



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Evaluation of the project "Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire"

Mid-term report



**Project Evaluation Series
50/2024**

Evaluation of the project “Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d’Ivoire”

Mid-term report
Project code: GCP/IVC/609/GCF

Required citation:

FAO. 2024. *Evaluation of the project: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire – Mid-term report*, project code: GCP/IVC/609/GCF. Project Evaluation Series, No. 50/2024. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3686en>

The designations employed in this information product and the presentation of the material herein do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal status or the stage of development of countries, territories, cities or areas or their authorities, nor as to the delimitation of their borders or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or manufacturers' products, whether or not patented, does not in any way imply approval or recommendation by FAO of said products in preference to others of a similar nature which are not mentioned.

© FAO, 2024



Some rights reserved. This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO license (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode/legalcode>).

Under this license, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial uses, provided that appropriate credit is given. In any use made of this work, it will in no way be implied that FAO endorses any organization, products or services whatsoever. Use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, it must be registered under an identical or equivalent Creative Commons License. If this work is translated, the following statement must accompany the chosen citation: "This translation was not produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content and accuracy of this translation. The original [language] edition is the authentic one.

Disputes arising under this license which cannot be resolved amicably will be resolved by means of mediation or arbitration in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the license unless another solution is proposed. The applicable rules for mediation will be the Mediation Rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization. United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third Party Materials. Users who wish to reuse material in this work and attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is necessary for their reuse and, if so, for obtaining permission from of the rights holder. The risk of complaint resulting from the violation of an element of property of a third-party present in the work concerns only the user.

Sales, rights and authorizations. FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased by contacting publications-sales@fao.org. Requests relating to commercial use should be sent using the form: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request. Questions regarding rights and permissions should be directed to: copyright@fao.org.

Cover photograph: © FAO/Seda Kojoyan

Abstract

The project “Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire” hereinafter referred to as either PROMIRE or the project, aims to reduce emissions through better land use, reforestation and reduced deforestation. It targets three regions in southeastern Côte d'Ivoire – Agnéby-Tiassa, La Mé and Sud-Comoé – over a five-year period from 2021 to 2026. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire implemented the project. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) provided financial support.

This mid-term evaluation analysed criteria relating to: relevance; coherence; effectiveness; efficiency; monitoring and evaluation (M&E); sustainability; gender and social inclusion; country ownership; and replicability and scalability. This evaluation used qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis: i) documentary analysis; ii) semi-structured interviews; iii) focus group discussions; and iv) visits to the project achievements.

The evaluation found that the project continues to be relevant and strategically aligned with national development objectives and partner priorities. The logical framework is well developed, but it shows some areas for improvement. Specifically, this involves gender disaggregation and baseline definitions for some indicators, as well as a clarification of the co-benefits. The project did not achieve its mid-term objectives. This was mainly due to a delay in starting activities during the first year. Regardless, the evaluation notes progress in reconvertng old cocoa plantations, rehabilitating forests and reinforcing capacities.

The M&E framework is appropriate but needs to be strengthened with indicators for the adoption of good agricultural practices and measures to mitigate the lack of baselines for several indicators. Gender was well integrated into the project design, but the presence of women in agroforestry and reforestation activities is still low. The project exhibits country ownership and sustainability potential, including commitments from the state and the private sector, community interest in agroforestry, and the presence of national structures specializing in agroforestry and forestry. However, the project has not set up a coherent knowledge management system to capitalize on its achievements.

The evaluation has six recommendations: i) create a national platform for exchanges on zero-deforestation agriculture; ii) strengthen the alignment of the logical framework with the theory of change (TOC); iii) update demographic indicators; iv) strengthen knowledge management activities; v) reinforce gender mainstreaming and social inclusion; and vi) provide capacity building for members of the project steering committee.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Executive summary	ix
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of the evaluation.....	1
1.2 Methodology.....	1
1.3 Limitations.....	7
1.4 Target audience.....	7
2. History and context of the project	9
2.1 Project context.....	9
2.2 Theory of change.....	12
3. Mission findings	17
3.1 Relevance of the project.....	17
3.2 Coherence.....	20
3.3 Effectiveness.....	21
3.4 Efficiency.....	27
3.5 Sustainability.....	33
3.6 Gender and social inclusion.....	35
3.7 Country ownership.....	41
3.8 Replication and scalability.....	42
4. Conclusions and recommendations	45
4.1 Conclusions.....	45
4.2 Recommendations.....	46
5. Lessons learned	49
Bibliography	51
Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix	59
Appendix 3. Results framework with methodological guidance for evaluation	70
Appendix 4. Key stakeholders	79
Appendix 5. Final evaluation stage: perspectives and recommendations	80
Appendix 6. Enabling factors in the project environment	82

Figures and tables

Figure 1. Project sites and sites visited by the Evaluation Team.....	4
Figure 2. September 2023 evaluation session with the project team and stakeholders in Abidjan	5
Figure 3. The senior evaluation specialist on a site visit, supported by the local agronomist.....	5
Figure 4. TOC diagram	15
Figure 5. Project governance and coordination.....	28
Table 1. The main evaluation questions.....	2
Table 2. Project achievements at mid-term	23
Table 3. Recalculated forecasts for GHG emissions reductions and removals.....	24
Table 4. Number of producers and areas under forest restoration	25
Table 5. Number of producers and areas under agroforestry restoration	25
Table 6. Number of direct project beneficiaries as of 31 October 2023	27
Table 7. Training set up by the project.....	39
Appendix table 1. Rating of the four basic indicators	82

Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team benefited from the support of the FAO Representation in Côte d'Ivoire, the FAO Office of Evaluation and the FAO GCF Coordination Unit in Rome, which provided the necessary logistics, documentation and information from the preparation of the mission to its completion in the field.

The Executing Entity expresses its gratitude to the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Permanent Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire, who spared no effort to facilitate the evaluation process.

The Executing Entity extends its sincere thanks to the project steering committee members, the programme coordination unit (PCU) at FAO headquarters, the national project coordination, the project's implementation partners and community organizations, and human resources who contributed to the evaluation process.

The Evaluation Team is particularly grateful to the training specialists, facilitators and beneficiaries of the project who gave their opinion on the implementation of the project and the results obtained.

The Evaluation Team consisted of four specialists: Yo Tiemoko; Natascia Palmieri; Doris Cordero; and Seda Kojoyan (the latter is with the FAO Office of Evaluation).

Abbreviations

AFOR	Rural Land Agency, by its French acronym
ANADER	National Rural Development Support Agency, by its French acronym
EX-ACT	Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	greenhouse gas
LOA	letter of agreement
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NGO	non-governmental organization
PAMOFOR	Rural land policy improvement and implementation project
PCU	programme coordination unit
PROMIRE	Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire project
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
SCOLUR-CI	Scaling up cocoa-based food systems, land use and restoration/transformation innovations in Côte d'Ivoire project
SODEFOR	Forest Development Company, by its French acronym
TOC	theory of change
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCF	World Cocoa Foundation

Executive summary

Evaluation objectives and methodologies

1. The evaluation adopts a global approach that covers all stages of the project and includes both a mid-term and a final evaluation report. The mid-term evaluation aims to analyse the results achieved and present lessons learned from project implementation. It also aims to make recommendations for the implementation of the remaining part of the project, as well as for conducting the final evaluation. The evaluation covers the period from February 2021 to October 2023. The geographical scope of the evaluation covers the three project zones in Côte d'Ivoire: Agnéby-Tiassa, La Mé and Sud-Comoé.
2. The evaluation questions were developed in accordance with the Green Climate Fund (GCF)'s evaluation criteria (GCF, 2023a). The assessment also followed recommendations for analysing reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, a paradigm shift analysis and enabling factors in the project environment. In addition, the evaluation proceeded with the reconstruction of the project's theory of change (TOC) based on elements of the project's logical framework, stakeholder opinions collected during a workshop and a survey.
3. The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders while maintaining gender sensitivity. Data collection and analysis included both a qualitative and quantitative approach, which combined several methods of data collection and processing. These involved a desk review and semi-structured individual or collective interviews with key stakeholders. Focus group discussions took place with communities, agricultural producers and representatives of local organizations. Field visits were carried out to observe the project's achievements.

Project overview

4. The project "Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire", hereinafter referred to as either PROMIRE or the project, is part of the implementation of the national REDD+ strategy. Its objective is to: reduce emissions from land use; support reforestation; reduce deforestation; support sustainable forest management; and conserve and enhance forest carbon stocks (GCF, 2020b). Scheduled for a period of five years from February 2021 to February 2026, the project is being implemented in 30 villages throughout three administrative regions in the southeast of Côte d'Ivoire: Agnéby-Tiassa; La Mé; and Sud-Comoé. The project is structured around two components: i) finalization and operationalization of the REDD+ architecture for REDD+ results-based payments; and ii) evidence-based and innovative jurisdictional REDD+ community-based activities.
5. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as the executing agency, implemented the project in collaboration with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, which is represented by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The total investment of the project was USD 11 754 000, including USD 10 million from the GCF grant and USD 1 754 000 of co-financing. This includes USD 1 200 000 from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in the form of an in-kind contribution, and USD 554 000 from FAO in the form of a grant from the project "Scaling up cocoa-based food systems, land use and restoration/transformational innovations in Côte d'Ivoire (SCOLUR-CI)".
6. The project aims to rehabilitate 3 650 ha of agroforestry systems and restore 1 500 ha of forests for an initial estimated GHG emissions reduction at 1 375 000 t CO₂ e. This was later updated to

1 326 000 t CO₂ e for the end of the five-year project cycle, and 5 500 000 t CO₂ e for the entire project cycle, that is, a period of 20 years. Further, 7 550 people (at least 30 percent of whom are women) and three cooperatives (one per region) should benefit directly, while 600 000 people should benefit indirectly.

Main findings

Relevance

7. The project was designed based on significant consultations with national and regional authorities. This resulted in a proposal that aligned with the country's priorities. Although a participatory approach has also been adopted towards other stakeholders, some accounts suggest that its impact has been less evident in the private sector. The project's logical framework is solid and well developed, but areas for improvement have been identified. These include: the use of gender-disaggregated indicators; the definition of risks and a baseline for indicators; the clarification of social and economic co-benefits for small producers; the evaluation of investment costs; and the profitability rates of agroforestry systems.
8. Overall, the project continues to be highly relevant and strategically aligned with national development objectives, sectoral priorities, and the needs and priorities of partner institutions, beneficiary communities, FAO and the GCF. This relevance has increased since the project's design. This is due to the evolution of the national and international environment of the cocoa sector, and the strengthening of the Ivorian State's commitment to inclusive and decentralized national development that considers the sustainable management of the environment.

Coherence

9. The programme coordination unit (PCU) has undertaken numerous steps at regional and national levels to create synergies with similar operational initiatives. Contacts made with local stakeholders should enable the establishment of a platform for dialogue between all stakeholders involved in zero-deforestation in each of the three regions. The multistakeholder dialogue platform aims to create a space where stakeholders can exchange information, develop a common understanding of the problems, decide jointly on desired outcomes, and jointly design and implement action plans. The platforms will develop regional strategic plans for zero-deforestation. They will be piloted by the representatives of the decentralized authorities, specifically the prefects and the regional councils, in order to promote the appropriation of these mechanisms and their inclusion in local policies.
10. At the national level, the PCU developed and signed a project sustainability plan with private sector umbrella organizations such as the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), the Union of Industrial Wood Producers, and the Professional Association of Decentralized Financial Systems of Côte d'Ivoire.¹ This plan provides a basis for developing future partnerships. The PCU has also developed a joint action plan with the "Rural land policy improvement and implementation (PAMOFOR)" project to support land security activities for the beneficiaries' plots.
11. Despite these notable project efforts, the growing number of initiatives in zero-deforestation agriculture suggests that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire should set up a formal national space where different stakeholders and institutions in this field can exchange information and experiences.

¹ The sustainability plan states that the focus will be on: i) developing a process to conclude purchase agreements with the cooperatives and producers that partner with the project; ii) testing principles and criteria for zero-deforestation cocoa production with cooperatives and producers that partner with the project; iii) a proposal for a "premium" zero-deforestation cocoa production; and iv) a proposal for optimal business models that support the sustainable development of agroforestry systems and value chains. With respect to microfinance institutions, the plan includes: i) testing financial products that are adapted to zero-deforestation cocoa production with cooperatives and producers that partner with the project; and ii) developing a process to conclude financing agreements with cooperatives and producers that partner with the project (FAO, 2022b).

Effectiveness

12. Overall, the project did not achieve its mid-term objectives. It achieved a GHG emissions reduction of 40 280 t CO₂ e, which corresponds to 7.3 percent of the mid-term objective. The evaluation found that the GHG calculations, which utilized the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT), were well done. In fact, these calculations were supported by technical expertise from FAO specialists and the use of detailed project data. Reference to some of the indicators is missing due to a delay in conducting an initial project analysis. It was therefore not possible to measure the progress made by the project in areas such as the degree of improvement in knowledge and the rate of adoption of good agricultural practices, as well as their effects on productivity. The evaluation was, however, able to analyse the achievements of the activities and the resulting outputs.
13. For Component 1, the operability levels of national and regional REDD+ mechanisms have not improved as planned. Regarding Component 2, the project achieved 991.30 ha of cocoa plantations rehabilitated in agroforestry systems (82.6 percent of the mid-term objective) and 165.03 ha of restored forests (33 percent of the target at mid-term). With regard to adaptation co-benefits, the project recorded 1 743 direct beneficiaries (23.09 percent of the final objective because no mid-term objective had been set) and four cooperatives, as well as 118 547 indirect beneficiaries (47 percent women and 19.8 percent of the final objective).

Efficiency

14. In November 2023, the total project execution amounted to USD 2 539 075 out of the USD 10 million grant from the GCF, representing a budget achievement rate of 25.39 percent. Alternatively, the expenditure on co-financing has evolved more quickly. The Côte d'Ivoire Government has already provided more than 36 percent of the expected co-financing. Only a few activities were implemented during the project's first year in 2021. The relatively slow start was because setting up the project bodies, administrative tasks and awareness raising prior to starting the planned activities required almost six months.
15. FAO and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development set up a PCU that is responsible for the day-to-day management, coordination and implementation of the project. In addition, the project steering committee fully assumed its governance function. Indeed, this is a key element in the country's ownership of the project.
16. The project has an appropriate and results-oriented monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Monitoring has been regular, but it has not covered all of the established indicators – several of which lack a baseline (see Appendix 3). In general, the system is functional but should be strengthened. Specifically, this involves the need for tools to inform the results indicators that relate to the adoption of good agricultural practices. Measures are also required to mitigate the lack of baselines for several indicators. In addition, it would be necessary to integrate data collection and analysis into an overall system that can show the links and influences between activities and the achievement of results.

Sustainability

17. The commitment of the Ivorian State and the private sector in promoting sustainable and traceable cocoa production on a large scale is a key factor. National and regional experience in forestry and agroforestry is also key. In fact, this experience is due to the project and the growing interest of producers in agroforestry. However, the reconversion of cocoa orchards into agroforestry systems will require a financial investment that producers will not be able to support without assistance.
18. To increase the likelihood of sustainability, the project must demonstrate that the introduced innovations are achievable. The project should also calculate the necessary level of investment, as well as its economic profitability. These results must be documented in a coherent knowledge management system. This will provide the Ivorian State and the private sector with objective elements to plan financially future projects related to the ecological transition of cocoa cultivation.

Gender and social inclusion

19. Overall, gender was well integrated into the project design. The approach responds relevantly to the gender dynamics and proposes proactive initiatives to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. However, in terms of implementation, the female presence in agroforestry and reforestation activities is lower than expected (14.4 percent) and several factors, which are external and internal to the project, have limited the scope of the results achieved.
20. Beyond the intentions stated in the project documents, and except for the local development plan processes, the project has not explicitly integrated issues related to minorities and the inclusion of young people. Although their participation is encouraged, no specific guidance or structured strategy has been developed. The project has a complaints management mechanism in which the themes of child labour and gender violence are considered. This is currently being implemented.

Country ownership

21. The country ownership of this project is adequate. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is responsible for implementing several activities under Component 1 and one activity under Component 2 through a letter of agreement (LOA) that was signed with the project. The Ivorian State regularly pays its financial share in accordance with the initial commitments. The project steering committee members, who are appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, is inclusive. Its membership includes representatives of the various implementing partners, the GCF national focal point, representatives of the sectoral ministries concerned, technical and financial partners, and civil society organizations. There are also private sector representatives. Since being set up, the project steering committee has functioned regularly and has appropriately assumed the project's supervisory and guidance role.

Reproducibility and scalability

22. The project provides capacity building for the beneficiaries of reforestation and agroforestry activities, as well as other small producers, members of four cooperatives and three REDD+ regional committees. The participatory and inclusive environment in which it is implemented, combined with the government's desire to promote zero-deforestation cocoa, are factors that may encourage the replication and extension of its model. To this end, the project should take better account of the capitalization of acquired knowledge and experience, which are essential factors for the reproducibility and scalability of the project.

Recommendations

To the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development)

Recommendation 1. Create a national platform for exchanging information and experiences between the various ongoing projects and initiatives on zero-deforestation agriculture. This should aim to stimulate synergies and partnerships.

To the PCU

Recommendation 2. Strengthen the alignment the project's logical framework with its TOC. In particular, this reflects the need for an ex-post evaluation of the investment costs required to convert old cocoa orchards into agroforestry systems, as well as their economic profitability. This can be done by adjusting Activity 2.5 or Activity 2.3.1 of Component 2.

Recommendation 3. Update the project's indicators that are linked to the population size of the three regions. Consider population growth rates that have been recorded since project formulation.

Recommendation 4. Organize the capitalization of acquired knowledge more effectively. Specifically, this applies to information and data related to the technical, economic and financial standards of zero-deforestation agriculture validated by the project, as well as lessons learned during implementation. This knowledge can be used as a reference in the development and implementation of new projects by the government, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Recommendation 5. The project should take greater account of gender and social inclusion. In particular, it should improve the targeting of disadvantaged groups, develop strategies to address the root causes of their vulnerability in the cocoa-growing sector, involve stakeholders more closely in gender objectives and plan a specific budget for these initiatives.

Recommendation 6. Strengthen the capacities of the project steering committee members in terms of governance to better support the PCU in project implementation.

Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. Take greater account of the start-up phase in project planning. The effective start of a project as complex as PROMIRE requires administrative and organizational work beforehand in order to set it up. This can take a relatively long time. It is necessary to consider this when planning the timing of the project's activities, especially during the first phase.

Lesson learned 2. Accelerate the establishment of the project steering committee. Indeed, the project steering committee has an essential role in national ownership and support for the operationalization of the project. In the future, it would be wise to take the necessary measures to ensure that it is in place upon project start.

Lesson learned 3. Define the respective roles of FAO and the Ivorian State more effectively. FAO assumes the dual role of accredited entity and Executing Entity in collaboration with the national entity. It is necessary to clarify upstream the respective roles of FAO and the Ivorian State in project execution to avoid misunderstandings and to promote the efficient functioning of the various bodies involved in the project.

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the evaluation

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) Office of Evaluation is in the process of designing an evaluation that covers the entire project duration and meets the needs of the project team, FAO and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Currently, the FAO Office of Evaluation is conducting a mid-term evaluation of the project, which is an integral part of the overall evaluation. The evaluation provides an analysis of the results achieved and presents lessons learned. It also makes recommendations to implement the remaining part of the project and to conduct the final evaluation report.
2. The evaluation covers the project's implementation, its progress, its overall management and its results achieved. This includes the behavioural changes that are necessary to achieve the expected results. The temporal scope of this phase of the evaluation covers the project implementation period from February 2021 to October 2023. The geographic scope of the evaluation covers the three areas in Côte d'Ivoire where the project took place: Agnéby-Tiassa; La Mé; and Sud-Comoé.

1.2 Methodology

3. The evaluation questions were developed in accordance with the evaluation criteria and guidelines published by the GCF (GCF, 2023a). Table 1 summarizes the main evaluation questions for the entire project duration. The evaluation matrix in Appendix 2 presents all the detailed evaluation questions, including those for the final phase of the evaluation.
4. This evaluation is based on a detailed theory of change (TOC) that assumes cause and effect relationships and logical links between programme activities, outcomes, intended effects and final impact. Originally, the project had developed a simplified outline of the TOC, which was included in the pre-feasibility study. The Evaluation Team used the logical framework to arrive at the TOC, then validate the evaluation questions that had been drafted during the inception phase.
5. The TOC was enriched and validated during a workshop on 19 September 2023. This workshop was organized by both the project team and the Evaluation Team. There were many key project partners, around 20 people, from different sectors. Following the release of the draft evaluation report, it was observed that this version of the TOC could further benefit from an alignment with the original TOC from the pre-feasibility study. The Evaluation Team took on this task, and an adjusted TOC was once again validated by the project team and the national partner in June 2024 (see Subsection 2.2). The evaluation followed the described methodological guidelines in accordance with the donor's evaluation of operational procedures, as well as the guidelines for evaluations conducted by accredited entities (GCF, 2023a). The evaluation was results-based and adopted a consultative and transparent methodology with stakeholders.¹

¹ The participatory and transparent approach was achieved through the organization of a participatory workshop to develop the project's TOC, focus group discussions conducted with direct beneficiaries, and the presentation and collective validation of the preliminary assessment.

Table 1. The main evaluation questions

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions
Relevance	Does the project meet the needs and expectations of the institutions involved, its beneficiaries, the environmental and development objectives in Côte d'Ivoire, the strategic objectives of FAO (including regional) and the objectives of the donor? What is the degree of alignment?
Coherence	Is the project: i) compatible with and/or complementary to (without duplicating) other climate financing; and ii) does it avoid creating parallel systems by creating synergies in financing mechanisms and interventions (i.e. other Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries [REDD]/REDD+ ¹ projects)? How does the project create synergies with other climate initiatives that are underway in the country?
Effectiveness	To what extent has the project achieved, to date, the results (outputs and effects) expected in its two components, and what is the progress compared to the logical framework indicators?
Efficiency	Are results achieved and activities implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner? To what extent are project management, governance mechanisms, and partnerships strong and functioning effectively?
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	Was the M&E system functional and sufficient for learning and results-based management? ²
Impact	To what extent do the project results have the potential to contribute to long-term changes?? This involves: reducing emissions from land use; supporting reforestation; reducing deforestation; supporting sustainable forest management; and conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks.
Sustainability	To what extent do the project results have the potential for sustainability?
Gender and social inclusion	Does the project satisfactorily implement actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion (including young people)? To what extent have gender issues been considered in the design and implementation of the project?
Ownership	To what extent has the country taken ownership of the project, and how is this reflected in the project's governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms?
Reproducibility and scalability	To what extent can project activities be replicated in other countries or other locations within the country? Does the project have the potential to expand its size and impact?

Notes:

¹ According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the '+' stands for additional forest-related activities that protect the climate. This specifically involves the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

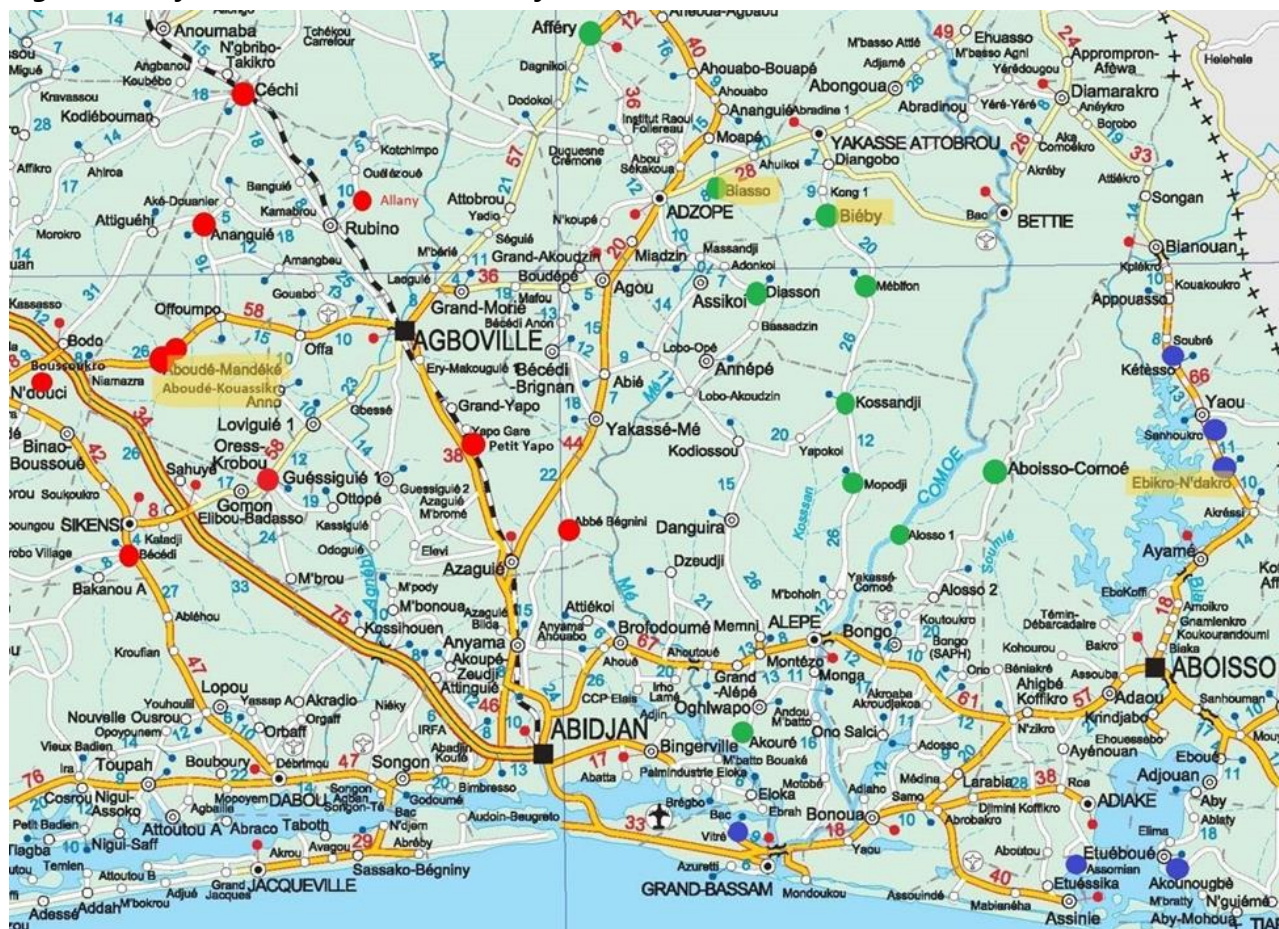
² For example, this involves the extent to which project indicators, assumptions and risks were adequately monitored.

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

6. The evaluation adopted a gender-sensitive approach, which considered the representation of women in interviews and focus group discussions. Specific evaluation requests were developed and gender-disaggregated data were requested from project staff. An annex to the evaluation report aims to provide a gender and social inclusion perspective to the evaluation.
7. The triangulation of data and information collected through different tools supports their validation and analysis, as well as the conclusions and recommendations that have been developed.
8. The evaluation used the following methods and tools to analyse the data:
 - i. stakeholder analysis;
 - ii. desk review;
 - iii. interviews and consultations in Abidjan;
 - iv. field visits to the villages of Ebikro, Biasso, Bieby, Aboudémandeké and Aboudékouassikro;
 - v. verification of calculations and methods to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
 - vi. a survey for members of the REDD+ regional committees established by the project;

- vii. an analysis of the project's environmental factors; and
 - viii. a comprehensive analysis of project monitoring systems to prepare for the final evaluation phase.
9. The following points detail each method.
10. The desk review helped to understand the issues addressed by the project. During this stage, relevant documents concerning the project were examined:
 - i. project documents (financing agreement, basic indicator data);
 - ii. project activity reports; and
 - iii. policy texts on REDD+ in Côte d'Ivoire.
11. The Evaluation Team answered evaluation questions related to the project's relevance, design and co-financing. This was done primarily through a desk review and by using the knowledge of the team's lead national consultant. To address the project's relevance, the Evaluation Team analysed FAO's interventions in relation to national and regional priorities, programmes and population needs, as well as the GCF policy.
12. To answer the other evaluation questions, the Evaluation Team used all available project documentation such as progress reports and GHG emissions reduction calculations as a starting point. Field visits were carried out to meet direct beneficiaries and local partners so that the team could assess the changes achieved by the project.
13. In September 2023, the evaluation carried out a data collection phase in the field: Abidjan; and the three project regions. The Evaluation team identified interlocutors to answer evaluation questions through a stakeholder mapping exercise. The stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project were consulted through semi-structured individual and collective interviews in Abidjan, as well as in the circles and samples of communes where the project operates. Particular attention has been placed on women and underprivileged groups to ensure that they are adequately consulted. Where possible, other partners like projects or national institutions involved in project implementation were consulted.
14. From 20 to 22 September 2023, the Evaluation Team visited five participating villages in three project regions: Ebikro; Biasso; Bieby; Aboudémandeké and Aboudékouassikro (see Figure 1 and Subsection 1.3). The project sites for field visits were selected in consultation with the project team. The state of progress of activities in each village and logistical issues were the main criteria adopted. The selection considered the geographic, climatic and demographic diversities of the regions involved in the project, as well as the opportunity to meet with cocoa producing cooperatives. In total, the Evaluation Team met around 100 people, mainly in focus group discussions, when visiting the villages.

Figure 1. Project sites and sites visited by the Evaluation Team



Note: The project sites are indicated in red, green and blue. The sites visited by the Evaluation Team are highlighted in yellow.

Source: Elaborated by the project team and the Evaluation Team based on CESIG. 2008. Côte d'Ivoire – Road Map. Abidjan.

<https://www.cesig.net/index.php> Refer to the disclaimer on copyright page for the names and boundaries used in this map.

15. The Evaluation Team used several different evaluation tools during the site visits: semi-structured interviews; focus group discussions, including cooperatives supported by the project; and observations of cocoa plantations to collect beneficiaries' and communities' perspectives as a whole. The visits were also used to observe the project's agricultural restoration activities. The data collected during these visits helped to answer all of the key evaluation questions. In particular, this addressed the project's relevance, coherence (notably with other projects), effectiveness, and potential for sustainability, as well as its level of gender and social inclusion.

Figure 2. September 2023 evaluation session with the project team and stakeholders in Abidjan



Figure 3. The senior evaluation specialist on a site visit, supported by the local agronomist



16. The GCF requires evaluations to verify the project's calculations and methods for reducing GHG emissions. To this end, the evaluation called on the services of a specialized consultant.
17. The desk review provided a basis for analysing GHG emissions reductions and an increase in carbon sequestration. Interviews supplemented this process. First, there was a review of the GHG emissions reduction targets and activities that had been included in the approved funding proposal, as well as the subsequent changes made by the project to these calculations. To this end, the projection of GHG emissions reductions made during the design phase through the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) (FAO, 2022a) was examined and compared to a new estimate that was made in April 2023. This was done through the new EX-ACT version and new coefficients that had been given by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2019.
18. The two projections cover a 20-year period: five years of project implementation; and 15 years of capitalization.
19. The consultant reviewed progress made in achieving the medium-term targets. This involved another GHG emissions reductions projection using EX-ACT Version 9 (FAO, 2022a) and considered the first two years, that is, 2021 and 2022, of implementation. The progress was compared to the proposed targets. The consultant also reviewed reports on the implementation of forest restoration activities and agroforestry systems, which have a direct impact on the reduction and removal of GHG emissions.
20. The GCF also recommends surveys during the evaluation. An online survey was launched using the Kobo Toolbox and sent to members of the REDD+ regional committees that had been established by the project (see Appendix 2). Out of 26 people, 11 responded to the questionnaire (42 percent). The survey was administered to help answer primary Evaluation question 3 on effectiveness, specifically the results achieved through training.
21. In accordance with the GCF evaluation guidelines, the Evaluation Team also carried out an analysis of the project's environmental factors. This was based on four core indicators proposed by the GCF: institution; technology; market; and knowledge (see Appendix 6).
22. The evaluation adheres to the UNEG norms and standards (UNEG, 2005) and its ethical guidelines. According to the FAO Office of Evaluation policies, during the recruitment process, only candidates who had not participated in project preparation or formulation could be considered to join the Evaluation Team and signed a statement to this end. The FAO Office of Evaluation conducted several internal checks for the evaluation report, including peer and supervisory reviews, before being released to the stakeholders for comment.
23. Finally, the Evaluation Team is responsible for designing an evaluation that covers the project's entire lifespan. To do so, it developed a comprehensive evaluation matrix with the main questions proposed for the final evaluation. The Evaluation Team also assessed the project's monitoring, data collection and record-keeping systems. During the desk review and field mission, the Evaluation Team carefully studied the available data and compared them to those that need to be collected in order to feed into the evaluation's final phase (see Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 5).

1.3 Limitations

24. To date, the evaluation has faced some limitations.
- i. Level of project progress: currently, the project has spent, or is committed to spending, approximately 25 percent of the total grant amount. This limited our ability to capture dimensions such as the effectiveness and potential scalability of the project. We have made detailed recommendations in relation to areas where the final evaluation should take a closer look (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 5).
 - ii. Reference data (baseline): the Evaluation Team found that a number of indicators lack a baseline. The report provides further information on this. This made it impossible to measure the progress made by the project in certain areas compared to the initial situation. In particular, it was not possible to measure the degree of improvement in knowledge and the level of change in producers' perceptions, or the adoption rate of good agricultural practices and their effects on productivity. This means that the evaluation findings are mainly based on the activities carried out, the products delivered, and the perceptions of the beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed.
 - iii. Minor difficulties in accessing the area during the evaluation mission: the country has a rainy season until November. This makes some project sites difficult to access in September. Additional visits to the communities would have allowed for a more in-depth perspective. Nevertheless, the dates of the visits were chosen carefully in discussion with the project team at national level and by considering the evaluation deadlines.
 - iv. Women's participation in the evaluation exercise was significant through their involvement in the focus group discussions with communities. However, in some cases, it was not possible to have their exclusive participation due to time constraints and logistics. The presence of men may have influenced the authenticity of women's responses during the discussions. The gender specialist on the Evaluation Team collected details from the women's groups for further engagement remotely. She also shared her contact details so that the women could share their feedback later.
 - v. The limited number of people reached through the online survey for the REDD+ regional committees did not allow for a quantitative analysis. However, the content of the survey was used to supplement the information on trainings for members of the regional committees since the Evaluation Team was not able to meet them during the field mission.

1.4 Target audience

25. FAO Côte d'Ivoire, the project management team, the project working group and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire constitute the main audience to which the majority of lessons and recommendations from this evaluation will be addressed. Other important users of the evaluation are FAO as a whole, but specifically the FAO-GCF Coordination Unit and the FAO Regional Office for Africa, as well as the GCF as the donor.

2. History and context of the project

2.1 Project context

26. In less than a century, Côte d'Ivoire has lost more than 80 percent of its natural forests. From 16 million ha at the beginning of the last century, the remaining forest areas were estimated at 2 800 000 ha in 2020 (FAO, 2021a). The study that bases this estimate used satellite data followed by field verification (National Office of Technical Studies and Development, 2016). The data from 2016 to 2020 were extrapolated based on the rate of deforestation within the country's different forest areas. To counter this accelerated degradation of forest heritage, the country committed to the REDD+ mechanism in June 2011 in order to restore its forest cover.
27. As part of this commitment, Côte d'Ivoire developed a national REDD+ strategy that its Government adopted in 2017. Its objectives are to: i) reduce deforestation and forest degradation by 80 percent compared to the reference situation of the year 2015; and ii) reconstitute the forest cover by introducing trees into agricultural and rural landscapes with a target of 5 million ha (FAO, 2021a). Côte d'Ivoire also considers REDD+ as a key mechanism to achieve its commitments as expressed in its nationally determined contributions. This contribution consists of a reduction of 13 200 000 t of GHG emissions due to the implementation of measures in the energy, waste and agriculture sectors. It also includes a reduction of 23 800 000 t of GHG emissions due to the implementation of measures in the forestry sector and other land uses. This corresponds to a 19.6 percent reduction in total national GHG emissions in 2030 compared to the reference scenario (UNFCCC, 2022).
28. In Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa cultivation is an essential activity for the livelihoods of 2 million producers for whom it provides 70 to 100 percent of annual income. These small, vulnerable, and low-income producers are mostly unorganized and do not have the benefit of security from tenure. This precarious situation affects women in particular. Women have more limited land rights and less access to assets, inputs and services. Also, small-scale farmers rely on rainfed agriculture for their livelihoods. This increases their vulnerability to the effects of climate change (GCF, 2020).
29. The project, financed by the GCF through a USD 10 million grant, is part of the implementation of this REDD+ strategy. Scheduled to take place from February 2021 to February 2026, the project is being implemented in 30 villages in three administrative regions of southeastern Côte d'Ivoire: Agnéby-Tiassa; La Mé; and Sud-Comoé. Its objective is to: reduce emissions from land use; support reforestation; reduce deforestation; support sustainable forest management; and conserve and enhance forest carbon stocks (GCF, 2020b). The project activities draw on the results and lessons learned from the REDD+ pilot project carried out in the La Mé region from 2017 to 2019. This supported the La Mé Organic Cocoa Producers Cooperative activities. This project also developed effective and sustainable organic and fair trade cocoa production models based on a zero-deforestation production approach.²

2.1.1 Project activities and products

29. The preliminary analysis that took place prior to project formulation made it possible to identify major obstacles in achieving the project's objectives. This was done through the funding proposal. The necessary activities to overcome such challenges were also defined. In particular, this involved

² La Mé REDD+ Project - Fight against deforestation and degradation of Mé forests. December 2016-February 2021.

the incomplete and inactive state of the national REDD+ mechanism and unsustainable land use practices adopted by small-scale farmers.

- i. The REDD+ mechanism is incomplete and inoperative. Despite significant progress in the development of the national REDD+ strategy, the architecture of the REDD+ mechanism is incomplete due to insufficient funding. Consequently, interventions have not reached the stage of results-based payments. This state of affairs is a major obstacle to the operation of a results-based payment mechanism.
- ii. The agricultural systems of cocoa producers are not sustainable. Agriculture is responsible for 62 percent of deforestation, of which 38 percent is due to cocoa production (National Office of Technical Studies and Development, 2016). There were three types of barriers identified in the funding proposal of this project.
 - Social and governance obstacles: these involve the absence of local development plans in rural areas, weak or non-existent land tenure rights (especially for women) and land use plans. These challenges also feature a low level of organization of agricultural producers, as well as weak enabling policies and a legal framework.
 - Technical and knowledge obstacles: these involve insufficient skills and experience of smallholder farmers in agroforestry and forest restoration, unsustainable agricultural practices (slash-and-burn agriculture and the expansion of cultivated areas in forests), and low financial skills among producers.
 - Financial obstacles: at the national level, these involve insufficient funding to implement the national REDD+ investment framework. At the producer level, there is a lack of access to income-generating, low-carbon activities, as well as weak access to financial systems.

30. In order to remove these barriers, the project plans to carry out activities divided between two components of the project.

Component 1. Finalization and operationalization of the REDD+ architecture for REDD+ results-based payments. This component aims to support the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire in finalizing and operationalizing the REDD+ architecture by building institutional capacities for effective implementation of REDD+ at the national level.

- i. Output 1.1 REDD+ architecture finalized for REDD+ results-based payments (GCF funding USD 1 050 710)
 - Activity 1.1.1 Update of the national investment framework
 - Activity 1.1.2 Update of the reference emissions level with regional (subnational) estimates
 - Activity 1.1.3 Update and consolidation of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)
 - Activity 1.1.4 Finalization of the safeguard information system for its operationalization
- ii. Output 1.2 The NFMS strengthened (GCF funding USD 1 008 196; national co-financing USD 630 000)
 - Activity 1.2.1 Development and operationalization of the benefit-sharing mechanism
 - Activity 1.2.2 Development of the fund management mechanism's legal aspects
 - Activity 1.2.3 Operationalization of the grievance mechanism at the national level
 - Activity 1.2.4 Design and operationalization of the web portal and platform

- Activity 1.2.5 Finalization and implementation of free, prior and informed consent guidelines
- Activity 1.2.6 Elaboration of mandatory reports for complying with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) requirements
- Activity 1.2.7 Development and implementation of the communications plan
- Activity 1.2.8 Development of the methodology for the nesting approach

Component 2. Evidence-based and innovative jurisdictional REDD+ community-based activities. This component aims to reduce the country's GHG emissions through the implementation of innovative, low-carbon land use models in 30 villages of the Agnéby-Tiassa, La Mé and Sud-Comoé regions.

- i. Output 2.1 Strengthened territorial planning and land security (GCF funding: USD 227 000)
 - Activity 2.1.1 Creation of local development plans
 - Activity 2.1.2 Strengthening of land tenure security
 - ii. Output 2.2 Reinforced local governance (GCF funding: USD 165 000)
 - Activity 2.2.1 Establishment of three REDD+ regional committees
 - Activity 2.2.2 Creation of three regional (subnational) grievance management committees
 - Activity 2.2.3 Operationalization of subnational benefit-sharing systems
 - iii. Output 2.3 Zero-deforestation agricultural production and reforestation (GCF funding: USD 5 974 117; Côte d'Ivoire Government co-financing: USD 510 000; FAO project co-financing: USD 386 000)
 - Activity 2.3.1 Agricultural technical support to small producers and restoration of degraded lands and forests
 - Activity 2.3.2 Conservation and restoration of natural habitats
 - Activity 2.3.3. Validation of the traceability system for sustainable cocoa production
 - Activity 2.3.4. Monitoring of agriculture and restoration activities
 - iv. Output 2.4 Strengthened agricultural financing structures and business capacities for cocoa cooperatives and smallholders (GCF funding: USD 688 796; FAO project co-financing: USD 144 000)
 - Activity 2.4.1 Creation, strengthening and capacity building of cocoa cooperatives
 - Activity 2.4.2 Development of business plans and financial literacy for cooperatives and producers
 - Activity 2.4.3 Development of partnerships with private sector and microfinance institutions
 - Activity 2.4.4 Strengthening of multistakeholder dialogue and cocoa innovation platforms
 - v. Output 2.5 Knowledge management and communications (GCF funding: USD 417 730)
 - Activity 2.5.1 Capitalization of experience and results dissemination
31. The project intends to generate the following effects and co-benefits.

- i. Effect 1. The REDD+ mechanism is strengthened and functional at national and regional levels: one national coordination mechanism (REDD+ national committee) at Level 3 at mid-term and Level 4 at the project's final stage; and three subnational coordination mechanisms (REDD+ regional committee) at Level 2 at mid-term and Level 3 at the final stage.
- ii. Effect 2. The management of cultivated land and forest area is improved and contributes to the reduction of GHG emissions:³ 1 500 ha of forests restored; and 3 650 ha of agroforestry systems restored and rehabilitated.
- iii. Co-benefit: the resilience and financial autonomy of communities are strengthened.
- iv. In addition to environmental benefits, the project expects to generate social and economic co-benefits for the populations concerned. In particular, this involves: improving agricultural yields; increasing and diversifying the income of small producers; increasing food self-sufficiency; improving access to property rights on a plot or the contents of a plot by virtue of land certificates; supporting local entrepreneurship; empowering women through their participation in economic activities; and strengthening the resilience and financial autonomy of communities. According to project calculations, 7 550 smallholders (at least 30 percent of whom are women) and three cooperatives (one per region) should benefit directly, and 600 000 people should benefit indirectly from the support provided by the GCF funding.

2.2 Theory of change

32. The project did not have a complete TOC, even though a simplified version was developed during the pre-feasibility study. The Evaluation Team carried out a reconstruction of the project's TOC at the start of the evaluation. The reconstruction considered the following elements:
 - i. an analysis of the project's logical framework;
 - ii. results from a workshop with stakeholders in Abidjan on 19 September 2023: sectoral ministries (planning, agriculture, forests, environment); regional councils (Agnéby-Tiassa, La Mé, Sud-Comoé); research and development agencies (National Rural Development Support Agency, [ANADER, by its French acronym], National Centre for Agricultural Research, Forest Development Company [SODEFOR, by its French acronym], Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves, Rural Land Agency [AFOR], by its French acronym); the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Ivorian Observer for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources [OIREN], by its French acronym); the private sector (World Cocoa Foundation [WCF]); the programme coordination unit (PCU); and
 - iii. interviews with producers and other project stakeholders during the mid-term evaluation mission.
33. The project's TOC first describes the logical sequences between the expected final result of the project (impact) in terms of GHG emissions reductions and the effects or co-benefits (outcomes and co-benefits) expected from the project. It then establishes the logical links between these expected effects and co-benefits of the project with the activities (activity) of the project, as well as the products (outputs) generated by their implementation.

³ The updated calculation indicates 5 300 000 t CO₂ e.

2.2.1 TOC causal chain

34. The TOC underlying this project assumes that the project objective can be achieved if the following conditions are cumulatively met:
- i. **if** the REDD+ mechanism is completed, strengthened, and made operational at national and subnational levels, so as to ensure results-based payments for environmental services to individual and institutional beneficiaries;
 - ii. **if** innovative land use models (including strengthening local governance and financing structures, land use planning, and land tenure security, as well as technical routes for zero-deforestation agriculture and reforestation) are adopted by small farmers;
 - iii. **then** we will witness the emergence in rural areas of a new agricultural economy based on new, more productive and more sustainable farming systems with low-carbon emissions (this will lead to a reduction in the pressure of agriculture on forests and improve agricultural productivity per hectare);
 - iv. **then** we would observe an increase in national forest cover thanks, on the one hand, to the practice of agroforestry and, on the other hand, to reforestation and the management of degraded forests;
 - v. **and** the project would therefore achieve its overall objective of reducing emissions through improved land use, reforestation, reduced deforestation, and sustainable forest management, as well as conservation and strengthening forest carbon stocks.

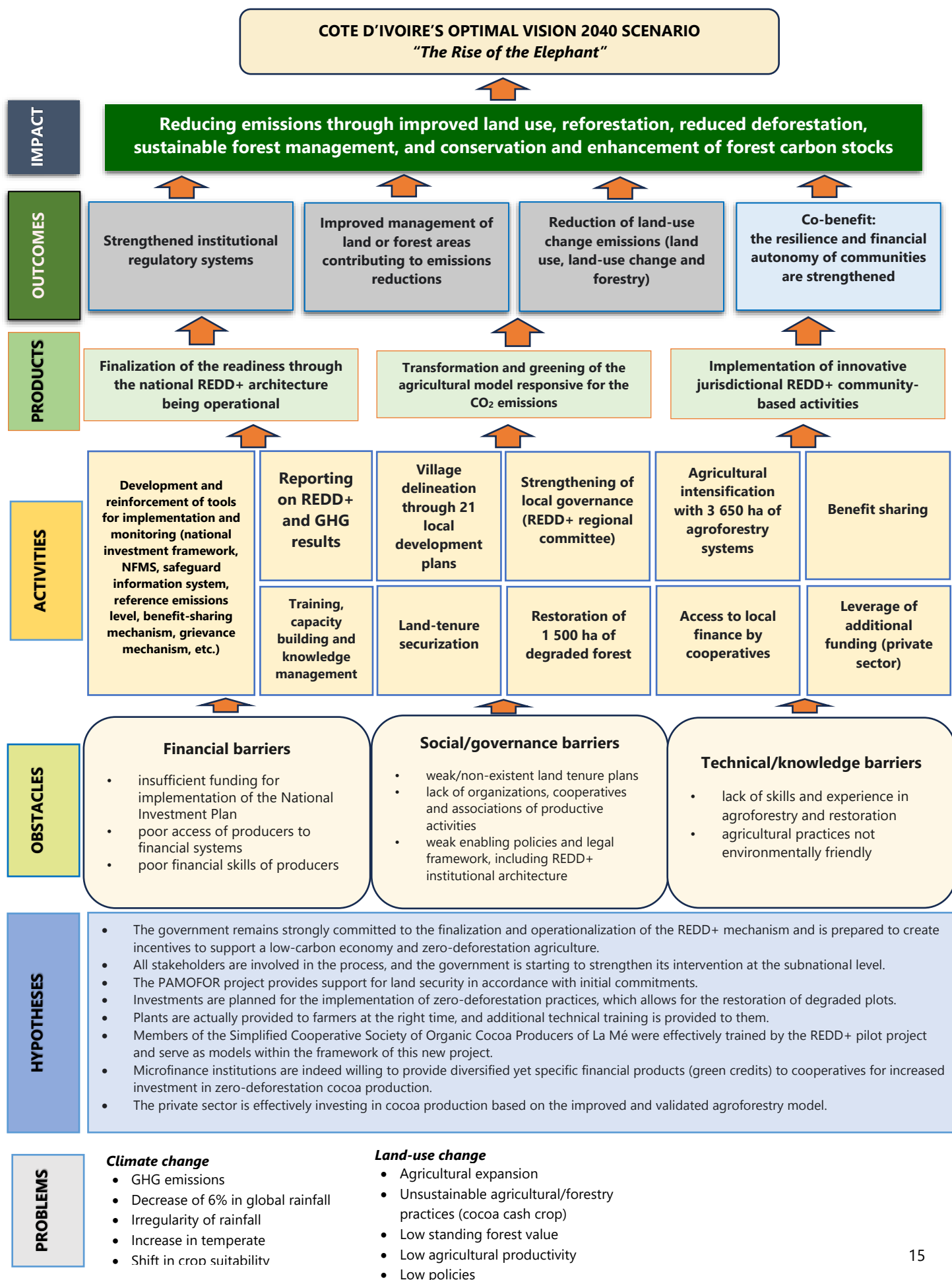
2.2.2 Project hypotheses

35. Enacting the TOC requires that certain external conditions, which are outside the direct control of the project but have a potential influence it, are fulfilled. These hypotheses were reviewed and some were updated during the TOC development workshop:
- i. The government remains strongly committed to the finalization and operationalization of the REDD+ mechanism and willing to create incentives to support a low-carbon economy and zero-deforestation agriculture.
 - ii. All stakeholders are involved in the REDD+ process, and the government is starting to strengthen its intervention at the subnational level.
 - iii. The "Rural land policy improvement and implementation (PAMOFOR)" project provides support for land tenure security in accordance with initial commitments.
 - iv. Investments are planned for the implementation of zero-deforestation practices, which allow for the restoration of degraded plots.
 - v. Plants are actually provided to farmers at the right time, and additional technical training is provided to them.
 - vi. Members of the Simplified Cooperative Society of Organic Cocoa Producers of La Mé have actually been trained by the REDD+ pilot project and serve as examples within the framework of this new project.
 - vii. Microfinance institutions are indeed willing to provide diversified yet specific financial products (green credits) to cooperatives for increased investment in zero-deforestation cocoa production.
 - viii. The private sector is effectively investing in cocoa production based on the improved and validated agroforestry model.

2.2.3 Changes induced by the TOC

36. Since the complete TOC was developed after the project start, it is important to analyse if it is consistent with the initial logical framework and to identify any changes that it might bring about in the planning and implementation of the project. In the present case, the only significant change prompted by the TOC in relation to the project's initial logical framework concerns the inclusion of an activity relating to the calculation of investment costs and profitability rates (ex-post) for the agroforestry systems set up by the project. This could be done by adjusting Activity 2.5.1 of Component 2, reinforcing it with aspects of knowledge generated by the project, or Activity 2.3.1 agricultural technical support to small producers and the restoration of degraded lands and forests. The change is justified by the need to take advantage of technical, economic and financial data as part of project implementation. It concerns determining the investment costs necessary to convert 1 ha of cocoa trees into an agroforestry system. It will also facilitate the estimation of the medium- and long-term profitability of such an investment. The availability of this information upon project closure would be an important factor for the government, the private sector, and producers, as well as for the development and funding of future projects for the conversion of old cocoa farms. In this sense, the existence of these data will be an important factor that will enable the reproducibility of the project's achievements.

Figure 4. TOC diagram



3. Mission findings

3.1 Relevance of the project

Evaluation question 1: Does the project meet the needs and expectations of the institutions involved, its beneficiaries, the environmental and development objectives in Côte d'Ivoire, FAO's strategic objectives (including regional objectives) and the donors' objectives?

Finding 1. The project design was based on significant consultation with national and regional authorities. This resulted in a proposal that clearly targeted the country's priorities. Although the participatory approach has also been adopted towards other stakeholders, some accounts state that its impact has been less evident in the case of the private sector.

37. The project was conceived in 2019, following a request by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development for technical assistance from FAO as an entity accredited to the GCF. The request related to support for the implementation of programmes and projects as part of the country's commitments in terms of nationally determined contributions. In this sense, the project was born from a national priority and a government commitment. This makes the initiative highly relevant. The involvement of national authorities in the design phase was therefore high, as confirmed by interviews carried out during the evaluation.
38. The project design was also based on consultation with other stakeholders involved. The regional councils of the three regions confirmed their involvement in drawing up the concept note and the project document, particularly with regard to the choice of villages to benefit from the initiative. Consultation missions to village communities, councils and directorates in charge of water and forests, the environment, agriculture, mines and animal resources in the three regions were carried out in the start-up phase (from June to July 2021), as well as at the beneficiary identification stage (February 2022).
39. Other key players, both public and private, have been involved. In particular, the private sector was consulted several times during the conceptualization and launch phase of the initiative.⁴ However, some stakeholders feel that these consultations did not result in real involvement in the design of the project's strategy and activities. In particular, this concerned identifying concrete activities to be carried out with the support of businesses in the areas of agroforestry and cooperative strengthening.

Finding 2. Overall, the project's logical framework is solid and well developed. However, areas for improvement have been identified. This specifically involves the inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators, the definition of risks and a baseline for indicators, and a clarification of social and economic co-benefits for small-scale producers.

40. The results architecture proposed in the logical framework is solid and clarifies the vision and short-, medium- and long-term benefits arising from project implementation. The path to success is well illustrated, that is, the intermediate steps (activities, outputs and results) necessary to achieve the expected impact. The assumptions are well defined, even though neither the risks nor the mitigation measures are described. Instead, the risk analysis is included in a mandatory

⁴ The project's prefeasibility study (FAO, 2020) refers to several meetings with the private sector during the conceptualization phase. In particular, between November 2019 and March 2020, meetings with the WCF and the companies of Mondelez International, Mars and Cémoi are reported. The private sector also participated in the July 2021 project launch workshop, especially the WCF and the Interprofessional Association of the Palm Oil and Rubber Industry (FAO, 2021c).

Appendix 7 to the project document, whereas no indication is given in this respect in the logical framework.

41. The indicators are relevant to the outcomes they aim to demonstrate, and they have been developed in accordance with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound criteria (OECD, 2014). There is a balance between efficiency indicators, which show the achievement of outputs, and effectiveness indicators, which prove the achievement of outcomes.
42. Two important areas for improvement concern the absence of gender-disaggregated indicators (see Subsection 3.6), as well as the absence of a baseline for certain logical framework indicators (see M&E findings, section 3.4). Although the project document describes the social and economic benefits for small-scale producers resulting from agroforestry and reforestation activities, these co-benefits are not clearly reflected in the project's logical framework through specific results and indicators.

Finding 3. Since its formulation, the project has remained highly relevant and strategically aligned with national development objectives, sectoral priorities, and the needs and priorities of partner institutions, beneficiary communities, FAO and the GCF. This relevance has increased since project design due to changes in the national and international environment of the cocoa sector and the strengthening of the Ivorian State's commitments to inclusive and decentralized national development, which considers sustainable management of the environment.

43. At the national level, the project still aligns well to the main national and sectoral development strategies. The country's strategic development objective for the decade from 2021 to 2030 is to ensure that, by 2030, the Ivorian economy is industrialized and that the majority of the Ivorian people are freed from poverty and vulnerability (National Council for Economic Policies, 2020). This involves gaining access to a middle class quality of life with all the comforts that this implies. To achieve this strategy, the country intends to rely on the organization of regional development and the promotion of sustainable development through optimal land use planning. At the same time, it will also protect the environment, safeguard natural heritage and prevent the ecological exploitation of natural resources (Ibidem).
44. National development plans detail how to put these strategic options into practice over five-year periods. The current version being implemented covers the period from 2021 to 2025 (Ministry of Planning and Development, 2023). The 2021–2025 national development plan includes a priority area on preserving the environment and combating climate change. This aims to: i) develop citizen awareness of the environment and promote sustainable development; ii) strengthen the sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity; iii) combat the effects of climate change; and iv) reduce the CO₂ emission rate from 0.49 percent in 2014 to 0.37 percent in 2025.

The project's objectives are well aligned with these strategic and operational options.

45. In terms of sectoral policies, recent developments have reinforced the project's relevance. Indeed, the forestry code promoted by Law No. 2019-675 of 23 July 2019 encourages all initiatives taken by the private sector, communities, local authorities and populations in terms of the reconstitution and creation of forests (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, 2023). This vision is based on the dual challenge of developing the agricultural sector and ensuring that this development has a positive impact on the environment and society as a whole (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, 2023b).
46. In recent years, the Ivorian State has also taken various legislative, regulatory and operational measures and steps to strengthen its commitment to promote sustainable cocoa production systems. In 2022, a national sustainable cocoa strategy was adopted, and a national committee was created for its implementation (Office of the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, 2022). The main

thrusts of the national sustainable cocoa strategy include improving producers' income, the fight against deforestation and respect for human rights. In addition, cocoa producers decided to adopt and apply the African Standard for Sustainable Cocoa, known as ARS 1000, which was developed by the African Organization for Standardization and based on the International Organization for Standardization 34101 on sustainable and traceable cocoa (Presidency of the Republic, 2022). This standard should eventually become a mandatory requirement for all cocoa producers after a pilot phase.

The project's objectives are therefore well aligned with the government's current priorities.

47. In 2022, the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, known as COP 15, was also held in Côte d'Ivoire. On this occasion, the Ivorian State reaffirmed its commitment to restore its forest cover to 20 percent by 2030 and announced the establishment of an operational programme, the Abidjan Legacy Program, which focuses on the sustainability of agricultural value chains and the fight against deforestation (COP 15, 2022).
48. These various measures are intended to prepare the Ivorian cocoa sector in meeting new market requirements. The most notable of these appears to be the European Union's adoption of a regulation that passed in April 2023. It allowed European countries to verify that products that had been both imported into and exported from the European Union did not cause deforestation or degradation after the end of 2020. This regulation was enforced at the end of June 2023 (European Union, 2023) and is commercially vital for Ivorian cocoa. In fact, the European Union represents the main outlet for cocoa exports from Côte d'Ivoire (European Union, 2021).
49. Private sector commitment to sustainable cocoa and forest preservation under the aegis of the WCF is demonstrated through a 2017 partnership with the Ivorian State. The Cocoa and Forests Initiative, led by 35 private companies in the cocoa and chocolate industry, was launched. The second phase of this initiative, which runs from 2022 to 2025, focuses on: i) forest protection and restoration; ii) agroforestry and sustainable cocoa production; and iii) social inclusion and the participation of communities in cocoa producing areas (Cocoa and Forests Initiative, 2023).
50. During project formulation, the private sector expressed its interest and support through the WCF in a letter that endorsed the project. Since project implementation, the WCF has confirmed its interest by signing the sustainability plan. This should lead to a more formal partnership with the project (FAO, 2022b).
51. With regard to producers and village communities, there is growing interest in agroforestry and reforestation. When drafting the local development plan, for example, in the village of Ebikro-N'Dakro, the people described their perceptions of climate change and its effects on resources and communities. They also mentioned agroforestry among the possible mitigation measures. Therefore, in describing their vision for the village by 2032, the communities of Ebikro-N'Dakro indicated, among other priorities, the desire to live in a village that masters and practices resilient agriculture in the face of climate change (FAO, 2022c).
52. The project aligned perfectly with Priority area 1 of the 2018–2021 FAO Country Programming Framework for Côte d'Ivoire. This aspect aims to improve the productivity, sustainability, and resilience of agropastoral and silvopastoral farms and fisheries by promoting and scaling up innovations and technical routes for sustainable intensification, diversification, and climate change adaptation (FAO, 2023). The new Country Programming Framework for Côte d'Ivoire was being updated at the time of the evaluation mission.

53. By analysing the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Côte d’Ivoire for the period from 2021 to 2025, we can also establish that the objectives of the project are well aligned with the priorities of the United Nations system in the country (UN Côte d’Ivoire, 2021). The 2021–2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Côte d’Ivoire is structured around five strategic priorities: i) accelerating the structural transformation of the economy; ii) improving human capital; iii) strengthening the inclusiveness of the development process; iv) reducing vulnerability to climate change and environmental problems; and v) promoting more effective, transparent and participatory governance. Priority area 4 aims to promote sustainable development, specifically the proper management of natural resources and the preservation of the environment for current and future generations. This is fully in line with the objectives of the project.
54. In relation to FAO’s 2022–2025 Medium Term Plan (FAO, 2023), the project priorities align with better production 1 (innovation for sustainable agriculture production) and better environment 1 (agrifood systems adapted to and mitigating climate change). The project also aligns with two cross-cutting priority areas: better life 1 (gender equality and capacity building of women in rural areas); and better life 2 (inclusive rural transformation).
55. The project is also part of the GCF’s updated vision to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways in the context of sustainable development (GCF, 2023b). Specifically, the project aligns well with two of the GCF’s four strategic priorities: i) mitigation and adaptation to support paradigm shifts in various sectors; and ii) adaptation to address urgent and immediate adaptation and resilience needs, and sectoral guidelines on forest and land use, agriculture, and food security.

3.2 Coherence

Evaluation question 2: Is the project: i) compatible with and/or complementary to (without duplicating) other climate finance; and ii) does it avoid creating parallel systems by creating synergies in funding mechanisms and interventions (that is, other REDD+ projects)?

Finding 4. The project has made contact in each of the three regions with the players and projects involved in zero-deforestation initiatives with a view to create partnerships or synergies of actions. In each region, the project plans to set up a platform for dialogue between all the players involved in zero-deforestation. At the national level, the project has concluded a sustainability plan with private sector umbrella organizations. Also, it has developed a joint action plan with PAMOFOR to support land tenure security activities and established contacts with a number of projects such as the Abidjan Legacy Program and the “Scaling up cocoa-based food systems, land use and restoration/transformation innovations in Côte d’Ivoire (SCOLUR-CI)” project. However, there is no formal national forum for the exchange of information and experience between the various initiatives involved in zero-deforestation agriculture.

56. In Côte d’Ivoire, the concept of zero-deforestation agriculture takes a broader view of sustainability than simply stopping deforestation. According to the definition used by the government (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Water and Forests, 2018), zero-deforestation agriculture includes both a sectoral approach (vertical) by utilizing different links in the value chains, as well as a territorial approach (horizontal), which aims to support the emergence of sustainable territories that include all the stakeholders that are present in village territories. The project formulation considered this dual orientation and integrated the value chain and territorial dimension into its planning. The project plans to involve the main players concerned with the issues of agroforestry and reforestation in its implementation.

57. As soon as the project was implemented, the PCU's field missions from May and December 2021 made it possible to: i) inform regional and local stakeholders about the project's objectives and the main expected results and activities; ii) identify local initiatives that are active in promoting good agricultural, agroforestry and forestry practices; and iii) organize working sessions with potential stakeholders in project implementation (regional departments of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, ANADER, SODEFOR, wood manufacturers, agro-industrialists, local NGOs, local associations, members of local associations) to create partnerships and synergies. At the national level, the PCU met during the same period with umbrella organizations from the private sector. These included the WCF, the Union of Industrial Wood Producers, the Professional Association of Decentralized Financial Systems of Côte d'Ivoire, and AFOR in charge of project implementation for the improvement and implementation of the rural land policy of Côte d'Ivoire. The purpose of the meetings was to negotiate partnership agreements such as a sustainability plan and a joint action plan with PAMOFOR.
58. The effective implementation of the project involves eight local NGOs specializing in forestry and agroforestry,⁵ as well as that of the national agency in charge of agricultural extension, namely ANADER. The project plans to set up a platform for dialogue between all the players involved in zero-deforestation in each of the three regions. The project is already engaged in setting up a platform in La Mé in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation and the La Mé regional council.
59. In addition, the project intends to establish a partnership with SCOLUR-CI, which is financed by the Global Environment Facility and led by FAO. The SCOLUR-CI aims to promote cocoa value chains without deforestation and restore forests in cocoa-growing landscapes in nine other regions in the east and west of the country. It plans to scale up the agroforestry technologies validated by PROMIRE in these areas. The PROMIRE project also made initial contacts with the Abidjan Legacy Program that focuses on the sustainable development of agricultural sectors (FAO, 2022d). These examples show that the project has made real efforts to create synergies both locally and nationally.
60. Despite the project's efforts to establish partnerships and synergies with projects and institutions operating in the field of zero-deforestation agriculture, it should be noted that the number of players in this field continues to grow over time. There appears to be a need to create a national forum for sharing and exchanging information and experiences on zero-deforestation agriculture.

3.3 Effectiveness

Evaluation question 3: To what extent has the project achieved, to date, the results (outputs and effects) expected in its two components, and what is the progress in relation to the logical framework indicators?

Finding 5. Overall, the project has not achieved its mid-term objectives. With regard to emissions mitigation, the project achieved an emissions reduction of 40 280 t CO₂ e corresponding to 7.3 percent of the mid-term objective. For Component 1, the operability levels of national and regional REDD+ mechanisms have not improved as initially expected. Regarding Component 2, the project achieved 991.30 ha of cocoa plantations rehabilitated in agroforestry systems (82.6 percent of the mid-term objective) and 165.03 ha of restored forests (33.0 percent of target at mid-term). Regarding adaptation co-benefits, the project recorded 1 743 direct beneficiaries (23.09 percent of the final objective) and four

⁵ They support project implementation on activities such as forest restoration (supply of plants and technical advice), as well as agroregeneration.

cooperatives as direct beneficiaries, as well as 118 547 indirect beneficiaries (19.8 percent of the final objective).

Finding 6. The evaluation found that the GHG calculations were well carried out. In fact, EX-ACT and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change coefficients were used. This involved technical support from FAO specialists and the use of detailed project data.

3.3.1 Main project achievements at mid-term

61. Table 2 presents the results set out in the logical framework, as well as the project's mid-term achievements that were confirmed as of October 2023.

Table 2. Project achievements at mid-term

Description	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term objective	Final objective	Mid-term achievements	Assessment
Impact	Mitigation: t CO ₂ e reduced or avoided	2 650 000 t CO ₂ e emission avoided per year	550 000 t CO ₂ e reduction	1 375 000 t CO ₂ e reduction	40 280 t CO ₂ e reduction ¹	7.3% of the mid-term objective
	Adaptation: total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	-	Not defined	Direct: 7 550 beneficiaries, including at least 30% women and 3 cooperatives Indirect: 600 000 beneficiaries, including at least 30% women	Direct: 1 743 beneficiaries (29.9% women) and 4 cooperatives Indirect: 118 547 (47% women)	23.09% of the final objective 19.8% of the final objective
Effects (outcomes)	Level of operability of the coordination of the REDD+ mechanism (Warsaw Framework for REDD+) ²	1 Level 2 national REDD+ coordination mechanism 3 Level 1 regional coordination mechanisms	1 Level 3 national REDD+ coordination mechanism 3 Level 3 regional coordination mechanisms	1 Level 4 national REDD+ coordination mechanism 3 Level 3 regional coordination mechanisms	1 Level 2 national REDD+ coordination mechanism 3 Level 1 regional coordination mechanisms	No improvement in the level of operability
	Hectares of plantations or forests under improved management	0 ha of restored forests 0 ha of plantations rehabilitated into agroforestry systems	500 ha of forests restored 1 200 ha of plantations rehabilitated into agroforestry systems	1 500 ha of forests restored 3 650 ha of plantations rehabilitated into agroforestry systems	165.03 ha of forests restored 991.30 ha of plantations rehabilitated into agroforestry systems	33.0% of the mid-term objective 82.6% of the mid-term objective

Notes:

¹ This stems from the project's 2022 annual performance report (GCF, 2022). The project management team carried out this evaluation. A more in-depth assessment of this value is expected from the specialized carbon credit consultant who was a member of the mid-term Evaluation Team.

² Warsaw Framework for REDD+ interoperability level criteria:

- Level 2. The interoperability of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ elements makes it possible to account for national deforestation. Mandatory documents have been submitted to the UNFCCC.
- Level 3. The interoperability of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ elements allows for the reporting of deforestation and degradation at the national level and is linked to the local (subnational) level. The mandatory documents have been submitted to the UNFCCC, and the tools are reinforced by additional elements such as the benefit-sharing mechanism, the management of REDD+ funds and the complaints mechanism.
- Level 4. The interoperability of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ elements allows for the reporting of deforestation, degradation, and forest carbon stocks (restoration) at the national level and is linked to the local (subnational) level. All requested elements that allow the country to access REDD+ results-based payments are in place for public consultation for the sake of transparency. The country reports regularly to the UNFCCC and is ready to access REDD+ results-based payments.

Sources:

Project logical framework; GCF. 2022. *Annual Performance Report for SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/2022-annual-performance-report-sap015-promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production>; the project's M&E data based on beneficiary statistics in the PROMIRE database at the end of October 2023.

62. The project’s overall objective (updated in early 2023) is to achieve an emissions reductions level of 1 326 000 t CO₂e by the end of the project (for an implementation period of five years) and 530 584 t e CO₂e halfway through the project (two years). The achievement reported by the project at the end of 2022 is an accumulative removal of 40 280 t CO₂e or 7.6 percent of the updated mid-term goal (FAO, 2022d).
63. Forecasts for the GHG emissions reductions and removals, recalculated by FAO in early 2023 using EX-ACT Version 9, provided an estimate of 265 292 t CO₂e per year for an implementation period of five years. This is equivalent to 1 326 460 t CO₂e as the final objective of the project. The estimated net carbon balance, adding a capitalization period of 15 years, is 5 300 000 t CO₂e emissions reductions and removals for a total of 20 years. Table 3 details the figures for the GHG emissions reductions and removals from the funding proposals and the updated estimates.
64. In all cases, the GHG emissions reductions and removals were calculated using EX-ACT. The estimation of the progress reported includes field data for the areas intervened by the project. The project has not taken measurements from the field to validate baseline biomass figures and initial results from early activities.

Table 3. Recalculated forecasts for GHG emissions reductions and removals

Data	Net carbon balance included in the approved funding proposal	Net carbon balance updated calculations, April 2023
EX-ACT version	8	9
Annual target	275 000 t CO ₂ e	265 292 t CO ₂ e
Mid-term target (2 years)	550 000 t CO ₂ e	530 584 t CO ₂ e
Final target (5 years)	1 375 000 t CO ₂ e	1 326 460 t CO ₂ e
Target 20 years	5 500 000 t CO ₂ e	5 305 840 t CO ₂ e

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation team based on project technical documentation (internal).

65. The updated estimate (EX-ACT Version 9) represents 96 percent of the initial estimate. According to the interviewed EX-ACT specialist from FAO, it is normal to see differences of up to 5 percent between projections, depending on the EX-ACT version used. These could be explained by the fact that the new version considers the different phases of plant growth, which were missing in Version 8. Version 9 also has more precise data with new coefficients from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was published in 2019 (FAO, 2022a).
66. The specialist hired by the Evaluation Team to conduct a review of the project’s GHG calculations found it to be an accurate exercise based on detailed project data.
67. The Component 1 objective is to improve the level of interoperability of the REDD+ architecture. At the start of the project, there was one national REDD+ coordination mechanism of operability Level 2 and three regional coordination mechanisms at operability Level 1 in the three project regions. The objective of the project was to improve these levels of interoperability and to have, at mid-term, one Level 3 national coordination mechanism and three Level 2 regional coordination mechanisms.
68. In fact, at mid-term, neither of the two mechanisms (national and regional) met the necessary conditions to change the level of interoperability. For the national mechanism, interoperability must extend to the regional level to access Level 3. Additional tools such as the benefit-sharing mechanism, the management of REDD+ funds and the complaints mechanism must reinforce the REDD+ mechanism. At the end of 2022, these conditions had not been met fully (FAO, 2022d).
69. However, there has been significant progress in carrying out certain project activities, notably:

- i. the adoption of a standard format for the benefit-sharing plan for REDD+ at the national level;
 - ii. adopting a methodology to estimate activity data at national and jurisdictional levels to update the National Emission Reference Level, including regional (subnational) estimates; and
 - iii. the development and adoption of a REDD+ communications plan for the period from 2023 to 2025, and the creation of tools to improve the visibility of project actions.
70. The Component 2 mid-term objective was to achieve 500 ha of restored forests and 1 200 ha of cocoa plantations rehabilitated into agroforestry systems. At the end of October 2023, a statistical analysis was produced from the project's M&E database. It showed that achievements include 165 ha of forests restored for 95 beneficiaries (33 percent of the mid-term objective). It also showed that 991.3 ha of cocoa plantations were rehabilitated into agroforestry systems for 441 beneficiaries (82.6 percent of the mid-term objective). Beneficiaries carry out forest restoration activities through project support, particularly the supply of plants and technical advice from contracting NGOs for the forestry component. These activities are carried out within the parameters of typical commercial reforestation activities using mainly timber species. They include exotic forest species such as teak (*Tectona grandis*) and gmelina (*Gmelina arborea*) at densities of 1 000 plants per hectare. The Evaluation Team saw and heard testimonies about the project's monitoring of the quality and maintenance of trees and planted areas.

71. Table 4 and Table 5 detail the achievement data.

Table 4. Number of producers and areas under forest restoration

Region	Number of producers	Area restored (ha)
Agnéby-Tiassa	10	15.339
La Mé	64	107.720
Sud Comoé	21	41.971
Grand total	95	165.030

Source: The project's M&E, based on beneficiary statistics in the database at the end of October 2023.

Table 5. Number of producers and areas under agroforestry restoration

Region	Number of producers	Area restored (ha)
Agnéby-Tiassa	227	537.440
La Mé	134	235.212
Sud Comoé	80	218.650
Grand total	441	991.302

Source: The project's M&E, based on beneficiary statistics in the database at the end of October 2023.

72. Under Component 2, the project also carried out the following activities.⁶

- i. Local governance was strengthened through the establishment of REDD+ regional committees in the three project regions of Agnéby-Tiassa, La Mé and Sud Comoé (GCF, 2022). The survey conducted among members of the REDD+ regional committees during the evaluation showed an adequate level of satisfaction with the training activities offered by the project. Respondents to the questionnaire appreciated the improvement in their knowledge, particularly regarding the areas of climate change and the REDD+

⁶ These were indicated in the project progress reports and verified by the Evaluation Team.

process in the country. Alternatively, measuring, reporting and verification, the NFMS, and REDD+ financing appear to be subjects that have not been fully explored and for which additional training is necessary. The knowledge acquired was considered substantially useful to the work of committee members and, according to the information provided, sufficiently disseminated among colleagues.

- ii. Two organic cocoa production cooperatives were formalized in the regions of Agnéby-Tiassa and Sud-Comoé.
- iii. A women's cooperative for conventional cocoa production was formalized in the La Mé region.
- iv. Fifteen local development plans with committees of more than 30 percent women were developed.
- v. A sustainability plan was developed with commitments from several private cocoa companies to work closely with the project and support project activities.
- vi. A joint action plan was signed with PAMOFOR.

73. For direct beneficiaries, the project aims to reach a total of 7 550 direct beneficiaries – at least 30 percent of whom are women. The methodology for calculating the number of direct beneficiaries, defined in the Project Implementation Manual (FAO, 2021b), is detailed in the following points:

- i. number of agroforestry beneficiaries: 3 650 owners (with an average forecast of 1 ha/owner);
- ii. number of forest restoration beneficiaries: 750 owners (with an average forecast of 2 ha/owner);
- iii. number of beneficiaries of community monitoring: 150 (community monitoring, that is, 50 people for three regions); and
- iv. number of beneficiaries of capacity building workshops in the regions at 3 000 (four workshops of 50 people per year for five years in three regions, so 3 000 people), that is, a total of 7 550 direct beneficiaries.

74. Achievements at the end of October 2023 (statistical data from the project's M&E database) involve 1 743 direct beneficiaries in total, including 441 for agroforestry, 95 for forestry and 1 207 for various trainings, that is, 23.08 percent of the final objective with 29.89 percent women. However, the specific rates of women for agroforestry (15.4 percent) and forestry (13.7 percent) are still low compared to the general target objective of 30 percent women. The training component concerned the following activities: i) development of the standard benefit-sharing plan (150 participants); ii) development of local development plans (925 participants); iii) training of members of the three REDD+ regional committees (85 participants); and iv) creation, strengthening and development of the capacities of cocoa cooperatives (47 participants). On the training side, 36.5 percent of participants were women.

75. Table 6 breaks down the total number of direct beneficiaries (1 743).

Table 6. Number of direct project beneficiaries as of 31 October 2023

Beneficiaries	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of women
Agroforestry	373	68	441	15.4%
Forest restoration	82	13	95	13.7%
Training	767	440	1 207	36.5%
Total	1 222	521	1 743	29.89%

Source: The project's M&E, based on beneficiary statistics in the database at the end of October.

76. The project ultimately targets 600 000 indirect beneficiaries – at least 30 percent of whom are women. The achievement at the end of October 2023 was 118 547 indirect beneficiaries (47 percent women), or 19.8 percent of the final target. This figure for indirect beneficiaries corresponds to the total population of the eight villages which had finalized their local development plan at the end of 2022 (117 585). It also includes the agents who were deployed in these regions by the service providers (962) that the PCU considers as fulfilling the conditions of indirect beneficiaries (FAO, 2022d). The PCU plans to refine the methodology for calculating the number of indirect project beneficiaries for the remainder of the project period. The rate of female indirect beneficiaries, considered in the statistics of indirect beneficiaries (47 percent), corresponds to the ratio of women in the population, as indicated by the 2014 census statistics (National Institute of Statistics, 2014).
77. In the future, the project would benefit from updating the indicators that are linked to the size of the population of the three regions. Indeed, the project formulation was based on a total population of 1 764 172 for the three regions. The project set the level of indirect beneficiaries at one third of this population, or around 600 000. The demographic statistics used during project formulation correspond to the results of the 2014 population and housing census (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). However, the total population of the three regions is growing rapidly and was estimated at 2 377 504 in 2021 by the latest population and housing census (National Institute of Statistics, 2022), an increase of 34.8 percent compared to the figures used to formulate the project. One third of this population would be around 800 000 in updated figures.

Were there any unexpected positive or negative mitigation or adaptation outcomes that were generated by the project?

78. The Evaluation Team has not yet observed any such changes as a result of the project. This subquestion remains in the list of evaluation questions for the final phase and may be explored further by the Evaluation Team at this stage.

3.4 Efficiency

Evaluation question 4.1: Are project management, governance mechanisms, and partnerships strong and functioning effectively?

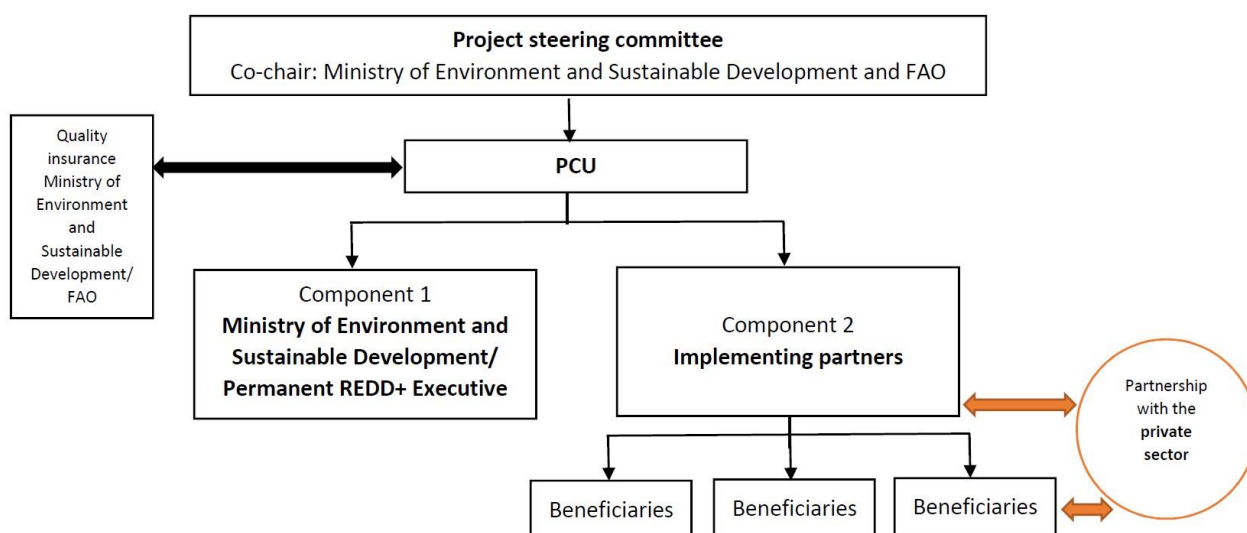
Finding 7. FAO and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development set up a PCU that is responsible for the day-to-day management, coordination and implementation of the project. In addition, the project steering committee has fully assumed its governance function. This is a key element of the country's ownership of the project.

79. FAO is the executing agency. As such, it is responsible for the overall management of the project vis-à-vis the GCF, including: i) all aspects of project evaluation; ii) administrative, financial, and technical supervision and control throughout project implementation; iii) ensuring that funds are managed effectively to achieve results and meet objectives; iv) guaranteeing the quality of project

monitoring, as well as the timeliness and quality of reports to the GCF; and v) project closure and evaluation.⁷ During the project’s six-month launch phase, FAO and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development set up a PCU that is responsible for the day-to-day management, coordination and implementation of the project. In addition, the project is led by a project steering committee that acts as a decision-making body and provides advice. This ensures that appropriate links and coordination are maintained with relevant national programmes and projects and the REDD+ national committee.

80. A government representative chairs the project steering committee, and the FAO Representative holds the role of Vice President. Its composition reflects the inclusive and multistakeholder character sought by the project. Its members, appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development Order No. 00224 of 27 July 2021 include representatives from the ranks of various implementing partners, the GCF focal point, and the involved sectoral ministries, as well as representatives from technical and financial partners, civil society organizations and representatives of the private sector. Figure 5 illustrates the roles of the project steering committee and the PCU in project governance and coordination.

Figure 5. Project governance and coordination



Source: Adapted from GCF. 2020b. *Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d’Ivoire: Approved funding proposal*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production-reducing-emissions-c-te-d-ivoire-promire>

81. The project steering committee meeting has held four meetings since being set up. This generally corresponds to a frequency of at least twice a year. The agenda debated during the meetings focused on strategic subjects relating to guidance, supervision, and advice for effective and efficient project implementation. Therefore, the four meetings covered: i) presenting the project and its main activities to the members; ii) analysing and validating the project’s management and governance tools; iii) presenting and validating the activity programmes and related budgets; and iv) monitoring and supervising the implementation of the project’s activities. All meetings are subject to the terms of reference that are distributed to the members beforehand. The reports

⁷ Detailed descriptions of the roles of the executing agency, the PCU, other coordination bodies and the project steering committee appear in the Project Implementation Manual.

and recommendations are recorded in the meeting minutes. The project steering committee follows up on the implementation of due diligence at subsequent meetings.

82. It can be said that the project steering committee fully assumed its project governance role. However, meeting attendance lists should distinguish between project steering committee members and implementation staff. This would make it easier to calculate the attendance rates of the project steering committee members.

Evaluation question 4.2: Are results achieved and activities implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner?

Finding 8. In November 2023, the project spent 2 539 075 of the 10 million grants. This represents an achievement rate of slightly more than 25 percent. In particular, the project experienced a low level of activity during the first year of implementation in 2021. It devoted the first six months to setting up project bodies and preparatory administrative activities. In 2022, the pace of activity execution was higher and allowed progress to be made in the operationalization of the project. In contrast, expenses linked to co-financing have evolved more quickly. The government has already provided more than 36 percent of the expected co-financing.

83. We tried to analyse and understand the factors behind the relatively slow project start in order to draw lessons for future projects. It appears that the establishment of project bodies and the administrative and awareness-raising activities, prior to the effective start of the activities planned by the project, required nearly six months. By way of illustration, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, FAO, and the PCU carried out the following activities during this period.
- i. The project came into force on 19 February 2021. The first release of funds to FAO was made on 19 March 2021. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development appointed the project coordinator and the project steering committee members on 27 July 2021 (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, 2021), that is, more than five months after the project's activation date. FAO Côte d'Ivoire recruited the PCU team during the first and second half of 2021. This involved the technical advisor, the operations manager, the M&E officer, the gender officer, the administrative assistant and three regional experts (GCF, 2021a).
 - ii. Subsequently, the first PCU activities mainly concerned missions to make contact, identify potential project partners and prepare management documents.
 - At the local level, the PCU carried out a mission to the three project regions (from 16 November to 3 December 2021). It informed regional and local stakeholders of the project objectives, the main expected results and the activities to be carried out. It aimed to identify similar initiatives in progress and potential stakeholders for implementing the project. These included the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, ANADER, SODEFOR, wood manufacturers, agro-industrialists, local NGOs, local associations and local community members. It gave information to members about the prefectural body and regional councils regarding the establishment of REDD+ regional committees (GCF, 2021a).
 - At the national level, the PCU has raised awareness among umbrella organizations in the private sector. These include the WCF, the Union of Industrial Wood Producers and the Professional Association of Decentralized Financial Systems of Côte d'Ivoire. It also worked on the preparation of the main project management and operationalization documents, such as the Project Implementation Manual, the sustainability contract and the joint action plan with PAMOFOR (GCF, 2021a).

- iii. The first version of the Project Implementation Manual was prepared and submitted to the project steering committee in July 2021. The final version was approved by the project steering committee in December 2021. During the same period, the PCU worked on the preparation of the sustainability contract and the joint action plan with PAMOFOR. These were conditionality documents required by the GCF (GCF, 2021a).
 - iv. The PCU also prepared and launched calls for tenders. It worked on recruiting service NGOs, an operator to carry out the agrarian analysis and negotiations for finalizing the letter of agreement (LOA) with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire (GCF, 2021a).
84. The PCU estimates that the project's preparatory phase lasted until the end of August 2021 (GCF, 2021a). It can therefore be said that, beyond operational difficulties, the administrative activities necessary for the start and implementation of the project takes at least six months. This phase should be better considered in planning future project activities.
85. The project's planned co-financing, as agreed upon between FAO, the GCF and the Ivorian Government, is as follows. Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire within the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development: USD 1 200 000 in the form of an in-kind contribution. FAO: USD 554 000 in the form of a grant. The evaluation mission was able to note the effectiveness of two payments made by the Ivorian Government (notifications of credits authorized for the benefit of the project) in the order of: i) XOF 139 500 000 for 2022; and ii) XOF 130 000 000 for 2023, or approximately USD 435 000 in total (at the United States dollar exchange rate on 31 October 2023). Thus, the government has already provided more than 36 percent of the total expected co-financing. This figure is higher than the project's disbursement rate.

Evaluation question 5: Was the M&E system functional and sufficient for learning and results-based management?

Finding 9. The project has an appropriate and results-based M&E framework. Monitoring was regular, but it did not consider all of the established indicators. In fact, several lacked a baseline, including those in the gender plan. In general, the system is functional but needs to be strengthened. In particular, it requires measures to inform the indicators of results related to the adoption of good agricultural practices. It also requires measures to mitigate the lack of baselines for several indicators. In addition, it would be necessary to integrate data collection and analysis into an overall system that can show the links and influences between activities and the achievement of results. Finally, it will be important to make systematic use of the monitoring tools that have been developed to measure gender indicators. This would make it possible to understand the results of the project in terms of gender equality.

86. M&E design: an M&E framework for the project was developed in accordance with the GCF guidelines (GCF, 2014; 2015; 2021b) and the procedures established by the FAO Project Cycle Manual. This framework is included in the Project Implementation Manual (FAO, 2021b). It presents the indicators to be reported, their links with activities, available baselines, targets and verification sources. It also includes a plan indicating the methods, frequency, roles and responsibilities for data collection and analysis.⁸
87. The evaluation noted that the results architecture contained in the logical framework, on which the M&E system is based, promotes appropriate M&E. It includes efficiency indicators, which

⁸ The existence of an M&E manual, covering all of these elements for the attention of staff responsible for data collection and analysis, was not noted. This, however, was mentioned in the plan itself.

make it possible to measure progress in terms of activities and outputs produced. It also includes effectiveness indicators, making it possible to detect the changes triggered by the project. This architecture was further consolidated during the project's launch phase. In particular, two indicators to provide information on the impact of the project in terms of climate change adaptation were included. These were the numbers of direct and indirect beneficiaries, broken down by gender,⁹ which were not in the original logical framework. These modifications show a good degree of flexibility in the system.

88. In contrast, certain weaknesses were noted in the design. In particular, several indicators lack a baseline.¹⁰ This makes it impossible to measure the project's progress in certain areas compared to the initial situation. Notably, this is the case with regard to the adoption of good agricultural practices and the degree of knowledge acquired. This also hinges on producers' perceptions. In the original intentions, this baseline should have emerged from an agrarian analysis planned during the first year of the project. In 2021, a call for tenders was issued for the recruitment of a provider, but the negotiations did not result in the award of a contract. Therefore, this activity was postponed and finally entrusted to ANADER through an LOA signed in May 2023. Additional delays were recorded and, at the time of the mid-term phase of the evaluation, the expected data from this analysis were not yet available.¹¹ Another weakness concerns the lack of a plan to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the training delivered by the project. Although several capacity-building activities were carried out, no internal assessment was done with regard to improving agricultural knowledge and practices adopted by the beneficiaries. In the absence of an ex-ante and an ex-post evaluation, it is difficult to understand objectively the contribution of the project. Beneficiaries' perceptions are the only reliance. As suggested in Appendix 3, acquired knowledge outcomes and skills could be better understood through surveys on knowledge, attitudes and practices, as well as technical questionnaires that are administered at the start and at some point after the end of the training.
89. The M&E framework is accompanied by a parallel system for monitoring gender-related activities and outcomes. It includes both efficiency indicators at the level of activities and outputs and socioeconomic outcome indicators to assess the project's impact on women's empowerment. Despite its potential, all the indicators lacked reference values. This severely limits the possibility of measuring achievements in terms of gender equality.
90. The M&E implementation benefited from specific provisions, including budgetary ones, such as the provision of human resources for this task. It also benefitted from functions assigned to the

⁹ Although the project is not classified as an adaptation project, the M&E plan recognized that it contributes through planned activities. Therefore, the indicators that are normally included in adaptation projects were retained and even considered easy to document (GCF, 2021a). Another indicator on the level of tree density in agroforestry and forest restoration activities was included under Output 3 on the adoption by farmers of zero-deforestation practices and models. This was done in the development phase of the M&E system.

¹⁰ The M&E system indicators that lack a baseline are under Output 3 on farmer adoption of zero-deforestation practices and models. This includes the following: percentage of farmers trained by the project who apply zero-deforestation agricultural practices on their plots; level of tree density as part of agroforestry and forest restoration activities; and changing knowledge, awareness and perception of farmers regarding best practices and benefits of forestry and agroforestry activities for future scale up. In a few cases, the baselines were integrated during the inception phase. For instance, the August 2021 project inception report cites a baseline for the following indicator from Output 1 to Output 3.1: percentage of farmers trained by the project who apply zero-deforestation agriculture practices on their plots (baseline: 0).

¹¹ The lack of baseline data was partially mitigated by the inclusion of smaller-scale diagnostics at the level of plots intended for agroforestry. These diagnostics were included in the framework of the first LOA arrangements signed with ANADER and the Marie Esther Foundation. Also, the number of plants already present on the beneficiaries' plots was calculated.

three agronomists based in the project regions. This formed the basis of data collection. Also beneficial was the use of specific collection tools, particularly with regard to hectares of land devoted to agroforestry, hectares put into operation by agrosystems and reforested hectares.¹² In addition, the M&E manager is expected to work in collaboration with three experts from the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire.¹³ However, the evaluation was unable to establish the level of interaction between these human resources. In addition, we noted that the M&E manager also fulfils other functions (see Subsection 3.6), which could limit the regularity of monitoring. Regarding the participatory monitoring activity that involves the communities, as required by the GCF (GCF, 2015), this has just started within the framework of the LOA signed with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in July 2023. The aim will be to involve local communities in forest monitoring.

91. Monitoring was implemented systematically based on the information collected. The reporting focused on progress made in relation to the logical framework, including information on the progress of the gender plan.¹⁴ However, it should be noted that monitoring focused mainly on the implementation of the workplan and budget, and on the indicators established for outputs and activities. Furthermore, the Evaluation Team was unable to collect and analyse data relating to the results and effects triggered in terms of improved agricultural production, increased knowledge and skills, changes in perceptions and increased income, even though these types of indicators are found either in the M&E framework or the gender plan. For example, indicators include the rate of adoption of good agricultural practices, changes in farmers' attitudes, an increase in women's income (in the gender plan) and a strengthening of cooperatives' financial independence. However, the use of specific tools for the collection of this type of information (knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys, analyses of beneficiaries' income, financial analyses of cooperatives) has not been observed.
92. Regarding the gender plan, specific monitoring tools have been developed by the UN-REDD Programme's gender team.¹⁵ These instruments are for reporting the actual degree of women's participation – not just their presence.¹⁶ However, the evaluation did not find that the project team uses them regularly. In addition, no mechanism was used to assess satisfaction levels among women and men with regard to project activities and training.
93. Other areas for improvement include the development of a comprehensive data collection framework and data digitalization. Currently, data are collected through different files that do not provide an overall view. For example, beneficiary data relating to hectares planted with agroforestry and data relating to participation in training courses are stored in different files. This makes it impossible to cross-reference them in order to identify trends and correlations between the different elements. For example, is there a relationship between the survival rate of fruit species planted and the rate of participation in training courses? Is there a link between the holding of land property rights by beneficiaries and the willingness to allocate plots to agroforestry? Additionally, as the project progresses, the M&E manager will receive large amounts

¹² For example, the evaluators noted the existence of data on the beneficiaries, including their contacts, cultivated area, georeferenced coordinates and species provided by the project.

¹³ These include the M&E specialist, the environmental and social safeguards specialist, and the measuring, reporting and verification specialist.

¹⁴ The annual performance report includes a section on progress against specific gender objectives.

¹⁵ This concerns, in particular, the monitoring sheet, Beyond the headcount: a tool for monitoring the effective participation of women and men in meetings and workshops (UN-REDD Programme, 2022a), and the Checklist for gender-sensitive workshops (UN-REDD Programme, 2022b).

¹⁶ For example, this involves the number of women expressing their opinion during meetings or the number of women proposing something like an activity or initiative during trainings and meetings.

of information from the field. It is therefore important to adopt automated tools in order to manage data efficiently.

94. The evaluation's interviews confirm that the monitoring activity sufficiently informs the project's strategic planning. For example, the annual workplan is developed based on monitoring data presented during the project steering committee meetings.¹⁷ On monitoring of the gender plan, this allowed staff to become aware of the low participation of women in agroforestry and reforestation activities. This has led to the planning of activities aimed at diversifying women's income in priority subsectors, such as agrosystems.
95. However, the fact that there is not yet a strong focus on measuring certain results limits the usefulness of the M&E system as a strategic guidance tool.

3.5 Sustainability

Evaluation question 6: To what extent do the project results have the potential for sustainability?

Finding 10. Several factors support the potential for sustainability. These include: the commitment of the Ivorian State and the private sector to promote sustainable and traceable cocoa production on a large scale; the existence at the regional level of national structures that have reinforced their experience in forestry and agroforestry due to the project; and the growing interest of producers in agroforestry. However, converting cocoa orchards into agroforestry systems will require a financial investment that producers will not be able to make on their own. To increase the likelihood of sustainability, the project must demonstrate the technical feasibility of the technology used and assess the necessary level of investment, as well as its economic profitability.

96. The project focuses on a theme (sustainable cocoa production through zero-deforestation) and a methodological approach (the territorialization of development), which correspond to the national and sectoral development options adopted by the government. There is a real mobilization of stakeholders nationally due to the project's high level of relevance. This is reflected, for example, by the project steering committee through a real desire for ownership and project completion (see Subsection 3.7). The involvement of the ministry that is in charge of the environment in project management, and the involvement of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in the realization of the local development plans, are factors that are conducive to the acceptance and sustainability of the project's achievements. In fact, the general councils consider the local development plans when they develop their own strategic plans.
97. The Ivorian State has made medium- and long-term commitments. These move in the direction of an environmental transition in cocoa production systems through the adoption of the African Standard for Sustainable Cocoa ARS 1000 on sustainable and traceable cocoa, and the establishment of a national sustainable cocoa strategy to achieve this. The project's achievements on the conversion of old cocoa orchards and forest restoration can be used in the implementation of this strategy. The coming into force of the new forestry code and the government's desire to accelerate the procedure for granting land ownership certificates to rightful claimants are other signals in this direction.
98. As for the private sector, some players are already carrying out similar zero-deforestation cocoa initiatives on the ground. Its partnership commitments are part of the sustainability plan that were

¹⁷ For example, when data showed that, in 2022, Component 1 had made little progress, it was decided to anticipate several activities of Component 2 compared to the initially planned schedule.

signed with the project. If they materialize, this will be an additional step in the sustainability of the project's achievements. On the one hand, the sustainability plan aims to encourage the signing of partnership agreements and purchasing contracts between the cooperatives. The project and private companies engaged in the cocoa-growing sector support this. On the other hand, it tends to bring together cooperatives and small producers with microfinance institutions, and to involve private companies in the forestry sector. At the time of the evaluation, the planned measures had not yet materialized. During the second phase of the project, concrete proposals for collaboration between cooperatives and the private sector will have to be developed. Similarly, the commercial aspect must be strengthened, considering the needs and opportunities for small producers.

99. Furthermore, at the local level, the project's operationalization is based on the development of the expertise present in the regions (NGOs and ANADER for reforestation and agroforestry regeneration). This corresponds to an appreciation and a strengthening of their capacities, which will be available for other operations – even after the end of the project.
100. The development of the local development plans, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, is one of the initiatives put forward by the project – the results of which could be replicated on a national scale. Indeed, the Ivorian State intends to provide each village in the country with a local development plan. The experience acquired in this exercise, covering the 30 project villages, will be capitalized by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and used in the exercise to extend the local planning programme. Taking local development plans into account in the development strategies realized by the regional councils, as well as the establishment and operation of REDD+ regional committees, will constitute new development dynamics at the local level.¹⁸
101. Through the example of the local development plan in the village of Ebikro-N'Dakro, it is interesting to note the communities' awareness of climate change risks. In particular, this involves their aspirations for more resilient modes of production based on the sustainable management and sustainable use of their natural resources (FAO, 2022c). A model contract between the state (through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development) and the project's beneficiaries have been developed to ensure the sustainability of the benefits derived from the agricultural and forestry activities carried out in the field. This contract formalizes the free engagement of the beneficiary producers for the maintenance of the forestry and agroforestry systems set up as part of the project (GCF, 2022).
102. Overall, these various elements work in favour of the sustainability of the project's achievements. This is why the project would benefit from a solid system to manage acquired knowledge. The project could then capitalize on it and make it available to current and future stakeholders.
103. One of the foreseeable constraints, which risks slowing down the conversion of old cocoa plantations into agroforestry systems, is the investment necessary to achieve this. The purchase of tree seedlings, the costs of their installation and their maintenance constitute additional costs for the producer. In pilot schemes such as development projects that promote agroforestry, the costs relating to the integration of trees in cocoa orchards are generally considered partially or totally by the project or private companies. However, making the concept of zero-deforestation cocoa a reality, in an agricultural landscape dominated by small-scale producers, will raise

¹⁸ These committees are composed of prefects, the president of the regional councils, regional directors from various ministries, representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, ANADER, SODEFOR and traditional authorities.

significant challenges. Implementing a zero-deforestation agricultural policy will certainly require technical and financial support for these small-scale producers. They often lack the means to bear the significant costs – especially those tied to land security, the production or purchase of plant material, quality fertilizers and enhanced technical supervision (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Water and Forests, 2018).

104. To a lesser extent, the lack of coordination between the various initiatives could also be cited as a risk that could affect both the efficiency and the sustainability of zero-deforestation initiatives. While the application of a common technical standard, the African Standard for Sustainable Cocoa ARS 1000, appears to be a solution for adopting a coherent technical approach, the lack of coordination between the different initiatives operating on the same theme can have negative effects. In some cases, we noted the presence of several projects of this type in the same village. Apart from the fact that this reduces the efficiency of producers' monitoring, there is the risk that the same producer receives seedlings from several organizations. This is why it is important to encourage exchange platforms at the local level and to create a space at the national level for the exchange of information and experiences in order to create synergies between stakeholders.

3.6 Gender and social inclusion

Evaluation question 8: Does the project satisfactorily implement actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion?

Finding 11. Overall, gender was well integrated into the project design. The approach responds appropriately to gender issues by proposing proactive initiatives to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. However, in terms of implementation, the presence of women in agroforestry and reforestation activities was lower than expected (14.4 percent). Several factors, external and internal to the project, limited the scope of the results achieved in gender matters. Notably, this involves: the issue of women's land ownership in the context of intervention; the absence of a full-time gender expert; limited gender training for project staff and partners; the lack of gender-based financial planning; and the absence of concrete measures to foster female presence in project activities.

Evaluation question 8.1: To what extent were gender issues considered in the design and implementation of the project?

105. Project design: the project is classified by FAO as Level 1 according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee gender equality policy marker. This means that gender equality is an important objective (OECD, 2024). Indeed, the project document recognizes the role of gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. Gender issues were duly considered during conceptualization through a specific analysis and a field mission, which made it possible to consult stakeholders of both sexes.¹⁹ The analysis highlights the role of women in agriculture, especially in the cocoa-growing subsector. Particular emphasis is placed on the question of land ownership, which, based mainly on traditional rules, severely limits women's access to land and increases their vulnerability. In fact, from a formal point of view, Côte d'Ivoire puts no legal restrictions or limits on the possibility of women owning land (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, 2004). Similarly, male and female heirs have the same rights to inheritance (Republic of

¹⁹ During the field mission, 272 people (137 women and 135 men) were met in the three project regions. Stakeholders included: technical agencies (ANADER); traditional authorities at the village level; decentralized administrative authorities; territorial authorities; women's NGOs; women's cooperatives; cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) producers; cocoa cooperatives; and heads of households (GCF, 2020a, footnote No. 1).

Côte d'Ivoire, 1964, Article 22). However, in the majority of cases, conservative traditional norms prevent women from having land independently of their male relatives. For example, of the 7 523 land certificates issued by AFOR at the national level, until June 2021, only 11 percent of beneficiaries had been women (Abidjan.net, 2021). This is because land ownership certificates are based on the recognition of traditional or customary-acquired rights. In 1998, the government promulgated Law No. 98-750, which provides for the regularization of traditional land rights and the registration of rural property rights (Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, 2004). The law aims to transform traditional land rights into officially recognized property rights (World Bank, 2018).

106. The gender analysis led to a specific action plan that is consistent with the REDD+ gender approach (UN-REDD Programme, 2016; 2017; 2021). Indeed, it proposes a strategy that is not limited to adopting a gender-sensitive approach.²⁰ It responds in a relevant manner to the gender issue by proposing proactive initiatives that aim to reduce inequalities between the sexes.²¹ For example, it sets objectives in terms of female presence²² and proposes activities that promote women's empowerment. This is the case for: skills development and income diversification; access to credit and the market; the strengthening of a women's cooperative; and raising awareness on women's access to land and gender-based violence.
107. Although the REDD+ gender documents are not referenced, the action plan also includes the majority of work areas proposed by the UN-REDD Programme (UN-REDD Programme, 2017; 2021).²³
108. The action plan also identified gender indicators. However, the project's logical framework does not explicitly mention women in its objectives, outputs and indicators, as recommended internationally (FAO, 2017). This limits the scope and shared perception, among staff and partners, of the gender impact expected from the project.²⁴ Only at a later stage did the project's M&E plan include a single gender-disaggregated indicator.²⁵
109. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the evaluation did not find any specific measures designed to achieve the set targets. Although activities aimed at women have been designed, it is not clear what instruments have been adopted to encourage their presence – especially in responding to obstacles that limit their participation. This can be, for example, poverty, which

²⁰ According to the REDD+ definition proposed in the methodological note of the UN-REDD Programme on gender, which adapted the definition from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, adopting a gender-sensitive approach "ensures that the views and ideas of both women and men are taken seriously; considers the implications of decisions on the situation of women relative to men; and takes actions to address inequalities or imbalance between women and men. In application, gender sensitive has come to mean 'do no harm'" (UN-REDD Programme, 2017, p. 6).

²¹ According to the REDD+ definition, which adapted the definition from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, an approach that responds to the gender issue involves "attempting to redefine women's and men's gender roles and relations and proactively and intentionally contributing to the advancement of gender equality" (UN-REDD Programme, 2021). More than do no harm, a policy, programme, plan or project that addresses gender issues aims to do better.

²² The target established in this regard in the project's M&E framework is 30 percent of female participants in trainings.

²³ The project effectively carried out gender-based analyses and evaluations (Axis 1 REDD+: evaluations based on a gender approach and gender-specific analyses) (UN-REDD Programme, 2017).

²⁴ The impact, results and expected products mentioned in the project's logical framework do not clearly refer to men and women. Gender is only mentioned in passing in a footnote and in a reference related to activities in Output 2.3, namely "all activities detailed previously will need to be monitored to ensure consistency with the rules. These are objectives targeted by the project and gender aspects" (PROMIRE project, Annex 2.a, logical framework).

²⁵ This is the indicator: number of direct and indirect beneficiaries by sex.

restricts women's involvement in initiatives that are seen to be effective in the medium and long term, or the lack of time available for training due to family workload. In addition, the action plan sets out to encourage women to apply for land certificates through a joint action plan with PAMAFOR. However, the concrete measures that will be taken to encourage this process in a context of inequality are not entirely clear. Although awareness-raising activities that target men and women are proposed at the community level,²⁶ the absence of prior identification of other measures, including budgetary issues, could hinder the achievement of the planned target (30 percent of requests from women for land certificates).

110. Here, it should be emphasized that, according to official estimates (Ministry of Women, Families and Children, 2022) and as confirmed by the various stakeholders interviewed, in the cocoa-growing sector, the national average of female farm managers is only 10 percent. This makes it objectively difficult to achieve the project's target, which does not appear to be supported by national statistics. There is neither a clear strategy for targeting women nor a strategy to address the main challenges that limit women's access to land.²⁷
111. Finally, another area for improvement in the plan concerns the development of a system for capitalizing on lessons learned and good practices in terms of gender in the field of cocoa cultivation, agroforestry, reforestation, and combating and adapting to climate change. This would be in line with Axis 5 of the UN-REDD Programme's gender strategy.²⁸
112. Project implementation: for project staff, women occupy six out of 14 current positions.²⁹ This leads to an adequate female presence (42.8 percent) (UN, 1995). Regarding the project steering committee, four out of the 22 designated members are women, so a ratio of 18.2 percent. The project's action plan provided for the recruitment of a full-time gender expert as an additional measure to strengthen the gender approach. However, to date, the human resources have occupied several functions: gender; safeguarding; and M&E. As a mitigating measure, it should be noted that an expert from FAO headquarters, who is also a gender focal point for the UN-REDD Programme, regularly assisted the gender expert. The former brings relevant skills and added value. Despite this support, and given the ambitious action plan and numerous obstacles in the context of intervention, a full-time expert could facilitate a more focused implementation of the plan. This is a development that project staff are already considering. Indeed, according to the information collected, a call for tenders for the recruitment of specific expertise is currently being prepared.
113. In terms of stakeholders, two relevant women's organization were involved: the Marie Esther Foundation; and the Simplified Cooperative Society of Women Producers of Biasso, a cooperative of women cocoa producers. However, with regard to the contribution of stakeholders to gender objectives, a review of the LOA arrangements shows that these aspects are poorly integrated. In general, some LOA arrangements mention aspects relating to women's participation and gender

²⁶ In the joint action plan between PROMIRE and PAMAFOR, it is mentioned that: i) PROMIRE will facilitate women's access to land certificates through the organization of awareness sessions on gender; and ii) PAMAFOR will alert village authorities and traditional leaders to examine the content of traditional laws that limit women's access to land.

²⁷ For example, and as the World Bank pointed out, in 2014, nearly 40 percent of village land management committees responsible for identifying land rights did not include a single woman, and only 55 percent of them included one or two women out of an average of 13 members. In this context, the certification process can be largely affected by the low female representation on committees, as well as the subjective interpretation of existing laws (World Bank, 2018).

²⁸ Specifically, this concerns Axis 5 on gender knowledge management (UN-REDD Programme, 2017; 2021).

²⁹ As of October 2023, the M&E expert position is vacant.

training but do not go into detail or include specific results or indicators.³⁰ The absence of this consideration in the LOA with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, for example, severely limits the gender approach within the framework of Component 1 of the project.³¹ The fact that gender outcomes and achievements are not fully clarified in the agreements has an impact on the extent to which partners commit to gender issues in the project, even when they are organizations specifically committed to gender equality.³² Instead, proactive measures have been taken with regard to the composition of the committees for drawing up the local development plans, where women's associations play an active part.³³

114. There have been several discussions between stakeholders and FAO on issues related to the presence of women in project activities. On this subject, some partners demonstrated better knowledge of the gender plan than others, even though the plan was officially presented during the project's launch event.³⁴ In several cases, little awareness of its progress was observed.
115. With regard to the development of gender awareness of project staff and partners, only one specific training had been conducted at the time of the evaluation.³⁵ Based on the information collected, additional training is planned, particularly on land issues and gender-based violence.
116. The presence of women in agroforestry and reforestation activities has been generally low until now (15 percent in agroforestry activities³⁶ and 13.8 percent in reforestation activities).³⁷ The percentage is higher for beneficiaries of agrosystems that set up food crop production, where women represent 25 percent of beneficiaries³⁸ (PROMIRE project database, accessed 24 October 2023). As part of cooperative strengthening, one of those involved, namely the Simplified Cooperative Society of Women Producers of Biasso, is made up of 97 percent women. The other cooperatives have 12 percent of women: the Cooperative Society of Coffee-Cocoa Producers of the Agnéby Programme with the Board of Directors; and the Aniaman Agricultural Cooperative Society of Ketesso with the Board of Directors. The Simplified Cooperative Society of Organic Cocoa Producers of La Mé accounts for 24 percent of women. In fact, women played a significant

³⁰ For example, the first LOA signed with ANADER for the period from July to December 2022 cites different activities: raising awareness and strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries on good agricultural practices, organic and fair trade cocoa production, gender, environmental and social standards, and child labour. As part of the second LOA for the period from May to September 2023, the LOA cites the collection of data on gender and child labour in the localities of intervention and as part of the agrarian analysis to be carried out. Likewise, the LOA with the Marie Esther Foundation (for the periods from July to December 2022 and from August to December 2023) cites gender among the training themes for beneficiaries, but they do not identify specific results or activities in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality.

³¹ Although the analysis of certain products such as the REDD+ communications plan in Côte d'Ivoire highlights the consideration of gender, no other significant element in this area was noted within the framework of the Component 1 products.

³² As part of the first LOA with the Marie Esther Foundation, for example, only four women out of a total of 67 planters (around 5 percent) were identified, despite being a women's organization.

³³ The local development plans' development committees have a representative from each stakeholder (village chieftaincy, community development mutual fund, natives and non-natives, young people and women).

³⁴ The project's launch workshop took place in Abidjan on 21 July 2021. Around 100 people attended from the ministries, the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire, the project steering committee, local elected officials, national partners, technical and financial partners, and the media.

³⁵ This training involved project staff, the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and AFOR, according to the attendance list of the technical and strategic retreat of the PROMIRE team held in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, on 16 and 17 March 2023.

³⁶ Out of 441 beneficiaries of agroforestry activities, 68 are women.

³⁷ Out of 94 participants in reforestation activities, 13 are women.

³⁸ There are 31 women out of 124 beneficiaries of agrosystems.

role in the development of 15 local development plans, which recorded a participation of 33 percent of women within the drafting committees. In general, the training courses carried out by the project also recorded a good percentage of female participation (see Table 7). However, data in Table 7 do not consider training on agroforestry and reforestation, which recorded the previously cited low percentages.

Table 7. Training set up by the project

Project training	Men	Women	Total	% women
Activity 1.2.1 Develop the standard profit-sharing plan	104	46	150	30.7%
Activity 2.1.1 Develop local development plans	560	365	925	39.5%
Activity 2.2.1 Establish 3 REDD+ regional committees	67	18	85	21.2%
Activity 2.4.1 Create, strengthen and develop the capacities of cocoa cooperatives	36	11	47	23.4%

Source:

Data collected and made available by the PROMIRE team.

117. The conducted interviews made it possible to identify some of the obstacles to greater female participation in project activities and to formulate suggestions. Regarding the implementation of activities aimed at women's empowerment, the development of the 15 local development plans and the strengthening of the women's cooperative in Biasso (called FEBROPIA) are the most notable to date. The evolution of the local development plan was based on a needs analysis, which was carried out through focus group discussions differentiated by gender and age. The developed documents consider specific courses of action to promote female empowerment, such as literacy and training, strengthening cooperatives, and promoting income generation activities. However, currently, no component of the various local development plans appears to have been launched. At the same time, the committees are in the process of identifying the resources to be mobilized for implementation.
118. The women's cocoa production cooperative has been supported in its formalization process, moving from an informal group to a simplified cooperative. The women met during the evaluation mission were satisfied since informality had excluded them from credit mechanisms, access to public aid and training opportunities. However, the cooperative needs additional support, notably for the development of a business plan, access to credit and improving technical and marketing capacities.
119. Other activities supporting women's empowerment, such as income generation activities, had not yet started at the time of the evaluation mission – except for a small number of women involved in the project's agrosystems.³⁹ Similarly, awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence (husband schools) had not yet been launched.
120. Regarding the gender-responsive budget, the action plan makes some specific provisions such as full-time human resources for this task, and gender capacity building activities for staff and national stakeholders. In addition, gender budget estimates were made in the same plan. However, these were not used for planning and, according to the opinions gathered during the interviews, they are in any case insufficient for the intended purposes. Overall, the use of a gender-specific financial planning and reporting system was not observed. Rather than allocate a specific budget, the strategy adopted when the project had been implemented involved planning for a female presence in each activity. However, planning a specific budget could make it easier to

³⁹ Thirty-one women were involved in the agrosystems launched by PROMIRE. Agrosystems (rubber, banana [*Musa sapientum*], peanut [*Arachis hypogaea*]) involving women were found in the regions of La Mé and Agnèby-Tiassa, while in the region of Sud Comoé, there was only one female beneficiary.

monitor the delivery of funds for women and men separately and to promote greater transparency in relation to the gender impact of the project.

Evaluation question 8.2: Have minority issues been considered, and what safeguarding measures have been taken?

Evaluation question 8.3: To what extent did the project focus on the inclusion of young people?

Finding 12. Beyond the intentions declared in the project documents, and with the exception of the local development plan process, the project did not explicitly integrate issues related to minorities and the inclusion of young people. Although their participation is encouraged, no specific guidance or structured strategy has been developed. The project has a complaints management mechanism in which the themes of child labour and gender-based violence are considered. This mechanism is currently being implemented.

121. Currently, migrants in the project regions mainly come from Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali. A large number of them work in the maintenance of cocoa, palm oil and rubber plantations (see Subsection 3.6). The project's gender plan mentions that the dynamics between Ivorians and foreigners in the intervention areas will be considered in order to promote their social cohesion. At present, a structured strategy does not appear to demonstrate these intentions. For example, the project did not set quotas for migrant participation in activities, nor did it collect disaggregated data based on the differentiation between Indigenous Peoples or natives and non-native people. Some proactive measures were nevertheless taken. The participation of natives and non-natives is always encouraged by project staff. However, the existence of specific guidelines in this regard was not noted. In addition, migrant communities participate in local development plan committees and in the realization of community development plans. Finally, project staff use a beneficiary identification form to determine their level of vulnerability and their nationality. However, to date, this is not structured to collect other information that is useful in contextualizing the situation of migrants. The project will have to improve the structure of the strategy for action in this regard given the key role played by migrants in the intervention areas in the cocoa-growing sector and the objective of promoting social cohesion.
122. Although the project document addresses the involvement of young people, the project is rather evasive when it comes to analysing their situation in agriculture, their targeting and their inclusion in the logical framework. So far, based on the desk review, it does not appear that the project has collected age-disaggregated data. This makes it difficult to estimate the extent of their participation in the project. The only activity that provided a specific approach to young people concerns the evolution of local development plans. The village associations that represent them were included them in this process. All partners have shown interest in involving young people in activities, but no vision has been found on this subject – nor a clear strategy regarding their role, contribution and the benefits that they can derive from the project.
123. The establishment of a safeguard system to avoid negative environmental and social impacts is planned as part of the project. The complaints management mechanism represents part of this system. It explains the process to be undertaken if a complaint needs to be reported and contributes to good project governance. The system relies on REDD+ safeguard mechanisms, FAO's internal complaint management mechanisms and the GCF's independent appeal mechanisms. A complaints management register and information brochures accompany this mechanism. Currently, the three regional committees set up by the project manage complaints at the regional level. At the subprefecture and village levels, the installation of committees were planned for 2023. At the community level, the project will be associated with the complaints management process of the land system. Awareness sessions about child labour and gender-based violence are also planned as part of the safeguarding system. Based on the information

collected, it is not yet clear how this system interacts and integrates with the national REDD+ safeguard system.

3.7 Country ownership

Evaluation question 9: To what extent has the country taken ownership of the project, and how is this reflected in the project's governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms?

Finding 13. The country joined the REDD+ mechanism in 2011, and the national party adequately owns the project. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development implements several activities in Component 1 and one activity in Component 2 through a LOA signed with the project. The project steering committee appropriately took on the governance of the project, and the government ensures the effectiveness of the financial commitments made as part of the co-financing of the project. Through the evolution of the local development plans, the target communities expressed their desires for modes of production and living that are resilient to climate change.

124. The country's ownership of the project was analysed through the effective commitment of the Ivorian State, institutional actors and the private sector. The participation of target communities and other stakeholders in carrying out activities, with a view to achieving project results, was also considered.⁴⁰
125. Regarding the commitment of stakeholders at the national level, it was shown that the project steering committee that had been set up by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development included the project's main stakeholders (see Subsection 3.4). The project steering committee operated regularly and in accordance with its remit. This contributed positively to the implementation and progress of the project. Given the very important role that the project steering committee plays in the successful delivery of the project, supportive actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of its members, in terms of project governance, would constitute an additional element to strengthen project ownership. This would contribute to the sustainability of its achievements. Furthermore, to increase its impact on the quality of project delivery, the project steering committee members should be able to carry out field missions in order to learn about the project's achievements and any obstacles that need to be removed.
126. Financially, the Government OF Côte d'Ivoire has made a commitment to co-finance the project for USD 1 200 000. This funding is earmarked for the implementation of Activity 1.2.3, Activity 1.2.5 and Activity 1.2.6 of Component 1. It is also a contribution to the implementation of Activity 2.3.4 of Component 2 and the general running costs of the activities planned on behalf of the government (fuel, maintenance). The evaluation mission was able to note the effectiveness of two payments made to the project by the Ivorian State (notifications of authorized credits to the project) in the order of: i) XOF 139 500 000 in 2022; and ii) XOF 130 000 000 for 2023, or approximately USD 43 000 in total (as per the United States dollar exchange rate on 31 October 2023), corresponding to 36.25 percent of the co-financing expected from Côte d'Ivoire.
127. Regarding the project's target communities, it is notable that certain activities, such as the preparation of local development plans, have already generated real enthusiasm among the communities through their effective participation in collective planning sessions. In most cases, these sessions lasted more than six months. Content analysis of the local development plans also shows that the project gave people not only a framework for analysing climate change, which has

⁴⁰ According to the GCF Board Decision 14.08 (GCF, 2016), country ownership goes beyond the national government and includes ownership by local communities, civil societies and local governments.

a constant effect on their lives, but also provided a channel of communication for expressing their need for more resilient production and living. This message seems equally well understood by local governance bodies. Indeed, the interviews that the mission had with members of the regional councils of Sud-Comoé and Agnéby-Tiassa highlighted their desire to consider the results of the local development plans in regional planning.

128. Finally, it is important to note that producers sign REDD+ payment contracts directly with the government on the agroforestry and forestry plots set up as part of the project.
129. In view of these achievements and the evolution of the project, we can estimate that most of the national stakeholders adequately adopted the project.

3.8 Replication and scalability

Evaluation question 10: To what extent can the project activities be replicated in other countries or other locations within the country?

Evaluation question 11: Does the project have the potential to extend its scale and impact?

Finding 14. The project ensures capacity building for beneficiaries of reforestation and agroforestry activities, other small producers, and members of four cooperatives and three REDD+ regional committees. The participatory and inclusive way in which it is implemented, combined with the government's desire to promote zero-deforestation cocoa, are factors that could encourage replication and extension of its model. The project should take greater account of the capitalization of knowledge and experience acquired, which are essential factors for the reproducibility and scalability of the project.

130. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, through its commitment to applying the African Standard for Sustainable Cocoa ARS 1000, demonstrates its desire to extend the application of zero-deforestation cocoa production methods to the entire national cocoa orchard. This offers the project prospects for replication and extension at a national level. Replicability in general relies, above all, on the capitalization of data and other information from the project concerning the methodological approaches used and the results acquired within the framework of the project (Lakens, 2014; Nosek *et al.*, 2022). These data must be processed, stored and made available to users in an appropriate form for their use during and after the project. In this sense, knowledge management and communications are therefore of paramount importance.
131. Although the project developed a communications plan and produced communications materials (brochures, news stories) to improve the visibility of the project's actions, there has not been any visible or planned action in relation to the capitalization of knowledge acquired as part of the project. The knowledge accumulated during the project has a bearing on the technical feasibility of the innovations deployed. It also concerns the economic and financial data linked to the investment necessary for the reconversion of plantations and forest restoration, as well as the lessons learned throughout the implementation of the project.
132. The potential for replication and extension of technically successful activities also relies on the training of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This enables them to not only carry out the project successfully but also lead other similar initiatives beyond the project. In this context, the project attaches great importance to the capacity building of stakeholders. During this first phase, the project provided capacity building of beneficiaries in agroforestry (441) and forestry (95). There were 1 207 other beneficiaries in various fields, including the training of members of four cooperatives and members of the three REDD+ regional committees. These 59 people included 24 from the La Mé regional committee, 18 from the Agnéby-Tiassa regional committee and 17

from Sud-Comoé. This training was based on themes related to climate change, such the REDD+ mechanism, forest landscape restoration strategies, and the National Forest Surveillance System.

133. Similar training for the project steering committee members, as well as their capacity building in project governance, would encourage the creation of factors that are favourable to sustainability, reproducibility and scalability of the project nationally.
134. In the short and medium term, the project's experiences and achievements could benefit the implementation of the national sustainable cocoa strategy that was decided by the Ivorian Government. In concrete terms, the technical, economic and financial standards validated by the project could serve as a reference for the development and implementation of new projects with broader geographical coverage. For example, SCOLUR-CI financed by the Global Environment Facility's Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Programme, which targets nine regions in the east and west of the country and more than 200 000 beneficiaries, plans to promote cocoa value chains without deforestation. It aims to restore forests in the landscapes of these regions by drawing on the project's achievements and experience.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance and coherence: the project continues to be highly relevant and strategically aligned with national development objectives and the priorities of partner institutions (FAO, GCF). The activities implemented by the project fit well with the aspirations of the beneficiary communities to have resilient production methods that are adapted to climate change. The project has been able to mobilize stakeholders in zero-deforestation agriculture. This will create partnerships and synergistic actions that are capable of contributing effectively to the emergence of new, more sustainable modes of cocoa production.

135. However, the challenge of this ecological transition, which has an increasingly important strategic dimension for the country, involves a multitude of actors and operational initiatives. The project will probably not be able to interact with them without the establishment, at the national level, of an appropriate framework for the exchange of information and experiences in zero-deforestation agriculture.

Conclusion 2. Evaluation: although the project has a fairly solid logical framework, the evaluation identified some weaknesses related to the indicators that undermined its effectiveness. These included: the absence of a baseline for certain indicators; the lack of indicators for social and economic co-benefits for small producers; the absence of indicators broken down by gender and age; the lack of precision in the definition of direct beneficiaries; and the failure to take account of demographic trends in the project region when calculating the number of indirect beneficiaries.

Conclusion 3. Efficiency: despite initial delays in starting activities, the project proved to be efficient in terms of management and coordination. Project implementation proved to be efficient from a governance and coordination point of view. However, initial delays, due to administrative procedures and the creation of management bodies, resulted in a low implementation rate. In November 2023, this was slightly more than 25 percent of the total grant. The M&E system is sound but still has room for improvement. Its functionality is limited by certain gaps in the logical framework (as indicated in the previous conclusion), and by the absence of tools to measure the results related to the adoption of good agricultural practices by the beneficiaries. The identified gaps limit the ability of the M&E system to meet the needs of a future evaluation (see Appendix 3).

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness: the project did not achieve its mid-term objectives for mitigating GHG emissions, improving the REDD+ mechanism, and establishing forestry and agroforestry plots. Nevertheless, notable progress has been observed in carrying out activities for each of the two components.

136. However, the results achieved and the progress made in the implementation of the activities have made it possible to highlight the enormous potential of the project in strengthening the environmental sustainability of cocoa cultivation and improving socioeconomic conditions for those involved. In addition to the project's mid-term achievements, identifying limiting factors and developing the project's TOC, via the evaluation process, are key elements that should help to improve the project's implementation during its second phase.

Conclusion 5. Sustainability: the project has many factors that could promote its sustainability. This includes: the commitment of the government and the private sector to convert cocoa farming to more sustainable agroforestry systems; the involvement of national organizations and local NGOs in project implementation; and the clear interest of local communities in having more resilient production methods that are better adapted to climate change.

137. The project helps to generate knowledge and experience in the technical, financial and socioeconomic feasibility of the transformation of traditional cocoa orchards, which could help to replicate, on a larger scale, the model that has been tested. This would, however, require the project to establish a coherent knowledge management system. It would then be possible to capitalize on the achievements of the project, with a view to their being valued and accepted in the future by the various stakeholders involved in zero-deforestation agriculture.

Conclusion 6. Gender strategy and action plan: this is an important point that must now be consolidated. More generally, the approach to social inclusion must take greater account of other vulnerable groups that play a potentially important role in agriculture, especially young people and minorities. Gender dynamics were satisfactorily considered during the conceptualization and implementation of the project through a specific action plan. However, the targeting of women and the strategy to overcome obstacles to gender equality in the cocoa farming subsector must be strengthened. Furthermore, despite the existence of certain budgetary provisions, the use of a gender-specific planning and reporting system was not observed. This limits accountability for the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, issues relating to young people and minorities have not been explicitly integrated, with the exception of the local development plan process.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. *To the government (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development):* create a national platform for exchanging information and experiences between the various ongoing projects and initiatives on zero-deforestation agriculture.

138. Given the growing number of projects and other initiatives aimed at promoting the emergence of zero-deforestation agriculture, the existence of a national-level platform for the exchange of information and experiences would be conducive to creating greater coherence. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, through the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire, gained experience in multisectoral and inclusive dialogue in the environmental field during the development of the national REDD+ strategy that had been adopted by the government in 2017. This experience could be used to coordinate these exchanges at the national level. The project could provide support for the implementation of this coordination initiative, which would fit perfectly with the objectives of the national REDD+ strategic plan.

Recommendation 2. *To the PCU:* strengthen the alignment the project's logical framework with its TOC. In particular, this reflects the need for an ex-post evaluation of the investment costs required to convert old cocoa orchards into agroforestry systems, as well as their economic profitability.

139. It is also important to include gender-disaggregated indicators from the gender action plan in the logical framework. This would enable stakeholders to take greater ownership of the gender objectives expected by the project. If formal procedures do not facilitate this, then closer and more regular monitoring of all gender-disaggregated indicators contained in the gender plan, including outcome indicators and gender-disaggregated indicators in the partnership agreements, may be sufficient. The project did not originally have the full TOC, that is, the assumptions were missing. The complete TOC was developed by the Evaluation Team during its September 2023 field mission through an inclusive process involving the project stakeholders. It was further enhanced and validated once again by the stakeholders in June 2024, following the release of the draft evaluation report. The main change introduced by the TOC, in relation to the project's initial logical framework, concerns the inclusion of the investment costs necessary to convert old cocoa orchards into agroforestry systems and their profitability in accordance with the evaluation. This could be done by adjusting Activity 2.5 or Activity 2.3.1 in Component 2 of the project.

140. The inclusion of this additional product is justified by the need to take advantage of the technical, economic and financial data collected as part of the project's implementation. The use of these available economic and financial data will facilitate the reproduction and extension of the project's achievements. This new logical framework should also include relevant results and gender-disaggregated indicators from the project's gender plan.

Recommendation 3. *To the PCU:* update the project's indicators that are linked to the population size of the three regions.

141. The indicator choice for indirect project beneficiaries was based on a total population of 1 764 172 for the three regions. The project set the level of indirect beneficiaries at one third of this population, or around 600 000. This population size corresponds to the figures from the 2014 population and housing census. However, the total population of the three regions is growing significantly and was estimated at 2 377 504 in 2021 by the latest population and housing census carried out in 2021. This was an increase of 34.8 percent compared to the figures used for the project formulation. A third of this population would be around 800 000. The project would benefit from aligning its indirect beneficiary objectives with these updated statistics. The project would also benefit from a better definition of indirect beneficiaries, clarifying the methodology for calculating their actual number and, if necessary, considering updated demographic statistics when setting target objectives.

Recommendation 4. *To the PCU:* organize the capitalization of acquired knowledge more effectively. Specifically, this applies to information and data related to the technical, economic and financial standards of zero-deforestation agriculture validated by the project, as well as lessons learned during implementation. This knowledge can be used as a reference in the development and implementation of new projects by the government, the private sector and other stakeholders.

142. So far, the project has developed a REDD+ communications plan and produced communications tools to improve the visibility of its actions. However, the component relating to knowledge management remains to be developed and implemented. Indeed, the project is seen as a model that should capitalize on lessons learned and experiences. In the future, it should be reproduced on a larger scale by the government and other projects or donors interested in zero-deforestation agriculture. The technical, economic and financial standards for zero-deforestation agriculture, validated by the project, could serve in the future as a reference for the development and implementation of new projects with broader geographical coverage.
143. The project requires that importance be given to the management of the knowledge it generates. Adequate knowledge management will allow for the capitalization of project achievements with a view to sharing them with users, both during and after the project's existence. This is therefore an important basis for the reproducibility and scalability of the project.

Recommendation 5. *To the PCU:* the project should take greater account of gender and social inclusion. In particular, it should improve the targeting of disadvantaged groups, develop strategies to address the root causes of their vulnerability in the cocoa-growing sector, involve stakeholders more closely in gender objectives and plan a specific budget for these initiatives.

144. Additional efforts are needed to improve gender targeting and encourage greater participation of women in activities. These efforts must focus on the causes of low representation, such as land access issues and female poverty. The latter could be mitigated by the introduction of income generation activities for the women who participate. All partners must be involved in strengthening the project's gender approach through specific training and the introduction of specific tasks on this subject into collaboration agreements. Dedicated human resources would strengthen the implementation of the gender plan. Regarding monitoring, the project should

monitor more closely the result indicators that show the benefits in terms of the socioeconomic empowerment of women, as well as paying greater attention to capitalizing on lessons learned and good practices. Finally, planning a gender budget could promote greater transparency regarding the project's impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. Regarding the participation of minorities and young people, the project should take greater account of and target these population groups, as well as develop specific action strategies.

Recommendation 6. *To the PCU:* strengthen the capacities of the project steering committee members in terms of project governance.

145. The project start and implementation phases showed the crucial role of the project steering committee in guiding and supervising the project's operational team. In addition, the project steering committee members played an essential role in the country's ownership of the project. Strengthening their project governance skills and organizing visits to observe project achievements in the field would enable them to be better equipped to analyse the constraints and challenges of the project and better support the PCU in project implementation.

5. Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. The start-up phase of a complex project such as PROMIRE includes many categories of stakeholders and can take a relatively long time. It is necessary to take this into account when planning project activities during the first phase.

146. The project officially came into being on 19 February 2021. However, the establishment of its bodies, that is, the project steering committee and the PCU, took six months – and even more for the recruitment of certain PCU staff. Once these bodies were established, the first activities of the PCU were devoted to raising awareness among potential partners and drawing up project management documents. These administrative activities are prerequisites for making the project operational. It is necessary to take this start-up phase into account when planning future project activities. This will allow for setting realistic objectives, particularly for the first period of the project. The start-up phase may be longer or shorter, depending on the level of complexity of the project and the number of institutional and operational players involved.

Lesson learned 2. Given the essential role played by the project steering committee in national ownership and support for the operationalization of the project, it would be wise, for future projects, to take the necessary steps to ensure that this is in place from the start of the project.

147. The project was approved by the GCF in August 2020 and put into effect in February 2021. However, the project steering committee members were appointed on 27 July 2021. It was during the first project steering committee meeting on 28 July 2021 that the project and the main management document, that is, the Project Implementation Manual, were presented and explained to the project steering committee members. This necessarily leads to a delay in the understanding of the project by the project steering committee members and the effective execution of their roles as the project's governance body. It would perhaps be possible, for future projects, for FAO and the government to take advantage of the period between project approval and its implementation – six months in the case of PROMIRE. This would allow for time to carry out the necessary negotiations in order to identify the project steering committee members so that the effective implementation of the project steering committee can be done from the start of the project. The project steering committee could then contribute to this delicate phase.

Lesson learned 3. It is necessary to clarify upstream the respective roles of FAO and the Ivorian State in project execution to avoid misunderstandings and to promote the efficient functioning of the various bodies involved in the project.

148. According to the Project Implementation Manual, FAO has the dual role of accredited entity and Executing Entity. As Executing Entity, FAO is responsible for the effective implementation and coordination of all project components through a dedicated technical assistance team. However, the project document, like the Project Implementation Manual, also indicates that Côte d'Ivoire, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, acts as the Executing Entity and co-financer of project activities. These different formulations can lead to confusion, particularly with regard to the responsibilities of the two parties in the financial management of the project.

149. The respective roles of FAO and the government in the execution of the project would benefit from being made clearer upstream, both in the project document and in the Project Implementation Manual, to avoid misunderstandings that could delay project implementation.

Bibliography

References

- Abidjan.net.** 2021. Around 7000 land certificates issued in the rural domain. In: *Abidjan.net* [Cited 25 October 2024]. Abidjan. <https://news.abidjan.net/articles/694933/environ-7000-certificats-fonciers-delivres-dans-le-domaine-rural-afor>
- Bamberger, M.** 2010. Reconstructing baseline data for impact evaluation and results measurement. *PREM Notes*, 4. World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/11075>
- Cocoa and Forests Initiative.** 2023. Réunion du Comité Technique de l'Initiative Cacao et Forêts: faire avancer la lutte contre la déforestation liée à la cacaoculture [Meeting of the Technical Committee of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative: Advancing the fight against deforestation linked to cocoa farming]. In: *initiativecacaoforets.ci*. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://initiativecacaoforets.ci/reunion-du-comite-technique-de-linitiative-cacao-et-forets-faire-avancer-la-lutte-contre-la-deforestation-liee-a>
- COP 15.** 2022. *Declaration by the President of the Republic for the establishment of the 'Abidjan Legacy Program'*. Abidjan. https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/29_cop15.pdf
- European Union.** 2021. La Côte d'Ivoire et l'Union européenne lancent un cadre de dialogue sur le cacao durable [Côte d'Ivoire and the European Union launch a dialogue framework on sustainable cocoa]. In: *eeas.europa.eu*. Brussels. [Cited 25 October 2024]. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/c%C3%B4te-divoire/la-c%C3%B4te-d%E2%80%99ivoire-et-l%E2%80%99union-europ%C3%A9enne-lancent-un-cadre-de-dialogue-sur-le-cacao-durable_und_en
- European Union.** 2023. Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 (Text with EEA relevance). PE/82/2022/REV/1. Brussels. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1115/oj>
- FAO.** 2017. *Guide to mainstreaming gender in FAO's project cycle*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd0350en>
- FAO.** 2020. *Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire – Prefeasibility study*. Rome. Internal document.
- FAO.** 2021a. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Main Report*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9825en>
- FAO.** 2021b. *Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire – Project Implementation Manual*. Rome. Internal document.
- FAO.** 2021c. *Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire – Inception report*. Rome. Internal document.
- FAO.** 2022a. EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), version 9. In: *fao.org*. Rome. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/456265/>
- FAO.** 2022b. *Sustainability plan for agreements with private sector companies (cocoa, forestry) and microfinance institutions to support PROMIRE*. Rome. Internal document.
- FAO.** 2022c. *Ebikro-N'Dakro local development plan 2022–2032*. Rome. Internal document.
- FAO.** 2022d. FAO en Côte d'Ivoire. Programmes et projets: le Cadre de Programmation Pays (CPP) 2018–2021 [FAO in Côte d'Ivoire. Programmes and projects: The Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2018–

2021]. In: *fao.org*. Rome. [Cited 25 October 2024]. [https://www.fao.org/cote-divoire/programmes-et-projets/fr/#:~:text=Le%20Cadre%20de%20Programmation%20Pays%20\(CPP\)%202018%2D2021%20pour,%d%C3%A9veloppement%20agricultural%20%C3%A0%20medium%20term](https://www.fao.org/cote-divoire/programmes-et-projets/fr/#:~:text=Le%20Cadre%20de%20Programmation%20Pays%20(CPP)%202018%2D2021%20pour,%d%C3%A9veloppement%20agricultural%20%C3%A0%20medium%20term)

FAO. 2023. *The Director-General's Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022–25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024–25 (C2023/3)*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/nl239en/nl239en.pdf>

GCF (Green Climate Fund). 2015. *Monitoring and accountability framework for accredited entities*. Adopted by decision B.11/10. 5 November. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/monitoring-and-accountability-framework-accredited-entities>

GCF. 2016. B.14/08: Matters relating to accreditation: Strategy and policy on accreditation. In: *www.greenclimate.fund*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/b14-08>

GCF. 2020. *SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Approved funding Proposal. August 2020. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production-reducing-emissions-c-te-d-ivoire-promire>

GCF. 2020a. *Gender assessment for SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Annex 4: Gender assessment and action plan. October 2020. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gender-assessment-sap015-promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production-reducing-emissions-c>

GCF. 2020b. *Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire: Approved funding proposal*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production-reducing-emissions-c-te-d-ivoire-promire>

GCF. 2021a. *2021 Annual Performance Report for SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/2021-annual-performance-report-sap015-promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production>

GCF. 2021b. *Integrated results management framework*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b29-12.pdf>

GCF. 2022. *Annual Performance Report for SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/2022-annual-performance-report-sap015-promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production>

GCF. 2023a. *Evaluation operational procedures and guidelines for accredited entity-led evaluations*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/evaluation-operational-procedures-and-guidelines-accredited-entity-led-evaluations>

GCF. 2023b. *Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024–2027*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/strategic-plan-gcf-2024-2027.pdf>

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and WRI (World Resources Institute). (2014). *A guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM): Assessing forest landscape restoration opportunities at the national or sub-national level*. Working Paper (Road-test edition). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://www.folur.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/guide-to-roam.pdf>

Lakens, D. 2014. The reproducibility project: A large-scale collaboration model for empirical reproducibility research. In: V. Stodden, F. Leisch and R. D. Peng (eds.). *Implementing Reproducible Research* (pp. 299–324). Chapman & Hall/CRC Books, London. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315373461>

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. 2021. *Order No. 00224/MINEDD of 27 July 2021 «Désignation des membres du Comité de Pilotage du Projet de Promotion d'une production de cacao sans déforestation pour réduire les émissions en Côte d'Ivoire PROMIRE» (appointing members of the project PROMIRE)*. Abidjan. Internal document.

Ministry of Planning and Development. 2023. *Plan National de Développement PND 2021-2025. Orientations stratégiques. Tome 2* [National Development Plan NDP 2021–2025: Strategic Orientations. Volume 2]. Abidjan. <https://www.cepici.ci/public/frontend/assets/document/strategie/2.5.OrientationsStrategiquesPND2021-2025.pdf>

National Council for Economic Policies. 2020.. Abidjan. <https://documents.economie-ivoirienne.ci/index.php?p=fstream-pdf&fid=12&bid=10>

National Institute of Statistics. 2014. *RGPH-2014 résultats globaux* [2014 General Population and Housing Census: Overall Results]. Abidjan. <https://www.ins.ci/documents/rgph/ivoirien18plus.pdf>

National Institute of Statistics. 2022. *Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat 2021. Résultats globaux définitifs* [2021 Population and Housing Census: Final Overall Results]. Abidjan. <https://www.ins.ci/RGPH2021/RESULTATS%20DEFINITIFS%20SRP21.pdf>

National Office of Technical Studies and Development. 2016. *Analyse qualitative des facteurs de déforestation et de dégradation des forêts en Côte d'Ivoire. Rapport Final* [Qualitative study of factors in the deforestation and degradation of forests broken down by agroecological area: Final report]. 10 November 2016. Abidjan. https://www.nitidae.org/files/b24e760c/161216081210_161214_analyse_facteurs_def_deg_ci_rapport_final.pdf

Nosek, B.A., Hardwicke, T.E., Moshontz, H., Allard, A., Corker, K.S., Dreber, A., Fidleret, F. et al. 2022. Replicability, robustness and reproducibility in psychological science, *Annual Review of Psychology*. 73:719–748. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-020821-114157>

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2014. Measuring and managing results in development co-operation: A review of challenges and practices among DAC members and observers. [Working paper]. *OECD Development Perspectives*, No. 2. Paris, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c7762fac-en>

OECD. 2024. DAC gender equality policy marker. In: *web-archive.oecd.org*. Paris. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://web-archive.oecd.org/temp/2024-02-06/369190-dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>

Office of the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire. 2022. *Order No. 0379/pm/cab of 30 March 2022 «Création, attributions, organisation et fonctionnement du Comité National pour la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Nationale du Cacao Durable»* (establishing the creation, responsibilities, organization and operation of the national committee for the implementation of the national sustainable cocoa strategy). Abidjan. Internal document.

Presidency of the Republic. 2022. Communiqué du Conseil des Ministres du mercredi 8 juin 2022 [Press release from the Council of Ministers of Wednesday 8 June 2022]. In: *presidence.ci*. Abidjan. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://www.presidence.ci/communiqué-du-conseil-des-ministres-du-mercredi-08-juin-2022/>

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (the). 1964. *Loi n° 64-379 du 7 octobre 1964 relative aux successions* [Law No. 64-379 of October 7, 1964 relating to successions]. Abidjan. <https://www.muscop-ci.com/Document/4ea5d7516be9e754f6d2db653a1e210d.pdf>

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (the). 2004. *Loi n° 98-750 du 23 décembre 1998 relative au domaine foncier rural. Modifiée par la loi n°2004-412 du 14 août 2004* [Law No. 98-750 of December 23, 1998 relating to rural land. Amended by Law No. 2004-412 of August 14, 2004]. Abidjan. <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/fr/c/LEX-FAOC015631/>

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (the). 2023a. *Loi n° 2019-675 du 23 juillet 2019 portant code forestier* [Law No. 2019-675 of 23 July 2019, relating to the forest code]. Abidjan. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/lvc189532.pdf>

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (the). 2023b. *Programme National d'Investissement Agricole de deuxième génération (PNIA II, 2017-2025)* [Second generation National Agricultural Investment Programme (PNIA II, 2017–2025)]. Abidjan. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/IVC176030.pdf>

UN (United Nations). 1995. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Adopted at the 16th plenary meeting, on 15 September 1995.* Fourth World Conference on Women. New York, United States of America. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group). 2005. *Norms for Evaluation in the UN System.* UNEG/FN/Norms(2005). New York, United States of America. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

UN-REDD Programme. 2016. *Stepping up efforts to measure progress towards gender equality.* Geneva, Switzerland. https://www.un-redd.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/UN-REDD_Gender_Marker_Info%20Brief%20%28234945%29.pdf

UN-REDD Programme. 2017. *UN-REDD methodological brief on gender.* Geneva, Switzerland. https://climateandforests-undp.org/sites/default/files/resources/unredd_methobriefgender_lr_523106.pdf

UN-REDD Programme. 2021. *Gender and REDD+: Promoting transformational change and innovation in REDD+ action.* UN-REDD Programme Info Brief, 10 December. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.un-redd.org/document-library/gender-and-redd-promoting-transformational-change-and-innovation-redd-action>

UN-REDD Programme. 2022a. *Beyond headcount: A tool for monitoring the effective participation of women and men in meetings and workshops.* Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.un-redd.org/document-library/beyond-headcounts-tool-monitoring-womens-and-mens-effective-participation-meetings>

UN-REDD Programme. 2022b. *Liste de contrôle pour les ateliers sensibles au genre* [Checklist for gender-sensitive workshops]. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.un-redd.org/document-library/liste-de-contrôle-pour-les-ateliers-sensibles-au-genre>

World Bank. 2018. *Cote d'Ivoire Land Policy Improvement and Implementation Project. Combined Project Information Documents/Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS). Appraisal Stage. Date Prepared/Updated: 12 January 2018. Report No: PIDISDSA21473.* Washington, DC. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/847131516184821909/pdf/Project-Information-Documents-Integrated-Safeguards-Data-Sheet.pdf>

Additional resources

FAO. 2020. *FAO Policy on Gender Equality* 2020–2030. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb1583en/cb1583en.pdf>

GCF. 2014. *Initial Results Management Framework of the Fund.* GCF/B.07/04. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b07-04>

GCF. 2020. *Gender action plan for SAP015: Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE)*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gender-action-plan-sap015-promoting-zero-deforestation-cocoa-production-reducing-emissions>

IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development). 2021. *La prise en compte du genre dans l'action climatique en Côte d'Ivoire* [Taking gender into account in climate action in Cote d'Ivoire]. Winnipeg, Canada. https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2022-01/napgn_fr_2021_la-prise-en-compte-du-genre-dans-laction-climatique-en-cote-divoire.pdf

ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. National Survey on the Employment Situation Repository: BIT-STATISTICS. In: *ILOSTAT*. [Cited 25 October 2024]. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/fr/data/country-profiles/>

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Water and Forests. 2018. *Zero deforestation agriculture. Policy guidance note*. Abidjan.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. 2022. *Contributions Déterminées au niveau National: CDN Côte d'Ivoire* [Nationally determined contributions (NDC) of Côte d'Ivoire]. March 2022, revised version. Abidjan. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/CDN_CIV_2022.pdf

Ministry of Women, Families and Children. 2022. *Rapport de la Côte d'Ivoire sur la mise en œuvre de la résolution de l'Ag. des Nations Unies sur la question des femmes dans le développement* [Report of Côte d'Ivoire on the implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the issue of women in development]. Abidjan. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/a-77-243-submission-cote-d-ivoire-fr.pdf>

REDD+ Permanent Executive Secretariat, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. 2018. *Strategie nationale REDD+ Côte d'Ivoire* [National REDD+ Strategy Côte d'Ivoire]. Abidjan. <https://reddplus.ci/download/strategie-nationale-redd-cote-divoire/>

United Nations Côte d'Ivoire. 2021. *Cadre de Coopération des Nations Unies pour le Développement Durable (CCDD) Côte d'Ivoire 2021-2025* [Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development (CFSD) Côte d'Ivoire 2021-2025]. Abidjan. <https://onudi.ci/le-ccdd-2021-2025/#:~:text=Le%20Cadre%20de%20Coop%C3%A9ration%20des,pour%20la%20p%C3%A9riode%202021%2D2025>

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2022. *Human Development Report 2021-2022: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*. New York, United States of America. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2021-22>

UN-Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2019. *L'égalité homme-femme en Côte d'Ivoire* [Gender equality in Côte d'Ivoire]. New York, United States of America. <https://cotedivoire.un.org/fr/110613-l%C3%A9galit%C3%A9-homme-femme-en-c%C3%B4te-divoire>

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Category	Name	Position	Organization	Role in the project	Meeting/interview location
Government	Abbe Jonas Assamoi	National Consultant, Expert in Spatial Forest Monitoring	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Project Coordinator	Abidjan
FAO	Attaher Maiga	FAO Representative Côte d'Ivoire	FAO	Budget Holder	Abidjan
Government	Ahoulou Kouamé	Permanent Executive Secretary	Permanent Executive Secretariat for REDD+		Abidjan
Government	Bio Abraham	Component Officer	Permanent Executive Secretariat for REDD+		Abidjan
Government	Gnahoré Kodehi	Deputy Chief of Staff	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	President of the project steering committee	Abidjan
Government	Ndri N'Degbeu	Elected regional council	Sud Comoé regional council	Member of the project steering committee	Abidjan
Government	Kouame Joseph	Deputy Director, Participation/Project Coordinator	Agnéby-Tiassa regional council	Member of the project steering committee	Abidjan
FAO	Zana Inzan Ouattara	Project Expert in M&E, Gender and Social Safeguards	FAO	Project Expert in M&E, Gender and Social Safeguards	Abidjan
Traditional authority	Local development plan committee		Local development plan committee Ebriko	Local development plan	Aboisso
NGO	Adane Kouakou Freeman	Supervisor	Health, Education and Development	Supervisor of project activities	Aboisso
Traditional authority	Local development plan committee (insert names of attendees)		Local development plan committee Biasso	Local development plan	Biasso
Farmers' organization/cooperative	Kouso Anne Brou (insert names of other attendees)	Cooperative President	Simplified Cooperative Society of Women Producers of Biasso	Beneficiary	Biasso
Civil society organization	Mambo Hohoueu (insert names of other attendees)	Youth President	Youth committee	Beneficiary	Biasso
Civil society organization	Kouman Atta Kouakou (insert the name of the other attendee)	Representative of Non-native Communities	Committee of non-natives	Beneficiary	Biasso
Individual farmer	Missed the name	Cultivator		Beneficiary of agroforestry	Biasso

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Category	Name	Position	Organization	Role in the project	Meeting/interview location
FAO	Nadia Amlan N'Goran Epouse Guioho	Expert Agronomist	FAO	Agronomist, La Mé region	Biasso
Farmers' organization/cooperative	Kassin Kassin Jérôme	President of the Management Committee	Simplified Cooperative Society of Organic Cocoa Producers of La Mé	Beneficiary	Biasso
Farmers' organization/cooperative	Kassin Kassin Jérôme	President of the Management Committee	Organic Cocoa Cooperative of La Mé	Beneficiary	Biasso
Traditional authority	Local development plan committee (insert names of attendees)		Local development plan committee Aboude-mandéké	Local development plan	Aboude-Mandéké
NGO	Esther Kanga	Executive Director	Marie Esther Foundation	Project implementing organization	Aboude-Mandéké
NGO	Kangamon Emmanuela		Marie Esther Foundation	Project implementing organization	Aboude-Mandéké
Government	Kouassi Joseph Kouakou	Director, Department of Studies and Spatial Planning	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, Department of Studies and Spatial Planning		Abidjan
Cabinet	Charles Appoh	Cabinet Deputy Director	Terinov Consulting Engineers	Service provider	Abidjan
Government	Didier N'cho	Deputy Director of Planning and Protection	Forest Development Company		Abidjan
Other international organization	Charlette Ouattara	Cocoa and Forests Initiative Programme Manager	WCF	Member of the project steering committee	Abidjan
Government	Edmond Sehouio	Head of the Department of Programming and Supervision of Decentralized Services	AFOR		Abidjan
Government	Konaté Abdul Racir	Environment Specialist	AFOR		Abidjan
Research institute	Akanvou René	Researcher, Regional Director	National Agricultural Research Centre		Abidjan
Research institute	Sekou Diabato	Researcher	National Agricultural Research Centre		Abidjan
Research institute	Coulibaly Brahim	Head of Department, Forests	National Agricultural Research Centre		Abidjan
Research institute	N'Guessan Kanga Anatole	Researcher	National Agricultural Research Centre		Abidjan

Evaluation of the project "Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions in Côte d'Ivoire" – Mid-term report

Category	Name	Position	Organization	Role in the project	Meeting/interview location
Research institute	Kouadio Richard	Researcher	National Agricultural Research Centre		Abidjan
Joint company	Amin Gbo	Head of the Climate Change Division	National Support Agency for Rural Development	Member of the project steering committee	Abidjan
NGO	Gone Aristide Romaric	Director	Initiative for the Development of Agriculture in Africa	Project implementing organization	Abidjan
NGO	Koné Dan Yves	Programme Assistant	Initiative for the Development of Agriculture in Africa	Project implementing organization	Abidjan
FAO	Minoarivelo Lantsoa Randrianarison	Forestry Officer, Forestry Division	FAO	Project Lead Technical Officer	Virtual
FAO	Amanda Bradley	Specialist on Forest Tenure, Gender and Indigenous Peoples for REDD+, Forestry Division	FAO	Support to gender action plan	Virtual
Research institute	Kouamé Christophe	Director, West and Central Africa	World Agroforestry	Expert in agroforestry	Abidjan
Government	Assamoi Yapo	Advisor to the Prime Minister	Côte d'Ivoire Government, Prime Minister's Office	Member of the project steering committee	Abidjan
Donor	Linus Hong	Fund Portfolio Manager	GCF	The project is in his portfolio	Virtual

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Relevance <i>Evaluation question 1: Does the project meet the needs and expectations of the institutions involved, its beneficiaries, the environmental and development objectives in Côte d'Ivoire, the strategic objectives of FAO (including regional) and the objectives of the donor?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 1.1: Were relevant stakeholders, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, sufficiently involved in the design of the project?</p>	<p>Perception of stakeholders on their level of involvement in the design of the project Adoption of bottom-up participatory planning processes in the design phase</p>	<p>Project documents Government, the private sector and partners Beneficiary communities</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions with beneficiaries</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis of data disaggregated according to stakeholder groups</p>
<p>Evaluation question 1.2: Are the objectives and planned results (results framework) of the project, as well as the activities (inputs) relevant and realistic in relation to the current situation on the ground? This is also about the current needs of the institutions and the beneficiaries involved, and corresponds to the environmental and development objectives in Côte d'Ivoire.</p>	<p>Degree of alignment of the project with the current priorities of stakeholders (government, private sector, beneficiaries) Overall quality of the logical framework (objectives, results, indicators, activities, risks, assumptions) Adequacy of the project results framework, including internal coherence and complementarity between components, results and activities</p>	<p>National and sectoral strategy documents from the government, FAO and the GCF Beneficiaries and stakeholders Project documents: logical framework of the project and TOC developed during the mid-term evaluation</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions with beneficiaries Community-level case study</p>	<p>Analysis of the causal chain of the TOC and its adequacy with the target objectives (project indicators) Analysis of indicators of the products, effects, co-benefits and impacts of the project Analysis with assessment of the level of adequacy: N = 1-4</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Coherence in the implementation of climate financing with other multilateral entities <i>Evaluation question 2: Is the project: i) compatible with and/or complementary to (without duplicating) other climate financing; and ii) does it avoid creating parallel systems by creating synergies in the mechanisms of funding and interventions (i.e. other REDD+ projects)?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 2.1: To what extent is the project compatible and/or complementary with other climate financing?</p>	<p>Compatibility with other climate interventions Existence of complementarities with other climate projects Degree of capitalization of previous results of other initiatives during project implementation</p>	<p>Project documents and performance reports for different projects Project managers FAO, the GCF National and local institutions</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Identification and convergences, complementarities and possibly redundancies between projects</p>
<p>Evaluation question 2.2: How does the project create synergies with other climate initiatives that are underway in the country, including zero-deforestation agriculture projects and other projects linked to the REDD+ mechanism and/or sustainable cocoa production?</p>	<p>Number of collaborative initiatives (formal and informal) with projects and other similar initiatives of the Ivorian State, the private sector, international organizations and NGOs Synergies created with other similar projects Extent to which the project cooperated with other international organizations, donors and development partners to achieve its objectives</p>	<p>Project performance report, project staff, performance reports of different projects, project managers, FAO, the GCF, and national and local institutions</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Inventory of formal and informal collaborations with other projects</p>
<p>Effectiveness <i>Evaluation question 3: To what extent has the project achieved, to date, the results (outputs and effects) expected in its two components, and what is the progress compared to the logical framework indicators?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 3.1: How did the project perform in relation to the indicators established in the logical framework for expected results and objectives?</p>	<p>Reported results (outputs and results) compared to target values, both quantitative and qualitative, by referring to the indicators of: i) logical framework; ii) project M&E framework; and iii) gender action plan</p>	<p>Project progress reports M&E data available Matrix of progress of indicators of the logical framework and the gender plan</p>	<p>Desk review</p>	<p>Comparative analysis between planned indicators and indicators achieved</p>

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Evaluation question 3.2: To what extent has the project strengthened the national REDD+ architecture and its implementation (Component 1)?</p>	<p>Number and level of REDD+ mechanisms that have become operational, including the degree of functioning of the three regional committees created by the project Degree of technical capacity building for the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire Degree of finalization and operation of planned tools (NFMS, National Investment Framework, benefit-sharing mechanism, safeguarding information system) Evidence of improved planning and implementation capacities of policies and programmes linked to REDD+ mechanisms by the actors involved</p>	<p>Project performance reports, project team and institutions concerned</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis with the evaluation of the levels of coordination in place N: 1-4 Quantitative and qualitative analysis N =1-4 Analysis of the level of operability of REDD+ tools</p>
<p>Evaluation question 3.3: To what extent did the project improve the management of land and forest areas and contribute to the reduction of emissions (Component 2)?</p>	<p>Robustness of the methodology adopted to calculate the number of beneficiaries (direct and indirect) in terms of adaptation Extent to which adaptation benefits are clearly identified and communicated to beneficiaries Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex, age and type of activity, including the number of beneficiaries in terms of adaptation (comparison between mid-term targets and final targets) Degree of implementation of recommendations made during project implementation (e.g. during mid-term evaluation) to gain a more accurate estimate of numbers benefitting from the adaptations Self-assessment by both partner organizations and beneficiaries in relation to the improvement of knowledge and capacities at individual and organizational levels (producer organizations, cooperatives) Degree of adoption of new or improved practices and techniques by farmers Dropout rate by beneficiaries and reasons Do beneficiaries understand the benefits of agroforestry, and are they willing to adopt them? Percentage of farmers trained by the project who show an improvement in their knowledge and perceptions</p>	<p>Implementation partners Beneficiaries Project performance reports and M&E data GHG expert measurements (calculations) Beneficiaries External experts</p>	<p>Desk review, site visits and semi-structured interview with stakeholders (regional councils, ANADER, SODEFOR, beneficiaries) Methods of measuring emissions reductions by the GHG expert of the Evaluation Team Focus group discussions with beneficiaries Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey Internal satisfaction evaluations and ex-ante/ex-post evaluations of training outcomes Community-level case study</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative analysis</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
	<p>Hectares of agricultural land subject to improved management which contributes to the reduction of CO₂ emissions</p> <p>Percentage of farmers involved in the project who obtain the land ownership certificate thanks to the joint PROMIRE/PAMAFOR action plan</p> <p>Hectares secured by land certificates issued by the joint PROMIRE/PAMAFOR action plan</p> <p>Level of technical capacity and financial independence of the cooperatives supported</p> <p>Number of hectares of forests under improved management contributing to the reduction of emissions</p> <p>Level of tree density in agroforestry and forest restoration activities</p>			
<p>Evaluation question 3.4: Are there any obstacles that could prevent future progress towards achieving the project objectives? What can be done to increase the likelihood of achieving the final results?</p>	<p>Unresolved project assumptions and/or new hypotheses that appeared after project formulation</p> <p>Analysis of risks and external conditions and their impact on achieving results</p> <p>Extent to which knowledge was generated</p> <p>Unresolved project assumptions and/or new hypotheses that appeared after project formulation</p> <p>Analysis of risks and external conditions and their impact on achieving results</p> <p>Extent to which the knowledge generated by the project is accessible and usable by farmers and rural populations</p> <p>Factors that prevent the use of acquired knowledge generated by the project is accessible and usable by farmers and rural populations</p> <p>Factors that prevent the use of acquired knowledge</p>	<p>Project TOC</p> <p>Project team</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Documents on the national and local context</p>	<p>Review of the hypotheses (assumptions) of the TOC and identification of possible new external constraints</p>	<p>Assess to what extent the preconditions of the project are satisfied (or not) and if new hypotheses have emerged</p>

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
Evaluation question 3.5: Have there been any unexpected positive or negative mitigation and/or adaptation outcomes generated by the project?	Has the project resulted in unexpected effects (positive or negative) for project stakeholders and beneficiaries? Was the project able to respond to unexpected effects?	Performance report, stakeholders and beneficiaries	Desk review Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions	Comparison with the forecast results of the project
<p>Efficiency <i>Evaluation question 4: Are project management, governance mechanisms, and partnerships strong and operating efficiently?</i></p>				
Evaluation question 4.1: Are results achieved and activities implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner?	Pace of governance, coordination and implementation activities compared to the forecast schedule Budget actually spent vs initial financial forecasts Efficiency in the allocation of human and financial resources for the implementation of planned activities and expected results	Project performance reports Project timeline/project narrative and financial reports Lessor Implementing partners Project steering committee Project staff and supervision staff (FAO)	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Quantitative method: calculation of completion rates within the planned time Comparison of activities and budgets carried out with planned activities and budgets
Evaluation question 4.2: To what extent did the project's institutional and management structure and planning and coordination mechanisms contribute to efficient implementation and the achievement of results? What were the specific operational challenges, and how can they be improved in the future?	Clarity and relevance of the roles and tasks of the various participants in the project Clarity and effectiveness of the internal communication system Regularity of management and project steering committee meetings Has project management provided clear conceptual and operational guidance for efficient and effective implementation? Degree of flexibility of the project in responding to emerging needs Assessment by stakeholders of the effectiveness of the project's institutional set up Project human resources/organization chart	Project documents Implementing partners Project steering committee Project staff and supervision staff (FAO)	Qualitative method: evaluation of the structure and the operational and managerial process of the project Desk review Interviews	Identification of operational challenges

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Evaluation question 4.3: Was the M&E system functional and adequate for learning and results-based management?</p>	<p>Quality of indicators contained in the M&E plan Existence of baseline indicators to measure performance Was the M&E function budgeted? Did the M&E system work according to plan? Was the information collected systematically, using appropriate methods? Extent to which project indicators, assumptions and risks were adequately monitored Was the information generated by the M&E system used for decision-making (i.e. was there an adaptive management ethos)? Quality of the project monitoring system, including monitoring of the gender action plan Degree of implementation of recommendations resulting from the mid-term evaluation</p>	<p>M&E plan Project manager for M&E Implementation partners</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Desk review</p>	<p>Opinion of evaluators on the quality of the M&E plan and procedures</p>
<p>Observations on impact Evaluation question 5: To what extent do the project results have the potential to contribute to long-term changes?</p>				
<p>Evaluation question 5.1: To what extent have appropriate methodologies for calculating GHG emissions reductions been adopted and used?</p>	<p>Are the targets provided in the logical framework based on a sound methodology? Is this methodology put into practice part of the project's M&E system?</p>	<p>Stakeholders, national statistics, media reports and reports from other organizations</p>	<p>Desk review Global positioning system data</p>	<p>Data reviews of evaluators Opinion of sector experts</p>
<p>Evaluation question 5.2: To what extent did the project contribute to reducing GHG emissions and increasing carbon sequestration?</p>	<p>To what extent did the project contribute to reducing GHG emissions and increasing carbon sequestration?</p>	<p>Stakeholders, national statistics, media reports and reports from other organizations</p>	<p>Desk review Global positioning system data</p>	<p>Opinions of evaluators Opinion of sector experts</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Evaluation question 5.3: To what extent has the project contributed to fostering an enabling environment for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation at the institutional, technological, market and knowledge production levels? (Enabling environment)</p>	<p>Existence of conditions and contextual factors capable of fostering a conducive environment</p> <p>Extent to which the project contributes to the strengthening of institutional and regulatory frameworks favouring development modes with low levels of emissions and resilient to climate change</p> <p>Extent to which the project's capacity building activities helped strengthen the leadership role of relevant institutions in the field of REDD+ (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire)</p> <p>Extent to which the project contributes to the deployment of technologies, their diffusion, and the development and transfer of innovations (also assessed in Evaluation question 9 on innovations)</p> <p>Extent to which the project contributes to transforming the market at the sectoral, local or national level</p> <p>Extent to which the project contributes to the effective generation of knowledge, the learning process and the use of good practices, methodologies and standards</p> <p>Extent to which the activities carried out made it possible to overcome the obstacles identified in the conceptualization phase (weak enabling policies and legal framework, weak land rights and plans, weak agroforestry and restoration skills of smallholder farmers, weak financial skills, widespread unsustainable agricultural practices, lack of access to low-carbon income generation activities)</p>	<p>Stakeholders</p> <p>National statistics</p> <p>Media reports</p> <p>Reports from other organizations</p> <p>National and local institutions</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus group discussions</p>	<p>Opinions of evaluators and comparative analysis with the initial situation</p>
<p>Observations on sustainability</p> <p><i>Evaluation question 6: To what extent do the project results have the potential for sustainability?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 6.1: Has the project been designed to promote sustainability?</p>	<p>Existence and quality of sustainability plans and strategies envisaged by the project</p> <p>Existence of a realistic exit strategy and realization of the project's assumptions</p>	<p>Project TOC</p> <p>Government actors and beneficiaries</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Evaluation level N: 1-4</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Evaluation question 6.2: What is the probability that the results achieved will persist after the end of the project (taking into account financial, socioeconomic, institutional, governance and environmental aspects)?</p>	<p>Existence of political will, arrangements, and institutional, socioeconomic, and financial incentive mechanisms Perception of beneficiaries on the sustainability of achievements Level of institutional capacities of the partners/actors involved to ensure monitoring of the results obtained Are the government and local communities committed to continually supporting project activities? Has the project approach been integrated into local and national political processes? Degree of private sector engagement/probability that the private sector will engage with project beneficiaries (at both the cooperative and the agroforestry level) Number of contracts signed between beneficiaries and the government for plots of land allocated to agroforestry or reforested Proportion of farmers and smallholders with access to land who invest in zero-deforestation agriculture due to the project intervention Degree of implementation of local development plans developed by the project</p>	<p>National and sectoral strategy documents Economic and financial context Beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews Community-level case study</p>	<p>Probability level according to the scorecard developed by the GCF (low-medium-high)</p>
<p>Evaluation question 6.3: Are there any obstacles or risks that could prevent sustainability?</p>	<p>Potential risks (internal or external) to the sustainability of the results of the initiative</p>	<p>Project documents (risks already identified) Beneficiaries for new potential risks</p>	<p>Desk review Focus group discussions with beneficiaries Community-level case study</p>	<p>Risk level: 1-4</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Gender and social inclusion <i>Evaluation question 7: Does the project satisfactorily implement actions to promote gender equality and social inclusion?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 7.1: To what extent were gender issues taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?</p>	<p>Adoption of gender-specific approaches to promote gender equality and women's empowerment Is the project implemented to ensure equitable participation and benefits for women and men? Does the project take into account, in its activities and planning, local gender dynamics in cocoa production? How do the project's interventions affect women? Degree of women's access to services provided by the project and representation of women in project activities (beneficiaries disaggregated by gender) Degree of inclusion of gender issues in local development plans To what extent have the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation been implemented to strengthen the gender approach of the project?</p>	<p>Project documents, including the gender action plan Implementation partners Local stakeholders Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Interviews Focus group discussions Desk review Community-level case study</p>	<p>Opinion of evaluators and comparison with international, REDD+ and FAO strategies on gender mainstreaming</p>
<p>Evaluation question 7.2: Are gender-related activities and monitored results adjusted where necessary? Are key stakeholders consulted?</p>	<p>To what extent are the project's M&E activities differentiated by gender? Use of indicators and gender-disaggregated data in the M&E system Existence and implementation of adaptive management with a gender approach</p>	<p>Project documents, including the gender action plan Implementation partners Local stakeholders Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Interviews Discussion groups Desk review</p>	<p>Opinion of evaluators and comparison with international, REDD+ and FAO strategies on gender mainstreaming</p>
<p>Evaluation question 7.3: Have the issues of minorities and Indigenous Peoples been considered? What safeguarding measures have been taken?</p>	<p>Were minorities and Indigenous Peoples taken into account in the design and implementation of the project? How does the project take into account the particular requirements of marginalized groups? Has the project adopted and implemented a safeguard system?</p>	<p>Project documents Partners Local stakeholders</p>	<p>Interviews Focus group discussions Desk review Community-level case study</p>	<p>Opinion of evaluators, comparison with international and FAO strategies on the inclusion of vulnerable categories, and comparison with the REDD+ safeguard system</p>

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
Evaluation question 7.4: To what extent did the project focus on youth inclusion?	Beneficiaries disaggregated by age To what extent are youth-related issues taken into account in the project design and implementation processes? How have the project activities contributed to taking into account the particular requirements of young people?	Project documents Partners Local stakeholders	Interviews Focus group discussions Desk review Community-level case study	Opinion of evaluators and comparison with international and FAO strategies on youth inclusion
<p>Country ownership Evaluation question 8: To what extent does the country have ownership of the project, and how is this reflected in the project's governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms?</p>				
Evaluation question 8.1: What are the governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms put in place by the project to promote ownership by the country?	Structures and mechanisms for governance, supervision, coordination, consultation and execution of the project	Project performance report, managers and members of different bodies	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Description of the project organization
Evaluation question 8.2: To what extent did these mechanisms promote (or not) the adequate implementation of the project?	Degree of operability of the structures and mechanisms put in place and how these promote ownership	Project performance report, managers and members of different bodies	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the different bodies and mechanisms of project implementation
<p>Innovation Evaluation question 9: Has the project generated opportunities for the creation and/or use of innovative solutions (new technologies, new commercial niches, new business models and/or processes) capable of causing a paradigm shift?</p>				
Evaluation question 9.1: To what extent did the project use innovative technology or processes?	Number of innovations created or introduced by the project: technologies; mechanisms; and opportunities Extent to which the project plans effective actions and strategies to ensure the dissemination and use of the innovations introduced	Project performance reports, stakeholders and beneficiaries	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Inventory of innovations and their potential impacts

Subquestions	Indicators or aspects to be assessed	Data sources	Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection	Analysis procedure
<p>Replicability <i>Evaluation question 10: To what extent can the project activities be replicated in other countries or other locations within the country?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 10.1: To what extent can the project approach, activities or results be replicated elsewhere?</p>	<p>Extent to which the project has clearly defined procedures that promote the replication of good practices Extent to which lessons learned and good practices have been generated by the project and disseminated to inform replication in other localities or sectors Number of knowledge products generated by the project Stakeholders' perception of the usefulness of the knowledge products generated Extent to which stakeholders and external actors have learned from the project to inform their activities Evidence of replication of the project's approach or results, including innovations introduced</p>	<p>Project performance report Stakeholders Development partners and external expert opinions</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Identification and inventory of factors favourable to reproduction Rating according to the scorecard developed by the GCF (low-medium-high)</p>
<p>Scalability <i>Evaluation question 11: Does the project have the potential to expand its size and impact?</i></p>				
<p>Evaluation question 11.1: Does the project have the potential to expand its reach and impact?</p>	<p>Project assumptions and contextual factors that could strengthen or weaken the scaling up of project outcomes or approach Extent to which the results obtained have the potential to go beyond the scope of the project and have an impact in other areas and beyond the restricted circle of direct beneficiaries Evidence of scaling up of the project approach or results, including innovations introduced Analysis of the time required for the materialization of project contributions for scaling up</p>	<p>Project performance report Stakeholders Development partners Opinions of external experts</p>	<p>Desk review Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Rating according to the assessment map score developed by the GCF (low-medium-high)</p>

Appendix 3. Results framework with methodological guidance for evaluation

Logical framework

	Description	Indicators	Baseline	Targets (mid-term)	Targets (final)	Sources and means of verification	Data collection methods and tools suggested by the Evaluation Team
Fund-level impact	M4.0 Reduced emissions from land use, reforestation, reduced deforestation, and through sustainable forest management and conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks	M4.1. t CO ₂ e reduced or avoided (including increased removals), forest and land use	2 650 000 t CO ₂ e of avoided emissions per year in the country for the period from 2000 to 2015	550 000 t CO ₂ e reduced	1 375 000 t CO ₂ e reduced	Biennial Update Report submitted to the UNFCCC (government) and available on the UNFCCC platform	The project and government partners can analyse the possibility of using a methodology, linked to international standards, to quantify the reduction of GHG emissions in Component 2 activities. This involves validation and certification so that they can be accounted for and recorded in the national measuring, reporting and verification system, and reported as part of the climate commitment defined in the nationally determined contributions. It is necessary to ensure the impact of interventions in light of the country's international commitments.
Outcomes	M5.0 <i>Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems</i>	M5.2 Number and level of effective coordination mechanisms	1 national coordination mechanism (REDD+ national committee) = Level 2 3 subnational coordination mechanisms (REDD+ regional committee) = Level 1	1 national coordination mechanism (REDD+ national committee) = Level 3 3 subnational coordination mechanisms (REDD+ regional committee) = Level 2	1 national coordination mechanism (REDD+ national committee) = Level 4 3 subnational coordination mechanisms (REDD+ regional committee) = Level 3	NFMS and REDD+ portal (including the REDD+ portal which will connect the full REDD+ platform) Meeting minutes of the REDD+ national committee Meeting minutes of the REDD+ regional committee	

Appendix 3. Results framework with methodological guidance for evaluation

	Description	Indicators	Baseline	Targets (mid-term)	Targets (final)	Sources and means of verification	Data collection methods and tools suggested by the Evaluation Team
	M9.0 Improved management of land or forest areas contributing to emissions reductions	M9.1 ha of land or forests under improved and effective management that contributes to CO ₂ emission reductions	0 ha of forests restored 0 ha of restored/rehabilitated agroforestry systems	500 ha of forest restored 1 200 ha of restored/rehabilitated agroforestry systems	1 500 ha of forest restored 3 650 ha of restored/rehabilitated agroforestry systems	NFMS and georeferenced data on the REDD+ web portal Evaluation of the implementation of the local development plan (report by the government)	A. It would be very useful to have data on geographical polygons of the project plots, not just points. Otherwise, the final Evaluation Team will have to include a specialist in charge of reconstructing and analysing these data. B. This involves the use of existing tools such as the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology (IUCN and WRI, 2014).
<i>Component 1. The national REDD+ architecture is finalized and operational for REDD+ results-based payments</i>							
Outputs	Interoperability of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ elements which allow for the monitoring of the national REDD+ process and unlock the potential future REDD+ results-based payments	Extent of interoperability of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ elements (National Investment Framework, Forest Emission Reference Level, NFMS and safeguard information system)	Extent = 2	Extent = 3	Extent = 4	Manuals, reports and data available on the REDD+ portal Documents submitted to the UNFCCC and available on the UNFCCC website (updated reference emissions level using more accurate data, disaggregated to the subnational level, taking into account forest degradation and its technical assessment, REDD+ technical annex of the Biennial Update Report, summary of the safeguard information system)	Training satisfaction questionnaires Knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys Ex-ante/ex-post training survey
<i>Component 2. Evidence-based and innovative jurisdictional REDD+ community-based activities are deployed</i>							
	Willingness of local farmers and smallholders, currently having customary land ownership rights to secure their land and respect local land-use plans	Proportion of farmers and smallholders with land access investing in zero-deforestation agriculture	4 150 farmers have only customary land ownership rights and are	50% of informed farmers apply for land certificates	80% of informed farmers apply for land certificates	Ministry of land certificate record Local government land-use plan assessment Random survey on the level of investment	PROMIRE/PAMAFOR database Advice/analysis from external experts

	Description	Indicators	Baseline	Targets (mid-term)	Targets (final)	Sources and means of verification	Data collection methods and tools suggested by the Evaluation Team
			unwilling to invest in productive activities		60% of the farmers applying for land certificates have received land certificates 80% of land owners with land certificates invest in agroforestry and forest restoration		
	Adoption of zero-deforestation practices and models by farmers	% of farmers trained by the project who apply zero-deforestation agriculture practices on their plots	0%	At least 40% of the trained farmers are implementing zero-deforestation practices for restoration of the degraded plots	80% of trained farmers are implementing zero-deforestation practices for restoration of the degraded plots	Georeferenced rehabilitated plots in the NFMS system and site visits to smallholders' activities by project monitoring specialists Randomized sampling check of beneficiaries	PROMIRE database Baseline to be developed with specific expertise Project procedures for agroforestry and reforestation activities Inventory of best practices and difficulties encountered by the project Use of existing tools such as the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology
		Survival rate of the planted tree species in the forest restoration activities	An average of 300 plants/ha are planted in the restored plots for zero-deforestation agroforestry,	Maintenance of plots shows that at least 60% of planted trees for agroforestry system and	Maintenance of plots shows that at least 80% of planted trees for agroforestry system and	Georeferenced rehabilitated plots in the NFMS system and site visits to smallholders' activities by project monitoring specialists	

Appendix 3. Results framework with methodological guidance for evaluation

	Description	Indicators	Baseline	Targets (mid-term)	Targets (final)	Sources and means of verification	Data collection methods and tools suggested by the Evaluation Team
			with a survival rate of 50%	forest restoration are surviving	forest restoration are surviving and additional seedlings are available in the tree nurseries		
		Change in farmers' knowledge, awareness and perception of best practices/benefits of forestry and agroforestry activities for future scaling up	To be determined	Baseline + 25%	Baseline + 50%	Knowledge awareness/perception survey	Develop a baseline utilizing tools such as knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys Ex-ante/ex-post training survey
		Level of technical capacity of the cooperatives to operate	1 cooperative = Level 3 2 cooperatives = Level 1	1 cooperative = Level 4 2 cooperatives = Level 2	1 cooperative = Level 5 2 cooperatives = Level 3	Cooperatives' official administrative status document and cooperatives registries	Analysis of cooperatives, to be provided to the evaluators at the final stage
	Smallholders and cooperatives diversifying their financial means linked to the cocoa value-chain	Extent of financial independence of cooperatives accessing private sector and microfinance institution resources for scaling up forestry and agroforestry activities to extend zero-deforestation cocoa production	2 cooperatives = Extent 1 1 cooperative = Extent 2	2 cooperatives = Extent 2 1 cooperative = Extent 3	2 cooperatives = Extent 3 1 cooperative = Extent 5	Contracts/credits with microfinance institutions and private companies	A list of the signed agreements

Methodological guidance

	List of the activities	Description	Data sources and means of verification
<i>Component 1. Finalization and operationalization of the REDD+ architecture for REDD+ results-based payments</i>			
<i>Output 1.1. REDD+ architecture finalized for REDD+ results-based payments</i>			
Activities	Activity 1.1.1 Update the national investment framework	The National Investment Framework will be updated to better reflect national and jurisdictional needs in terms of REDD+ policies and measures implementation.	The national investment framework's updated version available on the REDD+ website
	Activity 1.1.2 Update the reference emissions level with regional (subnational) estimates	An updated version of the reference emissions level will be submitted to the UNFCCC by 2022, integrating a GHG inventory that is consistent with all national submissions.	Updated reference emissions level submitted to the UNFCCC
	Activity 1.1.3 Update and consolidation of the NFMS	The NFMS will be improved with existing new technologies to monitor changes in forest cover at regular intervals, at both the national and regional levels, with community forests monitoring guidelines being published.	NFMS (including the REDD+ portal that will link the entire REDD+ platform)
	Activity 1.1.4 Finalization of the safeguard information system for its operationalization	The safeguard information system platform will be developed to be operational like the REDD+ projects' registry.	Summary of the safeguards information system
<i>Output 1.2. Warsaw Framework for REDD+ operationalized for REDD+ results-based payments</i>			
Activities	Activity 1.2.1 Development and operationalization of the benefit-sharing mechanism	A benefit-sharing plan accounting for carbon rights will be created at the national level.	The national benefit-sharing plan

Appendix 3. Results framework with methodological guidance for evaluation

	List of the activities	Description	Data sources and means of verification
	Activity 1.2.2 Development of the fund management mechanism's legal aspects	The REDD+ fund management mechanism will be created with the associated legal framework.	Regulatory texts adopted on the creation of the REDD+ national fund
	Activity 1.2.3 Operationalization of the grievance mechanism at national level	The complaint management mechanism will be developed.	Reports from the complaint management mechanism (committee)
	Activity 1.2.4 Design and operationalization of the web portal/platform	A web portal linking all tools will be developed for the national level.	NFMS (including the REDD+ portal linking the entire REDD+ platform)
	Activity 1.2.5 Finalization and implementation of free, prior and informed consent guidelines	Free, prior and informed consent guidelines will be finalized and implemented to support the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.	Free, prior and informed consent manual available on the REDD+ website
	Activity 1.2.6 Elaboration of mandatory reports for complying to the UNFCCC requirements	Official documents will have to be submitted to the UNFCCC by the government.	Reports submitted to the UNFCCC and available on the UNFCCC platform
	Activity 1.2.7 Development and implementation of the communications plan	The communications plan of the Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire will be updated to communicate REDD+ policies and measures and achievement towards national REDD+ strategy objectives.	Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire communications plan
	Activity 1.2.8 Development of the methodology for the nesting approach	A nesting methodology will be developed to start thinking about carbon markets that are already in place.	

	List of the activities	Description	Data sources and means of verification	
<i>Component 2. Evidence-based and innovative jurisdictional REDD+ community-based activities</i>			Data sources and means of verification	Suggestions by the Evaluation Team
<i>Output 2.1. Strengthened territorial planning and land security</i>				
Activities	Activity 2.1.1 Creation of local development plans	Twenty-three local development plans in the targeted villages will be developed.	Validation reports – local development plans Manuals of the local development plans (23 villages)	Monitoring the projects included in the local development plans
	Activity 2.1.2 Strengthening of land tenure security	Provide information sessions to local communities in order to explain the land tenure approach.	Joint action plan drawn up with PAMOFOR	PROMIRE/PAMOFOR database and guidance from the land tenure experts
<i>Output 2.2. Reinforced local governance</i>				
Activities	Activity 2.2.1 Establishment of 3 REDD+ regional committees	The project will also support three REDD+ regional committees in their functioning.	Meeting minutes from the REDD+ regional committee meetings	Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey
	Activity 2.2.2 Creation of 3 regional (subnational) grievance management committees	The project also supports three regional grievance management committees in their functioning.	Meeting minutes from the complaints management committee	Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey
	Activity 2.2.3 Operationalization of subnational benefit-sharing systems	The benefit-sharing mechanism at the subnational level will be developed and tested once the results-based payments are available.		

	List of the activities	Description	Data sources and means of verification	
<i>Output 2.3. Zero-deforestation agricultural production and reforestation</i>				
Activities	Activity 2.3.1. Agricultural technical support to small producers and restoration of degraded lands and forests	There will be the implementation of 3 250 ha of agrosystems and the restoration of 1 800 ha to improve producers' incomes, food security and resilience of ecosystems.	Georeferencing of the rehabilitated plots M&E reports	
	Activity 2.3.2. Conservation and restoration of natural habitats	There will be the conservation and restoration of specific landscapes in La Mé.	Georeferencing of the rehabilitated plots M&E reports	PROMIRE database
	Activity 2.3.3. Validation of the traceability system for sustainable cocoa production	The dissemination of standards will be linked to the traceability system.	Georeferencing of the rehabilitated plots M&E reports	
	Activity 2.3.4. Monitoring of agriculture and restoration activities	All activities detailed previously will have to be monitored to ensure consistency with rules, the goals targeted by the project and gender aspects.	M&E reports Project's annual activity report	PROMIRE database
<i>Output 2.4. Strengthened agricultural financing structures and business capacities for cocoa cooperatives and smallholders</i>				
Activities	Activity 2.4.1. Creation, strengthening and capacity building of cocoa cooperatives	Increase the investment capacity of cooperatives to enable them to develop their actions and gain financial autonomy.	Official document regarding the administrative status of the cooperatives and cooperative registers	Reports and analysis by technical experts
	Activity 2.4.2. Development of business plans and financial literacy for cooperatives and producers	Another kind of support will include training in business plan development, optimization of operations, accounting and bookkeeping, as well as marketing.	M&E reports Business plan	Final evaluation

	List of the activities	Description	Data sources and means of verification	
	Activity 2.4.3. Development of partnerships with private sector and microfinance institutions	Establish fair offtake agreements between the cooperatives and companies. Work with local microfinance institutions and investors.	Contracts/credits with microfinance institutions	PROMIRE database
	Activity 2.4.4. Strengthening of multistakeholder dialogue and cocoa innovation platforms	Share innovative tools and approaches through the global platform of the Global Environment Facility project.	Minutes from the multistakeholder dialogue platform sessions	
<i>Output 2.5. Communications and knowledge management</i>				
Activities	Activity 2.5.1. Capitalization of experience and results dissemination	Diffuse results through different supports to provide information about the project for the different stakeholders.	M&E reports Project's annual activity report	Develop clearly defined procedures for implementing the different components to encourage the replication of best practices

Appendix 4. Key stakeholders

Entities representing the Ivorian State

- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
- Permanent REDD+ Executive Secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire mechanism
- Regional councils of the three administrative regions of the project
- Subprefects of the areas covered by the project
- ANADER
- SODEFOR
- Coffee-Cocoa Council
- AFOR

Project governance, supervision and management bodies

- Project steering committee
- FAO Representation in Côte d'Ivoire
- PCU

The private sector in the cocoa sector

- Cocoa industrial companies
- Cocoa and Forests Initiative and the WCF, including 35 private companies
- Microfinance institutions

Project service providers

- ANADER
- Five NGOs in the forestry and agroforestry sectors
- Terinov cabinet (development of local development plans)
- PAMOFOR

Beneficiaries

- Sustainable cocoa production cooperatives
- Women's groups in the agriculture sector
- Individual farmers

Other potential partners (zero-deforestation agriculture projects)

Appendix 5. Final evaluation stage: perspectives and recommendations

1. As described in the evaluation's terms of reference, the Evaluation Team is responsible for designing an evaluation that covers the entire lifespan of the project. This appendix describes how the results of this report prepare for and support the future final evaluation of PROMIRE and how to best carry out data collection and preparation for the final evaluation stage.

Evaluation questions and matrix

2. The Evaluation Team developed a comprehensive evaluation matrix (see Appendix 2), which also includes the main questions proposed for the final evaluation.
3. We considered that some elements, such as the assessment of relevance at the design stage, have already been sufficiently considered in this evaluation report. Therefore, the Evaluation Team recommends that the questions below be mid-term evaluation questions:
 - i. Were relevant stakeholders, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, sufficiently involved in the design of the project?
 - ii. Was the project designed to promote sustainability?
4. It is important to note, however, that the continued relevance of the project (that is, relevance to the current state, not just at the time of design) is an area that the GCF and FAO consider to be important. It is also important to evaluate the project during the final evaluation phase. Therefore, the context of the particular policy landscape will need to be updated during the final phase.
5. Some areas have not been covered in depth in this evaluation report, particularly due to the current level of progress of the project. However, these areas must be fully analysed during the final evaluation, and they are reflected as such in the evaluation matrix. They include the probable impact of the project; the paradigm shift (as defined by the GCF, criteria of sustainability, scalability and reproducibility); and the sustainability and rigour of project interventions from an environmental⁴¹ and innovative point of view.
6. It is recommended that during the final phase, the Evaluation Team use the relevant sections of this report as starting points for their analysis. For example, we noted the importance of the involvement of partnerships with cocoa buyers (the private sector) for the sustainability of the project's results.

M&E plan and methodological guidelines for monitoring indicators

7. During the desk review and field mission, the Evaluation Team assessed the type of data that needs to be collected to inform the final evaluation. To guide the project team on the type and frequency of data that will be needed for the final evaluation of the project, the Evaluation Team has prepared some suggestions for monitoring individual indicators and data collection (see Appendix 3).

⁴¹ It is necessary to involve an agroecology and agroforestry specialist in the evaluation for these analyses.

8. Two points should be noted.
 - i. A knowledge, attitudes and practices survey to capture any lessons learned, an improvement in knowledge, and changes in perceptions and behaviours after the training should be provided as part of the project. The project team has already agreed that the project would benefit from these surveys and that they could begin to conduct them during the second half of the project implementation.
 - ii. For geospatial data, the project has a dataset with the geographic coordinates of each land parcel where the project activities and inputs were introduced. To answer questions about effectiveness and efficiency, the Evaluation Team can perform a geographic time series analysis during the final evaluation phase. However, what may be missing now are geographic polygons – not just longitude and latitude coordinates.

Data gaps

9. Our team identified some data gaps during the interim evaluation work. It will be important for the project team to address them quickly, as required during the final evaluation phase.
 - i. Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey or other questionnaires submitted before and after trainings: without this, the evolution of knowledge, awareness and perception of farmers is difficult to measure and the justification for future scaling is also questioned. The Evaluation Team found that the baseline has also not been developed systematically.
 - ii. Assessment of capacities (technical, marketing) and financial independence of the cooperatives participating in the project: this analysis must be carried out during project implementation, and the baseline must also be identified. Otherwise, as in the previous case, it is difficult to identify the changes triggered by the project.
 - iii. Geographic features are generally represented by points, lines or polygons: for evaluation at the final stage, it would be very useful to have data on geographic polygons of the plots and not just points. Otherwise, the Evaluation Team should include a specialist responsible for reconstructing and analysing these data.
10. In general, the Evaluation Team found a notable lack of baseline data for several indicators – especially gender indicators (for example, on women's income levels before the start of the project) (Bamberger, 2010).
11. Finally, it would be useful to have clear parameters, especially for the project's monitoring staff and service providers, vocabulary such as zero-deforestation agriculture, and sustainable agricultural practices and investments in zero-deforestation agriculture. For example: What is sufficient justification for a producer to say that he has adopted good agricultural techniques?

Appendix 6. Enabling factors in the project environment

1. The analysis of the factors of the project environment is focused on four basic indicators (core indicators) of the integrated results management framework (GCF, 2023a).
 - i. Core indicator 5: this involves the degree to which the GCF projects and programmes contribute to strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks for low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways determined by countries (six evaluation questions with a rating from 1 to 3 per question, that is, a maximum of 18 points).
 - ii. Core indicator 6: this involves the degree to which the GCF projects and programmes contribute to the deployment, diffusion, development or transfer of technologies and innovation (five evaluation questions with a rating from 1 to 3 per question, that is, a maximum of 15 points).
 - iii. Core indicator 7: this involves the degree to which the GCF projects and programmes contribute to market development and transformation at the sectoral, local or national level (four evaluation questions with a rating from 1 to 3 per question, that is, a maximum of 12 points).
 - iv. Core indicator 8: this involves the degree to which the GCF projects and programmes contribute to market development and transformation at the sectoral, local or national level (five evaluation questions with a rating from 1 to 3 per question, that is, a maximum of 15 points).
2. Generally speaking, for each element (question) to be noted, the evaluator is asked to choose from three levels of progress described in the integrated results management framework reference table. This is to be based on their overall assessment of the state of the project at a given moment. These ratings, which will be taken up during the final evaluation, could change for certain elements in one direction or another, depending on the evolution of the project. The aggregated scores of the four core indicators are presented in Appendix table 1 for the project status at mid-term.

Appendix table 1. Rating of the four basic indicators

Basic indicators	Low level	Medium level	High level
Core indicator 5 (Institution)	≤ 10	11 (11-14)	≥ 15
Core indicator 6 (Technology)	≤ 8	10 (9-11)	≥ 12
Core indicator 7 (Market)	≤ 5	(6-9)	10 ≥ 10
Core indicator 8 (Knowledge)	8 ≤ 8	(9-11)	≥ 12

Source:

Table based on the analysis of the Evaluation Team, following the model provided in: GCF. 2023a. *Evaluation operational procedures and guidelines for accredited entity-led evaluations*. Incheon, Republic of Korea. [Cited 25 October 2024].

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/evaluation-operational-procedures-and-guidelines-accredited-entity-led-evaluations>.

3. The following are elements of evaluation for basic Indicator 5.
 - i. The project is part of a coherent institutional framework that prioritizes the fight against climate change: the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; a national

- climate change strategy; and a national REDD+ mechanism that has developed a national REDD+ strategy. The project supports the national REDD+ mechanism.
- ii. The limited resources of the Ivorian State did not make it possible to complete the full implementation of the REDD+ mechanism. The project intervenes to finalize the REDD+ architecture and put it into effect at national and regional levels (Component 1).
 - iii. Efforts are being made to increase environmental awareness at the administrative level and in civil society. For example, the project has provided training for representatives of the prefectural body and civil society in this regard.
 - iv. The project has made it possible to set up REDD+ regional committees in the three project regions and plans to create regional exchange platforms. However, there is a need for an exchange platform at the national level to allow different projects to share their experiences.
 - v. The private sector signed a partnership with the government in 2017 and is currently implementing zero-deforestation cocoa production projects. Private sector actors signed a sustainability plan with the project for a future partnership.
 - vi. At local and national levels, NGOs have developed capacities in reforestation and agroforestry. Eight of them contribute to the implementation of PROMIRE through contracts. This will allow them to broaden their experiences, which they will be able to make use of in subsequent projects.

The aggregate rating for Indicator 5 is 11 out of 18, corresponding to the average level.

4. The following are elements of evaluation for basic Indicator 6.
 - i. The project promotes the reconversion of old cocoa plantations into more sustainable, more profitable agroforestry systems that preserve the forest. This innovation is based on the introduction of trees (fruit trees, timber) into existing cocoa plantations.
 - ii. The conversions of current plantations are financed thanks to partial or total project support. However, the government plans to mobilize funds for the implementation of its sustainable cocoa strategy, which was developed in 2022. For example, over the period from 2023 to 2025, the government plans to invest EUR 238 million (Interview with the Advisor to the Prime Minister for Agriculture in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 5 March 2023) for the execution of the sustainable cocoa strategy. Public structures have qualified human resources for the implementation of zero-deforestation cocoa programmes.

The aggregate rating for Indicator 6 is ten out of 15, corresponding to the average level.

5. The following are elements of evaluation for basic Indicator 7.
 - i. The international cocoa market is changing. The new European Union directive, which prohibits the importation of products resulting from deforestation from 2020 (European Union, 2023), requires a change in the method of cocoa production towards zero-deforestation cocoa. The PROMIRE project responds to this demand. In addition to cocoa, the project promotes the local development of the market for wood and food products. The project will also make it possible to operationalize the payment system for environmental services.
 - ii. Contact with microfinance and cocoa operators, support for the development of business plans for cooperatives, support for the production of organic cocoa, and the diversification of agricultural production are all opportunities for improving income and job creation.

- iii. Subsidizing the costs of tree seedlings and periodic maintenance charges, training given to producers, and support for cooperatives to develop their business plans are all factors that help to remove restrictions on the adoption of technology and reduce risks.
- iv. Market demand for sustainable and traceable cocoa is expected to increase in the future. The same goes for niche products such as organic cocoa and the fair trade market, which are among the targets of the cooperatives supervised by the project.

The aggregate rating for Indicator 7 is ten out of 12, corresponding to the high level.

6. The following are elements of evaluation for basic Indicator 8.

- i. Still untapped potential: the project has not yet implemented a knowledge management plan generated by activities designed to archive and capitalize on achievements linked to the technical implementation of the reconversion of plantations. Such knowledge can lead to the evaluation of necessary investments and their profitability and, generally, to the lessons learned during the entire process. However, there are plans to create exchange platforms in the three regions with other zero-deforestation initiatives.
- ii. The project has set up an M&E service. However, the completion of the basic analysis was delayed, so the project has lacked basic references for certain indicators.
- iii. For the time being, there is no mechanism at the national level for sharing information and experiences between zero-deforestation projects. To our knowledge, there are few examples where learning and knowledge generated in environmental projects have been used to develop new methodologies or standards. The SCOLUR-CI project intends to scale up the zero-deforestation cocoa production techniques validated within the framework of PROMIRE in nine other regions of Côte d'Ivoire.
- iv. During this project, ANADER modified the classic technique of planting and monitoring forest trees by introducing a microirrigation technique using drip bottle watering. This made it possible, according to their testimonies, to improve the survival rate of the plants, despite periods of drought.

The aggregate rating for Indicator 8 is eight out of 15, corresponding to the average level.

Office of Evaluation
evaluation@fao.org
www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy