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## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	PROGRAMME DE RESTAURATION DURABLE DES FORETS
Project Number:	2019-0875
Country:	Côte d'Ivoire
Project Description:	The project aims at protecting, rehabilitating and expanding forests in Ivory Coast through the financing of selected capital-intensive structural investments and soft-asset investments of a comprehensive national reforestation and forest rehabilitation programme.
EIA required:	Multi-scheme Framework Loan (FL) operation. Some of the schemes may require an EIA
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	no

### Environmental and Social Assessment

The operation comprises three main components:

- Component 1: Sustainable restoration of gazetted forests -GF (140 000 ha), including forest management planning, reforestation activities and necessary enabling activities.
- Component 2: Sustainable restoration of rural forests (5 000ha), including reforestation and livelihood restoration activities.
- Component 3: Enabling activities for supporting the Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests (SPREF), by implementing a forest cover monitoring system, an integrated management system, and reinforcing capacities for forest monitoring, protection, and fire prevention.

The Promoter is the Ministry of Water and Forests (MINEF), responsible for setting up the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the Project Implementation Units (PIUs) that will coordinate the work of Société de Développement des Forêts (SODEFOR) and other relevant local services. The Promoter will benefit of technical assistance (TA) for project preparation and implementation.

#### Environmental Assessment

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) is regulated by Law No. 96-766, and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is regulated by Order No. 2013-41. The relevant environmental authorities are the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Ecological Transition (MINEDDTE) and the National Environment Agency (ANDE) under the MINEDDTE.

During the implementation of Component 1, Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMP) will be developed to ensure alignment with international best practices on environmental protection, nature conservation, and sustainable forest management (SFM), particularly concerning public consultations, quality assurance, and monitoring. Technical Assistance (TA) is engaged by the Team Europe to support the project preparation and implementation and to ensure the alignment of environmental and forestry sector relevant national legislation,

<sup>1</sup> Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.



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processes, and practices with the EIB Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESFF).

### *Environmental impacts*

Considering the nature of the investments supported by this operation, the schemes anticipated to be implemented as part of the project are likely to deliver significant environmental benefits. These benefits include enhanced soil stabilization, improved ecosystem protection, and better habitat conditions for biodiversity. These aspects will be further evaluated during the appraisal of individual schemes under the FL.

The EU funded a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for the national forestry strategy (SPREF), with a focus on the scope of this operation, in line with national and EU legislation and the Promoter will provide to the EIB the outcome of the SEA process. For any scheme requiring an EIA, the Promoter shall carry out the EIA process and provide to the EIB the outcome of the process.

With the support of Team Europe TA, an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is under preparation and will be applied during the implementation of the whole project. The ESMF will be aligned with the EIB's E&S standards, and it will be used for screening the schemes against EIB's E&S policy and for identifying mitigation activities.

### *Biodiversity issues*

The principles underlying the investment programme are aligned with the SFM practices and include promotion of native species, maintenance of natural forest ecosystems, ensuring continuity of forest ecosystems and conservation of biodiversity (forests and habitats).

The activities to be implemented through the project are unlikely to have negative impacts on nature conservation areas due to their nature/type. In fact, these investments would support the further enhancement of habitat conditions for biodiversity. The reforestation and enrichment planting schemes will make use of a variety of locally adapted tree and shrub species that will be planted in mixed and mosaic patterns. By promoting international best practices in forest management, including forest certification, the project will improve the health and vitality of forest ecosystems, and will enhance their sustainability, biodiversity and their ability to provide ecosystem services.

Assessment of the project impact on biodiversity and/or protected areas will be carried out as per the national legislation. Compliance with the national forest and biodiversity legislation, as well as alignment with EU legislation (Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Birds Directive 2009/147/EC) and the EIB Environmental and Social (E&S) Standards will be further checked during appraisal of individual schemes allocations under the FL.

### *Climate change adaptation*

The project includes actions to strengthen the resilience of forest ecosystems and the local population. It contributes to improving forest health and growth. It strengthens the resilience of forest ecosystems against climate change and the local supply for sustainable forest products as well as ecosystem services through conservation and development of national forest resources and promotion of SFM practices. Forest protection and reforestation are essential for improving soil quality and restoring the balance of local ecosystems, on which the local population depends.

### *Physical climate change risks*

In terms of physical climate change risks, the sub-projects are exposed to risks such as *e.g.*, drought, heat waves, wildfires, water stress, increase in temperatures, or flood. A Climate Risk Vulnerability Analysis will be requested at allocation stage and the schemes will have to take into consideration the adapted activities needed to mitigate the identified risks.

The project has been assessed for Paris alignment and is aligned with the Paris Alignment Framework – Low Carbon of the EIB, Table E - Bioeconomy, *Investment in nature and*



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*biodiversity conservation and restoration, and investment in subsectors such as sustainable forestry.*

## **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

Through the various sub-projects supported, it is estimated that the operation will sequester and store substantial amounts of carbon compared to the baseline situation. This would be mainly done by increasing the forest carbon pool in the country through reforestation works, and by rehabilitating degraded forests and ecosystems, including through enrichment planting, soil and water conservation measures, thereby improving the management and carbon enrichment of existing (forest) ecosystems.

## **EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework**

Côte d'Ivoire is a signatory to the Paris Climate Agreement under the UNFCCC<sup>2</sup> and its NDC commits to an unconditional target of decreasing economy-wide emissions by 30.41% reduction in emissions by 2030 as compared to year 2012. This target includes Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sectors.

## **Social Assessment**

The project is expected to deliver significant social benefits and stimulate economic development in rural areas. It aims to enhance local capacities and technical skills within the sector, create employment opportunities for local communities, and promote equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The project will not require land acquisition or cause any physical displacement. However, some economic displacement and loss of access to resources in the medium to long term may occur. The project will be partly implemented in gazetted forests and buffer areas, where many informal occupants are engaged in cocoa, coffee, and other farming activities.

Farmers with unauthorized crops or plantations will be allowed to continue using the land in gazetted forests, provided they sign agroforestry contracts that gradually introduce forestry species into their parcels. At the end of the agreed period, the areas will be restored, and the farmers will be compensated and their livelihoods restored according to the Livelihood Restoration Framework (under preparation).

One of the project aim is to contribute to women's access to income generating opportunities in the forestry sector. The project gender assessment confirms that women in the project locations are active across the forest value chain and often depend on forests for their livelihoods. However, women's forest related activities are primarily of subsistence rather than income generating nature and their participation in the forest management decision making process, can be substantially improved. The promoter has a gender strategy in place that will be complemented by a project specific Gender Action Plan (GAP). The GAP will include activities focused on improving women's livelihood in forestry sector (in the project area) and the promotion of an inclusive workplaces across the project.

The promoter is preparing an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) aligned with EIB Environmental and Social Standards. The ESMF includes a Livelihood Restoration Framework (LRF), a Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF), and a grievance mechanism, with technical assistance support. The identification of impacted farmers will take place during the first phase of preparing participatory forest management plans.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



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## Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement activities have been carried out during the SEA process for the National Forest Strategy (SPREF) and during the identification phase of the project components. Further public consultation and stakeholder engagement will be carried out as per the applicable national legislation at project schemes level in line with a stakeholder engagement plan currently under preparation. As part of component 1, the project also includes the preparation of participatory forest management plans for each forest. Technical Assistance will be in place to further support project preparation, schemes allocations and implementation.

## Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The project will involve the employment of both direct and third-party workers. Labour management procedures are being prepared in accordance with EIB standards, which strictly prohibit the use of child labour. While the project does not directly finance cocoa production, activities such as plantation, maintenance, and harvest in forest or agroforestry settings (e.g., agroforestry contracts with informal farmers) may indirectly involve child labour, particularly in family-run plantations. To mitigate this risk, specific measures is being incorporated into the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). These include monitoring the Chain of Custody as part of supervision activities and reporting, as well as commissioning an independent third-party annual audit on child labour across all project components, which will be the subject of a project undertaking..

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Given the nature of the operation (FL), the environmental and social impacts and mitigants will be evaluated at allocation stage. The Bank will require the Promoter to implement the subprojects in compliance with the EIB Environmental and Social standards.

Overall, the project is expected to deliver positive net social and environmental benefits. If required, ESIA studies shall be prepared according to the National Legislation and to the satisfaction of the Bank. The Promoter shall provide the Bank proof of no negative impacts on biodiversity or that the appropriate mitigation measures are being taken according to the applicable national law, and with the principles of EU biodiversity strategy.

Conditions for first disbursement not linked to an allocation:

- The Promoter commits to update, finalize and submit to the satisfaction of the Bank the following documents: the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Occupational Health and Safety Plan (OSHP), Livelihood Restoration Framework (LRF), Labour Management Procedures (LMP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) including the Grievance Management Mechanism (GMM). All documents must be aligned with the EIB Environmental and Social Standards.
- The Promoter commits to have an expert on Climate Risk Assessment in place for managing physical climate risks to the schemes of this operation, to the satisfaction of the bank (Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment - CRVA).

Conditions for all disbursements:

- The Promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes that require an ESIA and/or biodiversity assessment according to national law and EIB Standards without, prior to commitment, receiving the consent from the competent authority, and the ESIA having been reviewed by EIB and made available to the public.
- For schemes (to be procured as works) not requiring ESIA according to national laws and EIB E&S Standards, the Promoter will conduct an identification and analysis of stakeholders and put in place a Grievance Mechanism acceptable to the Bank.



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- For schemes entailing economic displacement, the promoter will prepare and submit a Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) in line with the LRF and EIB standards satisfactory to the Bank.

The following E&S relevant undertakings shall be adhered to for all schemes under the FL:

- The Promoter shall store and maintain updated the relevant Environmental & Social documents (including environmental studies related to the ESIA, Biodiversity Assessments, Environmental, Social Management Plans, Livelihood Restoration Plans and Stakeholder Engagement Plans) to be provided to the Bank upon request.
- The Promoter shall implement and operate the Project in compliance with EIB's Environmental and Social Standards, the ESMF and related management plans, as well as ILO core labour standards, in particular with the inclusion of provisions (for contractors) for the respect of principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination in employment, anti-trafficking in person and gender-based violence at the workplace, and equal access for men and women to employment opportunities and grievance mechanism.
- The Promoter commits to develop a project specific Gender Action Plan (GAP) as part of the ESMF.
- Noting the EIB's zero tolerance towards child labour, the promoter shall commit to annual independent audits of all Project components/schemes as a proactive measure to prevent and address child labour in line with the requirements of EIB's Standard 7. .
- Schemes triggering physical resettlement will not be considered for EIB financing.