
FINAL EVALUATION

EMBEDDING COMMUNITY REAL TIME MONITORING TO SUSTAIN LIVELIHOODS AND FORESTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



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FINAL EVALUATION

EMBEDDING COMMUNITY REAL TIME MONITORING TO SUSTAIN LIVELIHOODS AND FORESTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Project Name	Embedding community Real Time Monitoring (RTM) to sustain livelihoods and forests in West and Central Africa
Country	Cameroon, Ghana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo
Implementing organisations	RFUK, FODER, Civic Response, GASHE, CJJ
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FINAL EVALUATION OF RTM PROJECT WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. BACKGROUND	5
3. EVALUATION FINDINGS	10
3.1 RELEVANCE	10
3.2 APPROPRIATENESS	14
3.3 EFFICIENCY & PROJECT MANAGEMENT	15
3.5 EFFECTIVENESS	20
3.6 IMPACT	26
3.7 PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT	31
3.8 EQUITY	32
3.9 SUSTAINABILITY	34
3.10 REPLICABILITY	37
3.11 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	38
4. LESSONS LEARNED	41
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	43
6. CONCLUSION	47
ANNEX 1 - TOR (SEPARATE)	
ANNEX 2 - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	49
ANNEX 3 - STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED	50
ANNEX 4 - TOPIC GUIDES	51
ANNEX 5 - EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY CAMEROON	54
ANNEX 6 - EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY GHANA	56
ANNEX 7- EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY DRC	58
ANNEX 8 - EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY ROC	60

GLOSSARY

APEM	Association pour la Protection des Peuples et des Espèces Menacés
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CIDT	Centre for International Development and Training, United Kingdom
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CJJ	Comptoir Juridique Junior, Republic of Congo
CSIFM	Civil Society Independent Forest Monitoring
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDEF	Direction Départementale de l'Economie Forestière, RoC
DfID-FCDO	Department for International Development – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
DGF	Direction de Gestion Forestière, DRC
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FC	Forestry Commission, Ghana
FGDH	Forum pour la Gouvernance et les Droits de l'Homme
FGMC	Forest, Governance, Markets and Climate
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FL	ForestLink
FSD	Forest Services Division, Ghana
FODER	Forêts et Développement Rural, Cameroon
GASHE	Groupe d'Action pour la Sauvegarde de l'Homme et son Environnement, DRC
GTP	Groupe de Travail Plaidoyer, DRC
IFM	Independent Forest Monitoring
ISO	International Standards Organisation
MINFOF	Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune, Cameroon
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OGF	Observatoire de la Gouvernance Forestière
OTP	Open Timber Portal
PGDF	Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts, RoC
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RENOI-RDC	Reseau National d'Observation Indépendante, DRC
RFUK	Rainforest Foundation United Kingdom
RoC	Republic of the Congo
RTM	Real-time monitoring
SNOIE	Système Normalisé pour l'Observation Indépendante Externe
SRA	Social Responsibility Agreement
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Before we thought that independent observations must be the best, but the project has demonstrated that local communities can contribute significantly to forest monitoring” - DRC, Associate Partner

The evaluation of the ‘Embedding community Real Time Monitoring (RTM) to sustain livelihoods and forests in West and Central Africa’ project was undertaken from October 2020 to January 2021 by a team of five independent external evaluators, based on the Terms of Reference provided by the Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK). The research was conducted according to a qualitative methodology which included systematic desk-based study of all key project documentation, interviews with all project partners, associated partners, and other national, regional and local-level stakeholders, including community representatives. Unfortunately, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to conduct any international travel, and no site visits were therefore possible. In all, 90 participants (stakeholders and partners) were interviewed for this evaluation.

The RTM project was highly relevant to global efforts to improve forest management and tackle deforestation, especially those which seek to tackle illegal logging in timber-producing low- and middle-income countries. Overall, the project was well-conceived, and the intervention objectives and design were highly relevant to the key stakeholders involved in the project (local communities, project partners and local and national government), as well as to donor priorities through a strengthening of FLEGT VPA. It is also commendable that

the design was sensitive and responsive to the unique circumstances in each of the four countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Republic of the Congo). The project piloted and demonstrated the proof of concept that forest monitoring can be conducted by trained monitors from local communities, even in extremely remote areas, using novel technological approaches to capture data in real-time, such as satellites (where there is no phone signal coverage) or SMS (where possible), and that this data can be credible enough to be used by authorities planning enforcement missions.

The project was ambitious, and its impacts were very impressive, especially given the interruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which substantially disrupted the third year of activities. This had a significant impact on the institutionalisation phase of the project, and this evaluation has attempted to take into account these external factors when assessing outputs and impacts. It should be noted that these are challenging operational contexts, even without the additional challenge of COVID-19, and as such the evaluation team highly commends the work of all implementing partners throughout 2020. Unfortunately, while project activities were suspended, many logging companies seized upon the opportunity to continue (or even redouble) illegal logging activities. This is further evidence that the project needs to be able to continue towards embedding locally led RTM monitoring into the legal framework and successfully identifying a financially sustainable mechanism in order to be able to secure and capitalise upon the gains that have already been achieved.

The intended outputs of the project were to roll out a “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of Real Time Forest Monitoring ‘Forestlink’ with forest communities in Cameroon, Ghana, DRC and RoC, ensuring that the technology is sustainably established and institutionalised, while supporting enforcement actions and better protection of community rights. The project achieved its primary intended outcome by demonstrating that strengthening participation from the local to the national level is

highly effective in strengthening forest governance. RFUK and partners had initially planned to use RTM and the Forestlink technology as a means of holding local authorities accountable, but as the project progressed, it proved to be a collaborative tool that was useful to forest authorities.

The evaluation could not draw on baseline or end-line information to measure actual reductions in illegalities, but there did appear to be progress towards reduced illegalities and an improvement with respect to enhancing advocacy for, and ensuring the rights and benefits of, poor people, local communities and indigenous people.

The project also built the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) and governments and made independent forest monitoring (IFM) more efficient. Furthermore, it supported enforcement, and improved justice, transparency, monitoring and whistleblowing. In some countries, such as DRC, this meant enshrining community monitoring in law (Decree 072) and advocacy work leading to the first tribunal on forest illegalities that the country has seen since the 2002 Forest Code was created. The project has led to governance reforms that reduce the illegal use of forest resources and benefit poor people, as well as policy and legal reforms that aim to eliminate illegal logging, and has substantially contributed towards the processes of governance by facilitating law enforcement through better collaboration between government at local, provincial and central levels, civil society, forest communities, private logging companies, and the judiciary. Unfortunately, at project closure - in part due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic - the RTM system is likely to be sustainable in only a few communities across the project countries, and without additional financial support and capacity building, benefits to communities and enforcement are likely to erode quickly.

Nonetheless, the RTM project is replicable and has the potential to apply lessons from the timber trade, to trade in other commodities that impact forests and people who depend on forests for their livelihoods. A number of lessons have been learned relating to (1) the importance of building relationships and dialogues between administration, CSOs, logging companies, and communities; (2) the power of working in networks when advocating for change; (3) the credibility which

is brought with real-time data; (4) proof of concept that communities can conduct forest monitoring, and are even more motivated if they have legal ownership of land (e.g. Cameroon); (5) the need to plan proactively when dealing with actors committing illegalities; (6) the fact that those on the frontline face significant security risks which cannot be underestimated; (7) the fact that institutionalisation is a lengthy process that requires sustained effort and multiple phases; (8) the fact that enforcement is the government's responsibility, and international advocacy and follow up legal support and action is as important as reporting illegalities in the first place in contexts where corruption is pervasive and the government lacks resources, in order to promote transparency and good governance; and (9) strengthening engagement with other actors vested in forest legality (Ministry of Justice or Ministry of Finance) will help sustain the project.

This was an extremely ambitious project given the time frame, and one that faced enormous challenges, particularly in certain contexts, where patron-client political economies meant that the project was struggling against powerful vested interests which sought to protect logging companies. As previous RFUK studies have documented, Central and West African countries have laid out plans to become "emerging economies", all of which rely heavily on extractive activities such as logging, mining, oil exploitation and agro-industry (almost exclusively run by foreign companies) and infrastructure building. According to this model of economic growth, forests are rich sources of potential wealth to be exploited. However, pursuing this form of development lacks a long-term vision for the sustainable management of forest resources. The negative consequences of externally-driven initiatives in the region include forest degradation and the abuse of indigenous and forest peoples' rights - outcomes which are incompatible with climate action and mitigation. It is clear that within this system, benefits do not trickle down, and that poverty and ecological crisis continue to deepen.

In consideration of all aspects of the project, the evaluation made the following recommendations:

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The project should continue. External funding (perhaps from international climate finance) is likely to be needed to support this work because a) there is a genuine limit to resources to ensure good governance across vast territories often in highly remote locations and b) the forests across the Congo Basin can be considered as a global public good, key in mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. Significant momentum has been achieved in DRC and, notably, in Ghana. In Ghana, a strong engagement with the government should continue to be pursued as there seems to be a real possibility of institutionalisation of the community-based RTM approach. Progress has also been made in RoC and Cameroon which would benefit from continuing into a further RTM Phase.
- Donors should provide longer term funding - at a minimum of 5 years of funding for projects that are a) seeking the institutionalisation of improved governance structures and b) are operating in countries with weak governance. Longer funding cycles would allow for continuity and efficiency, and longer time spent on implementation (rather than effort spent renewing project formulation and obtaining funding approval).
- All project partners (RFUK, GASHE, FODER, CJJ, Civic Response and associated partners) to make more use of the data (they have available) in advocacy efforts. They should keep a ready to use record of illegalities to be used for national and international advocacy.
 - » RFUK should ensure that their data across different complementary projects and programmes is holistically combined and analysed and used to help inform policy and strategy decisions of donors e.g. feed into the extension to FGMC.
 - » RFUK, in partnership with other international NGOs, can also make more use of their data in the course of their advocacy work, in order to challenge donors to use their funding as leverage to put pressure on non-complying States with persistent illegal forestry practices.

RELEVANCE

- Assess corruption levels in a given country and adapt RTM strategy in high corruption countries to expose corruption and illegalities and encourage the government to act, which can feed into better Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRD) protection strategies. If corruption levels are very high it is likely that at some level authorities will not be willing to collaborate as the alerts would impinge on their own personal interests (e.g. often ministers have their own 'protected' logging concessions from which they benefit and it is not necessarily logged following law). DRC showed that a good media strategy coupled with support to advocacy networks and legal expertise can work even in contexts of high corruption.

APPROPRIATENESS

- Expand the project into new communities who are carefully selected. Selection should be carried out in collaboration with administration at the right level. To do so must consider characteristics of communities involved (distance from yearly cutting sites, road access) but also include a fund for community identification missions in the project budget. Ghana achieved this well, but in RoC, selection was based on collaboration with another project without thoroughly considering implications for their project activities (e.g. of distance of communities to the future logging sites). During the identification missions, interest from the communities and commitment to monitoring illegalities should be a fundamental criterion for community selection.
- As part of this, RFUK and partners should develop readily available and shareable maps of community locations and logging sites and have these updated regularly to help track movements of illegal activities.

EFFICIENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Facilitate the development of a clear policy and strategy for access to FL (Collectaur, Monitaur) by CSOs and government representatives in all project countries (based on the work done in Ghana on the

User Agreement and Data Governance Policy). This policy should be clearly communicated to partners so that they understand why (or not) they are being granted access.

- Include enough budget to support recruitment of legal experts and lawyers to support community cases deriving from alerts - at appropriate rates. These lawyers need to be well trained on forest regulations and procedures to support community forests and indigenous rights – and work in conjunction with the media (that act as a layer of protection by giving a lot of visibility to the cases) as they may need to challenge judicial level corruption.
- RFUK should improve their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the RTM project. The RTM project involved a substantial amount of data which needed to be managed better to improve the use of the data (especially for advocacy and the monitoring of trends). At the time of evaluation, this has been taken on board by RFUK and incorporated into the new RTM Phase plan.

» For example, FL data should be able to be exported in a user friendly format in Excel/csv to enable routine and systematic data analysis by time, by community, by country, to filter by those that were verified, and to include tracking of SRAs per community and whether these were met or being followed up on.

» In particular, improvements can be made to record keeping of log frames, e.g. tracking when milestones are achieved, and in general tracking targets in simplified formats alongside the longer narrative Technical Reports.

» Another improvement could be made in defining measurable SMART indicators for project impact.

» In the next phase, RFUK should ensure that baselines and end-line assessments are carried out. A thorough baseline should be conducted before another 12-15 months of work, to be able to understand the current socio-economic development of communities, the current level of illegal activity, and conduct an end-line in order to be able

to measure progress in impacts such as improved livelihoods or reduction in illegal activities.

- A few extra materials should be provided to improve the endurance and basic comfort of community monitors and outreach officers, for example, outreach officers could be provided with camping bedding/ (lit de camp) so they can stay longer and in more comfort in communities; and boots, waterproof coats, and either a means of transport (e.g. a bicycle) or an allowance to cover the cost of transport for both outreach officers and community monitors.
- A budget line should be included to improve the communication means (e.g. reliable internet connection which enables Skype/Zoom use) for implementing partners. This is important to enable secure communication with associated partners, as WhatsApp was not considered to be secure due to the risk of phones being tapped.

EFFECTIVENESS

- Proactively prevent tensions arising in communities. Devote some more attention to the fact that empowerment of monitors does not equal empowerment within the community. Intra-community dynamics need to be further considered to avoid tensions arising and there should be further reflection on how to involve community leaders across the different communities in the project. A one-size-fits-all strategy will not be appropriate here as different community leaders showed varying degrees of openness or hostility towards the project, and different levels of corruption with regards to obtaining (and distributing) the SRAs. Careful community-based assessments are needed to resolve and prevent tensions from inhibiting the long-term success of the independent community-based monitoring. Systematically documenting the Free Informed Prior Consent (FPIC) process may also support in resolving any tension that may arise during the course of the project.
- RFUK and all partners should ensure there is regular data cleaning so that the data is a reliable historical source of information (e.g. many alerts were verified but this not recorded as TRUE in the database and there were no dates given for the verification missions in the centralised database).

- RFUK should finalise the technological improvements to FL so that end-to-end process allows community monitors to tell if their alerts are tackled or not and by whom. This would ensure accountability across the system - from the verifier who should respond to the alerts, through to the authorities who should conduct a mission and enforce the law if it is needed. Greater transparency and accountability in the system from the communities' perspective is important in sustaining their motivation to monitor illegal activities.
- Strengthen the involvement of the judiciary in future phases, by systematically ensuring training on forest legislation is given to relevant magistrates and they are brought into conversation with CSOs and any lawyers who are also involved in the project.

IMPACT

- Continue to expand the work by conducting new 'anticipatory' training with non-target communities before logging companies arrive in or near their forests, so many more communities know what their rights are before interacting with logging companies. This could be small scale training in partnership with community members who are already trained to help galvanise the cascading training that is already happening or be modelled on an idea of 'training the trainers' i.e. training of community-based trainers. This would facilitate the spreading of knowledge and link with the concept of expanding the tool and areas covered to follow the illegal activities in a rolling fashion.

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- Assess the effectiveness of training community paralegals and if effective expand this initiative across the communities and countries. When possible, collaborate with partners (e.g. Client Earth) and other projects involved in community legal activities to fund this stream of work.

EQUITY

- Systematically push for more female field staff to be hired in implementing agencies, so that they act as models for women in communities to be involved. Experience across countries shows that having women staff from the implementing agencies working in

communities motivates stronger female participation amongst monitors.

- Continue to facilitate the participation of women and marginalised people as monitors, notably by completing the development of guidelines related to diversity and inclusion based on the lessons learned gathered in Phase 2. Guidelines should include the following: work with young women and established women leaders, explain why not only men should be involved (i.e. to ensure community SRAs are well used), ensure timing of training and missions for selection of monitors are compatible with livelihood activities by women and indigenous people, communicate with village leaders/elders to explain why it is important to involve women, continue to invite women and indigenous people to be represented in village meetings.
- Develop training sessions and material so that all (present and future) implementing partners using FL can implement activities in line with such guidelines.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Improve the security training for everyone involved, and especially community members working on the frontline as monitors, as the risks are very high. The design and provision of comprehensive personal safety training to monitors may warrant a specific collaboration with Greenpeace for this.
- Based on the findings in this evaluation and recommendations provided in the Sustainability Report (TLLG 2020) develop a strategy to ensure sustainable engagement of forest monitors – based on an understanding of the costs and benefits that monitoring entails for both monitors and communities and what the incentive measures may need to be. Engage all implementing partners in a reflection on how to provide community incentives and appropriate cost reimbursement for monitors, for their time and risks taken. This will be especially important to avoid the dropping out of the project of marginalised people participating as monitors – especially given that only a few have fulfilled the criteria (literacy and availability to do the job) and are ready to challenge norms for the sake of their community rights and forests.

- RFUK and partners could consider introducing a rotating position of community monitoring, whereby a few monitors are responsible for the main RTM activities for a month and pass on the responsibilities to another set of monitors the month after. In this way, monitoring is a) viewed as more of community activity, as the responsibility is more clearly shared, and b) the costs and risks are also spread amongst the community better.
- RFUK should continue to work to support and improve implementing partners' technical expertise to be autonomous from RFUK in maintaining the FL system much earlier in the next project cycle, this would include specific training on running the database, troubleshooting issues, and finding means to paying for the cloud storage, with clear milestones on progress.
- officials with personal interests in logging). Wherever possible, RFUK should seek to collaborate with media and other international organisations to raise awareness of corruption links to illegal logging across the value chain.
- Ensure that where illiteracy is very high to use illustrated material systematically when educating communities on their key rights instead of brochures and written material for community awareness raising
- Include a budget line for engaging with national media (as done in DRC) and training of media personalities and journalists which seems promising, as done in Ghana.

INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION

- RFUK to expand and strengthen informal collaboration with key international NGOs and media outlets interested in logging illegalities (e.g. The Environmental Investigation Agency, Global Witness, RFI, The Guardian) to provide relevant information to their stories without exposing local NGOs to potential retaliation from interested parts (e.g. government

The main evaluation findings are summarised below:

CRITERION	EVALUATOR'S SUMMARY COMMENTS	EVALUATOR RATING
Relevance	The intervention objectives and design were highly relevant to the key stakeholders (communities, partners, government, and donors) involved in the project, and the design was sensitive and responsive to the unique circumstances in each country. This was in part due to RFUK's excellent analysis of existing policy and regulatory frameworks before the start of the project, and its continued work with highly motivated implementing partners who ensured the involvement of government partners from the start of the project. The FL application provided added value for community users in remote communities, allowing them to send alerts anonymously and without need for the internet or phone signal. Local government stakeholders also had an interest in using FL and benefited from the support of communities when attempting to detect illegalities in a trust-worthy manner.	Highly Satisfactory
Appropriateness	The selection of communities in Ghana, Cameroon, and DRC was highly appropriate as they were either living in the forests or at the fringe of the forests close to logging concessions. This criterion has still scored highly satisfactory, despite communities in RoC living far (15-40km) from the logging sites, because at the point communities in RoC were selected they were living next to logging concessions but these had rotated by the time the communities began monitoring resulting in the large distances to travel. Logging concessions rotate yearly and it is not possible to predict accurately from one year to the next the exact location.	Highly Satisfactory

CRITERION	EVALUATOR'S SUMMARY COMMENTS	EVALUATOR RATING
Appropriateness (continued)	living next to logging concessions but these had rotated by the time the communities began monitoring resulting in the large distances to travel. Logging concessions rotate yearly and it is not possible to predict accurately from one year to the next the exact location.	
Efficiency and Project Management	<p>There were some inefficiencies in the project including: (1) timing and delays at the beginning of the project, (2) the distances community forest monitors were required to travel in some countries (RoC), (3) inefficiencies in the functioning of technology (partly external as forest conditions are damp and challenging to technology longevity), (4) delays in verification missions beyond the control of the project which limited the real-time nature of enforcement actions, and (5) some restrictions in the budget. The project countries were challenging to work in, often with large distances between communities and relevant authorities which is problematic when attempting to institutionalise community-based evidence into national processes.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the extent to which the outputs were efficiently achieved in relation to the inputs was high. Furthermore, FL RTM has provided an option for real-time monitoring which was previously not an option, and therefore represents an undoubtable improvement from the situation beforehand. The overall set-up built on relationships developed during Phase 1 and expanded to bring in a fourth country (RoC) and partner, C.JJ. Each country developed their own country specific framework and set up, based broadly on a multi-layered approach (local – regional – national) which was mediated and supported by the activities of a highly engaged multi-stakeholder network of CSOs.</p>	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	It was difficult to measure achievement of all the outputs as formulated in the original and revised logical framework. Data was not consistently and systematically collected and recorded in such a way that would make it possible to make comparisons between baseline and end-line e.g. for planned achievements such as 100% SRA received, nor in measuring a reduction in forest illegalities. Where it was not possible to measure the achievement of outcomes, this has been highlighted, and stakeholder evidence to show progress towards their achievement has been provided. Overall, stakeholders perceived that substantial progress had been made towards achieving most of the planned outputs in DRC, Ghana and Cameroon, despite activities being suspended in the third year the project due to disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This had a particularly negative impact on activities in the RoC, which were only just beginning. Much of the main institutionalising and strengthening of the project in all countries would happen in Y3, including: (1) continuing to build the capacity of stakeholders through further training (communities, government, associated partners); (2) ensuring pre-verification and verification missions to further strengthen the use of ForestLink RTM by target communities; (3) working to further include forest administration in the alert cycle and verification process. It is therefore unsurprising that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the project did not progress as far into institutionalisation as had originally been intended.	Unable to measure/ assess all outputs. Evidence of impressive progress being made towards meeting ambitious targets.
Impact	Whilst there were country specific differences in impact, the overall impact (socio-economic, political and environmental consequences) exceeded expectations in the given timeframe (which was also reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic), especially given that the project was undertaken in extremely difficult operating environments with many external factors beyond its control. The stated impact of the project was that "Deforestation and other forms of environmental damage diminish, and the rights and livelihoods of forest communities are strengthened". This is an ambitious goal, which was nonetheless broadly achieved. Firstly, communities' knowledge on their rights was unequivocally strengthened across all communities in all countries, and many community members had used this knowledge to advocate – successfully in many cases – for their rights to be respected. Furthermore, knowledge of rights also increased in other neighboring (non-project) communities, which is indicative of the high degree of appropriation and empowerment felt by the target communities; the communities clearly internalised their rights and had a desire to share this knowledge with their peers.. Secondly, despite the fact that data is somewhat limited (as there was no baseline and end-line information), there are early indications that livelihoods were strengthened. For example, in DRC, villagers gained better access to markets (to sell their produce) via the use of logging company vehicles. Thirdly, while this evaluation was not able to	Highly Satisfactory

CRITERION	EVALUATOR'S SUMMARY COMMENTS	EVALUATOR RATING
Impact (continued)	to make a quantitative assessment on the reduction in deforestation and other forms of environmental damage (due to a lack of baseline and end-line data on tree loss and regrowth), some communities in countries reported a drastic reduction in deforestation. However, others suggested the reduction was modest and more gradual. These mixed results could, however, be due to the fact that many of the activities in the final year were truncated as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, meaning that the project only had two years of full operation in which to achieve its ambitions.	
Participation and Empowerment	The project created a system that enabled communities to collaborate with authorities in forest law enforcement and allowed local governments to appreciate the role that communities can play in supporting forest law enforcement, particularly in Ghana and DRC. In most countries, the project strengthened trust between implementing partners (and CSOs in general) and the government. This development was facilitated by the organisation of joint verification missions, training workshops, and through collaboration in negotiating community SRAs. However, in Cameroon, the project struggled to foster collaboration, and at times even led to increased conflicts as monitors became even more aware of the extent of corruption within local administration and were threatened by forest authorities because of their work as monitors. Nonetheless, some joint missions between CSOs and Forest authorities were organised, leading to sanctions and the seizure of timber. In RoC, dialogue between communities and administration remained weak, with no exchanges facilitated by the project. This was mainly due to the fact that it was still in the pilot phase and there were many delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.	Satisfactory
Equity	The inclusion of women was particularly successful in Cameroon and DRC, and all countries attempted to involve women as much as possible. Some cultural aspects made it more difficult for women to participate including communities' misconception that women would be incapable of doing the work required of monitors, a lack of self-confidence by women themselves, and jealousy from husbands or family who did not approve of their participation. However, RFUK and implementing partners attempted to overcome this in all communities in which they were working. There are no indigenous people in project areas in Cameroon and Ghana, only in RoC and DRC. However, the project struggled to engage them meaningfully in both countries. Some countries struggled to find indigenous people and women who met the selection criteria, especially in terms of literacy and ability to use a phone. The lack of payments to monitors was also a central issue for the continued engagement of women and indigenous people.	Satisfactory
Sustainability	Sustainability was assessed as referring to the extent to which the mechanisms and model of community-based monitoring set in place by the project would continue to benefit communities and forest law enforcement after the end of the project. An external Sustainability Assessment (TLLG, 2020), commissioned by RFUK in addition to this evaluation concluded that at project closure, the RTM system is likely to be sustainable in only a few communities across the project countries. It concludes that without additional financial support and capacity building, benefits to communities and enforcement are likely to erode quickly. At the time of writing this evaluation, there was the possibility of a 15 months extension (until June 2022) for the project. This time could be used to build further the capacity of the IFM networks and local government staff across project countries.	Moderately Satisfactory
Replicability	The process is very replicable including the majority of unanticipated positive enablers and most of the innovations. RFUK is also implementing ForestLink in Peru, Liberia and soon in the Ivory Coast. The primary challenge was the openness and engagement of forest authorities, which was generally high, due to the relevance of the project to their mandate. However, in several countries corruption could constitute a barrier to replicability.	Highly Satisfactory
Information Dissemination	Across countries, radios, posters, social media, articles and videos were used to reach both target communities and neighboring populations, and to raise awareness on both the project and on logging illegalities and forest rights. This was satisfactory at the community level and in terms of reaching a national general public in Cameroon, DRC and Ghana. In RoC, however, information dissemination was limited to a few blog posts and related social media communications, and was therefore represents a shortcoming for information dissemination overall. RFUK could also have used the data further at the international level for advocacy purposes.	Satisfactory

RESUME

« Avant, nous pensions que les observations indépendantes devaient être les meilleures, mais le projet a démontré que les communautés locales peuvent contribuer de manière significative au suivi des forêts » - RDC, Partenaire Associé

L'évaluation du projet « Intégrer le suivi communautaire en temps réel (RTM) pour soutenir les moyens d'existence et les forêts en Afrique de l'Ouest et l'Afrique centrale » a été entreprise d'octobre 2020 à janvier 2021 par une équipe de cinq évaluateurs externes indépendants, sur la base des Termes de Référence fournis par la Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK). La recherche a été menée selon une méthodologie qualitative qui comprenait une étude documentaire systématique de toute la documentation clé du projet, des entretiens avec les partenaires du projet, les partenaires associés et d'autres parties prenantes aux niveaux national, régional et local, y compris des représentants communautaires. Malheureusement, en raison de la pandémie mondiale de COVID-19, il n'a pas été possible d'effectuer des voyages internationaux et aucune visite sur place n'a donc été possible. En tout, 90 participants (intervenants et partenaires) ont été interviewés pour cette évaluation.

Le projet RTM était très pertinent pour les efforts mondiaux visant à améliorer la gestion des forêts et à lutter contre la déforestation, en particulier ceux qui cherchent à lutter contre l'exploitation forestière illégale dans les pays en développement qui sont producteurs de

bois. Dans l'ensemble, le projet était bien conçu et les objectifs et la conception de l'intervention étaient très pertinents pour les parties prenantes impliquées dans le projet (communautés locales, partenaires du projet et gouvernements locaux et nationaux), ainsi que pour les priorités des bailleurs de fonds à travers un renforcement du FLEGT VPA. Il est également louable que la conception été sensible et adaptée aux circonstances uniques de chacun des quatre pays (Cameroun, Ghana, RDC et RoC). Le projet a testé et prouvé le concept selon lequel la surveillance des forêts peut être menée par des observateurs formés issus des communautés locales, même dans des zones extrêmement reculées, en utilisant de nouvelles approches technologiques pour récolter des données en temps réel, comme les satellites (où il n'y a pas de couverture de réseau téléphonique) ou SMS (si possible), et que ces données peuvent être suffisamment crédibles pour être utilisées par les autorités qui planifient des missions de vérification.

Le projet était ambitieux et ses impacts étaient très impressionnants, surtout compte tenu des interruptions causées par la pandémie mondiale de COVID-19, qui a considérablement perturbé la troisième année d'activités. Cela a eu un impact significatif sur la phase d'institutionnalisation du projet, et cette évaluation a tenté de prendre en compte ces facteurs externes lors de l'évaluation des résultats et des impacts. Il convient de noter qu'il s'agit de contextes opérationnels difficiles, même sans le défi supplémentaire du COVID-19, et en tant que tel, l'équipe d'évaluation salue vivement le travail de tous les partenaires tout au long de l'année 2020. Malheureusement, alors que les activités du projet ont été suspendues, de nombreuses sociétés forestières se sont emparé de l'opportunité de poursuivre (voire de redoubler) les activités forestières illégales. C'est une preuve supplémentaire que le projet doit être en mesure de continuer à intégrer la surveillance RTM menée localement dans le cadre juridique et à identifier un mécanisme financièrement viable afin de pouvoir sécuriser et capitaliser sur les acquis déjà réalisés.

Les résultats attendus du projet étaient de déployer une version « prête à déployer » (V2.0) de la surveillance des forêts en temps réel – « Forestlink » – avec les communautés forestières du Cameroun, du Ghana, de la RDC et de la République Démocratique du Congo, en veillant à ce que la technologie soit établie de manière durable et institutionnalisée, tout en soutenant les actions de mise en application des lois et la protection des droits des communautés. Le projet a atteint son principal résultat attendu en démontrant que le renforcement de la participation, du niveau local au niveau national, est très efficace pour renforcer la gouvernance forestière. RFUK et ses partenaires avaient initialement prévu d'utiliser le système RTM et la technologie Forestlink comme moyen de responsabiliser les autorités locales, mais au fur et à mesure de l'avancement du projet, il s'est avéré être un outil de collaboration, un outil utile aux autorités forestières. L'évaluation n'a pas pu s'appuyer sur des informations de base ou de fin de ligne pour mesurer les réductions réelles des illégalités, mais il semble y avoir eu des progrès vers la réduction des illégalités et une amélioration en ce qui concerne le renforcement du plaidoyer et la garantie des droits et des avantages des populations locales et des peuples autochtones. Le projet a également renforcé les capacités des organisations de la société civile (OSC) et des gouvernements, et a rendu le suivi forestier indépendant (IFM) plus efficace. En outre, il a soutenu l'application de la loi et amélioré la justice, la transparence, la surveillance et la dénonciation. Dans certains pays, comme la RDC, le résultat est que le suivi communautaire a été consacré dans la loi (Décret 072) et que le travail de plaidoyer a mené au premier procès sur les illégalités forestières que le pays a connu depuis l'adoption du Code Forestier de 2002. Le projet a conduit à des réformes de la gouvernance qui réduisent l'utilisation illégale des ressources forestières et bénéficient aux communautés locales, ainsi qu'à des réformes politiques et juridiques visant à éliminer l'exploitation forestière illégale, et il a considérablement contribué aux processus de gouvernance en facilitant l'application de la loi grâce à une meilleure collaboration entre le gouvernement au niveau local, provincial national, la société civile, les communautés forestières, les sociétés forestières privées et la justice. Malheureusement, à la clôture du projet – d'une part en raison des retards causés par la pandémie COVID-19 – le système RTM est susceptible d'être durable dans seulement quelques communautés à travers les pays du projet, et sans un soutien financier supplémentaire ou un renforcement des capacités, l'application de la loi risque de s'éroder rapidement.

Néanmoins, le projet RTM est reproductible et a le potentiel d'appliquer les leçons tirées du commerce du bois aux commerces d'autres produits qui ont un impact sur

les forêts et les personnes qui dépendent des forêts pour leur subsistance. Un certain nombre de leçons ont été tirées concernant (1) l'importance d'établir des relations et des dialogues entre l'administration, les OSC, les sociétés d'exploitation forestière et les communautés; (2) le pouvoir de travailler en réseau lors des activités de plaidoyer; (3) la crédibilité qui est apportée avec les données en temps réel; (4) la preuve que les communautés peuvent effectuer un suivi forestier, et sont encore plus motivées si elles sont légalement propriétaires des terres (ex. Cameroun); (5) la nécessité de planifier de manière proactive face aux acteurs qui commettent des illégalités; (6) le fait que les personnes en première ligne sont confrontées à des risques de sécurité importants qui ne peuvent être sous-estimés; (7) le fait que l'institutionnalisation est un processus long qui nécessite des efforts soutenus et de multiples phases; (8) le fait que l'application de la loi relève de la responsabilité du gouvernement, et que le plaidoyer international, le suivi, le soutien et l'action juridique sont aussi importants que le signalement des illégalités en premier lieu, dans des contextes où la corruption est omniprésente et où le gouvernement manque de ressources, afin de promouvoir la transparence et la bonne gouvernance; et (9) le renforcement de l'engagement avec d'autres acteurs investis de la légalité forestière (Ministère de la Justice ou Ministère des Finances) contribuera à pérenniser le projet.

Il s'agissait d'un projet extrêmement ambitieux compte tenu de la durée du projet, et qui faisait face à d'énormes défis, en particulier dans certains contextes où les économies politiques clientélistes signifient qu'il est nécessaire de lutter contre des intérêts puissants qui protègent les sociétés forestières. Comme l'ont montré des études antérieures de RFUK, les pays de l'Afrique Centrale et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest ont élaboré des plans pour devenir des « économies émergentes » qui dépendent fortement des activités extractives telles que l'exploitation forestière, l'exploitation minière, l'exploitation pétrolière et l'agro-industrie (presque exclusivement gérées par des sociétés étrangères) et la construction d'infrastructures. Selon ce modèle de croissance économique, les forêts sont des sources de richesse potentielle à exploiter. Cependant, la poursuite de cette forme de développement manque de vision à long terme pour la gestion durable des ressources forestières. Les conséquences négatives des initiatives externes dans la région comprennent la dégradation des forêts et les abus et violations des droits des peuples autochtones et forestiers – des résultats qui sont incompatibles avec l'atténuation du changement climatique. Il est clair qu'au sein de ce système, les bénéfices sont mal répartis, et que la pauvreté et la crise écologique continuent de s'aggraver.

CRITERE	RÉSUMÉ DES COMMENTAIRES DE L'ÉVALUATEUR	NOTE DE L'ÉVALUATEUR
Pertinence	Les objectifs et la conception de l'intervention étaient très pertinents pour les principales parties prenantes impliqués dans le projet (communautés, partenaires, gouvernement et donateurs), et la conception était sensible et adaptée aux circonstances uniques de chaque pays. Cela était en partie dû à l'excellente analyse de RFUK des cadres politiques et réglementaires existants avant le début du projet, et à son travail continu avec des partenaires très motivés qui ont assuré l'implication des partenaires gouvernementaux dès le début du projet. L'application FL a apporté une valeur aux utilisateurs dans les communautés éloignées, leur permettant d'envoyer des alertes de manière anonyme et sans avoir besoin d'Internet ou d'un signal téléphonique. Les parties prenantes du gouvernement local avaient également un intérêt à utiliser FL et bénéficiaient du soutien des communautés lorsqu'elles tentaient de détecter des illégalités avec confiance.	Très satisfaisant
Appropriée	La sélection des communautés au Ghana, au Cameroun et en RDC était tout à fait appropriée car elles vivaient soit dans les forêts, soit à la lisière des forêts à proximité des concessions forestières. Ce critère a obtenu un score très satisfaisant, bien que les communautés de la République du Congo vivent loin (30 à 40 km) des sites d'exploitation. Au moment où les communautés de la République du Congo ont été sélectionnées, elles vivaient à côté des concessions forestières, mais les limites des concessions avaient changé au moment où les communautés ont commencé la surveillance, ce qui mène à ce qu'elles devaient parcourir des grandes distances. Cependant, les concessions forestières tournent chaque année et il n'est pas possible de prévoir avec précision d'une année à l'autre l'emplacement exact.	Très satisfaisant
Efficacité & Gestion de Projet	Il y avait quelques inefficacités dans le projet, notamment: (1) des retards au début du projet, (2) les distances que les observateurs forestiers communautaires ont dû parcourir dans certains pays (République du Congo), (3) les inefficacités dans le fonctionnement de la technologie (en partie externes car les conditions forestières sont humides et compromettent la longévité de la technologie), (4) des retards dans les missions de vérification hors du contrôle du projet qui ont limité la nature « en temps réel » des mesures d'application, et (5) certaines restrictions dans le budget. Cependant, les pays du projet posaient un contexte difficile à travailler, souvent avec de grandes distances entre les communautés et les autorités compétentes, ce qui est problématique lorsqu'on tente d'institutionnaliser les preuves communautaires dans les processus nationaux.	Satisfaisant
Efficacité	Il était difficile de mesurer la réalisation de tous les extrants tels que formulés dans le cadre logique original et révisé. Les données n'étaient pas systématiquement collectées et enregistrées de manière à permettre de faire des comparaisons entre la ligne de base et la ligne finale, par exemple, pour les réalisations planifiées (telles que 100% de SRA reçu), ni pour mesurer une réduction des illégalités forestières. Là où il n'a pas été possible de mesurer l'atteinte des résultats dans ce rapport, cela a été souligné, et des preuves qui montrent les progrès vers leur réalisation ont été fournies. Dans l'ensemble, les parties prenantes ont estimé que des progrès substantiels avaient été accomplis vers la réalisation de la plupart des extrants prévus en RDC, au Ghana et au Cameroun, malgré la suspension des activités au cours de la troisième année du projet en raison des perturbations résultant de la pandémie COVID-19. Cela a eu un impact particulièrement négatif sur les activités de la République du Congo, qui venait juste de commencer. Une grande partie de l'institutionnalisation et du renforcement du projet dans tous les pays était prévu pour la troisième année, notamment : (1) la poursuite du renforcement des capacités des parties prenantes par une formation complémentaire (communautés, gouvernement, partenaires associés) ; (2) assurer des missions de pré-vérification et de vérification pour renforcer encore l'utilisation de ForestLink RTM par les communautés cibles ; (3) s'efforcer d'inclure davantage l'administration forestière dans le cycle d'alerte et le processus de vérification. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les impacts de la pandémie de COVID-19 aient fait que le projet n'ait pas progressé aussi loin dans l'institutionnalisation que prévu initialement.	Incapable de mesurer / évaluer tous les extrants. Preuve de progrès impressionnants accomplis pour atteindre des objectifs ambitieux.

CRITERE	RÉSUMÉ DES COMMENTAIRES DE L'ÉVALUATEUR	NOTE DE L'ÉVALUATEUR
Impact	<p>Bien qu'il y ait eu des différences d'impact spécifiques dans chaque pays, l'impact global (conséquences socio-économiques, politiques et environnementales) a dépassé les attentes dans le temps donné (qui a également été réduit en raison de la pandémie COVID-19), d'autant plus que le projet travaillait dans des environnements extrêmement difficiles, avec de nombreux facteurs hors de son contrôle. L'impact prévu était que « la déforestation et les autres formes de dommages environnementaux diminuent et les droits et les moyens de subsistance des communautés forestières sont renforcés ». Il s'agit d'un objectif ambitieux, qui a néanmoins été largement atteint. Premièrement, les connaissances des communautés sur leurs droits ont été sans équivoque renforcées dans toutes les communautés de tous les pays, et de nombreux membres de la communauté ont utilisé ces connaissances pour plaider – avec succès dans de nombreux cas – pour que leurs droits soient respectés. En outre, la connaissance des droits s'est également accrue dans d'autres communautés voisines (hors projet), ce qui témoigne du degré élevé d'appropriation et d'autonomisation ressentie par les communautés cibles ; les communautés ont clairement intériorisé leurs droits et avaient le désir de partager ces connaissances avec leurs pairs. Deuxièmement, malgré le fait que les données soient quelque peu limitées (car il n'y avait pas d'informations de base et de fin de ligne), il y a des signes précoces que les moyens de subsistance ont été renforcés. Par exemple, en RDC, les villageois ont obtenu un meilleur accès aux marchés (pour vendre leurs produits) grâce à l'utilisation de véhicules de la société forestière. Troisièmement, alors que cette évaluation n'a pas pu faire une estimation quantitative de la réduction de la déforestation et d'autres formes de dommages environnementaux (en raison d'un manque de données de base et de fin de ligne sur la perte et la repousse des arbres), certaines communautés dans les pays ont signalé une réduction drastique de la déforestation (cependant, d'autres ont suggéré que la réduction était modeste et plus graduelle). Ces résultats mitigés pourraient toutefois être dus au fait que de nombreuses activités de la dernière année ont été tronquées en raison de la pandémie COVID-19, ce qui signifie que le projet n'a eu que deux ans de fonctionnement complet pour réaliser ses ambitions.</p>	Très satisfaisant
Participation et Responsabilisation	<p>Le projet a créé un système qui a permis aux communautés de collaborer avec les autorités dans l'application des lois forestières et a permis aux gouvernements locaux d'apprécier le rôle que les communautés peuvent jouer dans le soutien de l'application des lois forestières, en particulier au Ghana et en RDC. Dans la plupart des pays, le projet a renforcé la confiance entre les partenaires d'exécution (et les OSC en général) et le gouvernement. Ce développement a été facilité par l'organisation de missions de vérification conjointes, d'ateliers de formation, et par la collaboration dans la négociation des SRA communautaires. Cependant, au Cameroun, le projet a eu du mal à favoriser la collaboration et a même parfois conduit à une augmentation des conflits quand les observateurs étant devenus plus conscients de l'ampleur de la corruption au sein de l'administration locale et quand ils ont été menacés par les autorités forestières en raison de leur travail. Néanmoins, des missions conjointes entre les OSC et les autorités forestières ont été organisées, débouchant sur des sanctions et des saisies de bois. En République du Congo, le dialogue entre les communautés et l'administration est resté faible, sans échanges facilités par le projet. Cela était principalement dû au fait qu'il était encore en phase pilote et qu'il y avait de nombreux retards à cause de la pandémie COVID-19.</p>	Satisfaisant
Équité	<p>L'inclusion des femmes a été particulièrement réussie au Cameroun et en RDC, et tous les pays ont tenté d'impliquer les femmes autant que possible. Certains aspects culturels ont rendu plus difficile la participation des femmes, notamment l'idée des communautés selon laquelle les femmes seraient incapables de faire le travail exigé des moniteurs, un manque de confiance en soi de la part des femmes elles-mêmes et la jalousie des maris ou de la famille qui n'approuvaient pas leur participation. Cependant, RFUK et les partenaires ont tenté de surmonter cela dans toutes les communautés dans lesquelles ils travaillaient. Il n'y a pas d'autochtones dans les zones du projet au Cameroun et au Ghana, uniquement en République du Congo et en RDC. Cependant, le projet a eu du mal à les impliquer de manière significative dans les deux pays. Certains pays ont eu du mal à trouver des autochtones et des femmes répondant aux critères de sélection, notamment en termes d'alphabétisation et de capacité à utiliser un téléphone. Le manque de paiements aux observateurs était également un problème central pour l'engagement continu des femmes et des peuples autochtones.</p>	Satisfaisant

CRITERE	RÉSUMÉ DES COMMENTAIRES DE L'ÉVALUATEUR	NOTE DE L'ÉVALUATEUR
Durabilité	La durabilité a été évaluée comme faisant référence à la mesure dans laquelle les mécanismes et le modèle de suivi communautaire mis en place par le projet continueraient à bénéficier aux communautés et à l'application des lois forestières après la fin du projet. Une évaluation externe de la durabilité (TLLG, 2020), commandée par RFUK en plus de cette évaluation, a conclu qu'à la clôture du projet, le système RTM est susceptible d'être durable dans seulement quelques communautés dans les pays du projet. Il conclut que sans soutien financier supplémentaire et renforcement des capacités, les avantages pour les communautés et la mise en application risquent de s'éroder rapidement. Au moment de la rédaction de cette évaluation, il y avait la possibilité d'une prolongation de 15 mois (jusqu'en juin 2022) pour le projet. Cette période pourrait être utilisée pour renforcer davantage les capacités des réseaux GFI et du personnel des gouvernements locaux dans les pays du projet.	Moyennement satisfaisant
Répliquabilité	Le processus est très reproductible, y compris la majorité des catalyseurs positifs imprévus, et la plupart des innovations. RFUK met également en œuvre ForestLink au Pérou, au Libéria et bientôt en Côte d'Ivoire. Le principal défi était l'ouverture et l'engagement des autorités forestières, qui étaient généralement élevés, en raison de la pertinence du projet par rapport à leur mandat. Cependant, dans plusieurs pays, la corruption pourrait constituer un obstacle à la reproductibilité.	Très satisfaisant
Diffusion de l'information	Dans tous les pays, des radios, des affiches, des médias sociaux, des articles et des idées ont été utilisés pour atteindre les communautés cibles et les populations voisines, et pour les sensibiliser à la fois au projet, aux illégalités d'exploitation forestière et aux droits forestiers. Cela a été satisfaisant au niveau communautaire et en termes d'atteindre un grand public national au Cameroun, en RDC et au Ghana. En République du Congo, cependant, la diffusion de l'information était limitée à quelques articles de blog et des médias sociaux, et représentait donc un défaut pour la diffusion de l'information dans son ensemble. RFUK aurait également pu utiliser les données au niveau international à des fins de plaidoyer.	Satisfaisant



Community monitor training
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1. INTRODUCTION

The 'Embedding community Real Time Monitoring (RTM) to sustain livelihoods and forests in West and Central Africa' project (2018 – 2021) was the second phase of the 'Community-based real-time forest monitoring in three countries (Ghana, Cameroon and DR Congo) to support Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) processes' (2015-2018) funded by DFID (now FCDO). Both phases of the Real Time Monitoring project ('RTM Project' for short) received funds under the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme (FGMC) of DFID (now FCDO). RFUK is currently seeking funding to continue and expand on this work.

ForestLink Real-Time Monitoring System (FL RTM) is a technological monitoring tool enabling local communities, indigenous peoples and relevant organisations to monitor and prevent illegalities in forests. ForestLink RTM comprises a set of software, hardware and methodologies used to collect and transmit geo-referenced alerts about illegal logging, illegal mining and other illegalities in real time.

Phase 2 of the RTM Project sought to consolidate the achievements of Phase 1, and continued its work in Ghana, Cameroon and DRC, whilst also expanding to the Republic of the Congo (RoC). RFUK had local partners in each country: Civic Response in Ghana, Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER) in Cameroon, Groupe d'Action pour Sauver l'Homme et son Environnement (GASHE) in DRC, and Comptoir Juridique Junior (CJJ) in RoC.

Phase 2 sought to:

- Deploy the ForestLink community-based real-time forest monitoring (RTM) system in order to reduce forest illegalities for the benefit of local communities;
- Further support the FLEGT VPA processes in implementing countries;
- Promote governance reforms to institutionalise the ForestLink RTM system within national forest monitoring, control and law enforcement systems;

- Improve and adapt the system to upscale its implementation and dissemination in new countries (e.g. RoC) and in connection with a wider range of forest illegalities and other sectors of the extractive industry;
- Enhance law enforcement and forest peoples' rights;
- Ensure that improved forest governance directly benefits forest communities;
- Promote sustainability, notably by ensuring that improved forest governance directly benefits forest communities.

The project's intended outcome was the improvement of forest governance in four countries, specifically through the strengthening of forest communities' participation and of benefits sharing, as well as an overall reduction of illegalities and increased sustainability in forest resources use. This meets the overall FGMC goal of working towards 'governance reform that reduces the illegal use of forest resources and that benefits poor people'.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of the RTM project was undertaken from October 2020 to January 2021 by a team of five independent external evaluators based on the terms of reference provided by RFUK (Annex 1). The evaluation covers the full duration of the project from its starting date on 1 April 2018 until January 2021 when the project had transitioned into closing off (project end date is to be 31 March 2021). This evaluation was conducted before the final date of the project contract to ensure that relevant staff were still available for interview and review.

The main purpose of this evaluation was to examine the magnitude and reach of the project to date and to determine the likelihood of future impacts. The evaluation also assessed the performance of the project (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability), the implementation of planned project activities and planned outputs against actual results, and examines the

level of participation, empowerment and equity of the approach. The two primary objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Evaluate the project from its design to its implementation in accordance with the evaluation criteria, to focus on the impact of interventions and outcomes in Cameroon, Ghana, DRC, and RoC;
2. Make relevant recommendations for the RFUK and partner organisations in Cameroon, Ghana, DRC, and RoC, and inform future work as the ForestLink system is being further developed and deployed in other countries.

Phase 2 of the RTM project, as per the original proposal, had four overarching strategic outputs which were to be implemented per country:

1. A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of the technology and system that would be consolidated based on further deployment and testing of the community based Real Time forest Monitoring;
2. Enforcement actions would increase in response to community generated alerts, leading to a sustainable reduction of illegalities and better protection of community rights in the context of forest activities;
3. Civil society led real time monitoring systems are institutionalised in user countries through integration of the system to forest control mechanisms and participation of forest communities and civil society representatives in forest management mechanisms;
4. Sustainable engagement of forest communities in forest monitoring efforts.

In addition, in 2019/2020, a further output was added as a result of a discussion between RFUK and FCDO on the importance of ensuring that CSOs and communities can be better involved in the delivery process and discussions surrounding COP26, hosted in the UK. This output was formulated as ‘Putting Forest Communities Firmly on the Agenda of the 2020 Climate and Biodiversity COPs’.

For the purpose of this evaluation, and in alignment with the log-frame and previous reporting to FCDO, the main outputs were reformulated at a country level, resulting in six main outputs for the Phase 2 RTM project:

Output 1: RTM Global: A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of the technology and system is consolidated based on further deployment and testing of the community based Real Time forest Monitoring

Output 2: RTM Cameroon: A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of Real Time forest Monitoring is rolled out with forest communities in Cameroon, sustainably established and institutionalized, supporting enforcement actions and better protection of community rights.

Output 3: RTM Ghana: A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of Real Time forest Monitoring is rolled out with forest communities in Ghana, sustainably established and institutionalized, supporting enforcement actions and better protection of community rights.

Output 4: RTM DRC: A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of Real Time forest Monitoring is rolled out with forest communities in DRC, sustainably established and institutionalized, supporting enforcement actions and better protection of community rights.

Output 5: RTM RoC: A “ready to deploy” version (V2.0) of Real Time forest Monitoring is rolled out with forest communities in Republic of Congo, sustainably established and institutionalized, supporting enforcement actions and better protection of community rights.

Output 6: COP Global: Putting Forest Communities Firmly on the Agenda of the 2020 Climate and Biodiversity COPs.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods approach was used to ensure an evidence-based qualitative and quantitative assessment. This included a systematic desk-based study of all key project documentation (project log-frame, project plans, quarterly- progress reports, annual technical reports, methodology and training documentation, publications, statements, summaries of key outputs) (Annex 2); semi-structured interviews with RFUK, implementing partners (FODER, Civic Response, GASHE, CJJ), associated partners (other national or international NGOs), and national, provincial and local government in each country, as well as other stakeholders (FAO HQ), and a selection of community members via Skype or telephone call (Annex 3). Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to travel to the countries and conduct

direct observations at the project sites and with the communities.

Interviews were conducted in the form of open discussions following the guiding questions in the ToR, which were complemented by additional questions developed by the evaluation team (see Annex 4 for the Topic Guides). Separate topic guides were developed depending on the category of the interview, i.e. with project partners, with government, with associated partners, or with communities. Interviews with communities were carried out in national or local languages by the interview team (Twi in Ghana, Lingala in RoC and DRC, and French in Cameroon).

A total of 90 interviews were carried out; 21 in Cameroon, 20 in Ghana, 23 in DRC and 15 in RoC, and 11 at the UK/ international level. The selection of communities was based on a weighted score of how many communities were part of the project i.e. Ghana had the greatest number of communities and the team therefore spoke with a greater selection of communities. Community members included women, community leaders, and community forest monitors. Interviews were run between 9 November – 12 December 2020, based on interviewees' availability.

Data was analysed and synthesised first at the country level by the designated responsible consultant. All data was then analysed and coded by the lead consultant and independently triangulated by two of the consultants to provide generalisable and country-specific findings, evidence-based recommendations, and an accurate assessment of the main evaluation themes.

Overall evaluation rankings were based on the six-point rating scale (high satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory) according to Global Environment Facility Guidelines (GEF (2017) Guidelines for Global Environment Facility Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations for Full-sized Projects):

- Highly satisfactory: Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and there were no shortcomings (within the control of the project).
- Satisfactory: Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were only minor short-comings (within the control of the project).
- Moderately satisfactory: Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings (within the control of the project).
- Moderately unsatisfactory: Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings (within the control of the project).
- Unsatisfactory: Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings (within the control of the project).
- Highly unsatisfactory: Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings (within the control of the project).

Table 1. Number of interviews per stakeholder per country

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDER	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS	COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDER	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
Cameroon	Communities	10	DRC	Communities	6
	Implementing Partners	5		Implementing Partners	7
	Associated Partners	3		Associated Partners	8
	Government	3		Government	2
Ghana	Communities	12	RoC	Communities	6
	Implementing Partners	3		Implementing Partners	5
	Associated Partners	4		Associated Partners	2
	Government	1		Government	2
International	RFUK	11	International	KPMG & FAO	2

1.3 LIMITATIONS

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to conduct any international travel, and all in-country data is therefore based solely on verbal accounts. It was not possible to observe community members using the Forestlink Application, nor verify the condition of the materials, nor experience the conditions and distances the communities travel in order to carry out the forest monitoring.

Time constraints, along with access issues (access to some communities in RoC and DRC required use of the satellite phones and lengthy travel on the part of the community outreach officers) and the extensive number of communities involved in the project across all countries meant that not all communities participated in the interviews, and the evaluation is therefore unable to comment on perspectives from all sites. The list of potential community members (for the interviews) was provided by the implementing partners. This list was longer than the final selection of interviewees - a selection made by the consultants. However, bias in communities may still have been introduced through the initial selection.

This evaluation was conducted before the end of the project, and therefore did not have access to some final project monitoring documents such as the annual Technical Report 2020/21, nor the finalised Y3Q3 reports from implementing partners, RFUK provided initial draft summaries of these wherever possible.

2. BACKGROUND

“You cannot underestimate how linked forestry logging is with patronage” - RFUK

2.1 FLEGT VPA PROCESS

THE EU FLEGT ACTION PLAN

The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan was adopted by the EU in 2003. FLEGT aims to reduce illegal logging and timber production, which are leading causes of forest degradation and deforestation. The Action Plan includes both demand- and supply-side measures. In the early 2000s, international efforts to tackle illegal logging focused on forest management, law enforcement and governance. But they did not tackle trade. These efforts failed to stem illegal activity. A focus on trade has the potential to create strong incentives in both producer countries and the EU market for verified legal products. Pressure to act came from EU stakeholders, including civil society organisations, the private sector and some EU member states. Pressure also came from political dialogue in the G8 and regional meetings in Asia and Africa in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These stakeholder deliberations and political dialogues resulted in the EU FLEGT Action Plan (EFI, 2020). The two main components of the Action Plan are the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) and the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). There are also several other important FLEGT tools, such as Voluntary Forest Certification (e.g. FSC or PEFC) schemes, national or private legality verification systems, and private or public procurement policies (EFI, 2020).

THE FLEGT VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (VPA)

VPAs are legally binding trade agreements that are negotiated between the EU and timber-producing countries. They are a key element of the EU's FLEGT Action Plan.

A VPA seeks to ensure that timber and timber products imported into the EU from a partner country comply with the laws of that country. During the negotiation of the agreement, the legislation that is to be taken into account in determining legality is decided, and a system is developed for assuring the legality of timber products (a legality assurance system), with 'FLEGT licences' issued for products verified as legal and destined for the EU market. A key feature of the VPAs is the establishment of multi-stakeholder processes for both the negotiation and implementation of these agreements. This has opened up opportunities for both CSOs and the private sector to participate in government decision-making processes. Another important feature of the agreements is the inclusion of provisions on transparency, that is, the data and information that each of the parties to the agreement commits to making publicly available.

To date, six partner countries have signed VPAs with the EU: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia and the Republic of the Congo. These countries are now developing the systems agreed in VPAs. Negotiations continue between the EU and nine other countries: Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Honduras, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Indonesia is the first country in the world that started issuing FLEGT Licences on 15 November 2016.

In November 2020, the European commission launched a consultation to evaluate whether the EU Timber regulations and the FLEGT were fit for purpose. VPAs should help timber-producing countries achieve their development objectives by securing employment, increasing government revenues, strengthening the rule of law and safeguarding the rights of forest peoples. However, to date, FLEGT-VPA processes have had mixed impacts on curbing illegal trade and deforestation, especially considering the amount of funding mobilized by the EU for this effort. Several international factors can influence VPA processes in timber-exporting countries, including changing consumer demand for wood and wood products and international market trends, such

as increasing demand from non-EU markets, for example China, India and Nigeria. On the positive side, they can be positively influenced by pressure on countries to protect forests as part of global efforts to limit climate change and reports from advocacy organisations about the social and environmental impacts of illegal logging.

2.2 INDEPENDENT FOREST MONITORING IN PROJECT COUNTRIES IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

IFM has a long history in Central and West Africa. In the Congo basin, IFM has progressed in leaps and bounds, with a growing number of national and regional CSOs developing their expertise. With funding from FCDO, the EU and the Food and Agriculture Organization-European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FAO-EU FLEGT) facility, systems for IFM have been set up across project countries (Chatham House and CIDT, 2020). Unfortunately, while there have been some significant improvements in forest governance, deforestation and forest degradation have nevertheless continued at an alarming rate.

GHANA

The cost of deforestation to Ghana is about US\$400 million, equivalent to 0.7 percent of 2017 GDP.

Forest communities historically have been excluded from forest monitoring by (1) the largely centralised control of forest monitoring by the Forest Commission, and (2) through several acts and regulations (notably the Timber Resource Management Act 1997 and Regulation) which served timber interests to the exclusion of forest communities' land rights and management rights.

However, with the signing of the Ghana–EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement in 2009, the Ghanaian government embarked on a number of important steps to reduce illegal logging and trade. The FLEGT VPA provided an enabling environment for the inclusion of CSO initiatives into forest governance. In particular, there was improved transparency and reliability of data (e.g. compartment and harvest volumes) due to the implementation of a robust new electronic Wood Tracking System (WTS) and to the newly-forged consensus on the benefits of SRA compliance to communities, government and the private sector.

Ghana's WTS, overseen by the Forestry Commission, is the main mechanism for managing the country's forest sector. It enables the government to control and supervise the flow of timber through the supply chain, from harvest to consumption or export, and to monitor revenue payments. As part of the implementation of Ghana's VPA, significant effort and resources have been put into strengthening the WTS, an important aspect of which has been its digitisation. Through a process of constructive engagement between civil society and government, a new digital WTS was completed in 2019. This system has significantly improved the quality and accessibility of information on forest-sector activities - both across government and for industry and civil society. This has resulted in more effective decision-making and better oversight by government officials. Consequently, illegal practices in the sector are reported to have declined.

In Ghana, SRAs are a form of contract in which logging companies commit to a code of conduct and to making payments to affected communities for use in social development projects. The payments should equate to not less than 5% of the total amount that the company pays the state in stumpage fees, and can either be in the form of community infrastructure or cash. SRAs must be negotiated and signed with communities before logging operations can commence. Since 2016, there has been a marked improvement in transparency regarding the value of payments that SRAs should provide, while training for communities has enabled them to establish more effective and representative negotiation processes with the companies. Furthermore, given that SRAs are now included within the criteria for legal timber established under the VPA, the Forestry Commission has been tasked with establishing a system for monitoring SRA implementation. These reforms have resulted in increased engagement by government agencies in the SRA system as well as improved compliance by the private sector, and the number of agreements negotiated and signed has subsequently increased (Chatham House, 2020).

CAMEROON

Illegal logging in Cameroon leads to an estimated yearly loss of at US\$5.3 million (Global Forest Atlas).

Mandated and non-mandated IFM have a long history in Cameroon. The main objectives of IFM have been to support the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF, previously MINEF) in reporting, control and follow-up of

illegal activities, (2) to help improve control operations and (3) to increase transparency and good governance. The history of non-mandated IFM has generated a group of experienced organisations who have integrated ISO standards into the IFM process, called the Standardised External Independent Observation System or SNOIE. Since 2013, SNOIE and communities have taken more responsibility for monitoring the forest sector independently due to a reported increase in the cases of corruption and illegalities within Cameroon's timber sector. Activities of SNOIE have triggered government control missions that have resulted in enforcement actions.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mandated IFM has been carried out nationally by the Forest Governance Observatory (OGF) as well as provincially by the CSO, OCEAN (in Tshopo province). DRC is a vast country and OGF has struggled to meet the needs of IFM across it. Since 2018, with the support of the CV4C project, a national network of independent observers has been formed - the RENOI RDC. This network has national coverage and brings together all national CSOs involved in mandated and non-mandated IFM. Organisations are now consolidating and communicating to ensure that natural resource governance is based on a national strategy, charter and plan of action - with buy-in from all stakeholders. Forest reform process and VPA FLEGT process blocked.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mandated IFM has been implemented since 2006, initially by foreign NGOs and since joined by the national NGO, Cercle d'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts (CAGDF). The Republic of Congo started FLEGT-VPA negotiations with the EU in 2008. The VPA was signed in 2010 and entered into force in 2013. It has given explicit recognition to mandated IFM, which was provided for in the 2020 Forest Code. Under Article 69, the revised Code formally recognizes an independent civil society "which performs independent field missions, alone or jointly with forest administration agents". Alongside CAGDF's mandated IFM role, members of the CSO network, PGDF, carry out non-mandated IFM. At present, however, practically all forest observations by civil society (mandated and non-mandated) are currently carried out by teams based in Brazzaville and in the departmental capitals. Community monitoring (with tools such as ForestLink) can be considered as the missing link at the community level

and should be in a position to access IFM funding in the VPA and REDD+ processes.

2.3 LOGGING CONCESSIONS AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT - DOES TRICKLE DOWN WORK FOR COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

The FAO defines forest concessions as "a policy instrument to implement forest harvesting. A forest concession is a widely used contractual arrangement, in which a government temporarily allocates some of its public forests to another party, such as a company. The contract typically includes use rights to specific resources in the area paired with obligations for their management". Forest concessions enable governments to 'outsource' forest use and management when lacking relevant capacities and expertise, to secure access and use rights while keeping the forests public, or combining these two, to carry out sustainable forest management (FAO, 2001).

Forest concessions cover about 123 million hectares in Latin America, Southeast Asia and West and Central Africa, which is 14 percent of publicly owned forests in those regions (FAO, 2018). Due to the vast areas currently under industrial forest concessions, their management has considerable implications for local development, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the provision of ecosystem services and socioeconomic benefits to both local and global populations (Tegegne et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of forest concessions has been reviewed from different perspectives, including economic viability, environmental impacts, relationship with local communities, and governance. Generally, their use in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and West and Central Africa has shown mixed results. The way concessions function are determined on the basis of a country's forest management policy, and may include aspects such as district politics, royalties, environmental concerns, employment issues trade of the harvest, renewal of the concession, or length of the logging permit. As such, it is unsurprising that concessions may contribute differently to the well-being of forest and their communities from one context to the other (CMI, 2007).

In Central and Western Africa, there seems to be limited evidence of industrial logging concessions bringing benefits for local development and forest conservation (Cerutti, 2010). For instance, the Cameroonian regulatory framework on forest, wildlife and fisheries set up in the mid-90s requires logging companies to pay an Area Fee (AF), half of which must be redistributed to rural councils and villages bordering the logging concessions. The AF aimed at providing a consistent contribution to the State budget while improving rural livelihoods through an equitable and effective redistribution of forest-related benefits. After more than a decade of implementation, and about 85 million redistributed to about 50 rural councils, research consistently exposed weak livelihood impacts of the distribution of the AF to communities (Cerutti, 2010).

A study from the Peruvian Amazon, using official government data, estimated that 68.3% of all concessions supervised by authorities were suspected of major violations. Of the 609 total concessions present in 2014, nearly 30% were cancelled for violations. The nature of the violations showed that the permits associated with legal concessions were often used to harvest trees in unauthorised areas, thus threatening all forested areas. In these areas, numerous violations concerned illegal logging of CITES-listed timber species (Finer et al., 2014).

Illegality remains a major issue in tropical timber markets. In 2009, the World Bank estimated the economic loss from illegal logging trade to be approximately 10 billion USD annually, and losses due to tax evasion and royalties on legally sanctioned logging to be approximately 5 billion USD (Interpol, 2009). Illegality is often enabled via corruption, which is a key variable determining the overall impact of logging concessions in any given country. Corruption can be viewed as a rent-seeking behaviour “which gives a high incentive for the rentiers to keep hold of the status quo from which they benefit so much” (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Corrupted government staff can be considered rent seekers, obtaining rents via illegal payments, bribes and political favours. Within that system, forest concessions may be allocated to those offering the highest bribes, with the forest rent allocated between bribers and the bribed. The risks of corruption in concession systems can affect all stages in the concession process: (i) design of concessions; (ii) award of concessions; and (iii) operation and logging (CMI, 2007).

However, the problem of illegal logging cannot simply be reduced to corrupt individuals or officials in a given timber exporting country. It is important to note that illegal logging and associated corruption operates within and relies on an international criminal network, which involves buyers and transporters across the globe. For example, it was found that timber harvested in 90% of concessions owned by Norsudtimber, a European logging company and DRC’s biggest logging company by surface area, was illegal (Global Witness, 2018). A substantial amount of this timber (11%) was imported by Europe (ibid).

Alternatives to forest management via private concessions are not without challenges. Reflecting wider findings, research on the effects of community-managed forests in Cameroon shows that while communities seem to be benefiting financially from the forest, their capacity to do so is limited by “their inability to capture value-added in the market chain”. A lack of technical skills, compounded with communities’ large distance to markets, competition with industrial loggers who easily access newly opened logging areas, and the intensity of external help received; explain the observed sub-optimal contribution of community forests to local development. (Lescuyer et al. 2012). The involvement of local communities in the management of forests often remains limited to rather superficial ‘participation’ rather than becoming actual power-sharing in the management of forest resources (FAO-CIFOR, 2016)



Community monitor training
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3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 RELEVANCE

Overall this aspect of the project was deemed highly satisfactory. The intervention objectives and design were highly relevant to the key stakeholders involved in the project, and the design was sensitive and responsive to the unique circumstances in each country. There was a clear formulation of a Theory of Change which was coherent and remained valid and relevant between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the RTM project. The project was well-suited to priorities and policies of the target group, partners and DFID (now FCDO). This was in part due to RFUK's excellent analysis of existing policy and regulatory frameworks before the start of the project, and its selection of appropriate implementing partners who ensured the involvement of government partners from the start of the project. The FL application provided added value for community users in remote communities, allowing them to send alerts anonymously and without need for the internet or phone signal. Local government stakeholders also had an interest in using FL and benefited from the support of communities when attempting to detect illegalities in a trust-worthy manner.

“The FL tool is important because it allows communities themselves to identify the problems they witness in their forests and to report them to organisations which can use them for advocacy” - RoC, Associated Partner

COMMUNITIES

Overall, the project was highly relevant in curbing forest illegalities and their impact on communities. In our interviews, community members made it clear that industrial logging companies had carried out many illegal activities before the arrival of the project. These illegal activities included the management of concessions and surrounding forests (e.g. cutting trees outside of designated areas, or more trees than permitted, or cutting species not included in the permit, as well as causing erosion and contaminating drinking and washing water by cutting trees close to water sources, and damaging farmland and crops in the process of extraction). Illegalities were also due to the fact that logging enterprises did not provide communities with benefits (SRAs) to which they were entitled. In many cases, community members felt that logging companies had ‘devastated’ their forests, without offering any compensation for communities.

The project was therefore highly relevant to communities in at least three respects: (1) community monitoring of illegal activities through the FL tool, (2) capacity building, which enabled communities to identify illegal activities by learning about their rights, related legal frameworks and their legal recourse to ensuring that their rights were respected, (3) advocacy, which allowed them to coordinate with other forest governance stakeholders both on a local and national level. The project gives voice to communities and places them at the heart of forest governance.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The project was highly relevant for each of the implementing partners in project countries. These partners were selected by RFUK based on their pre-existing involvement in independent forest monitoring as part of FLEGT-VPA processes as well as their previous work with forest communities. Implementing partners were involved in the project early on and were able to support

the design of the project.

“In the blink of an eye, you have results on illegalities from the most remote corner of the rainforest” - RoC CJJ

Several partners already had some experience with community monitoring, although mostly through manual data collection. For example, in Ghana, communities had been reporting illegalities to Civic Response using Excel and then doing follow-ups with the Forest Services Division (FSD) managers. When FL was introduced, it therefore integrated well with implementing partners' existing work, while reducing both costs and time needed for data collection and verification and improving the quality of data collected and subsequent advocacy. For example, CJJ in RoC mentioned that the FL process greatly reduced the chances of wasting time and money on unproductive verification missions.

Project partners had a great deal of technical expertise and had the following overall goals which aligned with this project:

- RFUK has 25 years' experience working on tropical forest governance (20 years in the Congo Basin) and believes firmly in building long-term capacity and autonomy among national and local stakeholders.
- Civic Response (founded in 2003 in Accra) undertakes research, capacity building, advocacy, networking and coalition-building to address the policy needs of communities who depend directly on natural resources, with a focus on forest resources, and has been working with other civil society organisations and the Forestry Commission to ensure that the FLEGT-VPA addresses both the social and economic needs of forest dependent communities. It is the host of Forest Watch Ghana; a national campaign vehicle for over forty CSOs and individuals committed to the rights of forest users, especially forest fringe communities.
- FODER (founded in 2002 in Yaounde) was involved in the initial testing phase of RFUK Real-Time Monitoring initiative in 2015, and is the leading NGO in Cameroon supporting community-based forest monitoring. It plays a key role within the SNOIE - the country's standardised external independent monitoring system. The SNOIE, developed in 2015 by FODER with other civil society organisations, the administration and other stakeholders in the forestry sector, is a set of monitoring procedures for the exploitation of natural resources based on the international standard ISO 9001 2015. SNOIE makes the Independent External Monitoring more effective, and increases the credibility of the denunciations that emerge from the system; these denunciations are primarily addressed to the relevant authorities (forest administration) and technical and financial partners, in order to bring a change (sanctions against illegal loggers and reduction of illegal logging); SNOIE is the main system for processing FL alerts in Cameroon.
- GASHE (founded in 2002 in Mbandaka) has partnered with RFUK for more than five years on issues including on the implementation of the Real-Time Monitoring project (funded by FGMC), participatory mapping and supporting local communities in participating in decision-making processes related to forest governance. GASHE have a recognised credibility as a CSO in Equateur Province with a proven track record of project delivery, strong knowledge of the province, strong relationships with communities in the south-west of the province, good relations with local forest authorities, and (thanks to various RFUK projects) strong technical and management capacities.
- Comptoir Juridique Junior (CJJ) (founded in 2000 in Brazzaville) has a mission to contribute to improving legal knowledge of the population, so that they are better able to defend their rights, ensure the good governance of natural resources, and define public policies that respond to their well-being. Since 2012, CJJ has been working with ClientEarth in RoC to enable civil society organisations to take part in forest reform processes and law enforcement, as to ensure the respect for the rights of local communities and indigenous populations living in and around forests. As part of this work, they were involved in sporting

the implementation of Congo's VPAs, reforming forest legislation and REDD + processes. RFUK has been supporting CJJ since mid-2019 to pilot the FL tool in order to integrate this missing component of community monitoring into Congolese IFM. Since January 2019, FODER in Cameroon has provided support to CJJ for the piloting of the SNOIE-Congo approach as part of the CV4C project led by CIDT until the end of 2020.

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

“We work on legal reform, but one of the problems in RoC is enforcement by forest authorities - giving communities the tools to report illegalities is therefore highly relevant.” - RoC, Associated Partner

The project was highly relevant to the associated partners involved. It supported and strengthened the ongoing work of local civil society organisations such as OCEAN and OFERA, which both focus on forest-dependent people, forest environments, and rights-based and sustainable development.

The immediate availability of FL was attractive to CSOs interested in community-led RTM, because it meant that they did not have to build an application from scratch. The fact that FL works without the internet and that information collected by community observers is accessible in real time without having to go to the field or organise missions, meant that partner CSOs could obtain information for advocacy more easily than when they were using traditional methods. In Ghana, RFUK has supported CR, associated partners and the IFM network to setup criteria for granting access to FL to other partners and stakeholders in a clear 'CSIFM Guiding Principles and Criteria for the Admission of New Members' document. However, in the other project countries the criteria with

which access to FL was granted to different CSOs was not clear- for example, in DRC, OGF and OCEAN had access to FL, but other CSOs, such as Tropenbos, (who recently expressed interest in FL but hoped to also monitor mining) did not (discussions are ongoing at the time of evaluation).

The tool also helped mandated observer organisations (in countries where they exist: DRC and RoC) to understand when to go to communities based on alerts. Mandated observers work more closely with the government, and while they can access documents from logging companies, they often struggle to find field information on forest illegalities and to voice their advocacy concerns freely. Joint verification missions strengthened links between CSOs and local forest authorities, and access to FL alerts enabled CSOs to strengthen their advocacy work.

Overall, the project enabled civil society to monitor the good implementation of forest governance and regulatory frameworks through stronger collaboration with the government, forest communities and private enterprises. Associated partners also benefited from increased organisational capacity and technical development.

“Having a project which focuses on monitoring and reporting is very important because it is when you start reporting that the government can be held to account - knowing that their communities, their people, and civil society are all watching them puts pressure on them to enforce the law.” - Ghana, Civic Response

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The project was extremely relevant to local government actors. Involvement of local government in project design was uneven across countries. In some cases the selection of communities was done with the government (Ghana), while in others (DRC, RoC, Cameroon), it was not. Nonetheless, local government officers in all countries welcomed the project and were very open to collaboration throughout. During KII interviews, several local government actors explained that they felt they shared the project's vision and its objectives.

Limited capacity, financial constraints, access issues and lack of transport were all cited as reasons for which local authorities were often overwhelmed by their role in monitoring forest illegalities. The project's capacity building efforts (including training on forest legal frameworks) were therefore greatly appreciated, as well as the access they gained to a modern monitoring tool (FL). Partnering with local CSOs and forest communities through the project also helped local authorities to fulfill their mandate in spite of the above-mentioned challenges, and enabled them to know where to concentrate their efforts. This collaboration also increased local authorities' trust in communities and CSOs. Having credible information in the form of alerts also facilitated dialogue between logging companies and communities.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The project was also highly relevant for the work of national-level forest administration. Efforts to institutionalise RTM systems meant that RFUK encouraged partners to deepen their understanding of policy environments at the national level. In all countries, national forest government representatives were involved from the start of project implementation. Early engagement of the government ensured buy-in of FL as a tool and a clear understanding of the importance of community-based RTM and IFM.

Early engagement ensured government representatives contributed with relevant technical and legislative expertise to the setup of the project, improving project relevance. In Ghana, for example, the national Forestry Commission shared information on forest illegalities to Civic Response so that they could select the most relevant target communities. Furthermore, national governments in countries such as RoC contributed to training events

organised by the project, ensuring their relevance to national frameworks.

INTERNATIONAL (FCDO AND FLEGT VPA)

The project, through RTM, was relevant in strengthening the monitoring of forest illegalities as provided for in the FLEGT VPA. By strengthening the monitoring of VPA, the entire process of forest governance was positively affected. In Ghana, an associated partner reported that thanks to the project, the FLEGT process has now been accepted as a national strategy and is contributing to the reform of the entire national forestry sector. According to a KPMG representative, the community RTM approach by RFUK is highly appreciated by FCDO and donors, as it helps bridge the gap between grassroots and strategic political levels by making sure there are no blindspots at the local level in terms of illegalities, while also ground-truthing and providing feedback on the reform of governance processes ongoing at the international level.

ADDED VALUE OF FOREST LINK

“The ForestLink platform isn't just about collecting data, it is about using data for advocacy work” - Ghana, Associated Partner

FL has strong added value for facilitating community-led real-time monitoring of illegalities, and a number of unique features when compared with the other monitoring tools being developed at the same time (e.g. TIMBY, Sapelli, Mapfilter, OBSTER, 2S2D). It was the first Satellite- and SMS-based system of its kind in forest monitoring, allowing alerts to be sent even without the need for internet or phone network signal. It was instrumental in enabling independent forest monitoring to reach into some of the most remote and difficult-to-reach locations and to both record and send alerts in real time.

ForestLink is designed to be an end-to-end system (alerts sent by community monitors; database accessed by key implementing partners; verification missions and;

transmission of verified information for advocacy actions, resulting in due rights being accorded to communities) which requires both the technology and a system of coordinated actors who respond to the alerts and are held accountable to do so. More than the technology itself, the real added-value of the RTM project should lie with the fact that the project builds capacity at the community, civil society and government levels, and that all can access and make use of the system.

However, the system is not yet fully functional in all countries. Forest authorities have access to the alerts in all countries, but in Cameroon they never logged on nor made use of the system (but staff within the Forest Ministry are supportive of the system). In Ghana, forest authorities considered the system to be very transparent, due to their access to alerts - on the other hand, however, communities highlighted that they did not have access to information on whether their alerts were received or verified. CSO and community access was defined by each country separately in the country strategy documents.

3.2 APPROPRIATENESS

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed highly satisfactory based on availability of information at the time of community selection. In Ghana communities lived on the fringes of forests in which logging activities were occurring; in Cameroon and DRC communities lived within the forests in which logging activities were occurring. In RoC, the selection of communities at the

time was appropriate. However, given the small sample size of only 2 communities being chosen, they ended up being very far (15-40km) from the rotating logging areas ('zone de coupe') by the time the communities were ready to begin monitoring. In RoC, communities were chosen prioritising synergies with Client Earth. Funds were not allocated by RFUK to organise a community identification mission (as the budget was limited), and the implementing partner, CJJ, chose communities involved in another benefits sharing project being jointly organised by CJJ and ClientEarth.

RFUK and partners acknowledge that illegal actors are reactive and likely to move the location of their operations and that in the future there may need to be a system of rolling community monitoring; as logging companies move their activities, different communities in close proximity take up the mantle of independent monitoring to ensure that logging activities are under constant surveillance.

Communities also wanted to monitor other types of illegalities (e.g. agro-industrial concessions, mining concessions, poaching, and human rights violations by park rangers, non-compliance of social obligations). Some extra forms were added over the course of the project in order to accommodate these extra monitoring initiatives and all project partners acknowledged that the system could be expanded to monitor many kinds of illegal activities and see this as a potential area of expansion in future work.

Table 2. Distance of communities to forest logging areas per country

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	DISTANCE OF COMMUNITIES TO FOREST LOGGING AREAS
Cameroon	FODER	KIIs highlighted that some communities were 15-40 km away. In particular, Erandzokou was 20km away from the forest, and Ngonaka was 15km away from the forest. The state of the roads during rainy periods meant it was hard to carry out activities as planned.
Ghana	Civic Response	Communities lived in close proximity to logging activities.
DRC	GASHE	Communities lived in close proximity to logging activities.
RoC	CJJ	Communities lived in close proximity to logging activities.

3.3 EFFICIENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed satisfactory. This is because despite some shortcomings in materials, financing, and timing of missions, the extent to which the outputs were efficiently achieved in relation to the inputs was high. The project countries were challenging to work in, often with large distances between communities and relevant authorities which is problematic when attempting to institutionalise community-based evidence into national processes. The overall set-up built on relationships developed during Phase 1, and expanded to bring in a fourth country (RoC) and partner, CJJ, who benefitted greatly from their involvement in the project and the reporting and monitoring requirements it brought. Each country developed their own country specific framework and set up, based broadly on a multi-layered approach (local – regional – national) which was mediated and supported by the activities of a highly engaged multi-stakeholder network of CSOs. However, there were some inefficiencies: notably in terms of (1) timing and delays at the beginning of the project, (2) the distances community forest monitors were required to travel in some countries (RoC, Cameroon and Ghana), (3) inefficiencies in the functioning of technology, (4) delays in verification missions beyond the control of the project which limited the real-time nature of enforcement actions, and (5) some restrictions in the budget.

SET-UP

‘We see ourselves as partners, we are all playing a common role, we have a common vision to protect our forests’ - Ghana, Administration

The majority of implementing partners (GASHE, FODER, Civic Response) started working with RFUK in Phase 1. This was beneficial, as expectations were well understood, ways of working across levels (international to local) had

been established and knowledge and capacity related to FL were already in place. Overall, partners continued to work effectively together in Phase 2. The exception to this, was CJJ in RoC, which joined the project in Phase 2. This new partnership provided an opportunity to establish ways of working based on lessons learned in Phase 1 as well as lessons learnt of working with other partners. However, there were some challenges linked to CJJ’s smaller size as an organisation and the fact that it was already working with a number of other organisations and therefore seemed, at times, overstretched. In order to mitigate this, RFUK and ClientEarth - two of the principle partners of CJJ – tried to coordinate with each other when planning activities with CJJ. There were also economic benefits in terms of joint financing of field activities.

Each implementing partner designed their own country strategy and framework for the project across the three years, based on a general plan, in order to capitalise on the results of Phase 1 by institutionalising FL and RTM through a multi-layered and multi-stakeholder strategy. Each country built local level evidence and, through multi-stakeholder platforms established to support the system at all levels, would feed this into district/regional and national level governance, in order to contribute to the strengthening of international FLEGT VPA processes. All stakeholders noted that the set-up of the project led to strong relationships between implementing partners and associated partners. Collaboration between implementing partners and associated partners in formal networks (CSIFM in Ghana, SNOIE in Cameroon, GTP and RENOI in DRC, and SNOIE-like platform in RoC) enabled the implementing partners to share their training, and enabled all members of the networks to pool their resources and work towards a common goal with their respective forest authorities.

There were some bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in terms of admitting different members onto the FL platform in certain countries, notably in Ghana, but also in DRC. In one case it took nine months to make a decision on the inclusion of a potential associated partner (Rainforest Alliance) to the FL platform. In the end, Rainforest Alliance decided to use a different tool in Ghana. During discussions between RFUK and the CSIFM network in Ghana, it was felt by RFUK that the different members held different visions, and that coordination around FL may be a challenge, requiring some more effort and discussion between RFUK before a CSIFM member

was admitted to the platform. This was unlike the case in Cameroon where all members of SNOIE (ISO certified group) were working towards the same overall goal of training local communities to the use of an innovative tool (FL) in order to monitor illegal logging and advocate for respect of rights of local communities in forest resources management. From RFUK's perspective, this meant that in Cameroon it was a straightforward process to admit members of SNOIE onto the FL platform, while in Ghana, further initial work needed to be done to ensure that all members of the CSIFM would use FL for a similar strategic purpose. The CSIFM network in Ghana was in existence before the RTM project, and members had been working together on a number of different projects with the administration, citing that they felt they had their own vision on how to work together.

For a project focused on institutionalisation, government involvement throughout is of central importance for the efficiency and overall success of the project. However, the four countries employed slightly different strategies in this set-up. In DRC, GASHE involved all relevant stakeholders (government, communities, CSOs, companies, other NGOs, and legal authorities) from the outset. In Ghana, the Forestry Commission was involved early in discussions and advocated for alerts to be sent to the District Managers as soon as it was sent to the FL platform, in order to make the system more efficient. When the Forestry Commission sent a letter requesting that Regional Managers be added to the platform, many more staff signed up. CJJ also involved the administration from the outset and worked with their version of SNOIE, while providing them with training on FL. FODER, however, did not involve the government during the design phase of the project (in Phase 1 they invited the government to provide some recommendations) which, in addition

to historic tensions with government authorities and NGOs/CSOs in general, resulted in MINFOF being highly suspicious at the beginning that the FL platform was some form of espionage. As of the end of January 2021, MINFOF and FODER have signed a MoU (as is the case for all NGOs seeking to collaborate with MINFOF) for the work being carried out between them, which is a positive step for future collaboration.

REPORTING AND M&E

RFUK held regular formal meetings (every three months for large quarterly reviews, and monthly check-ins) and informal exchanges (often via Whatsapp) with all implementing partners. All activities were well documented (with results and objectives semi-evaluated or reflected upon after each session with communities) and discussed. The calendar was well determined and established (1) when reporting was expected, (2) when formal exchanges would be held, (3) which activities would happen when, and (4) when funds would be distributed. All activities and plans were agreed on collectively, and country frameworks and strategies were led by the implementing partners. The regularity of the exchanges enabled a greater level of flexibility when activities needed to be changed or adapted. RFUK was very responsive to these changes, e.g. Civic Response cited an issue in June 2020 when they weren't getting alerts, and asked to increase the budget for call credit for the verifiers to be able to call monitors. This helped to maintain the interest on the side of the communities during COVID-19 as they still felt cared for by the project.

Some implementing partners felt that RFUK's close oversight occasionally erred towards "micromanagement" and may have introduced some inefficiency into activities

Table 3. Multi-stakeholder platforms in existence in each of the countries

COUNTRY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS
Cameroon	FODER	SNOIE (existed before the project)
Ghana	Civic Response	CSIFM (9 CSOs) (existed before the project)
DRC	GASHE	GTP (developed as part of the RTM project by GASHE) RENOI (developed by an OGF initiative through EU funding, and supported and strengthened by GASHE through the course of the RTM project)
RoC	CJJ	SNOIE-Congo (developed as part of the CV4C project with CIDT, RTM project supported SNOIE-Congo with the objective of training all SNOIE members with a field presence on the use of FL) Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts (PGDF) (existed before the project)

e.g. the need for RFUK to give the OK on activities that had already been planned was time-consuming, and somewhat frustrating to partners who felt that after several years of working with RFUK should have earned their trust. Indeed, RFUK was a lot more stringent in reporting requirements with its newest partner, CJJ, “checking every receipt”. Nonetheless, CJJ felt that they worked well with RFUK and that this partnership pushed them to be more “dynamic”. Contrary to the opinion of some implementing partners, this evaluation does not criticise the diligence and care on the part of RFUK, but suggests that a solution to this tension point may be for RFUK to communicate that its close oversight is not due to a lack of trust in its partners, but is simply a core part of its responsibilities in managing the grant.

TIMELINESS

The biggest contributor to the disruption of planned activities was the COVID-19 pandemic. This had a significant impact on the project in RoC, as training and activities had only just begun when they had to be suspended. However, given this was completely unforeseeable, and has impacts and consequences which are still unfolding, this section will not focus on the impacts of COVID-19, but will instead focus on the timeliness of the FL System and the activities as part of Phase 2 overall.

Timing and efficiency in the FL system, as one would expect, faced unique challenges in different countries. One of the biggest problems was that not all communities were living within or very close proximity to the forests, limiting the timeliness of monitoring information (e.g. in RoC communities had to travel 15-40km by motorbike to reach the forests). Other problems included (1) the fact that forest canopy can cause minor delays in sending off alerts when using the satellite system, (2) occasional delays in pre-verification missions, given that community outreach officers were not always based right next to communities - or else road and weather conditions prevented them from being able to access communities easily (this was particularly a problem in DRC, where some community outreach officers were based nearly a day's travel from certain communities), (3) delays in verification missions given how costly they were (e.g. joint quarterly missions in DRC were felt by communities to be too infrequent, as were missions in Ghana, which were triggered only after 10 alerts in one location), and (4) the fact that some authorities did not find the system

easy to use (e.g. the database was never logged into by the forest authorities in Cameroon, who relied on reports compiled by SNOIE and criticised the flow of information, as they thought that alerts should be sent to the Heads of Posts first rather than the central Forest Ministry). Furthermore, in some cases enforcement proceeded rapidly while in others it took a lot of time. However - like many of these challenges - this is beyond the control of the project, as it is reliant on the judicial system of the given country. Timing of activities showed some delays at the beginning of the project, but the most significant delays were as a result of the lock-downs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING

The technical expertise was high across the project, and was a key criterion for involvement. RFUK provided a significant amount of technical expertise in the development and refinement of V2.0 of FL and also acted as a technical backstop for in-country experts. In Ghana, a technical coordinator was employed to coordinate the FL platform among the CSIFM network. In DRC, GASHE hired consultants based on competence criteria, which is rare in DRC where appointments are often the result of patronage networks. This emphasis on technical expertise contributed greatly to the efficiency of the system.

Feedback from community members and implementing agencies led to several improvements to the application, allowing for instance to send SMS alerts (based on feedback from Ghana); providing automated analysis of alerts received (in Cameroon, through feedback from FODER), allowing pictures to be taken immediately when the alert is raised followed by other information (based on suggestions from communities in Cameroon). In DRC, many actors demanded that alerts would be expanded to include human right violations, poaching, and other types of illegalities. RFUK worked on constant improvements of FL based on feedback received and appeared to be receptive to country feedback, ensuring the adaptability of the tool to problems and national conditions and needs.

Capacity building and training of implementing partners was appreciated and deemed highly satisfactory. The regular updates in FL tool (three times a year), needed in order to make improvements and achieve the ‘ready to deploy’ output, meant that regular training on the updates was required, by both the implementing partners

and the associated partners. As a result, the frequency of updates to the app was a source of some frustration, as well as having budgetary implications, as it required the retraining of monitors and verifiers. Some associated partners also felt that the training was not long enough for them to fully grasp the tool, and some did the training without access to the FL application.

Capacity building was also highly appreciated by communities and forest authorities. Forest monitors were trained extensively on how to manipulate the technology and use the different Collecteur updates, and wider communities received training in forest regulations, and their rights relating to forest laws. Training was also given to forest authorities in all countries, and in DRC, this led to an important change in the law. Decree 072, which allows communities to negotiate one or more social clauses in a five-year forestry development block, was modified to enshrine the rights of communities to conduct monitoring of their forests, following a GASHE training for forest authorities in Kinshasa. Unfortunately, in some countries, such as Cameroon and RoC, forest authorities did not really end up using the system directly (however, it must be noted that there was real interest amongst certain staff and members in the respective Forest Ministries to use FL). In RoC, it was felt that the training was too short (only 2-3 days) and needed strengthening and repetition.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

A number of challenges with the materials supplied as part of the FL tool were highlighted, including (1) the fact that some phones were too slow for the task (NB when this was reported to RFUK, faster phones were sourced and sent to communities); (2) locally procured phones didn't last as long, and (3) there were difficulties in installing the app in some smartphones that communities already owned (Tech Brand, ITEL, XTEG) (this has since been resolved in Cameroon as FODER have succeeded in installing Collecteur on local smartphones), and (4) cables would often break or phones would lose their charge or stop working partially (cameras would stop working or GPS would stop recording) or entirely. As a solution, RFUK often purchased in the UK and shipped to countries. This is neither efficient nor a sustainable long-term solution. Delays were also introduced as implementing partners and communities waited for equipment to be replaced. However, this inefficiency is beyond the control of the project, as forest conditions (high temperatures and high humidity) are tough on technology, leading to frequent erosion or malfunctioning, and ultra-hardwearing

technology is not a cost-effective use of money. Our assessment suggests that RFUK, implementing partners and communities all tried their best to seek solutions to these challenging environmental conditions.

USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In the original proposal, a total of 2,458,170 GBP was requested for the Phase 2 of the RTM project across 2018-2021. This was revised up to 2,522,021 GBP with the addition of Output 6 in 2019/20. The majority of the budget was planned for, and was actually used on, Output 1: RTM Global. Outputs 2, 3 and 4 (RTM Cameroon, Ghana and DRC, respectively) received roughly equal amounts of funding (20%) each, whilst Output 5: RTM RoC received only 6% of the total budget (see Figure 1). RFUK received the greatest share of budget (57%) which corresponds to the highest spend in Output 1: RTM Global. The main spending was on staff and consultants (45%), followed by operation costs (24%) and output related equipment costs (11%). Overheads received by RFUK were relatively low (6%). There was some underspending in Y1 and Y2 by RFUK, as there were delays in bringing implementing partners on board, however this was made up for in spending in Y3. Overall, there will have only been a minor underspend of 3.2% (as of estimates in January 2021).

It was planned that Implementing partners (FODER, GASHE, Civic Response) would receive roughly the same amount of funding across the first and second year (around 100-130,000 GBP annually) and slightly less (around 90,000 GBP) in the third year. However, as of January 2021, they had actually received roughly the same amount per year. RoC partner CJJ did not receive funding in Y1 as it was not yet on board, and subsequent years did not receive more than 35,000 GBP annually.

A number of implementing partners and associated partners highlighted that the budget was tight, slightly inflexible, and may have prevented opportunities from being seized and capitalised on:

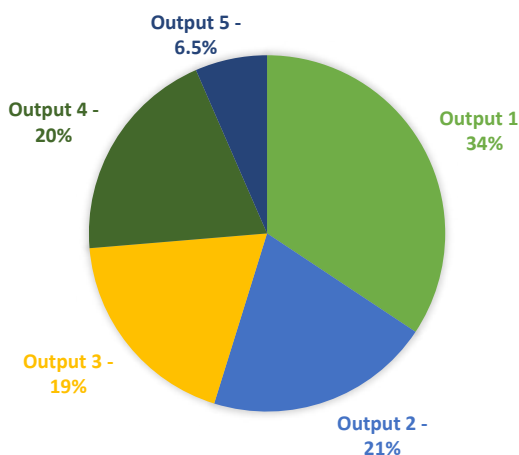
- CJJ, for example, was not able to organise an identification mission to identify appropriate communities. Furthermore, CJJ carried out many missions with ClientEarth, who effectively co-funded the missions. As project success revolves around joint verification missions, and given that these are very costly, more funding should perhaps have been allocated to CJJ.
- FODER reported that the budget was too inflexible and did not allow opportunities to be seized e.g. the

establishment of local dialogue structures (with the CPF and CR) could not be pursued as a new initiative (CR Quarterly report Oct-Dec 2019).

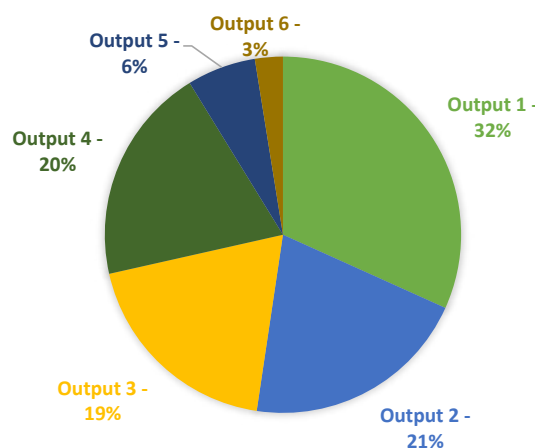
- Budgetary restrictions were also highlighted by GASHE, who did not have sufficient funds to cover work with GTP as they had hoped, GTP also highlighted that they felt their budget was tight (GASHE Q2 2020 report). Furthermore, GASHE highlighted that the 10% for operating costs was not high enough to cover the work other staff in GASHE not directly implicated in the project also had to do to support RTM.
- In Ghana, Civic Response had to scale down from two community monitors to just one per community due to financial limitations: “The only challenge to delivering project strategy is inability to secure adequate number of android phones to equip 2 community monitors per community with phones. 2 out of 10 community people per community were given deeper training on RTM but only one can be equipped with a phone.”

Implementing partners overall did not record under-spending, and in fact had to spend more in Y3 (20.4% higher) as they had to ensure facilities for workshops (that were able to go ahead) were big enough for safe social distancing. This evaluation did not conduct an exhaustive review of the financing per year (beyond the scope of the ToR) but based on these findings suggests that budgets could be reviewed with some extra budget lines added, and made more flexibility to move budget allocations around.

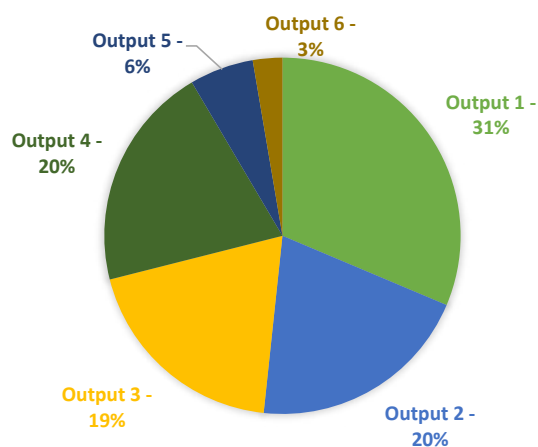
Figure 1. Spending per output



(a) Original budget proposal



(b) Budget with amendment in Year 3



(c) Actual budget (forecast to Year 3)

3.4 EFFECTIVENESS

Overall, it was not possible to accurately measure all outputs due to a lack of data. The project made progress towards achieving most of the planned outputs in DRC, Ghana and Cameroon, despite activities being suspended in the third year of activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This had a particularly negative impact on activities in RoC, which were only just beginning. Each of the countries designed and adopted their own specific implementation strategy based on their specific national contexts, challenges and opportunities, but each planned that much of the main institutionalising and strengthening of the project in all countries would happen in Y3, including: (1) continuing to build the capacity of stakeholders through further training (communities, government, associated partners); (2) ensuring pre-verification and verification missions to further strengthen the use of FL RTM by target communities; (3) working to further include forest administration in the alert cycle and verification process. It is therefore unsurprising that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the project did not progress as far into institutionalisation as had originally been intended.

Beyond the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it was also difficult to measure achievement of all the outputs as formulated in the original and revised logical framework for a number of reasons. Firstly, some of the wording in the milestones was vague. This was, in part, intentional; given that institutionalisation and strengthening of rights is a long process, indicators on these are inherently challenging to measure, and each of the countries differed in terms of the legal context and governance capacity of the state at the start of the project. Secondly, data was not consistently and systematically collected and recorded in such a way that would make it possible to make comparisons between baseline and end-line e.g. for planned achievements such as 100% SRA received, nor in measuring a reduction in forest illegalities. Where it was not possible to measure the achievement of outcomes, this has been highlighted, and stakeholder evidence to show progress towards their achievement has been provided. Overall, stakeholders perceived that substantial progress had been made across all the planned outputs but that some shortcomings remained.

Table 4. Overall ability to measure achievement of project outcomes

OUTPUT	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT	EVIDENCE
A "ready to deploy" version (V2.0) of the technology and system is consolidated based on further deployment and testing of the community based Real Time Forest Monitoring	Achieved	Community-based real time forest monitoring achieved in all countries insofar as alerts were being sent from communities and resulting in pre-verification and verification missions.
Enforcement actions increase in response to community generated alerts, leading to a sustainable reduction of illegalities and better protection of community rights in the context of forest activities	Unable to measure	1400 alerts sent across three countries (Ghana, Cameroon, DRC) but unable to measure an increase in enforcement actions nor a reduction in illegal activities as there is no baseline or end-line data. Anecdotal/stakeholder perceptions are that there has been a reduction in illegalities, and stakeholders believe that there is increased credibility of community alerts. DRC mentioned that the government might do one mission every 3-4 years, but as part of this project, GASHE ensured quarterly joint missions to sites of illegal activities, therefore enforcement as a result of CSO/NGO facilitation did increase in DRC.
Civil society-led real time monitoring systems are institutionalised in user countries through integration of the system to forest control mechanisms and participation of forest communities and civil society representatives in forest management mechanisms	Strong level of integration achieved; progress made towards an ambitious target	ForestLink RTM has achieved strong level of integration in DRC (via RENOIE), and in Cameroon and Ghana in pre-existing forest monitoring platforms (SNOIE and CSIFM, respectively), while newly formed SNOIE in RoC has been modelled on SNOIE in Cameroon and is seeking ISO certification. Substantial achievement of institutionalisation with administration being seen in Ghana, and potentially in Cameroon via MoU, and community-based monitoring now enshrined in law in Decree 072 in DRC. However, communities don't yet have consistent feedback on the alerts they send. They don't have ownership of the platform, they can't see how many alerts are coming from their communities or surroundings, nor what is done with the reports. Their ownership is only at the level of monitoring. RFUK and partners are developing concrete plans and have ongoing technology development in order to address these issues.

OUTPUT	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT	EVIDENCE
Sustainable engagement of forest communities in forest monitoring efforts	Unable to measure	Too early to tell if there is sustainable engagement, and consistent data on livelihoods was not captured in order to facilitate measurement. Some community members mentioned that they did not know what happened to their alerts after they sent them, leading to frustration. RFUK is developing a new feature of FL to allow monitors to observe what is done with their alerts, and whether they are verified.

OUTPUT 1: RTM GLOBAL

RTM is running in all three Phase 1 and Phase 2 countries (DRC, Cameroon, Ghana) but as a result of the COVID-19 suspension of activities, more work is needed on co-ordination and training in RoC to make full use of the technology which has been successfully implemented in the pilot communities. A clear FL RTM Data and User Rights Agreement has been developed and signed by all implementing partners in the four countries, in addition Ghana has developed a country-specific data governance policy. There is movement towards having the FL app available on Google Playstore. At the time of evaluation, a technical issue related to the messaging function is being fixed by RFUK so that the online store can offer the app. A User Package has been developed, which includes training manual, user agreement, T&C, ethical

standards, and communication procedures in order for other CSOs to use the system. Whether the software is open source is different to whether the app is available on Google Playstore. Open source refers to the technology itself – real time monitoring via forms which can be collated into a centralised database. The risks of open source – namely that the technology could technically be used for nefarious reasons e.g. monitoring the movement of community members - became apparent over the course of the project and led to a reassessment of whether this software should be released, and whether this would unintentionally impact RFUK's "do no harm" principle. At the point of writing, this was still under discussion internally in RFUK, and with partners. Overall, substantial achievement was made for the targets in Output 1: RTM Global.

Table 5. Output indicators, target/milestone by 2021 and assessment of level of achievement for Output 1.

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Cross-cutting technical development: Ready to deploy version of the RTM system (V2.0)	V2.0 consolidated V2.0 running in user countries (Cameroon, Ghana and DRC); and successfully tested and running in at least 2 pilot sites in 1 new country (RoC)	Achieved in all countries (Cameroon, Ghana, DRC) and tested in 2 pilot sites in RoC (North Likouala; Sud Lekoumou), some limitations on whether it can be considering 'running' in RoC due to curtailing of activities as a result of COVID-19 pandemic
RTM data property rights statement and user agreement	RTM data property rights statement and user agreement integrated to RTM system V2.0	User agreements developed, in which the forest communities (not the individual monitors) retain exclusive ownership of all primary and secondary data (including indigenous data) processed by ForestLink RTM, and implementing partners and RFUK would seek Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to use this data. Some reservations remained within Ghana Forestry Commission on RFUK's level of 'ownership' or role as custodian of the data. A data governance document has been finalised which aims to answers outstanding questions surrounding data access and intellectual property rights, and is still in the process of being negotiated within the countries.
ForestLink available to other Independent Monitoring organisations as an open source software, and analysis/lessons learnt of data collected in 4 countries	V2.0 consolidated available Opensource. Analysis and lessons learnt from RTM data collected in 4 countries inform better forest law enforcement and community based IFM initiatives	In both Ghana and Cameroon, partners tested compatibility of a beta version with Google Playstore to increase access to the ForestLink tool. New users can download the app from the online platform when providing authorised user credentials (obtainable from national ForestLink administrators). Discussions remain about the risks of providing software as open source. Lessons learnt collected in the form of a 3-day workshop, this workshop reflected on impact and achievements, consolidating gains and improving best practices, and the future of ForestLink as a community-based monitoring tool.

OUTPUT 2: RTM CAMEROON

Please refer to Annex 5 for a full breakdown of the level of achievement (against the target indicator) by December 2020.

RTM V2.0 was successfully running in 44 communities (NB target: 20 communities), with 126 observers (NB target: 100 community observers) in 4 regions: Centre, Littoral, East and South Regions (NB target: 3 regions): all targets were effectively covered in the project. However, the management has not been achieved: the Forest Administration has accounts for the FL platform and many staff are supportive of RTM and the use of the FL platform to achieve this, but has never logged in to receive alerts directly from the platform, and there remains some confusion over the strategy for SNOIE to manage FL alerts and transfer them to the administration.

The number of control missions (~3-7 verifications per year, of which 4 were joint with the administration in 2019/20) is low for the number of RTM alerts received (~500 per year). It was not possible to measure an increased responsiveness of enforcement, reduction in forest illegalities, or whether communities had received 100% of due benefits (SRAs) as these assessments were not carried out. There were mixed perspectives on whether forest illegalities had been reduced, but joint missions did result in the seizing of illegal timber, and some communities did receive SRAs. However, there are logging companies and artisanal loggers in communal forests who still do not pay the rights due to communities, and communities have not seen 100% of the promised social projects manifest.

FODER staff felt that all communities now had a good understanding of the long-term sustainability of forest resource management and had fully appropriated the FL App. However, community motivation and tensions within the community remained an issue for the long-term sustainability of RTM, and partners on the ground explained that communities may seek other income opportunities and become “corrupted” as “people still live in extreme poverty, so they are ready to accept the money that the operators offer them to let them exploit illegally”. This was said to be particularly true of village chiefs and elites, who are also able to intimidate members of their communities who do the monitoring.

Effective participation of CSOs and the strengthening of CSOs’ and forest communities’ capacity was achieved. As one associated partner explained: “We used to say that

denunciations are baseless and unfounded, but with RTM everything is geolocated, georeferenced, and the information provided by the communities is indisputable.” For institutionalisation to move forward, stakeholders believe that it is necessary to strengthen and work more closely with the Comité Paysan Forêt (CPF) (local-level structures with an institutional mandate for forest monitoring, created by Décision N° 1354/D/MINEF/CAB du 26 novembre 1999) and the Riparian Committees. It should be noted, however, that the Sustainability Report (2020) cautioned that careful consideration and work with the CPF was needed as “some CPFs are dysfunctional or under the influence of logging enterprises”. The project has been attempting to address these issues through support to CPF governance and promoting participation of women and IPs in order to counter elite capture.

One of the biggest constraining factors was the risk of corruption of some forest agents, which, as one Associated Partner explained “[forest agents] do not want to see the system be applied in full legality; this would reduce their manoeuvring force and involvement in these illegalities of which they are often the accomplices”. Corruption is also an issue within local authorities who are enabling forest loggers to illegally access some forest areas for illegal activities.. However, Forest authorities highlighted that they want to become the owner of FL, and that as long as the tool is privately owned it would be difficult for the administration to take ownership of it and see it institutionalised. For them, institutionalisation will only be achieved once ownership is given to the Forest Ministry.

OUTPUT 3: RTM GHANA

Please refer to Annex 6 for a full breakdown of the level of achievement (against the target indicator) by December 2020.

RTM V2.0 was successfully running in 72 communities (NB: target 30 communities), with 175 observers (NB: target 100 observers) in 27 districts (NB: target 10 districts). The system was managed and used by 7-8 CSIFM members, of which 10 Forest Watch Ghana members are verifiers, as well as the Forest Services Division (FSD). According to all stakeholders involved, the synergy and shared mission and vision contributed to the success of the outcomes.

Accurate data on the number of alerts that were sent was not provided. In total there were 7 control verification missions over the course of the project. The ratio of control missions to alerts as reported in the Technical

Reports did not achieve 50%, but most of the missions were planned for 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic therefore seriously delayed the ability to travel to communities. The strategy in 2019 was to wait for a certain number of alerts before sending a verification mission (alerts were pre-verified though) as it was not feasible or cost effective to check every alert by deploying a large mission. CSOs came up with an allocation programme whereby they would focus on recurring alerts, identifying which ones needed more attention before initiating a verification mission. Across the quarter July-Sept 2019, 181 alerts were reported, of which 14 were 'verified alerts' and 4 'controlled verifications' were recorded. 62 Forestry Commission staff signed up on the FL platform and are able to access information on a daily basis. There were mixed perspectives on whether forest illegalities had reduced, and communities have not seen 100% of social projects manifest from logging companies.

RTM is not yet fully institutionalised, but it has made the greatest progress in Ghana. This project came at the right time, when a multitude of actors were trying to find ways of integrating local-level (community indigenous) knowledge and expert knowledge into the sustainable protection and management of resources. Bringing the Forestry Commission on board from the onset was a hugely positive influencing factor, even though buy-in from government authorities was initially slow. In 2020, the Forestry Commission stated that Provincial and Subnational actors should use FL as a tool for timber licensing under FLEGT. FSD Headquarters sent formal directives to all the 10 Regional Managers and 15 District Managers where Civic Response and CSIFM Partners are operating, instructing the District Managers to take part in controlled verifications. What remains outstanding, is for RTM processes to officially become part of FSD operational frameworks like the Manual of Operations.

It is too early to measure the sustainability mechanisms and incentives in communities, as these are still being explored. In general, community members were well sensitised, but during the course of the project some tensions emerged that Civic Response worked to resolve - or to prevent in other communities. Tensions existed between community monitors and youth (who may have been involved in illegal logging) or elders who were not fully on board with the project and Community Leaders/Chiefs in the community who were supporting the illegal felling of trees and mining. Community members had not realised that forest lands did not exclusively belong to Community Leaders, and had experienced intimidation

from Community Leaders who sought to retain their vested interests in illegal activities. Civic Response recognised that continued awareness-raising and sensitisation was needed in order to overcome tensions and ensure the gains of the project in the long-term management of forest resources.

OUTPUT 4: RTM DRC

“The RTM project attacks environmental criminals. In the past, in terms of justice, these cases have often been treated lightly - these criminals are not typically punished and there is often inaction” - DRC, GASHE

Please refer to Annex 7 for a full breakdown of the level of achievement (against the target indicator) by December 2020.

RTM V2.0 was successfully running in 13 communities (NB: target 20 communities), with 49 monitors (NB: target 70 community monitors) in 3 Provinces: Equateur, Tshuapa and Tshopo (NB: target 2 provinces). Therefore, the targets were not quite met in DRC. The management of the system by GASHE and OGF was achieved and all members of the RENOI network made full use of FL. Furthermore, forest authorities were supportive of and happy with the tool.

A total of 60 alerts were sent across 2019/20 and 108 alerts in 2018/19. In DRC there were two main types of missions which could contribute to enforcement actions: (1) Routine quarterly missions between GASHE and the administration and (2) Urgent missions which would be undertaken either by a community outreach officer visiting the community for verification (as quickly as the day after an alert was received) or by one of the NGO/CSO platforms members, with the administration if possible. The administration was thankful for GASHE's organisation of joint missions, and for the ways in which

they provided logistical support for forest authorities to visit communities and follow up with companies. A major influencing factor was that GASHE and the administration had, in the words of one government representative, "the same vision" and that GASHE was a trusted partner who would help verify the veracity of information coming to the administration from logging companies. However, tensions sometimes erupted when authorities were expecting financial support and it was not provided.

The government did not have access to the alerts themselves but worked with GASHE. In total, 5 joint verification missions occurred in 2019/20 and 3 joint verification missions occurred in 2018/19. The ratio of 25% of RTM alerts triggering verification missions was therefore not achieved. However, most of the missions were planned for 2020 and COVID-19 seriously delayed the possibility of traveling to communities to undertake verification missions. Other challenges included the fact that the provincial level sometimes neglected to send alerts to the national level; that traditional Chiefs involved in forest illegalities would sometimes deliberately obstruct project activities; that national-level politicians were implicated in corruption and would often offer protection to logging companies (e.g. MU2) seeking to evade the law; that some logging companies spread rumours against GASHE (e.g. IFCO), and tried to intimidate and threaten communities. However, despite these challenges and constraining factors, the project nonetheless achieved a lot in DRC.

The institutionalisation of the system has not yet been achieved, but progress has been made. There is a real opportunity for RTM to become institutionalised in DRC, given that community monitoring is now enshrined in the law (Decree 072). Members of the RENOI-RDC (Réseau d'Observation Indépendante des ressources naturelles de la RDC), including OCEAN, ADEV, CERN/CENCO, APEM, CFLEDD, CEPECO, ABCOM, Réseau CREF, CALF, ECC/FPCF, and CADEM have all been trained on FL. The formation of RENOI created a synergy amongst all actors, with each strengthening the capacity of the others. Furthermore, the creation of a consultation framework in collaboration with the CNCEIB (Coalition Nationale Contre l'Exploitation illégale des bois) has also made it possible to approach magistrates and judges. The involvement of the administration, the legal system, logging companies, communities and partners from the outset was an influencing factor that positively impacted the success of the overall project.

It is too early to measure the sustainability mechanisms and incentives in communities as these are still being

explored. A strong contributing factor to the success of the project, however, was the level of participation and involvement in the project by communities.

OUTPUT 5: RTM REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Please refer to Annex 8 for a full breakdown of the level of achievement (against the target indicator) by December 2020.

RTM V2.0 was successfully tested in 4 communities (target 10) in 2 pilot sites (target was 2 pilot) with 14 community observers. Therefore, the targets were not quite met in RoC. Implementing partner staff were competently able to use FL V2.0 technology.

RoC joined in 2019 and there was not an expectation that institutionalisation would have reached as far as other countries which had either been in Phase 1 or which had a longer timeframe in Phase 2. However, the impact of COVID-19 only ~6 months into the project effectively precluded the achievement of many of the anticipated results, as many of the activities had to be suspended. However, with only one year and a few months before activities had to cease as a result of the pandemic and transmission mitigation measures, CJJ was able to draw together relevant stakeholders and garner interest in RTM and FL amongst CSOs and with the administration.

A total of 4 alerts were sent in 2020 and 64 alerts were sent in 2019. The number of alerts being sent dropped drastically during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, a verification mission was carried out by CJJ in December 2019, but no joint verification missions were ever carried out. 12 agents from DDEF and 4 agents from the Central Forest Administration (the Cellule de la Légimité Forestière et de Traçabilité (CLFT) and the Direction Générale des Forêts (DGF) of the Ministère de l'économie forestière) were trained on accessing and using RTM platform.

There is evidence of successful training of communities as they received many different refresher training events and keep making requests for further training, but it is too early to assess the sustainability of the RTM project in RoC. Once it was possible to resume activities again, CJJ worked with 22 community members to train them on legal proceedings (including how to draft a legal complaints) and worked with approximately 150 community members to sensitise them on community-based monitoring and forest protection, and community rights vis-à-vis logging concessions. Evidence that this training has been effective is that: "Community monitors are

organised around the village chief to set up a team, made up of community monitors and leaders, to supervise issues related to the promotion and defense of their rights (user rights, sharing of benefits and customary land rights) and procedural rights such as access to justice, participation and access to information)" (CJJ).

OUTPUT 6: COP PUTTING FOREST COMMUNITIES FIRMLY ON THE AGENDA OF THE 2020 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COPS

This output was added in June 2020 after a discussion with FCDO on the importance of ensuring that CSOs and communities participate in deliberative processes leading up to COP26 and COP15 so that the rights of forest communities be put firmly on the agenda. COP26, which will be held in Glasgow, UK, jointly between the UK and

Italy, was postponed from November 2020 to November 2021 due to the pandemic. COP15 was postponed to September, 2021. Therefore there is further time to work on these outputs. It is too early to measure the achievement as many of the policy debates are ongoing. For example, the NDCs and the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework are still not finalised. Below is a summary of the progress towards achievement, which once the extension to the work is received, will go much further in amplifying the voices of CSOs and communities at COP26.

Table 7. Output indicators, target/milestone by 2021 and assessment of level of achievement for Output 6

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Community-led forest protection is formally reflected into the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for Congo Basin countries	At least one Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for a Congo Basin country (DRC or RoC) includes provisions for community-led forest protection	DRC and RoC were chosen as target countries. In DRC, civil society submitted their position paper on the NDC to the government in December. Their NDC position paper was based on answers to an online questionnaire, consultations with provincial organisations in four different areas of the country, and discussions with civil society during two national workshops. The position paper on the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework is in the process of being finalised and will be submitted to the government in March.
Community rights and community-based forest management approaches are included in NIFs for Congo Basin countries	At least two National Investment Frameworks (NIF) in the Congo Basin (DRC and RoC) promote community forests and other rights-based approaches	In RoC, civil society submitted their position paper on the NDC to the government in December. Their NDC position paper was developed by the PGDF's legal working group and validated by organisations from across the country during a national workshop. Similarly, their position paper on the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework is in the process of being finalised and will be submitted to their government in February.
The post-2020 framework gives greater emphasis on reaching the 30 percent protected area target through rights-based conservation approaches as opposed to militarised ones	Specific targets related to rights-based conservation will be included in at least one Congo Basin NBAP	Both teams established relationships with key decision-makers including the climate focal points responsible for revising their country's NDC and the focal points responsible for representing DRC and RoC at the CBD. In both countries, focal points participated in their workshops to inform civil society of processes underway and how their recommendations will be integrated. Civil society can now hold decision makers accountable and is well-positioned to participate in deliberations on the NDC and the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.
The role of Indigenous peoples and Local communities (IPLCs) in implementing 'nature-based solutions' will be given a higher profile at COP26, resulting in improved policy and funding commitments	Enhanced participation of forest peoples' representatives and civil society organisations in deliberative processes	

3.5 IMPACT

"If everywhere we are educated about forest law, the forest will be respected" - RoC, Community Member

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed highly satisfactory. Whilst there were country specific differences in impact, the overall impact (socio-economic, political and environmental consequences) exceeded expectations in the given timeframe (which was also reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic), especially given that the project was undertaken in extremely difficult operating environments with many external factors beyond its control.

The stated impact of the project was that "Deforestation and other forms of environmental damage diminish, and the rights and livelihoods of forest communities are strengthened". This is an ambitious goal, which was nonetheless broadly achieved.

Firstly, communities' knowledge on their rights was unequivocally strengthened across all communities in all countries, and many community members had used this knowledge to advocate – successfully in many cases – for their rights to be respected. Furthermore, knowledge of rights also increased in other neighboring (non-project) communities, which is indicative of the high degree of appropriation and empowerment felt by the target

communities; the communities clearly internalised their rights and had a desire to share this knowledge with their peers.

Secondly, despite the fact that data is somewhat limited (as there was no baseline and end-line information), there are early indications that livelihoods were strengthened. For example, in DRC, villagers gained better access to markets (to sell their produce) via the use of logging company vehicles.

Thirdly, while this evaluation was not able to make a quantitative assessment on the reduction in deforestation and other forms of environmental damage (due to a lack of baseline and end-line data on tree loss and regrowth), some communities in countries reported a drastic reduction in deforestation. However, others suggested the reduction was modest and more gradual. These mixed results could, however, be due to the fact that many of the activities in the final year were truncated as a result of the pandemic, meaning that the project only had two years of full operation in which to achieve its ambitions.

"Fighting against forest illegalities - it's hard, you don't get that done from one day to the next, it takes time" - DRC, GASHE

Table 7. A brief country summary of impacts

COUNTRY	IMPACT SCORE AND SUMMARY
Cameroon	Satisfactory - There was a gradual decrease of illegalities, but largely via more clandestine activities or a relocation of illegal activities. Communities are better aware of their rights, and through their advocacy have managed to claim some benefits and rights. The suspension of a forest company based on an alert sent by community observers was a major impact. The community observers reported feeling empowered, however, they did not feel a real collaboration with the forest administration and did not feel very involved with missions.
Ghana	Highly Satisfactory - Ghana has moved the furthest towards institutionalisation and community-based monitoring has been accepted as an important means of IFM. Forestlink has become the main tool for independent forest monitoring in the country, which is a striking achievement.
DRC	Highly Satisfactory - Communities noted significant impacts including reduction in illegal activities and benefits sharing (schools built, produce evacuated). There were several unanticipated positive impacts: (1) Thanks to the project, a clause in the law (Decree 072) which protects communities' rights to monitor their own forests, was created; (2) The first ever case for illegal logging in the country's history came to court (although the defendant was later acquitted) as a result of GASHE's advocacy work challenging impunity and corruption.

COUNTRY	IMPACT SCORE AND SUMMARY
RoC	Moderately Satisfactory - The impact was strongly negatively affected by COVID-19 travel restrictions, which led to an estimated loss of 6 months of activities, over a project duration of less than 2 years. No joint verification mission was carried out to date (involving CJJ, government and CSOs). CJJ carried out one verification mission of alerts and produced one report on those alerts, which is currently under revision by the lobbying platform (PGDF). While CJJ raised the awareness of CSOs and local/national administration on FL, no one except CJJ used it for forest monitoring. CSO and administration pointed to the need for more direct involvement in FL activities and further training.

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED FOREST GOVERNANCE (LEGAL AND REGULATORY REFORM, EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION)

“You cannot just go and monitor when you don’t know what is illegal, you have to understand the law [...] civil society actors in Ghana now are well versed in issues of forestry law and can confidently challenge officials.” - Ghana, Associate Partner

The project achieved its primary intended outcome by demonstrating that strengthening participation from the local to the national level is highly effective in strengthening forest governance. RFUK and partners had initially planned to use RTM and FL as a means of holding local authorities accountable, but as the project progressed, it proved to be a collaborative tool that was useful to forest authorities. At the operational level, it was welcomed by forest authorities because it helped them choose the sites to patrol.

In Cameroon, there is evidence that forest governance improved. While they did not feel that much of a collaboration had been created with forest authorities, local communities felt knowledgeable and empowered to take part in the National Committee for FLEGT VPA and had begun negotiating with logging companies on SRA. CSOs (SNOIE platform) were able to draw on solid information

provided by community monitors and use this to bring sanctions against forestry companies (Decision 1289 on 31st October 2019 and Decision 1367 on 7th November 2019 concerning the suspension of SBAC forest company). Authorities did not use the FL platform directly, but SNOIE funnelled information to the forest authorities, who then seized illegal timber and benefitted from the fines and the sale of the timber. For example, during a joint verification mission between FODER-SUHE-DDFoF in Sanaga Maritime (Littoral region) a total volume of 208m3 of timber was seized, along with 7 chainsaws, 1 motorcycle, 60L of petrol and 170m3 of lumber. Furthermore, 7 people, presumed guilty of illegal logging, were arrested.

In Ghana, there is evidence that forest governance improved. Both communities and civil society benefited from capacity building on forest law, and communities find it much easier and quicker to report infractions and to have them taken seriously by authorities. Forestlink has become the main tool for independent forest monitoring in the country, which is a striking achievement. The government has also benefited economically, as community forest monitors are now doing much of the work its own monitors used to do. The government is also aware that CSOs are monitoring them, and this has led to greater cooperation between the government and CSOs, greater accountability and reduced corruption. This is also a striking achievement. As one associated partner told us: “it would have been unheard of to have government staff coming to do training with Civil Society prior to this project”. As a result of Civic Response’s support, communities reported feeling as though they are taken more seriously and by the Forestry Commission. It also appears that forest governance has improved in areas in which FL app was not rolled out (e.g. illegal logs were confiscated in Kade and Oda areas), which, according to communities is evidence of how the project has “developed people’s awareness of issues regarding forest illegalities [and] their rights” beyond targeted communities.

In DRC, logging companies often act with impunity and a near-total disregard for communities, local authorities

and the environment. Due to corruption of political elites in the capital, Kinshasa, local authorities are often under pressure to ignore illegal activities undertaken by logging companies, which would often go 3-4 years without any government oversight or inspection. All stakeholders felt that forest governance had been improved by combining data from the ground with pressure from forest authorities and CSOs. Associated partners noted that the project had empowered local authorities and that they had finally been in a position to investigate illegalities and make their presence and their authority known to logging companies. A major positive outcome was that Decree 072, which allows communities to negotiate one or more social clauses in a five-year forestry development block, was modified to enshrine the rights of communities to conduct monitoring of their forests. This came about unexpectedly following routine advocacy and training with DGF when an assistant to a politician who was present at the training subsequently advocated for these rights to be legally enshrined in Decree 072.

The project in DRC had wide-ranging impacts and even had ramifications at the international level, where data

coming from communities showing a contravention of the logging moratorium was used to hold international actors to account on their funding activities, resulting in CAFI suspending their agreement with DRC.

The formation of RENOI complemented the independent mandated observations on forest monitoring and both were able to collaborate in order to reach sites the mandated observers could not reach. Local administration has also realised that they can benefit from fines and are now more likely to follow up on claims against the logging companies. Capacity building has also meant that local administration has become much more efficient. Further evidence on effective participation in forest governance, include the fact that logging companies, through the efforts of GASHE, meet with communities every quarter in order to discuss issues. This helps companies avoid denunciation by listening to the communities, and communities no longer need to resort to illegal activities such as blocking the road in order to be heard by the logging companies.

Box 1: Engaging civil society and the justice system to challenge impunity in DRC: The case of the MU2 logging company

"The arrest of the Head of Sector after that of [MU2] gives us hope that the situation in the DRC can change if civil society fulfills its role in the same way the NGO GASHE fulfils its role." Jean-Jacques Nzila, journalist at Ingende Emala radio. Statement made during a press briefing organised in Ingende on November 09, 2019. Since 2019, communities in the sector of Ingende, in Equateur Province, in DRC have been using FL alerts to denounce an illegal industrial logging operation by the company Maniema Union 2 (MU2). The impact of the RTM project in this region also galvanized communities who were not participating in the project, but knew of FL and GASHE, to report this illegal activity. This led to a site visit by provincial authorities in March 2019, and the arrest of a representative of the Chinese logging company on charges of "criminal conspiracy", "malicious destruction" and "illegal logging." The defendant subsequently appeared at a tribunal in Mbandaka. However, on 22nd May 2019 the court acquitted the company on all counts, citing a lack of evidence and that the company had paid a "transactional fine", despite the fact the 'fine' had been paid before the company was accused of illegalities (RFUK, 2019). Testimony and correspondence recorded during the tribunal shows that the provincial authorities and a provincial deputy influenced the decision of the court of appeal in favour of the company.

Many of our informants spoke of the difficulty faced by politico-administrative and legal authorities in enforcing the law when powerful actors protect logging companies like MU2. In June 2018, a Congolese General, Gabriel Amisi Kumba (known as "Tango Four") - who has been sanctioned by the EU and US for human rights abuses, and is a powerful figure in DRC and a close ally of former President Joseph Kabila - obtained five logging concessions in contravention of DRC's long standing moratorium on the allocation of industrial logging concessions. The DRC's Minister of Environment had confiscated these licences from other logging companies without warning, before transferring them to Amisi's family-held company, Maniema Union 2. Lei Hua Zhang (chairman of Wan Peng International, a major Chinese timber, shipping and cement conglomerate active across Africa and Asia) acquired Amisi's permits by buying Maniema Union 2 (Global Witness, 2019).

Despite the acquittal, this tribunal case was a great success for forest law in the DRC. Firstly, communities had the knowledge and confidence to report the illegal activities perpetrated by MU2. Secondly, the verification mission, supported by the RTM project - and initially opposed by politico-administrative authorities - involved all stakeholders (including the administration and civil society) and exerted strong pressure (including advocacy and media at the provincial and national level) on legal authorities to proceed with the case. When the mission found the logging company in flagrante delicto, it was obliged to proceed. The trial against MU2 has led to the very first judgment made in a case against a logging company since the creation of the 2002 Forest Code. Furthermore, CSOs in DRC have appealed the acquittal, so the story is not yet over.

In RoC there was insufficient time to measure change in forest governance, but many stakeholders felt that the system had been strengthened. The government itself stated it wanted to increase the frequency of missions and that forest authorities had participated and benefited from workshops, training and meetings. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to carry out a joint verification mission due to suspension of activities as a result of COVID-19. While CJJ have raised the awareness of CSOs and local and national administration on the FL tool, no one except CJJ has used it for forest monitoring. CSOs and the administration pointed to the need for more direct involvement in FL activities and further training.

OUTCOME 2: REDUCED ILLEGALITIES, RIGHTS AND DUE BENEFITS BETTER RESPECTED

One of the key outputs in Phase 2, as in Phase 1, is a reduction in illegalities. This evaluation, like the previous evaluation, acknowledges that a reduction of illegalities and the respect of rights and due benefits is not entirely in the control of the project, and the project is working against powerful vested interests. This evaluation could not draw on baseline or end-line information to measure actual reductions in illegalities, but the flexible framing of the outcome does enable an assessment of the progress towards reduced illegalities and an improvement with respect to rights.

In Cameroon, illegal logging (such as wild sawing) has reduced slightly. Rather than an overall reduction, however, illegal logging seems to have been relocated to areas where logging companies can continue activities with impunity. This does show that the project is having an impact, however, as illegal loggers now avoid conducting illegal activities out in the open. Not all communities, however, have received their due rights and benefits (some have received payment in arrears), nor seen the social work projects that logging companies should be fulfilling.

In Ghana, some communities reported a “drastic” reduction in illegalities (down by 50-60% according to community monitors, and not verified by data), while others felt there hadn’t been much of a reduction. In many cases, illegal actors appear to have turned to more clandestine activities e.g. using electrical generators instead of chainsaws to make less noise in the forest when logging illegally.

Nevertheless, as a result of their training, community members reported feeling confident in halting those who

enter the forest without permits, and denouncing logging companies working outside of their permits - knowledge they only gained as a result of training provided by Civic Response. Communities also felt more empowered to raise an alert without fear of being identified, by using the FL app, and noted that they were receiving more benefits via SRAs.

Indeed, some people noted that upon arrival, logging companies now visit communities to show their permit and concession number, through which communities can get their SRA, and that as soon as a contractor enters the forest, the community contacts the Forestry Commission to sign the SRA paper. Previously, communities had thought that since the government had given permission to logging companies to enter the land, the communities didn’t have any rights to report when their farms were destroyed in the process. This has now changed and companies often offer communities compensation directly - or else community members demand compensation with the support of the Forestry Commission. One of the unintended consequences is that illegalities have moved further into the forests, where it is harder for community forest monitors to reach them.

In DRC, illegalities appear to have greatly reduced - in some cases by as much as 30% - as the logging companies in target zones of the project have realised that they are under constant surveillance and have witnessed what can happen if illegalities are recognised by the legal system, following the MU2 case (see Box 1). While some logging companies are trying to camouflage their activities, others are now seeking to collaborate with GASHE and communicate more openly with communities. Logging companies are showing more respect towards local authorities and appear to be making efforts not to repeat offenses for which they have already been reprimanded by authorities.

Where communities had previously used any means necessary - often roadblocks, which would lead to their own arrest - the capacity building and training they received from GASHE led them to become very engaged in learning about their rights and to use this knowledge to denounce infractions and demand that companies fulfil their legal obligations, within the limits of the law. A reduction in illegalities also occurred because of the capacity building and organisation of the GTP and other CSOs who were very active in publicly denouncing logging companies (such as MU2) and in putting pressure on national and provincial politico-administrative authorities.

In RoC illegal activities appear to have moved deeper into the forest - too far for community forest monitors to follow, rather than reducing. Communities themselves report being more aware of their rights, and feeling that companies are now respecting their rights and fulfilling SRAs.

OUTCOME 3: FOREST LEGALITY LINKED TO BENEFITS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST USE

"It opened our eyes, taught us what we needed to know. We began to benefit." - DRC, Community Member

In Cameroon, both positive and negative consequences were reported. While the State has reported income from the sale of seized timbers, these benefits have not yet reached communities. It appears that some SRAs may have been fulfilled e.g. the construction of classrooms (which led to increased student attendance - from 25 to 65 students in 2019 - in Ambanga) and payment of teachers, community shelters, a solar plate in the health center, solar power plants to supply households with electrical energy, receipt of generators, construction of hangars, installation of relay antennas. All of these were the result of advocacy letters written by community members and sent to local authorities to demand the return of their share of forest royalties from logging company activities, and would not have been possible without awareness-raising efforts by FODER and ECODEV (such as Bois Nation, DINO and FILS).

However, there were also some negative consequences to community forest monitors, with one person stating that he had lost his job at the local sawmill because people said he was "an informer."

In Ghana, many positive benefits were reported. Prior to the project, communities weren't aware that they had the right to enter the forest, believing that it was land owned by the government. The project has taught them that they have the right to harvest forest products (e.g. mushrooms and firewood) for personal - but not commercial - use. This has improved their livelihoods, as well as reducing

illegal farming, communities understand which parts of the forest they have access to and have been able to create legal farmland on which to cultivate. As one community member explained, this has also changed their attitude to taking responsibility for the forest. Community forest management committees have been established in order to monitor forest use, in collaboration with the Forestry Commission. Communities have even made local, community by-laws to fine people for infractions and to deter people from committing infractions. The FSD are aware of these bylaws and have embraced this initiative, which can be seen as a long-term positive consequence of the project. Communities have also been asserting their rights with logging companies and benefiting from Timber Utilisation Contracts (TUC) which require timber companies to invest a minimum 5% of their profits to communities. With the introduction of FL, and the Legality Grid questionnaires, SRAs have been increasingly respected, because communities can use FL to track the fulfilment of SRAs, which has led to enthusiasm for the project, with many other communities hoping to become part of it. Indeed, target communities valued the legal awareness training they received so highly that they undertook their own outreach programmes with neighbouring communities.

In DRC, all of the consequences appear to have been positive. There is now a follow-up to verify that the SRAs are being respected by the logging companies and that communities are receiving benefits via community-based management committees. Logging companies are under pressure to sign SRAs and meet their obligations and as such, communities have benefited from the construction of schools, health centres, and fixed roads, and have access to transport for themselves and their produce in logging company cars, meaning that their livelihoods through better access to markets on which to sell their produce.

There were also unintended positive consequences in DRC, where neighbouring communities heard about GASHE's activities, the FL application, and joint civil society-government verification missions, and therefore gained the confidence to report the illegal activities of one logging company (MU2) and seek out GASHE for support (see Box 1).

3.6 PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed satisfactory. The project created a system that enabled communities to collaborate with authorities in forest law enforcement and allowed local governments to appreciate the role that communities can play in supporting forest law enforcement, particularly in Ghana and DRC. In most countries, the project strengthened trust between implementing partners (and CSOs in general) and the government. This development was facilitated by the organisation of joint verification missions, training workshops, and through collaboration in negotiating community SRAs.

“The project has brought people together to advocate for change in forest governance.” - Ghana, Civic Response

However, in Cameroon, the project struggled to foster collaboration, and at times even led to increased conflicts as monitors became even more aware of the extent of corruption within local administration, and were threatened by forest authorities because of their work as monitors. Nonetheless, in Cameroon some joint missions between CSOs and forest authorities were organised, leading to sanctions and the seizure of timber. One joint mission even led to the suspension of a forest company. In RoC, dialogue between communities and administration remained weak, with no exchanges facilitated by the project. This was mainly due to the fact that it was still in the pilot phase and there were many delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implementing partners were able to provide strategic direction and guide project work plans and activities, based on their level of initiative. A predefined standard country logframe was modified to take into account activities identified by implementing partners (e.g. for law enforcement, Civic Response identified that there should be greater focus on the monitoring and follow-up of implementation of corrective actions triggered by

verification missions after alerts have been received). Implementing partners altered their plans in light of new challenges (such as emerging tensions within the communities resulting from the project in Ghana and DRC). Implementing partners were also involved in training other CSOs on FL. Through the project, implementing partners increased their capacity to contribute to independent forest observation processes. They became recognised and more effective in their roles of external forest observer organisations, and as such strongly valued by other organisations and actors. Moreover, increased coordination of CSOs activities around IFM, increased the influence of implementing partners on decision-making and policies. For instance, in DRC, one of the partners mentioned that the project allowed them to increase their level of influence on questions related to forest governance and the environment.

The project also empowered civil society by building its activities on existing IFM platforms in each of the implementing countries, strengthening existing CSOs' work and providing opportunities for action. Across countries, IFM networks had differing levels of maturity and coordination. In some, such as RoC and DRC, they were just being set up, while in others, such as Ghana and Cameroon, the networks were already well coordinated. The project strengthened these networks' internal coordination and capacity so that they could verify and act upon alerts effectively. In RoC, for instance, SNOIE-Congo partners were involved in discussions with the RTM project and consulted regularly to understand how to work together. As a result, CSOs felt that they had become better at collaborating in order to reach their common objectives and felt that (according to one interviewee) "the project allowed for a united front with CSOs in their interactions with the Forestry Commission."

Achievements of this effort included getting 62 Forestry Commission staff to sign up to the FL platform in Ghana. In DRC and RoC, mandated external observers began collaborating productively with non-mandated organisations. In DRC, for example, the mandated monitor (OGF) understood that within their MoU with state authorities they could not push cases beyond their mandate, so they gave these to non-mandated CSOs instead. Across countries, and especially in DRC, advocacy NGOs and networks were greatly empowered by participation in the project, which they felt allowed them to reach a wider audience.

Several CSOs requested access to FL, however, to date only a few CSOs have been granted access. At the end of the project, only a few CSOs in the networks had access to Collectaur and Monitaur, most of them having just received awareness raising on FL. This is part of RFUK data governance policy. However, several CSOs interpreted it as reluctance from RFUK and implementing partners to share their tool.

Community monitors mentioned that their understanding of forest rights and their capacities in detecting illegalities improved greatly as a result of the project. Monitors also obtained recognition from forest authorities for their work as monitors. The project fostered better dialogue and working relationships between community monitors and local forest authorities. In Ghana, community monitors described how before the project, it was difficult for communities to go to the FSD office. Now community members even feel comfortable calling the FSD on the phone and the FSD also freely calls communities for information on people entering the forest and conducting illegal activities.

Even in situations of potential disagreement, community monitors in DRC and Ghana reported feeling confident in contacting forest authorities, discussing issues, bringing their views and opinions to the table, and even challenging forestry officials. In Cameroon, unfortunately, the opposite was true, due to widespread corruption (within the Forest Ministry and also beyond) and the hostility of MINFOF forest agents towards monitors.

Some monitors spontaneously travelled to neighboring communities to train them on forest laws and monitoring. In DRC, following SRA recoveries and condemnation of logging activities by the courts, communities near project targets expressed interest in FL and in the training provided by GASHE, and in Ghana, one community member explained that other communities had been in touch with him asking to receive the training Civic Response's project participants were receiving.

However, the involvement of monitors did not always coincide with empowerment of the entire community. Across interviews, local stakeholders mentioned tensions with community leaders or other members of the community who felt jealous of or threatened by monitors' work. However, in some cases (DRC, Cameroon) this was because community leaders had been corrupted by logging companies.

Capacity building on rights in the concessions empowered communities in all countries to assert their rights with logging companies, both alone and mediated by local and national CSOs, and the project contributed greatly to a change in power balances, with communities refusing to accept abuses by logging companies and demanding SRAs and other benefits due to them. Communities and local CSO felt empowered, especially by the fact that they could challenge the climate of impunity in which logging companies operated. The success of roundtables and community assemblies to foster community involvement in policy and decision-making, depended on the country: in DRC they were at times very successful, in part through fruitful collaboration with the Rainforest Foundation Norway project MCD (Moteurs commerciaux de déforestation), which aimed at creating permanent dialogue between all forestry stakeholders. Conversely, in Cameroon, some stakeholders felt that they had made little difference, and that there is now even more tension between the private sector, communities and CSOs. In Ghana, communities made contributions at various deliberative processes and decision-making meetings.

3.7 EQUITY

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed satisfactory. The inclusion of women was particularly successful in Cameroon and DRC, and all countries attempted to involve women as much as possible. There are no indigenous people in project areas in Cameroon and Ghana, only in RoC and DRC. However, the project struggled to engage them meaningfully in both countries. Some countries struggled to find indigenous people (IP) and women who met the selection criteria, especially in terms of literacy and ability to use a phone. The lack of payments to monitors was also a central issue for the continued engagement of women and indigenous people.

WOMEN

“We are no longer in the time of the ancestors where women could not do things - the 21st century woman

can do everything that men can do” - DRC, GASHE

Overall, the project had a positive impact on women in project areas. It aimed to increase women’s involvement in forest governance, build their capacity in understanding and advocating for their rights, and engage them as community forest monitors. Furthermore, across project countries, at least one female project community outreach officer was selected per area. This tended to have positive effects on women’s engagement - in DRC, for example, the female project community outreach officer working for GASHE noted that she had even seen a change in families’ approaches to girls’ education since she had been working there, with many people continuing to send their girls to school so she could become “like Mama Benitha” (the project community outreach officer).

RFUK encouraged implementing partners to involve women from communities in training and as monitors, and set some quotas accordingly. However, some cultural aspects made it more difficult for women to participate including communities’ misconception that women would be incapable of doing the work required of monitors, a lack of self-confidence by women themselves, and jealousy from husbands or family who did not approve of their participation. In addition, monitors needed to fulfill some criteria: being able to read and write, feeling comfortable walking in the forest alone or in small groups and not having too many work or family obligations. Many women in the villages were unable to read or write and were often busy performing domestic labor for their families and so did not fulfil these criteria. As a result, the communities tended to choose either unmarried, young women perceived as ‘more dynamic’ and mobile, and with fewer responsibilities, or established women leaders

whose role was already recognised in the community (e.g. in RoC).

The level of engagement of women monitors in the project varied greatly from country to country (See Table 8). In most countries, women became strongly involved in the activities. Thanks to the training they received on forest rights, several respondents explained that they had gained a lot of confidence and that they were then ready to speak up to defend the forest. In Roc, implementing partners mentioned that women monitors were much more outspoken, committed and dynamic than men. In Ghana, communities described how women were able to advocate for their rights in front of forest logging company staff and engage with the FSD to demand illegalities would be confronted in a way that men could not. Several interviewees explained that this was because women experience the negative effects of over-exploitation more than anyone else in the community - they are the ones who used to gather caterpillars to feed their children from the trees logged by companies, and the ones who used to collect drinking and cooking water and wash clothes in the streams which now run dry because of unsustainable logging.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The project had limited positive impact on indigenous people (IP), mainly due to the paucity of IP involved as monitors (in part due to the fact that monitors were not paid). It should be noted that there are no IP in project areas in Cameroon and Ghana, only in RoC and DRC. The project struggled to engage IP as monitors for the project. Only 2 out of 14 monitors were involved in RoC and 5 out of 49 monitors in DRC (data from November 2019).

In DRC, GASHE made an effort to systematically involve IP in community consultations, in order to make sure they felt integrated in activities, while in RoC, IP participation was

Table 8. The total number of women trained as part of the project (data available up until November 2019)

COUNTRY	TOTAL TRAINED ACTIVE COMMUNITY OBSERVERS (AS OF NOVEMBER 2019)	TOTAL TRAINED ACTIVE FEMALE COMMUNITY OBSERVERS (AS OF NOVEMBER 2019)
Cameroon	63	18
Ghana	65 active (510 total)	3 active (160 total)
DRC	49	13
Roc	14	4

hampered by lack of awareness of IP livelihood activities; the mission to select monitors was set at a time when most IPs in project sites were in the forest hunting. That was given as a reason why only two IP monitors were involved in RoC. In both countries, the main reported difficulty in engaging monitors in the project was finding IP who would meet the selection criteria, especially in terms of literacy and ability to use a phone. The main issue in maintaining their engagement as monitors was the lack of payments, which was a huge disincentive, given that IP are already marginalised and struggling to be integrated in economic activities. In RoC, this resulted in one of the monitors dropping out to work for the local logging company. IP who did end up working as monitors, however, reported becoming confident using the technology and gaining knowledge about forest law, which they described as very empowering. Being able to protect their forests was extremely important for them and they felt proud in doing so.

“They have integrated us. We believe in this project because before we weren’t integrated. The project has shown the companies and local leaders that we also know the laws [...] Many indigenous people don’t know how to use a telephone, but now we know how to use this technology” - DRC, Community Monitor

3.8 SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed moderately satisfactory. For the purpose of this evaluation, sustainability was assessed as referring to the extent to

which the mechanisms and model of community-based monitoring set in place by the project would continue to benefit communities and forest law enforcement after the end of the project. An external Sustainability Assessment, commissioned by RFUK in addition to this evaluation concluded that at project closure, the RTM system is likely to be sustainable in only a few communities across the project countries. It concludes that without additional financial support and capacity building, benefits to communities and enforcement are likely to erode quickly. At the time of writing this evaluation, there was the possibility of a 15 months extension (until June 2022) for the project. This time could be used to build the capacity of the IFM network.

This evaluation answers the following questions as related to sustainability:

1. Could forest communities continue to use the community-based monitoring system after the project ends?
2. Is the community-based monitoring system likely to continue after the project ends?
3. Will momentum continue regarding the institutionalization of FL and community-based monitoring in project countries?

COULD FOREST COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO USE THIS COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM AFTER THE PROJECT ENDS?

Communities were well trained in the FL tool and community-based RTM approach. Trained community monitors, in particular, became confident in handling FL and smartphones and in recognising logging illegalities, resulting in a large number of alerts being sent to the FL platform. In some countries, such as Ghana and Cameroon, smartphones are common and the network conditions allow people to send alerts through FL without the need to use RFUK satellite kits. This led to increasing numbers of community members accessing the FL tool and sending alerts.

However, communities lost motivation if they did not feel supported by implementing partners. During COVID-19 travel restrictions, implementing partners were often unable to reach communities, resulting in a drop in alerts. This suggests that at this stage, support by local NGOs or CSOs is still important in ensuring that monitors remain engaged in the project.

In the current implementation modality, monitors were not directly compensated for their work and risks, nor did they receive direct incentives for the monitoring work carried out, rather incentives were provided at the community-level.

This decision was taken because in earlier phases, GASHE had provided incentives to monitors that had led to conflicts in communities (due to jealousy that monitors were paid even though they relied on tip-offs from other community members) and risks to monitors from logging companies, which considered them as conducting remunerated espionage.

Moreover, this policy was in line with RFUK and partner's policy of 'no incentive', which seeks to avoid creating community dependency on the project (which has an end point) and promotes the idea that communities self-organise to support their chosen monitor, and have more ownership of the process.

While it is understandable that in order for the project to be fully sustainable, monitors should be volunteer members of the community, it is the conclusion of this evaluation that this appropriation phase had not yet been reached, and that in the absence of community arrangements to support expenses and risks, the project should strengthen mechanisms to cover monitors so that they are reimbursed for expenses and compensated for their time and risks taken for the following reasons:

- Monitors experience high costs for monitoring, in terms of time and transport to reach the sites. In Ghana some monitors were paying out of pocket for their transport costs, and in DRC and RoC, several monitors described their living conditions as worsening due to their monitoring activities. In RoC, for example, one community member mentioned that sometimes after monitoring illegalities under the rain, he would get sick but would not be able to afford medicines to treat himself, and in Cameroon, one monitor lost his job at the local sawmill because people said he was "an informer";
- Several monitors pointed to the high costs they bore in terms of personal security, which they believed the project should compensate them for. In Ghana, for example, one community member said the job was "very dangerous" because "those committing illegalities in the forest are sometimes armed and can 'shoot you, they can kill you if they know you

are monitoring them". This person suggested that monitors should receive a 'small amount' monthly so that if "he dies his wife or child can also benefit from it or they can use it to pay for getting their injuries treated". Whilst a monthly payment may not be possible (due to donor restrictions and concerns of creating dependency), some further reflection is needed on how the project would support the monitor and the members of their family if they were permanently disabled or severely injured as a result of project activities;

- At sites where no strategies were in place to reduce those costs, monitors showed signs of frustration and disengagement with the project by what they interpreted as a lack of recognition of their hard work; a monitor from Ghana told us, "they are protecting the environment, they are protecting Ghana, they are protecting the nation, but they are not getting payment or something that recognises this work";
- Monitors did not have, and could not afford, personal protective equipment to go to the forest, such as raincoats or wellington boots, and sometimes they did not have even proper footwear (as mentioned by a monitor in Ghana). In the long run, monitors highlighted that the lack of incentives could lead to them having to disengage from their activities. As pointed out by a monitor in Ghana, despite monitoring for the love of his country and forest, he still has to work to provide for his family. In RoC, a (female) monitor dropped out to take care of her fields and another (IP) to work for the local logging company. Women and IP were especially affected by the lack of payments.

In all countries, implementing partners encouraged appropriation by strengthening capacity and teaching communities about forest law and about their rights. The strategy from the outset of the project was to provide community-based incentives or community-based compensation, such as providing a community lunch or paying for fuel to go to the forest (in RoC), setting up cooperatives to provide seeds and support community agriculture (in DRC and Cameroon) which benefited the entire community. RFUK and its partners have experience of this approach in other projects, e.g. Civic Response has 10+ years' experience in working via community-based incentives and GASHE used a community-based incentive model for the work on Community Forests in DRC.

Collaboration with organisation such as the FAO, as done by GASHE in DRC, can help design appropriate community-support systems. These community-based incentives should be systematically used in all participating communities and potentially combined with establishing a community insurance pot to support the monitor or families in the case of injury or contribute towards fees for legal representation if needed for the community. Fundamentally, monitors should not be put in a position where they end up paying out of pocket for the monitoring expenses, ending up poorer than before they started monitoring as this contravenes principles of 'do no harm'.

IS THE COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM LIKELY TO CONTINUE AFTER THE PROJECT ENDS?

As pointed out by RFUK and international donors, FL is not just a tool - it is a system. In order for the communities to keep benefitting from FL, the entire system of community-based monitoring needs to continue after the project ends. If monitors send alerts and nothing is done about it, monitors may quickly disengage. Civil society engagement is therefore very important. All actors recognised the value of community-based monitoring to enforce forest laws and community rights.

However, while a number of CSOs involved in independent monitoring have integrated FL in their activities, further capacity development of actors seems to be needed to ensure full ownership by CSIFM networks. Several CSOs did not receive training on how to use FL or were not granted access to the tools (Monitaur/Collectaur).

In some countries, CSFIM networks themselves need to be further strengthened to be able to coordinate activities. For example, implementing partners have the human capacity to support the process but they might not have the resources needed, especially to travel to communities, support them, organise joint verification missions, and pay for lawyers to support cases against logging companies.

Several stakeholders mentioned that the project needed to expand to additional target areas to reach further out to communities. This would require further support for institutionalisation of activities as well as additional external funding – so that both forest administration

and CSOs can ensure adequate involvement in community-based monitoring.

FL allows community forest monitors to send alerts anonymously. This is extremely relevant to ensure their safety, as emphasised by both implementing partners and communities, especially in Ghana and Cameroon. As one community monitor in Ghana explained: "The app is good [...]. It's something you can use on your phone, instead of what I was previously doing by calling and talking to someone where anyone can hear what you're reporting. This reduces these risks, so it is much easier and simpler. I can take a photo of an infraction, and wait till I'm outside the community to send it, so that people don't know I'm the one sending the alerts."

Community members run very significant risks to their safety while undertaking monitoring activities. Monitors mentioned receiving repeated threats from logging companies, as well as from community members in Cameroon. Community members would threaten them either because they were corrupted by logging companies (especially leaders), because they were afraid of losing the few benefits they received from logging companies, or because they were involved in illegal activities in the forest themselves (e.g. illegal artisanal logging, illegal farming, poaching).

Furthermore, concession security guards, logging operators and illegal loggers were often armed, increasing the risk to monitors. Several monitors mentioned being threatened by armed security personnel or illegal loggers while undertaking monitoring activities.

Monitors were also exposed to non-logging related security risks when they travelled to remote areas. Women were particularly exposed, especially when travelling alone, or when relying on other people for transport. Implementing partners did provide some guidance to monitors on how to work safely, including advising them to be discreet with monitoring, not to discuss their monitoring work in public, and to immediately report any threats to the relevant authorities, e.g. the police.

In Ghana, a lot of reflection and experimentation revolved around the issue of monitors' safety. This resulted in Civic Response creating a "strategy for anonymity". This involved making sure that alerts could be sent anonymously, so that even if monitors' phones are taken by staff of the logging company while they monitor, it is not possible to see who sent it. Then Civic Response

developed two alternative models to protect monitors: (1) have many people in the community download and use FL so that people can't tell who is doing the monitoring or (2) identify the monitors and have them be recognised by the community in their role as monitor.

Civic Response tested the two models, without telling communities, to see what worked best. People were told to be discreet and not to use IDs but community members felt that while that was "all that Civic Response could do", it was definitely "not enough". Monitors in several countries felt that more could be done to protect community forest monitors, rather than informing them that their safety was their own personal responsibility.

Monitors were also exposed to zoonotic diseases when working deep in the forest for prolonged periods, often in areas that are more remote than they usually go to.

The lack of payments to monitors, combined with high risks to safety to which monitors are exposed, was especially harmful to women and IPs, who have fewer resources to start with.

This evaluation concludes that the project could go further in ensuring the personal safety of monitors working at the frontlines. However, building on a wealth of lessons learned by organisations supporting EHRDs, RFUK and partners are currently reassessing ways in which the security of community monitors and CSOs can be improved as part of RTM monitoring. In the FGMC project extension proposal (2021-2022), RFUK included explicit indicators and milestones to measure such improvements.

WILL MOMENTUM CONTINUE REGARDING INSTITUTIONALISATION OF FORESTLINK AND MORE BROADLY COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING IN PROJECT COUNTRIES?

'Institutionalisation' is the process by which new ideas and practices are adopted by individuals and organisations and become part of 'the norm'. It follows a series of stages (innovation, habitualisation, objectification, sedimentation), resulting in integration and appropriation in the culture of various groups and organisations.

Overall, most countries were assessed as being in the habitualisation stage of the institutionalisation process - except for RoC, which was still in the innovation stage. Given the difficult implementation context across countries, and the relatively short length of the project,

we estimate that these results can still be considered a success for the project.

Given the context, it is unlikely and perhaps undesirable that the government becomes the only actor responsible for RTM, which means that work needs to continue to improve political commitment and support CSO networks with external funding. Furthermore, political commitment can be improved through engagement with international processes such as VPA-FLEGT, policy reforms and advocacy actions that increase public awareness of illegalities.

Overall, evidence seems to show that the enabling conditions are not yet in place for the RTM system to be expanded without continuous external support from RFUK and donors. The sustainability assessment found that the key conditions are: "(1) political support (viewed as hard to achieve while some politicians and administrators benefit from lack of control or 'désordre' in the forestry sector, especially in countries such as DRC); (2) mobilisation of public funds to support the system; (3) well-trained technicians in both the administration and civil society, and competent community monitors; and (4) sufficient equipment 'pools' for the RTM system to function".

Several solutions for funding activities of implementing partners and CSIFM networks have been explored by the project as part of the sustainability report. In the short to medium term, civil society will always have a role to play in ensuring a balance of powers and in supporting communities to hold administrations accountable. External funding (such as the 15 month extension) is therefore needed to support their work.

3.9 REPLICABILITY

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed highly satisfactory. The process is very replicable, including the majority of unanticipated positive enablers and most of the innovations. The primary challenge was the openness and engagement of forest authorities, which was generally high, due to the relevance of the project to their mandate. However, in several countries corruption could constitute a barrier to replicability.

Several unanticipated positive enablers were identified. Existing national platforms for independent observation and/or advocacy greatly facilitated the coordination and impact of FL alerts. Furthermore, in Ghana, RoC and DRC, forest administrators at both local and national level

were very receptive and open to the project. This was reflected in all KII with national government officials in those countries. It was also shown by the fact that senior staff attended training organised by an NGO, which is rare. In Cameroon, MINOF has recently signed a MoU to work with FODER, which needed to be in place before formal collaboration could move forward.

These unanticipated enablers should be replicable in subsequent project phases, given the high relevance of the project for the administration, but work will need to be done to tackle corruption. In DRC, corruption was tackled by engaging legal authorities and increasing advocacy at all levels - perhaps lessons could be learned from this and applied in other high corruption contexts.

A number of unanticipated negative constraints were also mentioned across countries. These included (1) problems with the FL technology - which improved over time, (2) intimidation of community monitors by corrupt traditional and administrative authorities - particularly in Cameroon and DRC, (3) threats to community monitors by other members of the community who were either involved in illegal activities in the forest, such as illegal logging and poaching, or benefitting from illegal activities, and (4) the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted planned activities in terms of training and field missions, restricting community work and stakeholder engagement. This was due to national travel restrictions and lengthy bureaucratic processes for authorisation of country field visits from RFUK.

In several countries, COVID-19 also led to reduced controls of local forest administration on logging. As such, in several areas, illegal logging activities increased, but community monitors reduced their activities because implementing partners were unable to organise verification missions. In RoC, where the project was in phase one, this strongly affected project impact, with an estimated loss of 6 months' worth of project activities.

Nonetheless, a number of potentially replicable innovations emerged from this phase of the project. One of the primary innovations was the collaboration set up with existing civil society networks. In several countries (Cameroon, RoC, DRC), national networks of observer organisations were either set up or in the process of being set up with support from project implementing partners. Within those networks, complementarity between the work of mandated independent observer organisations and external observers emerged as a strong innovation

in the context of community-based RTM. In DRC, for example, GASHE worked closely with a national network of civil society organisations involved in advocacy (the GTP), which allowed them to tackle national level issues which could not be resolved at the community level; any verified illegality detected through FL (or other application) was able to easily move up through national advocacy channels, putting pressure on authorities to act. Strong advocacy actions by the GTP advocacy network, forced the minister of environment to demand that a prominent logging company (MU2) negotiate with the community to repair the damage they caused.

Another important innovation which emerged was the engagement with legal authorities and lawyers. In RoC and Ghana, community paralegals were trained to support communities' capacity to protect their rights and obtain SRAs. GASHE set up legal working groups which brought together lawyers to defend cases and instigate legal reforms. They hired or paid lawyers to follow-up on legal actions, as well as linking them to the national advocacy platform (GTP). Further than this, they also started building capacity and making the juridical system more accountable by involving them in the project as additional key stakeholders in the forest governance process.

3.10 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

“This project has given us a voice. When we make statements, the statements are aired on Tele5, and on the environment- related channels.” - DRC, Associated partner

Overall, this aspect of the project was deemed satisfactory. In DRC, information dissemination was highly satisfactory: both at the community level and in terms of reaching a national general public. In Cameroon and Ghana, information dissemination at community level was carried out using a diversity of mechanisms, and

was also assessed as highly satisfactory. In RoC, however, information dissemination was limited to a few blog posts and related social media communications, and was therefore deemed only moderately satisfactory. Across countries, radios, posters, social media, articles and videos were used to reach both target communities and neighboring populations, and to raise awareness on both the project and on logging illegalities and forest rights.

In Cameroon, a broad community communication strategy was developed, focusing on forest communities. Amongst several communication activities, the implementing partner prepared and distributed community-level displays and posters reaching hundreds of people across 30 forest communities. The project signed 8 MoUs with the network of community radios for the improvement of forest governance (RACOGEF) for communication. It produced a number of radio broadcasts and debates - in all four of the most common local languages. Radio broadcasts focused on different themes and reached an average of 1,000 people per radio show. They also used newspapers, their website and social media to expand their reach.

In Ghana, the project used innovative mechanisms to disseminate information. They built the capacity of radio and media personalities on issues of illegal logging and set up radio broadcast roundtables involving both community members and government officials. These broadcasts were complemented by the use of social media, including the creation of a video documentary about the impact of the project, featuring several communities.

In DRC, GASHE set up live roundtables involving forest stakeholders on radio programmes, used social media widely, and recruited a national consultant to prepare footage of activities at the community level. They also employed local journalists, who they trained in forest law and who began to report regularly on environmental issues.

In most cases, little was done with the wealth of information (e.g. on alerts and illegalities) collected by the project using the FL tool. One notable exception to this was in DRC, where this information was used strategically through advocacy NGOs and media contracts to ensure that it would lead to follow-up of illegalities detected in the field. GASHE contracted several journalists and involved national and international television and radio channels to increase the visibility of illegalities and cases that were being fought at the local level. Through a skillful

handling of authorities, media, CSOs and magistrates, GASHE made the most of the power of media to serve advocacy and forest law enforcement (e.g. the MU2 case). Interviews also revealed the extent to which informal sharing of information detected through FL led to several additional actions by informal associated partners.

In RoC, communication activities appeared to focus mostly on publishing blog posts on the CJJ website (3 posts) and on social media. At the time of writing this report, a mass awareness raising campaign for community members was conducted sensitising over 150 community members.

One cannot underestimate the role that strategic, well-planned and well-resourced communication actions could play in amplifying project impacts, not only by furthering the reach of information to target communities and neighbouring communities, but also by using media to awaken public opinion and hold forest authorities to account. Unfortunately, RFUK only had a communication expert working at 15% for this project, and while it had generic guidelines for communication, no communication strategy was drafted at RFUK programme level, nor was a communication strategy requested by country projects. Furthermore, RFUK seemed unable to retrieve well-organised records on the number of alerts sent by FL per country, nor the number of verified alerts signifying illegalities. Moreover, while information on information dissemination mechanisms was readily available, valuable information on actual effectiveness of different mechanisms was not.



Community monitor training
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4. LESSONS LEARNED

This project demonstrates that an alternative model of forest governance - one which puts local communities at the center and one which fosters collaboration between communities, civil society, forest authorities and the justice system - is possible and can be extremely effective.

LESSON 1: RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IS KEY TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS

The project aims for institutionalisation and embedding of sustainable processes and practices. This requires strong relationships based on trust and transparency - right from the start of the process. For example, it is possible to proactively counter suspicion by bringing forest authorities and legal authorities into discussions and plans from the start of the project, and even during project design.

Similarly, in communities, working closely with community leaders, while making the project accessible, understandable and transparent for all community members is key; suspicion arose in villages where people did not fully understand the work of community monitors. When poverty is high and illegal activities create revenue for some or all members of the community, it is important that the project makes an effort to engage everyone, so that they understand the benefits of denouncing illegal activities.

Furthermore, routinely bringing stakeholders together in dialogue (CSOs, administration, logging companies and communities) is highly effective, as illegal actors realise that they are being observed by multiple actors and their impunity is diminishing. In project sites, there are now numerous reports of logging companies adhering to the law, and this builds confidence in each of the stakeholders to continue.

LESSON 2: THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The creation of platforms for CSOs and NGOs protects organisations, as it becomes difficult to target any one organisation or actor. For example, the GTP legal co-ordination piloted in DRC worked well and could be

replicated elsewhere as long as finances are allocated. Collaboration with OIM and OI can also be productive and complementary. Independent observers are able to reach sites that mandated observers cannot. Platforms can also build visibility for legal cases and expose corruption, while protecting implementing partners.

LESSON 3: DATA BRINGS CREDIBILITY

Concrete evidence is difficult to ignore, and can be used to challenge impunity and hold governments accountable; for this project, data formed the basis of a number of exposes. The majority of governments (DRC, Ghana, RoC) involved in this project have realised that community-based monitoring is a highly valid and effective way of conducting independent forest monitoring.

Communities themselves have seen the value of this data and have even expressed an interest in tracking SRA payments and monitoring other types of illegal actions. Indeed, this system was successfully expanded to monitor human rights in Mai Ndombe. RFUK has also developed an app-based human rights monitoring methodology and trained local investigators in Mai Ndombe on its use. Field missions were carried out around Salonga National Park, documenting the social and human rights impacts of conservation measures on communities, as well as around REDD projects in the area, where RFUK measured the degree of participation of local communities and whether they received the promised benefits. Qualitative and quantitative data collected revealed serious concerns, which were shared with relevant stakeholders, triggering interesting discussions on how to better monitor and safeguard communities' rights in the context of protected areas and REDD programmes - including via the potential scaling up of FL RTM as means of alerting authorities to human rights abuses as they occur and also for feeding information back to communities. Communities certainly wanted more feedback on how their data was being used; they wanted to feel more involved and able to monitor what happened with the data they sent.

LESSON 4: COMMUNITIES ARE ACTIVE ADVOCATES FOR THE FOREST WHEN THEY ARE SUPPORTED

Local communities have faced a long history of abuse and decades of witnessing logging companies act with impunity. Most are completely unaware of their rights. However, given access to information on their rights, especially if this is combined with legal support and efforts to help communities gain legal ownership of their forests, communities show high levels of commitment to ensuring they manage their land sustainably for future generations.

LESSON 5: ILLEGAL ACTORS ARE REACTIVE; PLAN PROACTIVELY

RFUK and partners acknowledge that illegal actors are reactive and likely to move the location of their operations deeper into the forest when they realise they are being observed. Furthermore, logging areas within concession may change from year to year, so communities selected in a given year might end up being very far from the cutting area the following year. Projects therefore need to be proactive in planning and increasing their coverage as situations change. In the future, it may be wise to implement a system of rolling community monitoring; as logging companies move their activities, different communities in close proximity take up the mantle of independent monitoring to ensure that logging activities are under constant surveillance.

LESSON 6: SECURITY RISKS TO THOSE ON THE FRONTLINES CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED

Security risks in the form of intimidation and threats were very real for community forest monitors. At times, they were working in extremely difficult conditions in the forest, in addition to worrying about their physical safety from antagonistic logging companies who often have armed guards. The project made a number of adaptations to protect individuals, including modifications to the app to make alerts more anonymous. However, this was not enough, and all partners need to include security and risk planning from the outset of their work with community members who are on the frontline and face threats and intimidation.

LESSON 7: INSTITUTIONALISATION TAKES TIME

The project highlighted that environmental law and rights are not always well-understood at provincial and national levels, including among magistrates. There are a lot of vested interests trying to counteract forest monitoring, and corruption takes time to unpick and combat. That is why capacity building is so important - and not once, but repeatedly.

LESSON 8: ENFORCEMENT IS ULTIMATELY THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY, WHO HAVE OVERALL BEEN OPEN TO THIS PROJECT

Forest administration across the countries, even where there was corruption, were largely open to, and supportive of FL, as it was highly relevant to their work. The project successfully engaged with forest administration through training, providing access to FL, joint verification missions, and regular exchanges for feedback and improvement and this model should be continued in future phases. It was clear that early consultation with relevant forest authorities was a successful strategy in building trust and support to the project. There were limitations in each country, and this reflects the different regulatory environments in which the project was operating - and the level of patronage and vested interests that the project was up against. It is hugely challenging for forest authorities to do their work - including joint missions, which are central to forest monitoring - when they lack equipment, funding and logistics. In order for the positive impacts of the project to become sustainable, international advocacy and action needs to sustain pressure on governments for transparency and investment in forest regulation and enforcement.

LESSON 9: STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER ACTORS VESTED IN FOREST LEGALITY WILL HELP SUSTAIN THE PROJECT

In the project, there was a reliance on forest authorities, when it might have been worth involving other actors such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance who are also implicated in issues of forest legality. RFUK has noted this as point and incorporated strengthening this engagement in the planned next phase of the RTM project.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- The project should continue. External funding (perhaps from international climate finance) is likely to be needed to support this work because a) there is a genuine limit to resources to ensure good governance across vast territories often in highly remote locations and b) the forests across the Congo Basin can be considered as a global public good, key in mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. Significant momentum has been achieved in DRC and, notably, in Ghana. In Ghana, a strong engagement with the government should continue to be pursued as there seems to be a real possibility of institutionalisation of the community-based RTM approach.
- Donors should provide longer term funding - at a minimum of 5 years of funding for projects that are seeking the institutionalisation of improved governance structures and are operating in countries with weak governance. Longer funding cycles would allow for continuity and efficiency, and longer time spent on implementation (rather than effort spent renewing project formulation and obtaining funding approval).
- All project partners (RFUK, GASHE, FODER, CJJ, Civic Response and associated partners) to make more use of the data (they have available) in advocacy efforts. They should keep a ready to use record of illegalities – to be used for national and international advocacy.
 - » For RFUK in particular, they should ensure that their data across different complementary projects and programmes is holistically combined and analysed and used to help inform policy and strategy decisions of donors e.g. feed into the extension to FGMC.
 - » RFUK, in partnership with other international NGOs, can also make more use of their data in the course of their advocacy work, in order to challenge donors to use their funding as leverage to put pressure on non-complying States with persistent illegal forestry practices.

5.2 RELEVANCE

- Assess corruption levels in a given country and adapt RTM strategy in high corruption countries to expose corruption and illegalities and encourage the government to act, which can feed into better Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRD) protection strategies. If corruption levels are very high (as in Cameroon) it is likely that at some level authorities will not be willing to collaborate as the alerts would impinge on their own personal interests (e.g. often ministers have their own 'protected' logging concessions from which they benefit and it is not necessarily logged following law). DRC showed that a good media strategy coupled with support to advocacy networks and legal expertise can work even in contexts of high corruption.

5.3 APPROPRIATENESS

- Expand the project into new communities who are carefully selected. Selection should be carried out in collaboration with administration at the right level. To do so must consider characteristics of communities involved (distance from yearly cutting sites, road access) but also include a fund for community identification missions in the project budget. Ghana achieved this well, but in RoC, selection was based on collaboration with another project without thoroughly considering implications for their project activities (e.g. of distance of communities to the future logging sites). During the identification missions, interest from the communities and commitment to monitoring illegalities should be a fundamental criterion for community selection.
- As part of this, RFUK and partners should develop readily available and shareable maps of community locations and logging sites and have these updated regularly to help track movements of illegal activities.

5.4 IMPACT

- Systematically push for more female field staff to be hired in implementing agencies, so that they

act as models for women in communities to be involved. Experience across countries shows that having women staff from the implementing agencies working in communities motivates stronger female participation amongst monitors.

- Continue to facilitate the participation of women and marginalised people as monitors, notably by completing the development of guidelines related to diversity and inclusion based on the lessons learned gathered in Phase 2. Guidelines should include the following: work with young women and established women leaders, explain why not only men should be involved (i.e. to ensure community SRAs are well used), ensure timing of training and missions for selection of monitors are compatible with livelihood activities by women and indigenous people, communicate with village leaders/elders to explain why it is important to involve women, continue to invite women and indigenous people to be represented in village meetings.
- Develop training sessions and material so that all (present and future) implementing partners using FL can implement activities in line with such guidelines.

5.5 EFFICIENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Facilitate the development of a clear policy and strategy for access to FL (Collecteur, Moniteur) by CSOs and government representatives in all project countries (based on the work done in Ghana on the User Agreement and Data Governance Policy). This policy should be clearly communicated to partners so that they understand why (or not) they are being granted access.
- Include enough budget to support recruitment of legal experts and lawyers to support community cases deriving from alerts - at appropriate rates. These lawyers need to be well trained on forest regulations and procedures to support community forests and indigenous rights – and work in conjunction with the media (that act as a layer of protection by giving a lot of visibility to the cases) as they'll need to challenge judicial level corruption if needed.
- RFUK should improve their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the RTM project. The RTM project involved a substantial amount of data which

needed to be managed better to improve the use of the data (especially for advocacy and the monitoring of trends). At the time of evaluation, this has been taken on board by RFUK and incorporated into the new RTM Phase plan.

- » For example, FL data should be able to be exported in a user friendly format in excel/csv to enable routine and systematic data analysis by time, by community, by country, to filter by those that were verified, and to include tracking of SRAs per community and whether these were met or being followed up on.
- » In particular, improvements can be made to record keeping of log frames, e.g. tracking when milestones are achieved, and in general tracking targets in simplified formats alongside the longer narrative Technical Reports.
- » Another improvement could be made in defining measurable SMART indicators for project impact.
- » In the next phase, RFUK should ensure that baselines and end-line assessments are carried out. A thorough baseline should be conducted before another 12-15 months of work, to be able to understand the current socio-economic development of communities, the current level of illegal activity, and conduct an end-line in order to be able to measure progress in impacts such as improved livelihoods or reduction in illegal activities.
- A few extra materials should be provided to improve the endurance and basic comfort of community monitors and outreach officers, for example, outreach officers could be provided with camping bedding/ (lit de camp) so they can stay longer and in more comfort in communities; and boots, waterproof coats, and either a means of transport (e.g. a bicycle) or an allowance to cover the cost of transport for both outreach officers and community monitors.
- A budget line should be included to improve the communication means (e.g. reliable internet connection which enables Skype/Zoom use) for implementing partners. This is important to enable secure communication with associated partners, as WhatsApp was not considered to be secure due to the risk of phones being tapped.

5.6 EFFECTIVENESS

- Proactively prevent tensions arising in communities. Devote some more attention to the fact that empowerment of monitors does not equal empowerment within the community. Intra-community dynamics need to be further considered to avoid tensions arising and there should be further reflection on how to involve community leaders across the different communities in the project. A one-size-fits-all strategy will not be appropriate here as different community leaders showed varying degrees of openness or hostility towards the project, and different levels of corruption with regards to obtaining (and distributing) the SRAs. Careful community-based assessments are needed to resolve and prevent tensions from inhibiting the long-term success of the independent community-based monitoring. Systematically documenting the Free Informed Prior Consent (FPIC) process may also support in resolving any tension that may arise during the course of the project.
- RFUK and all partners should ensure there is regular data cleaning so that the data is a reliable historical source of information (e.g. many alerts were verified but this not recorded as TRUE in the database and there were no dates given for the verification missions in the centralised database).
- RFUK should finalise the technological improvements to FL so that end-to-end process allows community monitors to tell if their alerts are tackled or not and by whom. This would ensure accountability across the system - from the verifier who should respond to the alerts, through to the authorities who should conduct a mission and enforce the law if it is needed. Greater transparency and accountability in the system from the communities perspective is important in sustaining their motivation to monitor illegal activities.

5.7 IMPACT

- Continue to expand the work by conducting new 'anticipatory' training with non-target communities before logging companies arrive in or near their forests, so many more communities know what their rights are before interacting with logging companies. This could be small scale training in partnership with community members who are already trained to help galvanise the cascading training that is already

happening, or be modelled on an idea of 'training the trainers' i.e. training of community-based trainers. This would facilitate the spreading of knowledge and link with the concept of expanding the tool and areas covered to follow the illegal activities in a rolling fashion.

5.8 PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- Assess the effectiveness of training community paralegals and if effective expand this initiative across the communities and countries. When possible, collaborate with partners (e.g. Client Earth) and other projects involved in community legal activities to fund this stream of work.

5.9 EQUITY

- Systematically push for more female field staff to be hired in implementing agencies, so that they act as models for women in communities to be involved. Experience across countries shows that having women staff from the implementing agencies working in communities motivates stronger female participation amongst monitors.
- Continue to facilitate the participation of women and marginalised people as monitors, notably by completing the development of guidelines related to diversity and inclusion based on the lessons learned gathered in Phase 2.. Guidelines should include the following: work with young women and established women leaders, explain why not only men should be involved (i.e. to ensure community SRAs are well used), ensure timing of training and missions for selection of monitors are compatible with livelihood activities by women and indigenous people, communicate with village leaders/elders to explain why it is important to involve women, continue to invite women and indigenous people to be represented in village meetings.
- Develop training sessions and material so that all (present and future) implementing partners using FL can implement activities in line with such guidelines.

5.10 SUSTAINABILITY

- Improve the security training for everyone involved, and especially community members working on the

frontline as monitors, as the risks are very high. The design and provision of comprehensive personal safety training to monitors may warrant a specific collaboration with Greenpeace for this.

- Based on the findings in this evaluation and recommendations provided in the Sustainability Report (TLLG 2020) develop a strategy to ensure sustainable engagement of forest monitors – based on an understanding of the costs and benefits that monitoring entails for both monitors and communities and what the incentive measures may need to be. Engage all implementing partners in a reflection on how to provide community incentives and appropriate cost reimbursement for monitors, for their time and risks taken. This will be especially important to avoid the dropping out of the project of marginalised people participating as monitors – especially given that only a few have fulfilled the criteria (literacy and availability to do the job) and are ready to challenge norms for the sake of their community rights and forests.
- RFUK and partners could consider introducing a rotating position of community monitoring, whereby a few monitors are responsible for the main RTM activities for a month and pass on the responsibilities to another set of monitors the month after. In this way, monitoring is a) viewed as more of community activity, as the responsibility is more clearly shared, and b) the costs and risks are also spread amongst the community better.
- RFUK should continue to work to support and improve implementing partner's technical expertise to be autonomous from RFUK in maintaining the FL system much earlier in the next project cycle, this would include specific training on running the database, troubleshooting issues, and finding means to paying for the cloud storage, with clear milestones on progress.

retaliation from interested parts (e.g. government officials with personal interests in logging).

- Ensure that where illiteracy is very high to use illustrated material systematically when educating communities on their key rights instead of brochures and written material for community awareness raising
- Include a budget line for engaging with national media (as done in DRC) and training of media personalities and journalists which seems promising, as done in Ghana.

5.11 INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION

- RFUK to expand and strengthen informal collaboration with key international NGOs and media outlets interested in logging illegalities (e.g. the Environmental Investigation Agency, Global Witness, RFI, the Guardian) to provide relevant information to their stories without exposing local NGOs to potential

6. CONCLUSION

The RTM project was highly relevant to global efforts to improve forest management and tackle deforestation, especially those which seek to tackle illegal logging in timber-producing developing countries.

The project piloted and demonstrated the proof of concept that forest monitoring can be conducted by trained monitors from local communities, even in extremely remote areas, using novel technological approaches to capture data real-time, and that this data can be credible enough to be used by authorities planning enforcement missions.

It therefore achieved its primary intended outcome by demonstrating that strengthening participation from the local to the national level is highly effective in strengthening forest governance.

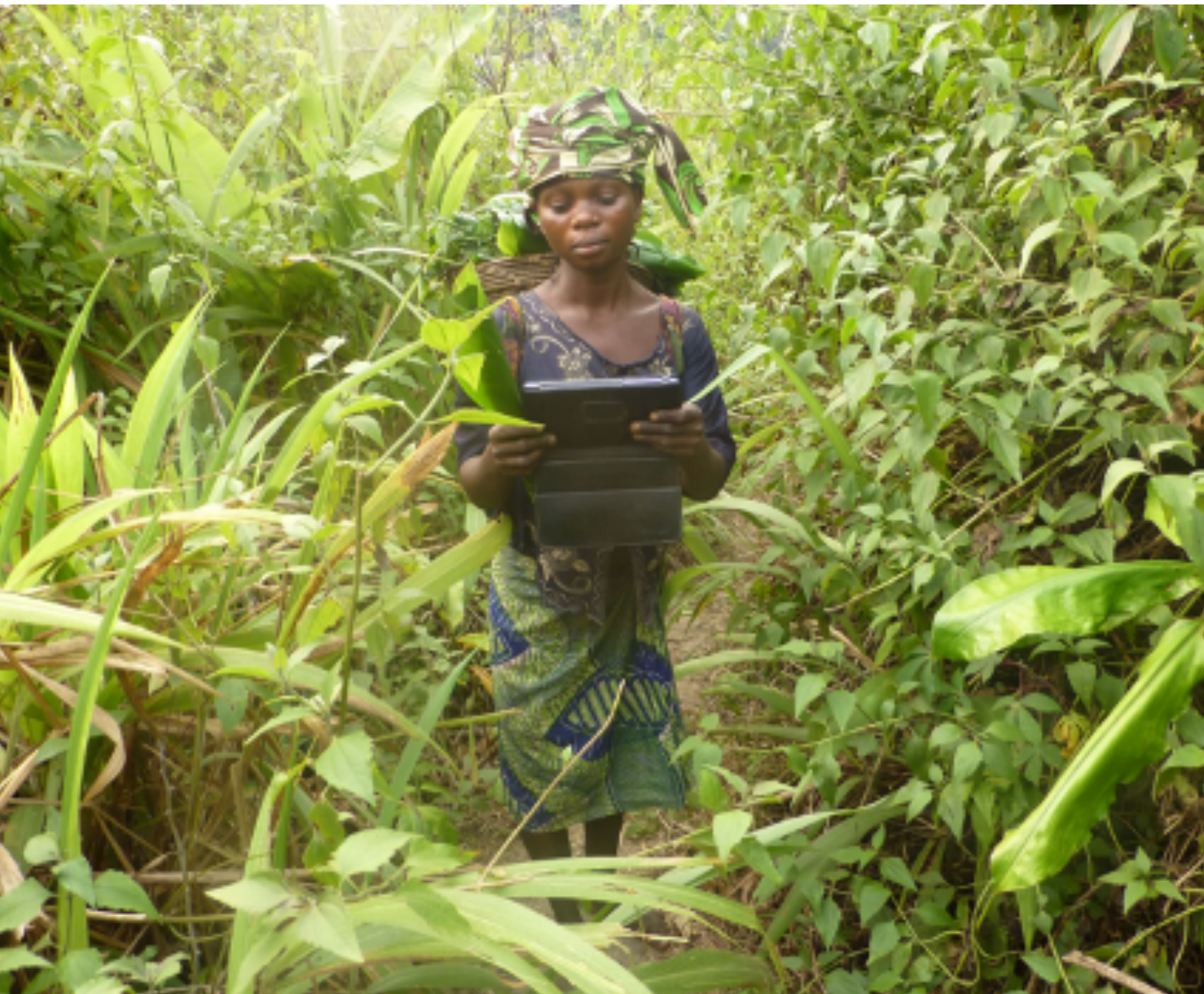
The evaluation could not draw on baseline or end-line information to measure actual reductions in illegalities, but there did appear to be progress towards reduced illegalities and an improvement with respect to enhancing advocacy for, and ensuring the rights and benefits of, poor people, local communities and indigenous people. The project also built the capacity of CSOs and governments and made IFM more efficient.

Furthermore, it supported enforcement, and improved justice, transparency, monitoring and whistle-blowing. In some countries, such as DRC, this meant enshrining community monitoring in law (Decree 072) and advocacy work leading to the first tribunal on forest illegalities that the country has seen since the 2002 Forest Code was created.

The project has led to governance reforms that reduce the illegal use of forest resources and benefit poor people, as well as policy and legal reforms that aim to eliminate illegal logging, and the institutionalisation and embedding of sustainable processes and practices. Unfortunately, at project closure - in part due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic - the RTM system is likely to be sustainable in only a few communities across the project countries and without additional financial support and capacity building, benefits to communities and enforcement are likely to erode quickly.

This was an extremely ambitious project given the time frame of the project, and one that faced enormous challenges, particularly in certain contexts, where patron-client political economies meant that the project was struggling against powerful vested interests which sought to protect logging companies.

As previous RFUK studies have documented, Central and West African countries have laid out plans to become “emerging economies”, all of which rely heavily on extractive activities such as logging, mining, oil exploitation and agro-industry (almost exclusively run by foreign companies) and infrastructure building. According to this model of economic growth, forests are rich sources of potential wealth to be exploited. However, pursuing this form of development lacks a long-term vision for the sustainable management of forest resources. The negative consequences of externally-driven initiatives in the region include forest degradation and the abuse of indigenous and forest peoples’ rights - outcomes which are incompatible with climate action and mitigation. It is clear that within this system, benefits do not trickle down, and that poverty and ecological crisis continue to deepen.



Community monitor training
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ANNEX 2. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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- RTM Africa - Dec 2019 lesson sharing and strategising workshop Keynotes
 - RTM project brochure
 - FGMC Full Project Budget
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 14 - Annual Budget (Year 1)
 - RFUK Annual budget Y3 F2020-21_Updated Jun 2020
 - RFUK FGMC Annual Budget
 - RTM Cameroon - Document narratif et stratégique de projet
 - RTM DRC - Document narratif et stratégique de projet
 - RTM Ghana - Narrative and strategic project document. Narrative document -Community based Real Time Monitoring in Ghana
 - RTM RoC - Document narratif et stratégique de projet
 - Collecteur Terms and Conditions
 - ForestLink RTM Standard Data and User Agreement
 - Moniteur platform Terms and Conditions
 - RFUK Statement of Ethical Standards
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 7 - Project Logframe
 - RFUK Logframe 17052019
 - RFUK logframe revised 01/.05.2020
 - David Young 2015 report - RTM of forest activities in the Congo Basin
 - David Young Report 2015 - RTM challenges and opportunities
 - FGMC2 RTM RF-UK final evaluation report 17-04-2018 final NW
 - Project Completion Report (PCR) Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) 2015 - 2018
 - Evaluation of the Community-based Real-time Forest Monitoring in three countries to support FLEGT processes
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 10 - Gender approach
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 11 - Organigramme
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 13 - Project budget (full)
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 14 - Annual Budget (Year 1)
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 3 - Theory of change diagram
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 4 - Key stakeholders diagram
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 5 - Project work plan (full)
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 6 - Project work plan (year 1)
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 7 - Project logframe
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 8 - Assumptions and risk analysis
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Annex 9 - Full project Gantt Chart
 - FGMC Grant PP 2018 - RFUK - Proposal document - RTM
 - RTM implementing countries - communities and concessions
 - RFUK FGMC Annual Technical Report FY2018-19
 - RFUK FGMC Annual Technical Report FY2019-20
 - All Quarterly reporting from Implementing Partners

ANNEX 3. STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

COUNTRY	STAKEHOLDER TYPE	NAME
Cameroon	Implementing Partner	FODER
	Associate Partner	SNOIE
	Associate Partner	OFERA
	Government	DDFOF & CPCFC
Ghana	Implementing Partner	Civic Response
	Associate Partner	Nature Development Foundation
	Associate Partner	Tropenbos Ghana
	Associate Partner	Ecocare
	Government	Forest Service Division
DRC	Implementing Partner	GASHE
	Associate Partner	Greenpeace
	Associate Partner	FAO
	Associate Partner	World Resources Institute
	Associate Partner	OCEAN
	Associate Partner	OGF
	Associate Partner	APEM
	Associate Partner	Tropenbos
	Government	Administration Forestiere Nationale
	Government	Administration Forestiere Provinciale
RoC	Implementing Partner	CJJ
	Associate Partner	ODDHC
	Associate Partner	FGDH
	Associate Partner	CAGDF
	Government	Administration Forestiere Nationale
	Government	Administration Forestiere Departementale
	Associate Partner	APEM
	Associate Partner	Tropenbos
UK	Partner	RFUK
	Other	KPMG
International	Other	UN FAO HQ
Communities were spoken with in Cameroon, Ghana, DRC and RoC		

ANNEX 4. TOPIC GUIDE - COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

ALL PARTICIPANTS

- What kinds of illegalities occurred in your forest before this project started? How did these affect your community? Has there been a reduction of illegalities and better protection of community rights since the project started?
- How sustainable do you think this project is? Have there been any long-term positive effects?
- Is this a good project? Why (not)? What did you think about this project when you first heard about it? What convinced you that this project would be a good idea for you/your community?
- What recommendations do you have for the donors and partners? What changes would you make if the project continued? If you were starting this project again from the beginning, what would you do differently?
- Has the project made it possible to take better account of the rights of your communities in the management and observation of forests? If yes, how?
- Did the project succeed in creating good dialogue and collaboration between your community and the forest administration? If yes, how?

FOREST MONITORS EXTRA QUESTIONS

- What do you think of the app, Collectaur? How easy is it to use? Could anything be improved?
- Is the monitor job dangerous? If so, what can be done to protect forest monitors?
- What has been the positive impact of RTM system on management of forest communities, reduction of illegal logging and role of communities in forest monitoring?

WOMEN/INDIGENOUS PEOPLE EXTRA QUESTIONS

- How involved have women/indigenous people been in the project? Can anyone be a monitor?
- Have you been informed of the project? If yes, what do you know exactly and from your point of view what is the importance of the project?

LEADERS/REPRESENTATIVES EXTRA QUESTIONS

- Has the project empowered your community? If so, how? Has it enabled you to engage with actors in the forestry sector? Which actors?

ANNEX 3. TOPIC GUIDE - ASSOCIATED PARTNER INTERVIEWS

ALL PARTICIPANTS

Ask them their role and involvement in the project

CONCEPTION OF THE PROJECT AND RELEVANCE

- At what point did you get involved in the project - did you have any involvement in the design or establishment of any of the civil society platforms?
- How relevant to forest governance is the project in your opinion?

EFFICIENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Can you describe your working relationship with the partners - what worked well, what could be improved?

EFFECTIVENESS

- What factors do you think contributed to the success of the project?
- Do you think more could have been achieved? And could you highlight some factors which might have hindered the project's success? (prompt: has there been any resistance?)

IMPACT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

- What have been the broader economic, social, legal and political consequences of the project? (intended and unintended)
- What real difference has the project made to civil society/government [depending on who you are speaking with]

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- How has the project helped strengthen forest governance? (prompt: can you comment on community involvement? Civil society involvement? Government involvement?)

SUSTAINABILITY

- To what extent do you think the Forest Link system has become institutionalised?

LESSONS LEARNED

- Do you have any key recommendations or lessons learnt you'd like to share?

ANNEX 3. TOPIC GUIDE - IMPLEMENTING PARTNER INTERVIEWS

ALL PARTICIPANTS

Ask them their role and involvement in the project

CONCEPTION OF THE PROJECT AND RELEVANCE

- Were you involved in the conception of the project? (ask as many or as few of the below)
- Who else (e.g. government?) was involved in the initial phases of the project, and what was the nature of their involvement? (prompt, did they help you select the target communities?)
- How was the project suited to the strategy, mission and priorities of the [partner org]
- In your view, how relevant is the project for forest law enforcement and tackling illegal logging?

EFFICIENCY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Can you describe the working relationship with RFUK - anything that worked particularly well? Any room for improvement?
- Can you explain your working relationship with others involved in the project (e.g. forest authorities) - what worked well, what could be improved? (prompt: did anything unexpected happen that influenced the project?)
- What were the major factors (both positive and negative) influencing your work with communities?
- How often did you meet with communities?
- Did you have an internal monitoring process to adapt the project along the way - if so what major changes did you make to the project?

EFFECTIVENESS

- To what extent have you achieved your objectives in this project?

IMPACT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Can you describe how you worked with communities.
- How did you involve women or marginalised communities (indigenous people)
- What is their level of ownership of the system?
- What real difference has the project made to (a) communities (b) your organisation (c) authorities?

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- How has the project helped strengthen community involvement and civil society involvement in forest governance?

SUSTAINABILITY - DOCUMENTS AND A SPECIFIC STUDY IS ALREADY LOOKING AT THIS SO A SPECIFIC QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED

LESSONS LEARNED

- Do you have any key recommendations or lessons learnt you'd like to share?

ANNEX 5. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: CAMEROON

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Ready to deploy version of the RTM system (V2.0)	V2.0 running in at least 20 communities with 100 community observers deployed in (at least) 3 regions in Cameroon, and managed by SNOIE coordination and associated partners/ state agents (BNG, MINFOF)	V2.0 running in 43 communities, with 126 communities observers (42 community leaders and 84 monitors) 4 regions (Centre, Littoral, Est and Sud regions) managed by SNOIE but despite Forest Administration (MNFOF) having accounts for the FL platform, they have never logging in to receive alerts directly from the platform.
Control missions from community-based RTM generated alerts	<p>50% of RTM alerts trigger verification missions in Cameroon</p> <p>At least 5 agents of relevant control authorities master relevant functionalities of RTM platform and ForestLink technology</p> <p>Relevant control authorities share outcomes of control missions (record of violations, payment of fines, etc.) with SNOIE</p>	<p>2020/2021: 478 alerts, 3-4 SNOIE verification missions. 50% not achieved.</p> <p>2019/2020: 547 alerts, 7 control missions of which 4 were joint control following SNOIE verification missions</p> <p>2018: no data (from RFUK), 4 verification mission of which one was joint with FODER-SNOIE-DDFOF.</p> <p>2 joint control mission following 7 community alerts</p> <p>1 Joint FODER-DDFOF mission to verify 10 alerts in Djendé</p> <p>Forest authorities have not yet responded to any alerts. Forest authorities have accounts to FL platform but have not yet logged in to use it. Alerts are remaining at the level of SNOIE and joint missions were triggered by SNOIE reports being presented to MINFOF. Outcomes of the control missions have not been feedback into the platform, though SNOIE have received some reports, though corruption issues mean that many reports remain internal to MNFOF.</p>
Compliance with laws in target areas	Increased responsiveness of enforcement authorities leads to reduction in forest illegalities	Unable to measure as lacking baseline and end-line data not available on rate of change of the number of enforcements and illegalities over time.
% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities	<p>100% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities</p> <p>100 community observers contributing to forest monitoring and leaders capable to defend their communities' rights</p> <p>Communities complaints in relation to SRAs or due benefits arisen during project implementation either solved or in the process to be</p> <p>Advocacy capacity of at least 1 SNOIE member organisation is strengthened and member organisations are better aware of forest community's rights</p>	<p>Data not available to measure if 100% of SRAs have been received.</p> <p>Across 2019/2020, community advocacy supported by the RTM project helped 7 communities in the Eastern region receive 8.5 million CFA francs (nearly \$14,000 USD) worth of contributions for the fulfilment of social obligations by forestry companies. Communities highlighted that there remain loggers in the communal forest who still do not pay the rights due to communities, and communities have not seen the social projects manifest from logging companies.</p> <p>613 community members sensitised on monitoring the forests (2019/2020) Data not available to track community complaints in relation to SRAs. ECODEV (SNOIE member organisation) was trained on forest community rights and use of FL platform</p>
Specific actions taken to adopt RTM in official forest control processes	SNOIE fully recognised as IFM stakeholder and RTM data used by relevant forest control authorities. Operational joint (SNOIE/forest control authorities) monitoring and control using RTM and ForestLink at their core in at least 3 regions (/MoUs implemented if relevant)	<p>As of January 2021, MoU signed between MINFOF and FODER. Over the course of the project, 5 joint control missions (with either CPFC or DDFOF) in 4 regions</p> <p>Relevant forest control authorities are not yet using FL platform effectively and are still reliant on SNOIE platform.</p>

ANNEX 5. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: CAMEROON

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Effective participation of civil society and communities in forest monitoring and FLEGT processes	Formal provisions to ensure effective participation of civil society and communities representatives. RTM updates contribute to VPA impact monitoring indicators.	2020: 17 CPF representatives trained 2019: Setting up of 46 CPF in project locations Blockages remained regarding the VPA process, the frozen reform processes (to provide stronger legal recognition for community monitors and their evidence), and the resistance from MINFOF to legitimise IFM are major obstacles to institutionalisation.
Advocacy capacity of civil society and forest communities	Relevant national stakeholders (SNOIE member organisations, and forest communities participating to project activities) are effectively contributing to national reform processes, and advocate for improved law enforcement	SNOIE members are signing MoU with MINFOF. FODER has signed as of January 2021. Local communities felt knowledgeable and empowered to take part in the National Committee for FLEGT VPA.
Financial sustainability framework of RTM	Sustainable funding mechanisms initiated or established	Under exploration.
Incentive models for forest communities contributing to forest monitoring	Sustainable incentive mechanisms are identified and initiated	Under exploration.
Communities understanding of long-term sustainability in relation to forest resources management	Increased number of community members sensitised	This project recorded the involvement of 613 people (incl. 173 women and 47 IPs) sensitised on forest legality, the rights and obligations of communities in sustainable forest management, the importance of fighting against illegal activities and the socio-economic and environmental impacts of illegal forest activities. A further 2500 reached via radio programmes raising awareness about illegal forest exploitation.

ANNEX 6. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: GHANA

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Ready to deploy version of the RTM system (V2.0)	V2.0 consolidated, and running in at least 30 communities in at least 10 districts in Ghana, with at least 100 community observers, and is managed by FWG members and associated state agents (FSD, RRT, FC, etc.).	V2.0 consolidated and running in 72 communities in 27 districts (by 2021, 15 districts reached in 2020), working with over 175 community observers, and is managed by 7-8 NGOs in the CSIFM platform (and a further 10 FWG members are verifiers) and used by state agents (FSD).
Control missions from community-based RTM generated alerts	<p>50% of RTM alerts trigger verification missions in Ghana</p> <p>At least 5 agents of relevant control authorities master relevant functionalities of RTM platform and ForestLink technology</p> <p>Relevant control authorities share outcomes of control missions (record of violations, payment of fines, etc.) with FWG</p>	<p>2020: 378 alerts 2019: 794 alerts, 4 verification missions for 181 alerts (July – September) (<50%) 226 alerts according to Technical Report (2019-2020) 2018: 252 alerts, 0 verification missions</p> <p>2020: training of further 50 FSF officials to use/navigate and sign into FL platform. 2019: 61 FSD officials and 2 TVD auditors (staff of the Timber Validation Department) trained on the use of ForestLink 2018: FSD demonstrating engagement with ForestLink as the Executive Director dedicated one of his senior management team members (also Operational Director) as the FC focal person for ForestLink RTM. 13 Forest Services Division (FSD) District Managers and 15 CSIFM partner facilitators trained on the concept and functioning of ForestLink. The 13 District Managers were given “administration” access to the ForestLink Platform.</p> <p>Data not seen on whether relevant control authorities shared outcomes of shared missions.</p>
Compliance with laws in target areas	Increased responsiveness of enforcement authorities leads to reduction in forest illegalities	Unable to measure as lacking baseline and end-line data not available on rate of change of the number of enforcements and illegalities over time.
% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities	<p>100% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities</p> <p>100 community observers contributing to forest monitoring and leaders capable to defend their communities' rights Communities complaints in relation to SRAs or due benefits arisen during project implementation either solved or in the process to be</p> <p>Advocacy capacity of at least 1 SNOIE member organisation is strengthened and member organisations are better aware of forest community's rights</p>	<p>Unable to measure whether 100% receipt of SRAs. 52/72 communities trained reported receipt of SRA and provided details on amount received and what social projects the SRA money/resources were used for. Analysis by CR shows a trend in increasing compliance with SRA obligations by timber companies (data and analysis not seen by consultants).</p> <p>2019-20: 21 equipped and active community observers/monitors contributing to forest monitoring and leaders capable to defend their communities' rights 2018-19: 80 Community Monitors (2 community monitors per community) from 40 communities in 8 districts trained to send alerts on infractions to the latest version ForestLink platform.</p> <p>Data not available to track community complaints in relation to SRAs. However, data is recorded on the absolute amount of money/resources received as part of the SRA. The project provided opportunities for FWG members to meet regularly and strategise.</p>
Specific actions taken to adopt RTM in official forest control processes	CS-IFM fully recognised as FLEGT VPA stakeholder and RTM data used by relevant forest control authorities. Operational joint (FWG/forest control authorities) monitoring and control using RTM and ForestLink at their core in at least 10 districts (/MoUs implemented if relevant)	CSIFM platform officially using FL from 2019. MoU signed between RFUK and CSIFM platform members for their ongoing use and deployment of ForestLink RTM in Ghana. 49 participants attended FWG general meeting in 2020 and were updated on progress and challenges with Ghana's VPA implementation, contents of the new land bill that is awaiting presidential assent, and inputs made into Ghana's NDC review.

ANNEX 6. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: GHANA

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Effective participation of civil society and communities in forest monitoring and FLEGT processes	Formal provisions to ensure effective participation of civil society and communities representatives. RTM updates contribute to VPA impact monitoring indicators.	CSOs continue to effectively participate in national and international forest monitoring policies and initiatives like the FLEGT processes during the course of the project.
Advocacy capacity of civil society and forest communities	Relevant national stakeholders (Forest Watch Ghana coalition members in Ghana, and forest communities participating to project activities) are effectively contributing to national reform processes, and advocate for improved law enforcement	Community-based monitoring is relatively well advanced in contributing to national reform processes.
Financial sustainability framework of RTM	Sustainable funding mechanisms initiated or established	Under exploration
Incentive models for forest communities contributing to forest monitoring	Sustainable incentive mechanisms are identified and initiated	Under exploration
Communities understanding of long-term sustainability in relation to forest resources management	Increased number of community members sensitised	2019-20: This project recorded the involvement of 51 community members who were sensitised on the problem of illegal deforestation and sustainable forest management. 2018-19: 405 community members (including 106 women) from 33 new communities trained about their rights, roles and responsibilities in order to enable communities to hold timber companies and forestry officials accountable.

ANNEX 7. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: DRC

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Ready to deploy version of the RTM system (V2.0)	V2.0 consolidated and running in at least 20 communities in 2 Provinces in DRC with at least 70 community observers, and is managed by GASHE and OGF, in collaboration with relevant state agents (JPO, CPEnv., DCVI, etc.)	V2.0 consolidated and running in 13 communities (85 villages) in 3 Provinces ((Equateur, Tshuapa and Tshopo) with 49 community observers, and is managed by GASHE, OCEAN and OGF and newly formed RENOI CSO network, the state agents are open and very happy with the tool.
Control missions from community-based RTM generated alerts	<p>25% of RTM alerts trigger verification missions in target areas</p> <p>At least 2 agents of relevant control authorities master relevant functionalities of RTM platform and ForestLink technology</p> <p>Relevant control authorities share outcomes of control missions (record of violations, payment of fines, etc.) with IFM-network</p>	<p>2020: no data shared on alerts, 3 joint verification missions</p> <p>2019: 60 alerts, 5 joint verification missions. According to Impact assessments 410 alerts were received, which triggered 17 verification missions and 3 joint missions with authorities (by Nov 2019). According to Technical Report 2019-20 7 joint verification missions were held in year 2.</p> <p>2018: 108 alerts, and 3 joint verification missions</p> <p>23 agents from the Forest Administration including forest inspectors and supervisors, territory administrators, provincial parliamentarians and environment ministers, magistrats, national officials from the DGF and the Cellule de Contrôle et de Vérification (CCV). All have a good understanding about of the aim and functioning of the RTM platform, and some also master the functionalities of the FL technology.</p>
Compliance with laws in target areas	Increased responsiveness of enforcement authorities leads to reduction in forest illegalities	Baseline and end-line data not available in order to measure the rate of change of the number of enforcements and illegalities over time. Perceptions were that forest illegalities have decreased. The joint missions organised quarterly by GASHE ensured the administrations presence in the forests at least 4 times a year, whereas previously enforcement authorities may only have been able to conduct a mission once every 2-3 years, and often organised by the logging companies themselves.
% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities	<p>100% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities</p> <p>At least 70 community observers contributing to forest monitoring and leaders capable to defend their communities' rights</p> <p>Communities complaints in relation to SRAs or due benefits arisen during project implementation either solved or in the process to be</p> <p>Advocacy capacity of at least 1 SNOIE member organisation is strengthened and member organisations are better aware of forest community's rights</p>	<p>Data not available to measure receipt of 100% of SRAs nor track whether communities complaints in relation to SRAs have been solved or are in the process of being solved. Data is available on some SRAs received in communities.</p> <p>49 fully trained community monitors at the end of the project.</p> <p>Workshop with the agents in charge of « clauses sociales » at the DGF (Direction de Gestion Forestière, service de l'administration forestière nationale) on the adoption of ForestLink as a tool for monitoring the compliance with SRAs in DRC forest concessions. Data not available to comprehensively measure whether complaints in relation to SRAs were solved or in the process of being solved.</p> <p>OCEAN received training from GASHE on RTM including advocacy and forest community rights. GASHE also established GTP (a network of lawyers and CSOs together forming an Advocacy Working Group) to strength advocacy efforts</p>
Specific actions taken to adopt RTM in official forest control processes	IFM fully recognised as contributing stakeholder, and RTM data used by relevant forest control authorities. Operational joint (IFM-network/forest control authorities) monitoring and control using RTM and ForestLink at their core in 2 Provinces (/MoUs implemented if relevant).	DGF welcomes civil society led IFM, and have conducted a number of joint missions using RTM and FL in 3 Provinces. Community monitoring within the framework of IFM is a relatively recent development in DRC and has made much progress in the course of this project. ForestLink adopted as a monitoring tool by the RENOI-DRC network in 2018. Deployment began by the training of 12 representatives from NGO members in Kinshasa and 6 field staff from OCEAN in Kisangani.

ANNEX 7. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: DRC

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Effective participation of civil society and communities in forest monitoring and FLEGT processes	Formal provisions to ensure effective participation of civil society and communities representatives. RTM updates contribute to VPA impact monitoring indicators.	The formal provision for independent community-based monitoring including SRA compliance was reached via Decree 072 with strong support from DGF. Limited information or movement on RTM updates contributing to a stalled VPA process.
Advocacy capacity of civil society and forest communities	Relevant national stakeholders (Independent Monitoring network organisations coordinated by OGF, and forest communities participating to project activities) are able to effectively contribute to national legal reform processes, and advocate for improved law enforcement	Evidence that national stakeholders and forest communities' contributions are well received by national reform processes e.g. the inclusion of community monitoring in Decree 072.
Financial sustainability framework of RTM	Sustainable funding mechanisms initiated or established	Under exploration
Incentive models for forest communities contributing to forest monitoring	Sustainable incentive mechanisms are identified and initiated	Under exploration, anecdotal evidence (from other projects) show that when minimal support is provided to a community as a whole for income generating activities, benefits can be reallocated by the communities to further invest in productive activities and to support community observers.
Communities understanding of long-term sustainability in relation to forest resources management	Increased number of community members sensitise	49 community monitors directly benefited from the project and highlighted that they have trained neighbouring community members to understand their rights also

ANNEX 8. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: ROC

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Ready to deploy version of the RTM system (V2.0)	V2.0 successfully tested in 10 communities, with 20 community observers, and running in at least 2 sites in RoC. At least 5 implementing partners staff members master use of ForestLink technology V2.0 and can carry on running RTM in selected deployment site(s)	V2.0 successfully tested in 4 villages in 2 pilot sites (Lekoumou and Likouala) with 14 community observers. 5 CJJ staff members and 8 CAGDF staff were trained and have mastered using FL V2.0.
Control missions from community-based RTM generated alerts	<p>25% of RTM alerts trigger control missions by relevant authorities in targeted areas</p> <p>At least 1 agent of relevant control authorities accessing RTM platform and using RTM data directly to trigger control</p> <p>Record of the outcomes of control missions (record of violations, payment of fines, etc.) by IFM-network</p>	<p>2020: 4 alerts 2019: 64 alerts, 1 verification missions by CJJ</p> <p>12 agents from DDEF and 4 agents from the Central Forest Administration (the Cellule de la Légalité Forestière et de Traçabilité (CLFT) and the Direction Générale des Forêts (DGF) of the Ministère de l'économie forestière) were trained on accessing and using RTM platform.</p> <p>No joint missions to date with administration.</p>
Compliance with laws in target areas	Increased responsiveness of enforcement authorities leads to reduction in forest illegalities	Baseline and end-line data not available in order to measure the rate of change of the number of enforcements and illegalities over time.
% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities	<p>Increase by 50% of due benefits (SRAs) received by participating communities</p> <p>At least 20 community members trained and continuously supported by implementing partners in target areas</p> <p>Legal capacity of at least 2 participating communities reinforced, and support to communities complaints provided by implementing partners</p> <p>Capacity building provided to at least 5 IFM organisations staff</p>	<p>Unable to measure percentage increase.</p> <p>22 community members trained on legal proceedings (including how to draft a legal complaints) in 4 villages.</p> <p>Capacity building provided to 5 IFM organisations, including OCDH, CAGDF, OCDH, FGDH, ODDHC.</p>
Specific actions taken to adopt RTM in official forest control processes	Operational integration (MoUs if relevant) of CB-IFM in forest control and FLEGT VPA processes, and joint monitoring and control (IFM-network/forest control authorities) initiated in at least two pilot sites in RoC. Opportunities of RTM contribution to inform VPA processes/stakeholders (Independent audit) identified and strategy defined with IFM network to explore them.	The Sustainability Assessment (2020) found that "community-based monitoring is still in the innovation stage and a number of key stakeholders are yet to become involved. The level of engagement of local communities in the two pilot areas is however encouraging, though stakeholders identified a number of obstacles to sustaining this engagement."

ANNEX 8. EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE: ROC

OUTPUT	TARGET BY 2021	ACHIEVEMENT BY DECEMBER 2020
Effective participation of civil society and communities in forest monitoring and FLEGT processes	Formal provisions to ensure participation and effective participation of civil society and communities representatives RTM updates included to IM-FLEG "comité de lecture" agenda. RTM updates contribute to VPA impact monitoring indicators.	Too early to measure.
Advocacy capacity of civil society and forest communities	Relevant national stakeholders (IM Civil society platform, and forest communities participating to project activities) are contributing to national reform processes, and advocate for improved law enforcement	Too early to measure.
Financial sustainability framework of RTM	Sustainable funding mechanisms initiated or established	Under exploration.
Incentive models for forest communities contributing to forest monitoring	Sustainable incentive mechanisms are identified and initiated	Under exploration, anecdotal evidence (from other projects) show that when minimal support is provided to a community as a whole for income generating activities, benefits can be reallocated by the communities to further invest in productive activities and to support community observers.
Communities understanding of long-term sustainability in relation to forest resources management	Increased number of community members sensitise	2020: 150 community members participated in sensitisation and awareness raising activities on community-based monitoring and forest protection, and community rights vis-à-vis logging concessions.

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