

CCB & VCS PROJECT DESCRIPTION

N'ZI-MAFA FOREST RESTORATION PROJECT



Project title	N'zi – Mafa Forest Restoration Project
Project ID	5145
Crediting period	15-April-2023 to 14-April-2063
Project lifetime	15-April-2023 to 14-April-2063; 40-year lifetime
(CCB) GHG accounting period	15-April-2023 to 14-April-2063; 40-year lifetime
Original date of issue	25-March-2026
Most recent date of issue	25-March-2026
Version	v.1
VCS Standard version	VCS Standards version 4.7
CCB Standards version	CCB Standards version 3.1
Project location	Côte d'Ivoire, Gbêkê region
Project proponent(s)	hummingbirds Anais Bach; anais.bach@hummingbirds.eu +33 6 11 47 62 08
Validation/verification body	This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

History of CCB status

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

Gold Level criteria

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

**Expected verification
schedule**

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

Prepared by

hummingbirds

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1 SUMMARY OF PROJECT BENEFITS

1.1 Unique Project Benefits

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

1.2 Standardized Benefit Metrics

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2 PROJECT DETAILS

2.1 Project Goals, Design and Long-Term Viability

2.1.1 Summary Description of the project (VCS, 3.2, 3.6, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14; CCB, G1.2)

Côte d'Ivoire has experienced one of the world's highest deforestation rates, with forest cover declining from nearly 50% of the national territory in 1960 to just 9% in 2020. Between 1990 and 2020 alone, around 5 million hectares of forest were lost, and projections indicate that forest cover could fall below 2 million hectares by 2035 (MPD, 2022; IGN FI, 2021; Critchley et al., 2021). This rapid degradation threatens biodiversity, climate stability, food security, and the livelihoods of over 60% of the population who depend on agriculture. Without urgent and systemic intervention, Côte d'Ivoire risks losing not only its remaining forests but the ecosystem services critical to both rural development and national climate resilience (UNSDG, 2022; GGGI, 2022).

The Mafa Massif, located in the Vallée du Bandama region, reflects these national trends. Once forested areas have increasingly been converted to degraded savanna and agricultural land, resulting in severe biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. The project zone is made up of rural communities that mainly rely on small farms and small-scale trade, with most jobs being informal. Local deforestation and forest degradation are driven by a complex set of interacting forces that play roles at various scales: demographic expansion, intra-national migration, expansion of insufficiently productive agriculture, fuelwood collection, and illegal extractive activities such as small-scale gold mining, compounded by widespread poverty, limited employment opportunities, and gender-based inequalities.

In response, the project prioritizes forest restoration as a central strategy to reverse ecological decline and strengthen local resilience. The project aims to halt deforestation and ecosystem degradation and actively restore degraded forest ecosystems through a landscape-scale approach that recognizes forests as critical carbon sinks, biodiversity habitats, and buffers against climate variability. Restoration activities are designed to regenerate forest cover, improve soil and water resources, and reconnect fragmented ecosystems, thereby restoring essential ecosystem services.

Forest restoration is paired with sustainable livelihood development to address the root causes of degradation. By promoting sustainable timber production and management, non-timber forest product value chains, and ecotourism, the project creates climate-resilient economic alternatives that reduce pressure on natural forests. These activities support long-term restoration outcomes by aligning environmental recovery with income generation, improved land governance, and inclusive community participation, particularly for women and youth.

Through integrated restoration and socio-economic interventions, the project seeks to deliver lasting global environmental benefits, such as carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, while enhancing local livelihoods and resilience in the face of climate and economic change.

2.1.2 Audit History (VCS, 4.1)

This project is currently under development and has not yet requested validation or verification.

2.1.3 Sectoral Scope and Project Type (VCS, 3.2)

Sectoral scope	14: Agriculture, forestry, and other land use
AFOLU project category ¹	Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation (ARR)
Project activity type	Reforestation and Revegetation

2.1.4 Project Eligibility (VCS, 3.1, 3.6, 3.8, 3.18, 4.1; CCB Program Rules, 4.2.4, 4.6.4)

General project eligibility

The project generates GHG removals via the restoration of indigenous forests and the implementation of commercial, high-quality timber plantations in historically degraded and deforested lands. Project activities include planting activities to promote forest revegetation and long-term protection of restored forests. These fall under the scope of Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation (ARR), being activities that increase carbon sequestration and reduce GHG emissions by establishing, increasing, and restoring vegetative cover.

¹ See Appendix 1 of the VCS Standard

The project qualifies for inclusion within the VCS Program based on the following criteria:

- The project activity is reforestation/revegetation aiming to establish, increase and/or restore vegetative cover through sowing and human-assisted regeneration. It is, therefore, eligible under the ARR category as described in the VCS Standard v4.7, Appendix 1.
- The project activity is not excluded under Table 1 of section 2.1.3 of the VCS Standard v4.7.
- The calculation of GHG emissions is based on the approved VCS methodology VM0047: Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation, v.1.1, the VCS AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool v4.2, and all other applicable tools and associated requirements.
- The methodology VM0047: Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation, v.1.1. does not apply scale and/or capacity limits; therefore, scale or capacity limits are not relevant for this project.
- The period between the start date and the date of project listing is less than 3 years, complying with Section 3.8.2 of the VCS Standard v4.7.
- The project activity involves the reforestation of degraded lands. These activities are eligible under Ivorian law according to conditions set out in section 2.5.1.
- The project follows all general requirements listed in Section 3.1 of the VCS Standard, v.4.7 and meets all applicable rules and requirements set out under the VCS Program, as detailed in this section and in Applicability of Methodology.

AFOLU project eligibility

The project is eligible under the scope of the VCS Program and meets the AFOLU-Specific Matters requirements set out in Section 3.2 of the VCS Standard, v4.7 and the applicability conditions set out in the VCS Methodology VM0047: Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation, v1.1.

- As described in Section 2.1.4, the project meets the AFOLU project category requirements for ARR from the VCS Standard v4.7.
- No native ecosystems have been converted, cleared, drained, or degraded to implement project activities, and no clearing or conversion of native ecosystems has occurred in the project area within 10 years prior to the start date. Evidence demonstrating this will be further presented.
- This project is not located within a jurisdiction covered by a jurisdictional REDD+ program.
- The project crediting period is 40 years.
- Project activities do not occur on organic soils or wetlands.

Grouped project design

The grouped project is designed for new project instances to be added over time within the Project's defined geographic area (project zone). The goal of the grouped project is to enable efficient yearly

scaling up the project activities, supporting both implementation and maintenance of new areas. All new project instances must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- All new project instances will meet the eligibility criteria outlined above regarding general project eligibility and AFOLU Project Eligibility.
- Project activities initiate after the Project start date and extend through the duration of the crediting period.
- All new project instances must fall within the defined project geographic zone outlined in Section 2.1.16 of this document.
- Each new project instance will be verified to ensure consistency in species selection, planting techniques, monitoring procedures, and social and environmental safeguards, as described in this Project Description Document.

2.1.5 Transfer Project Eligibility (VCS, 3.23, Appendix 2)

The project is not a transfer project; therefore, this section is not applicable.

2.1.6 Project Design (VCS, 3.6)

- ☐ Single location or installation
- ☐ Multiple locations or project activity instances (but not a grouped project)
- ☒ Grouped project

2.1.7 Project Proponent (VCS, 3.7; CCB, G1.1)

Organization name	hummingbirds
Contact person	Anais Bach
Title	CEO
Address	8 rue de la Michodière, 75002 Paris, France
Telephone	+33 6 11 47 62 08
Email	anais.bach@hummingbirds.eu

2.1.8 Other Entities Involved in the project

Organization name	N'zi River Lodge (SNRL)
Role in the project	Owner of N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve and concession owner of the classified forests of Mafa, Fètèkro, Laka, and Bessé-Boka
Contact person	Louis Diakité
Title	Owner and Founder
Address	N'zi River Lodge, Réserve Naturelle du N'zi, Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire
Telephone	+225 07 09 204 545
Email	louisdiakite@gmail.com

Organization name	N'zi Wildlife Conservation Foundation
Role in the project	Entity in charge of the forest surveillance and biodiversity protection activities in the Project area.
Contact person	Louis Diakité
Title	Founder
Address	N'zi River Lodge, Réserve Naturelle du N'zi, Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire
Telephone	+225 07 09 204 545
Email	louisdiakite@gmail.com

2.1.9 Project Ownership (VCS, 3.2, 3.7, 3.10; CCB, G5.8)

The project activities will be implemented in the N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve and the surrounding four classified forests of Mafa, Fètèkro, Laka, and Bessé-Boka (Figure 1). The N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve is on private land, and the four classified forests are in the public domain.

Boundaries of the project zone

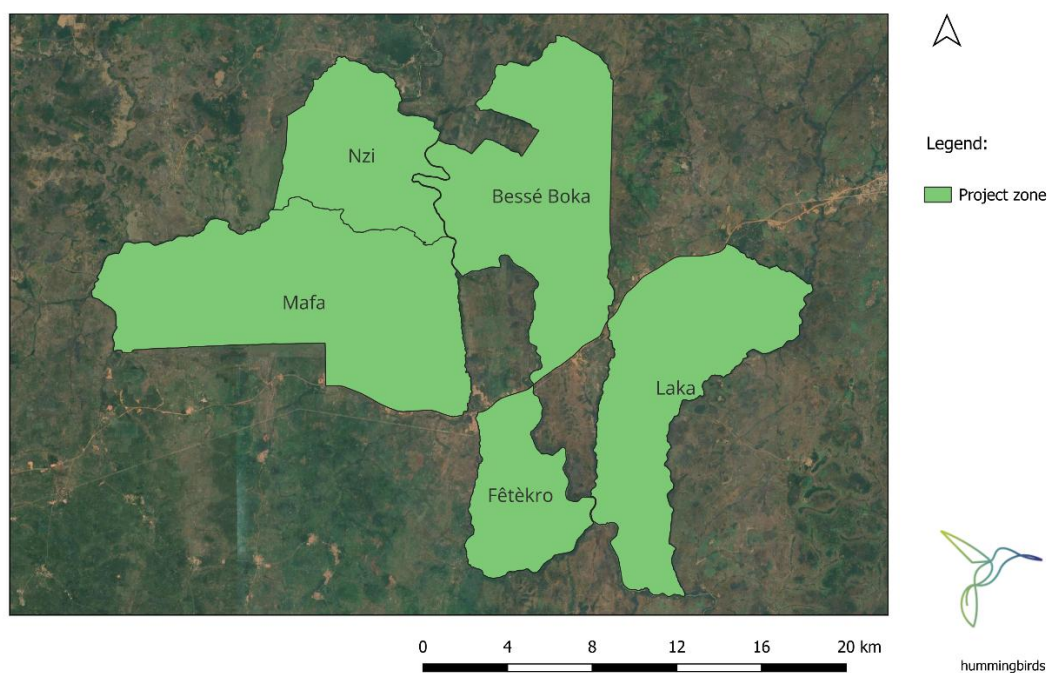


Figure 1. Project zone, covering the four classified forests and the natural reserve.

The N'zi River Lodge (SNRL) is an Ivorian ecotourism company which owns the 3,662-ha N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve (RNVN), a private reserve acquired in 1998 from the villages of N'Dênou, Akrou Kouadiokro, and N'Dokro. SNRL has legal proof of ownership for the N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve.

In response to the challenge of sustainable forest resource management, the Ivorian government has designed the Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Expansion of Forests (SPREF). At the core of the strategy is the concept of a forest concession, defined as “a defined forest area granted to an individual or legal entity for management”. Through these new approaches, the Ivorian government seeks to establish collaboration tools with private sector entities that can contribute to its strategy and channel private investments to significantly impactful activities on the ground. In this regard, it has made decisions to make forest areas within its private domain (classified forests) available to those wishing to invest in forest rehabilitation.

In 2022, as part of the SPREF, the State of Côte d'Ivoire, through the Ministry of Waters and Forests, signed a concession with the owner of N'zi River Lodge for the sustainable management of the four classified forests of Mafa, Fètèkro, Laka, and Bessé-Boka for a 40-year period. This grants the concession holder the responsibility of the long-term sustainable management of the forests as well as the carbon rights associated with it. SNRL is the holder of the concession over the four classified forests.

2.1.10 Project Start Date (VCS, 3.8)

Project start date

15-April-2023

Justification

The project start date conforms to the start date requirements as per section 3.8 of the VCS Standard, v.4.7 as the date on which the project initiates the implementation of the activities that will lead to the generation of GHG emission reductions or carbon dioxide removals. Land preparation activities in Laka Classified Forest started on 15 April 2023; therefore, this is the start date of the project.

2.1.11 Benefits Assessment and Project Crediting Period (VCS, 3.9; CCB, G1.9)

Crediting period

The project crediting period for this project will be 40 years, renewable. According to the requirements of Project Crediting Period Length for AFOLU projects described in the 3.9.3 section of the VCS Standard v4.7, crediting period shall be a minimum of 20 years to a maximum of 100 years, which may be renewed at most four times, with a total project crediting period not to exceed 100 years.

Start date of first or fixed crediting period

15-April-2023 to 14-April-2063

CCB benefits assessment period

15-April-2023 to 14-April-2063

2.1.12 Differences in Assessment/Project Crediting Periods (CCB, G1.9)

There are no differences between the assessment periods for GHG emissions accounting, climate adaptive capacity and resilience, community, and/or biodiversity.

2.1.13 Project Scale and Estimated Reductions or Removals (VCS, 3.10)

☒ < 300,000 tCO₂e/year (project)

☐ ≥ 300,000 tCO₂e/year (large project)

Calendar year of crediting period	Estimated reductions or removals (tCO ₂ e)
15-Apr-2023 to 31-Dec-2023	50
01-Jan-2024 to 31-Dec-2024	2,231
01-Jan-2025 to 31-Dec-2025	13,158
01-Jan-2026 to 31-Dec-2026	28,507

01-Jan-2027 to 31-Dec-2027	34,548
01-Jan-2028 to 31-Dec-2028	38,044
01-Jan-2029 to 31-Dec-2029	38,583
01-Jan-2030 to 31-Dec-2030	24,328
01-Jan-2031 to 31-Dec-2031	26,744
01-Jan-2032 to 31-Dec-2032	85,799
01-Jan-2033 to 31-Dec-2033	144,413
01-Jan-2034 to 31-Dec-2034	207,353
01-Jan-2035 to 31-Dec-2035	275,384
01-Jan-2036 to 31-Dec-2036	319,214
01-Jan-2037 to 31-Dec-2037	318,698
01-Jan-2038 to 31-Dec-2038	248,188
01-Jan-2039 to 31-Dec-2039	100,695
01-Jan-2040 to 31-Dec-2040	69,783
01-Jan-2041 to 31-Dec-2041	72,255
01-Jan-2042 to 31-Dec-2042	74,380
01-Jan-2043 to 31-Dec-2043	76,134
01-Jan-2044 to 31-Dec-2044	77,506
01-Jan-2045 to 31-Dec-2045	78,503
01-Jan-2046 to 31-Dec-2046	79,140
01-Jan-2047 to 31-Dec-2047	79,417
01-Jan-2048 to 31-Dec-2048	79,180
01-Jan-2049 to 31-Dec-2049	77,915
01-Jan-2050 to 31-Dec-2050	75,641
01-Jan-2051 to 31-Dec-2051	72,504

01-Jan-2052 to 31-Dec-2052	68,898
01-Jan-2053 to 31-Dec-2053	64,771
01-Jan-2054 to 31-Dec-2054	59,939
01-Jan-2055 to 31-Dec-2055	53,032
01-Jan-2056 to 31-Dec-2056	44,659
01-Jan-2057 to 31-Dec-2057	41,849
01-Jan-2058 to 31-Dec-2058	40,503
01-Jan-2059 to 31-Dec-2059	39,150
01-Jan-2060 to 31-Dec-2060	37,805
01-Jan-2061 to 31-Dec-2061	36,477
01-Jan-2062 to 31-Dec-2062	35,176
01-Jan-2063 to 14-Apr-2063	7,078
Total estimated ERRs during the first or fixed crediting period	3,347,632
Total number of years	40
Average annual ERRs	83,691

2.1.14 Physical Parameters (CCB, G1.3)

Topography

The project zone is predominantly flat, with little to gentle slopes (0 – 9%) covering 75% of the area, while moderate slopes (9 - 15%) cover approximately 15% of the region. Steep slopes (>30%) cover 10% of the project zone and are located mainly in the Classified Forests of Bessé-Boka, in the northeast, and Fètèkro, in the southwest. In terms of elevation, the project zone has an average elevation of 218 meters, ranging from 154 to 437 meters (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

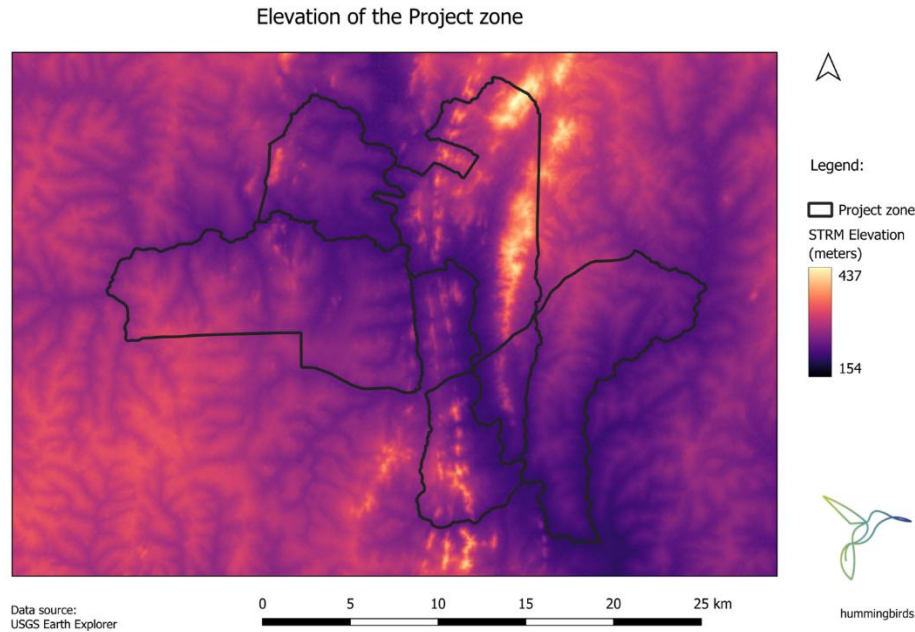


Figure 2. Elevation range, in meters, within the project zone. Source: USGS Earth Explorer.

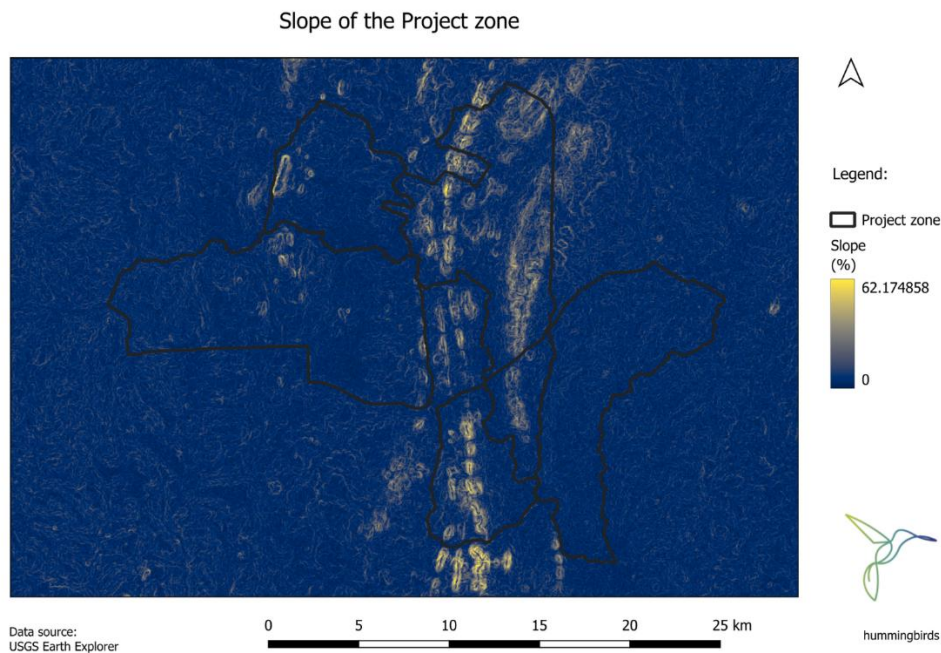


Figure 3. Slope, in percentage, across the project zone. Source: USGS Earth Explorer.

The aspect map of the project zone illustrates the directional orientation of the terrain's slopes, showing a highly varied and complex topography (Figure 4). The wide range of colors across the area indicates that slopes face in multiple directions, suggesting a landscape of ridges and valleys. Such variation in aspect is typical of mountainous or dissected terrain, where erosion and elevation changes create frequent shifts in slope orientation within short distances.

Aspect of the slope in the Project zone

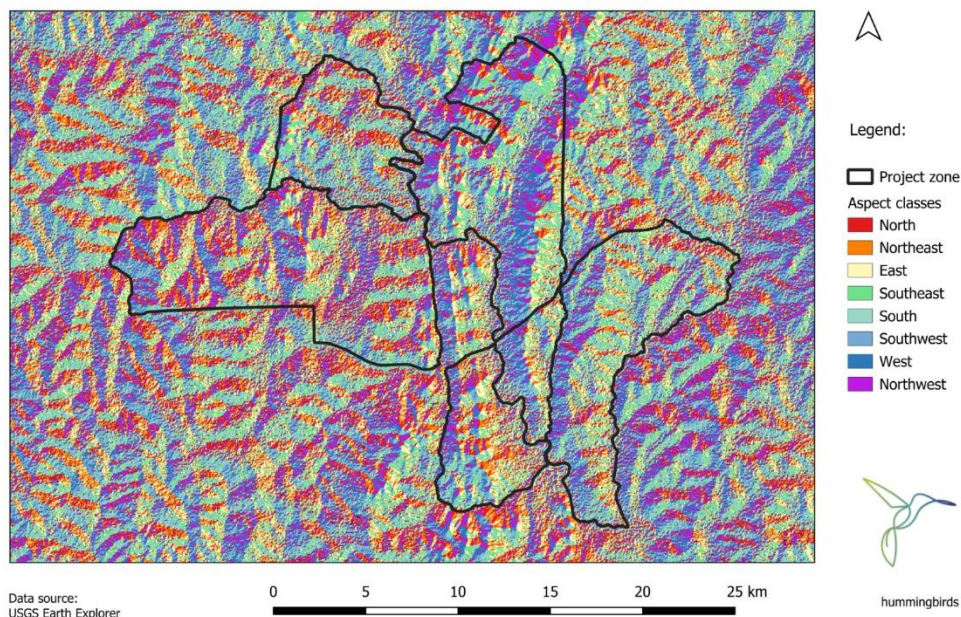


Figure 4. Aspect of the slope, within the project zone. Source: USGS Earth Explorer.

Within the project boundary, no single aspect direction clearly dominates, though south- and southeast-facing slopes appear to be more widespread in several central and southern sectors, while north- and northeast-facing slopes are also prominent, particularly in the northern parts of the area. This diversity in slope orientation has important implications for microclimate, vegetation distribution, and land use potential. South-facing slopes generally receive more solar radiation, making them warmer and drier, while north-facing slopes tend to retain more moisture and support denser vegetation (Singh, 2018).

Soil type

According to the Harmonized World Soil Database (FAO & IIASA, 2023), the project zone consists of three main soil types: Ferric Acrisol (ACf), Eutric Cambisol (CMe) and Ferric Lixisol (LXf). Based on the USDA soil texture classification, these correspond to sandy clay loam for Acrisols (AC), clay loam for Cambisols (CM) and sandy loam for Lixisols (LX).

Approximately 73% of the total area is covered by Cambisols, predominantly in the central and eastern parts of the project site. Acrisols occupy about 19% of the area, mainly in the western section, while Lixisols (LX) account for the remaining 8%, found in a small patch in the eastern part (Figure 5).

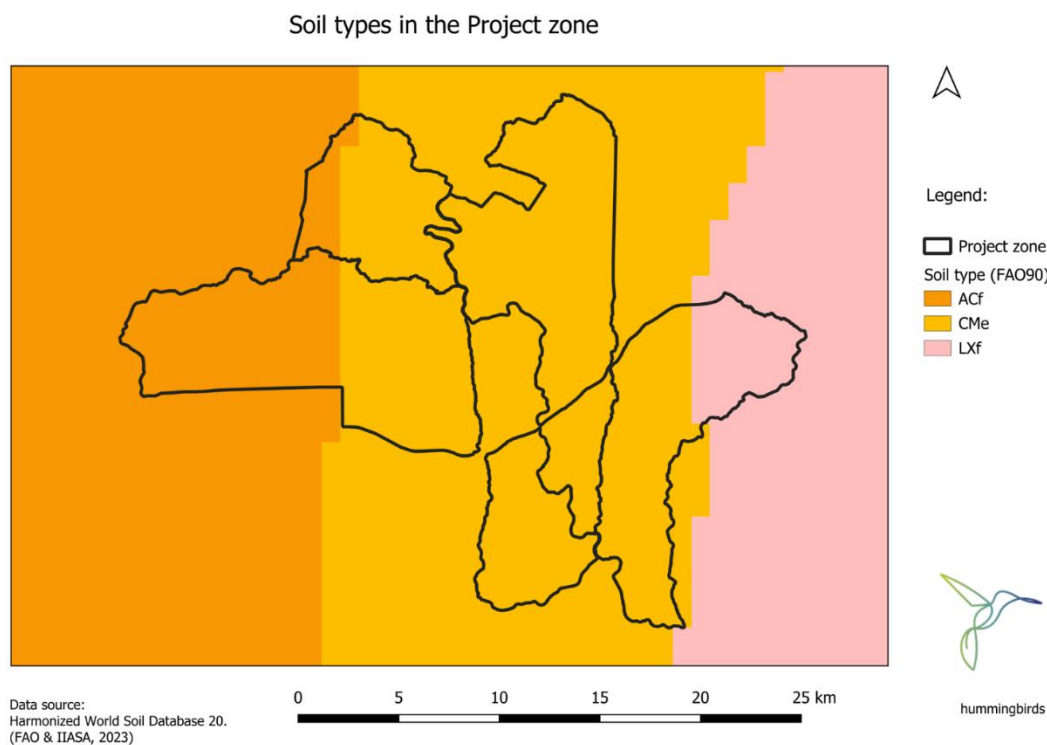


Figure 5. Soil type classification within the project zone. Source: FAO & IIASA (2023).

These soils show differences in terms of water holding capacity. Having a balanced loamy texture and moderate clay content, Cambisols have a moderate to high water holding capacity and moisture availability. Acrisols, due to having more clay content also have less water available to plants, especially under dry conditions. Lastly, Lixisols have a lower water holding capacity due to their sand content making them less prone to waterlogging (Salter & Williams, 1965).

Climate

The project zone falls within the Aw climatic type — a tropical savanna climate with dry winters. This climate is marked by distinct wet and dry seasons, with the temperature, for the coldest month, above 18°C. The driest month, typically during winter, receives less than 60 mm of rainfall and accounts for under 4% of the total annual precipitation (Millison, 2019; Pidwirny, 2021).

Regarding precipitation, the project zone had a mean precipitation of 985 mm/year according to ERA5-Land monthly averaged data (1994-2024) (Muñoz-Sabater, 2019). The region experiences a pronounced rainy season from May to October, peaking in August and September, followed by a dry season from November to April, during which rainfall drops below 60 mm (Figure 6). Temperatures remain consistently warm throughout the year, ranging between 25°C and 29°C. Long-term data indicate a decreasing trend in annual precipitation within the last years, as shown in Figure 7.

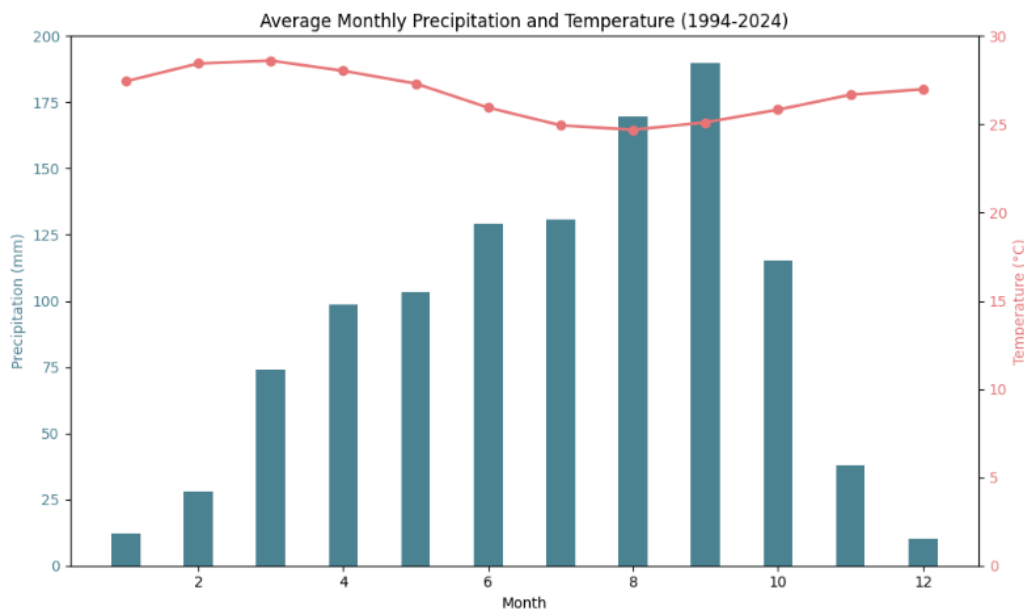


Figure 6. Average monthly precipitation and temperature in the project zone, from 1994 to 2024. Source: Muñoz-Sabater (2019).

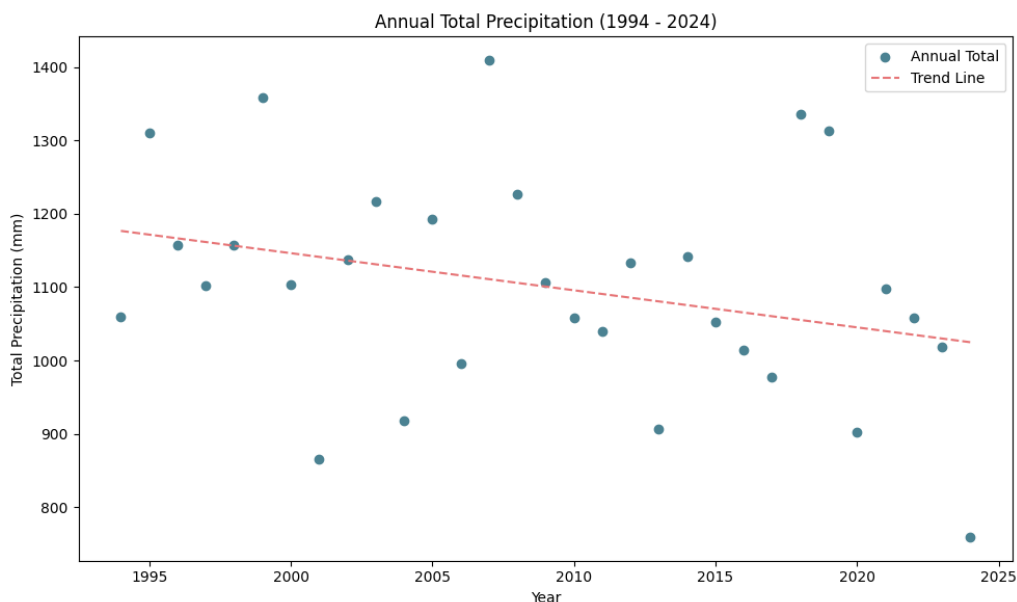


Figure 7. Annual precipitation, in millimeters, in the project zone. The dashed red line represents the trend line over the years, from 1994 to 2024. Source: Muñoz-Sabater (2019).

Hydrology

The project zone is crossed by the N'zi River, the main permanent watercourse that forms natural boundaries for each of the four classified forests and for the Natural Reserve. A secondary hydrographic network comprising permanent tributaries of N'zi River, such as Tébé, Mafa, Laka and Bondo, as well as seasonal streams are distributed broadly throughout the entire project zone, as presented in Figure 8.

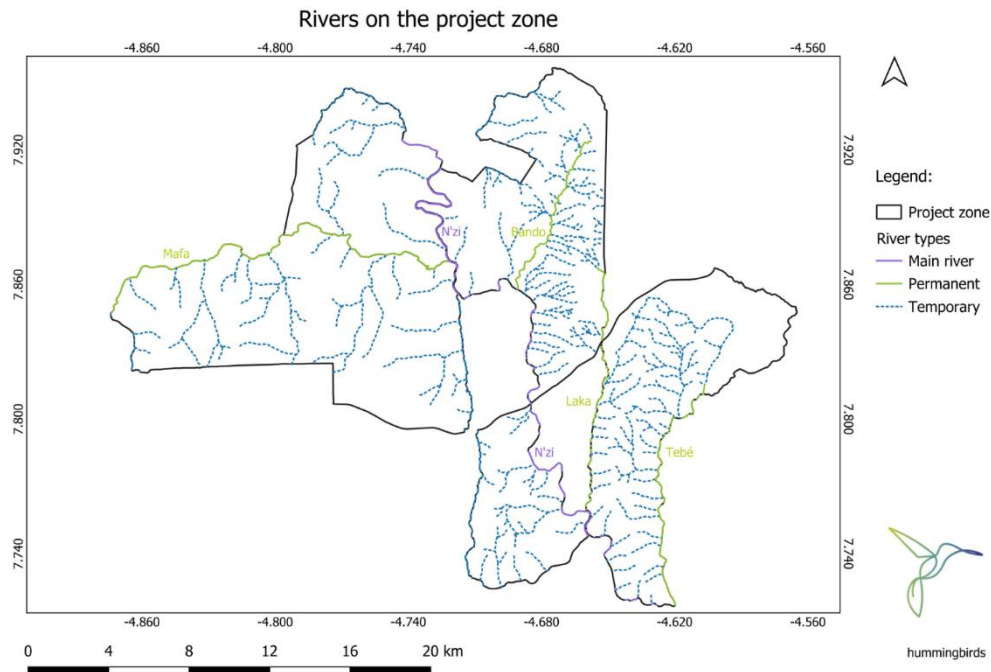


Figure 8. Hydrology within the project zone.

Vegetation

According to RESOLVE biome dataset (Dinerstein et al., 2017), the entire project zone is located within the Guinean forest-savanna ecoregion. Running from east to west across West Africa, it covers parts of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Lying within the humid tropical savanna zone, it has annual high temperatures between 30-33 °C, and lows ranging between 14-21 °C. Annual rainfall averages 1,600-2,000 mm, but some parts receive 1,000 mm or less, as is the case for the project zone. In the northern area, where the project is located, there is a single rainy season of five to seven months peaking in August/September. Its vegetation is characterized by a mosaic of forest islands, gallery forests and savanna, in which anthropic impacts commonly induce a decline of natural forests, leading to habitat fragmentation and isolation (Goetze et al., 2006).

Over the past years, the forested landscape in the project zone has suffered major impacts and has become increasingly degraded, composed mostly of degraded forests that now can be characterized as wooded savanna. Overall, local deforestation and forest degradation are driven by a complex set of interacting forces that play roles at various scales: demographic expansion, intra-national migration, expansion of insufficiently productive agriculture, fuelwood collection, and illegal extractive activities such as hunting and small-scale gold mining.

The current land cover classification clearly demonstrates this transition from forests to wooded savannas and shrublands. According to the European Space Agency (ESA) WorldCover (Zanaga et al.,

2021), the project zone is mostly covered by shrublands (48.9%), while tree cover² only represents 31.2% and grasslands cover 19.8% (Figure 9).

In fact, when evaluating land use, there are clear differences across the 5 areas composing the project zone (four classified forests and one Voluntary Natural Reserve). While the Classified Forests of Laka and Mafa present respectively only 12% and 15% of tree cover, being the most anthropized areas, the N'zi Reserve and Bessé-Boka and Fétèkro Classified Forests present larger tree cover, with 31%, 39% and 43%, respectively. Both Bessé-Boka and Fétèkro have most of their forests in the hilliest and less accessible areas, therefore less suitable for agriculture or fuelwood collection. This distribution, in turn, highlights the impacts of anthropization in the land cover dynamics in the region and demonstrates that the forests might re-establish themselves with reduction of anthropic disturbances.

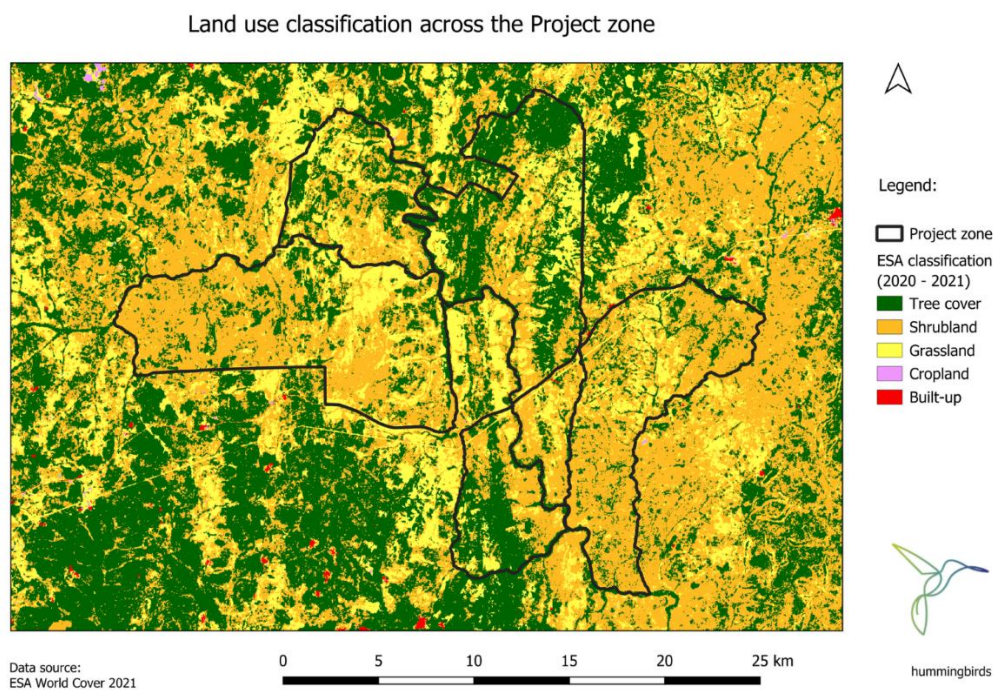


Figure 9. Land cover classification across the project zone. Source: Zanaga et al. (2021).

2.1.15 Social Parameters (VCS, 3.18; CCB, G1.3)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development,” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.1.16 Project Zone Map and Project Location (VCS, 3.11, 3.18; CCB, G1.4-7, G1.13, CM1.2, B1.2)

² In ESA World Cover, tree cover is defined as any geographic area dominated by trees with a canopy cover of 10% or more. As the national definition of forests in Côte d'Ivoire includes a minimum of 30%, it is not possible to consider those areas as forests. Therefore, in order to assess which areas in the project zone are covered by forests, a more accurate forest x non-forest classification will be further presented in the next version of this document.

Project Zone

The project zone, i.e. where the project activity instances will be implemented, is situated in the administrative regions of Gbêkê (Department of Bouaké) and Hambol (Department of Dakabala). It lies between the sub-prefectures of Mamini to the south, Bouaké to the northwest, and Satama-Sokoro to the northeast. The Mafa Massif is composed of four Classified Forests: Laka to the east, Fètèkro to the south, Bessé-Boka to the north and Mafa to the west as well as the N'zi Voluntary Natural Reserve to the northwest. The project activities are expected to take place in all the four Classified Forests as well as in the Voluntary Natural Reserve (Figure 1).

Covering a total of 35,192 ha, the project zone is delimited as below:

- N'zi Voluntary Natural Reserve: 4,568 ha
- Mafa Classified Forest: 11,104 ha
- Bessé-Boka Classified Forest: 8,350 ha
- Laka Classified Forest: 7,780 ha
- Fètèkro Classified Forest: 3,390 ha

The project zone is located between the geographical coordinates:

- Latitude: 7° 43'02" and 7° 57'22" N
- Longitude: 4° 52'28" and 4° 33'49" W

According to the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) projection, the Mafa Massif is in the 30N zone, within the quadrilateral whose Cartesian coordinates of vertices A, B, C and D are:

- A (304753; 886736)
- B (331716; 870042)
- C (319182; 849798)
- D (292219; 866493)

Communities

Figure 10 displays the location of rural communities within the project's area of influence. Within the project zone, there are no permanent settlements. In the surrounding areas of the project zone, however, several villages, with a total of approximately 15,000 inhabitants (hummingbirds & AETS, 2025a; RGPB 2021; RGPB 2014) have been identified: N'Dênou, Akrou-Kouadiokro, Latéma-Koffikro, Langbassou, Fètèkro, Sabaridougou, Yao-Amoinikro, Frondobo, N'Dokro, Kanguierenou, Gbamakro, Komgbéra, Kombara-Mangrosso and Kombara-Bambarasso. Most of the local population is made up of Baoulé, the

dominant group in the Gbèkè region. In addition to these populations, there are immigrants from other Ivorian ethnic groups such as the Senufo, Djimini, Mahouka, Kôgbê, and Koyaka. The latter have settled in the area relatively recently and are actively involved in local social and economic dynamics.

Project zone and neighboring communities

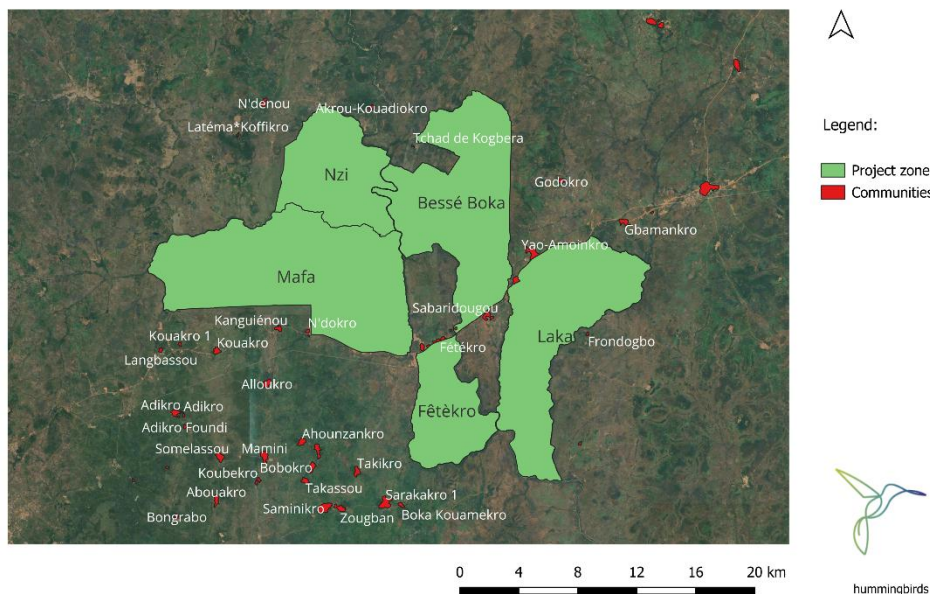


Figure 10. The project zone and the location of neighboring communities.

In 2025, a field survey assessed 603 heads of households who were farmers within a 5 km radius of the project zone and found that 97% of respondents declared themselves as farmers, of which 50% declared operating in the project zone. The two main agricultural activities undertaken in both the project zone and the project's area of influence are cashew (perennial crops) and yam cultivation (annual crops).

The project zone is also a key resource for energy consumption in its influence area. According to the survey, 98% of the households located in the project's area of influence are dependent on firewood as cooking fuel and 41% of this firewood is sourced from classified forests (hummingbirds & AETS, 2025a).

Livestock grazing and transhumance corridors are present in the project zone. Entry points are located mostly west and east of Laka Classified Forests and east of Fètèkro. Livestock farmers and external pastoral communities seek specific resources in the forest such as abundant water bodies and pastureland.

High Conservation Value areas

The determination of High Conservation Value areas within the project zone will be completed in 2026. Therefore, these will be presented in the second version of this document.

2.1.17 Project Activities and Theory of Change (VCS, 3.6; CCB, G1.8)

Project Activities

The project aims to stop forest degradation and climate vulnerability through the empowerment of local communities to manage natural resources sustainably, addressing the root socio-economic causes of forest overexploitation, and strengthening the governance systems to support integrated land-use planning. The interventions will result in a reduction of destructive practices (slash-and-burn agriculture, bushfires, overgrazing, illegal mining), improved ecosystem health, enhanced local capacities, and diversified, climate-resilient livelihoods. Governance will be strengthened through robust monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) framework, ensuring full transparency and quantifiable measurement of on-the-ground impact. This approach not only enhances accountability but also actively engages local communities, integrating their feedback and aspirations into project evolution. A strong grievance mechanism will help identify and tackle any emergent issues, mitigating potential adverse effects, fostering trust, long-term alignment, and measurable social and environmental returns.

This envisaged transformation hinges on four key causal pathways:

1. Forest landscape restoration through direct planting and regeneration

This component focuses on restoring degraded forest landscapes through a combination of zoning, boundary demarcation, and reforestation techniques using native species and commercial species for timber. Restoration will be carried out via active restoration and assisted natural regeneration, complemented by the protection of riparian and gallery forests and targeted actions to restore soil and water quality.

For the forest restoration component, based on the current degradation status and accessibility of the area, three distinct technical approaches will be developed:

- **Intensive restoration:** estimated 2,750 hectares, at a varying density, from 200 to 800 plants per hectare, depending on the degradation level. This will take place in the most degraded areas, mainly those that have suffered intensive deforestation for agriculture, and that are still being affected by recurrent forest fires that impede a healthy ecosystem regeneration. The density of up to 800 plants per hectare allows space for natural regeneration and does not lead to a dense tropical forest, but rather to an open forest.
- **Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with low density planting:** estimated 5,500 hectares, at a density of up to 200 plants per hectare, depending on the degradation level. This will occur in areas where trees are already present, such as degraded wooded savannas and degraded forests. The aim is to boost enrichment with native species that are well adapted to the area. In those areas, silvicultural activities include pruning, singling and protection of regenerating individuals.
- **ANR without planting:** estimated 2,750 hectares. This will take place in areas with higher resilience, i.e. areas with high regeneration potential. These zones will be protected from illegal loggers and livestock thanks to fencing and ranger patrols, will be safeguarded from bushfires, and will be managed to support the growth of native woody species through pruning, singling and protection of young plants.

These three approaches will be complemented by measures of fire prevention and mitigation (firebreaks, anti-fire brigades, preventive fires etc.), which will play a pivotal role in ensuring the permanence of the restored areas. Overall, the maintenance of the plantations, with recurrent weeding until year three or four, is planned to allow the forests to regenerate as sustainably as possible, while simultaneously restoring the ecosystem and wildlife present. No harvesting will happen in the forest restoration areas.

Tree species for the forest restoration component will be selected based on their natural occurrence in the area. All the species used for this component are indigenous to the project zone and preference will be given to seeds collected in the region of the project, ensuring higher resilience and adaptation to edaphoclimatic conditions and creating a potential source of revenue for local communities. A non-exhaustive list with pre-identified species to be employed in the project, together with their status in IUCN Red List, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Potential native species for the forest restoration areas.

Species	IUCN status
<i>Adansonia digitata</i>	
<i>Azelia africana</i>	Vulnerable
<i>Albizia ferruginea</i>	Near Threatened
<i>Anogeissus leiocarpa</i>	
<i>Antiaris toxicaria</i>	
<i>Berlinia occidentalis</i>	Vulnerable
<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	
<i>Ficus capensis</i>	
<i>Gardenia ternifolia</i>	
<i>Griffonia simplicifolia</i>	
<i>Kalanchoë crenata</i>	
<i>Khaya senegalensis</i>	Vulnerable
<i>Luffa cylindrica</i>	
<i>Milicia excelsa</i>	Near Threatened
<i>Morinda lucida</i>	
<i>Nesogordonia papaverifera</i>	Vulnerable
<i>Newbouldia laevis</i>	
<i>Parkia biglobosa</i>	
<i>Piliostigma thonningii</i>	
<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>	Endangered
<i>Turraea heterophylla</i>	
<i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i>	Vulnerable

A commercial component, aiming at producing high-quality timber following FSC guidelines, will also be deployed in the project zone to increase the project's financial resilience. Between 2023 and 2024, approximately 1,900 hectares of *Tectona grandis* and *Gmelina arborea* have been planted in the

Classified Forests of Laka and Fètèkro. From 2026 onwards, the project aims to plant an additional area of approximately 4,000 hectares, employing a mixed plantation approach, with *Tectona grandis* and *Gmelina arborea* together with high-value indigenous timber species, potentially including *Khaya ivorensis*, *Piptadeniastrum africanum*, *Distemonanthus benthamianus*, *Triplochiton scleroxylon*, *Lovoa trichilioides*, *Erythrophleum ivorense*, *Milicia excelsa*, *Terminalia superba* and *Entandrophragma angolense*. The project expects to use a planting spacing of 3x3 m, resulting in a tree density of 1,111 trees/ha. The final species mix and planting design will be defined based on the edaphoclimatic conditions and tree species suitability assessed during subsequent project phases, including the pilot phase, in which various species mix arrangements will be tested.

By integrating timber production into a landscape restoration effort, a core hypothesis is that former encroachers can be integrated into reforestation activities and employed to plant, maintain, and protect timber resources, thus transforming them into long-term forest stewards. Through this approach, the project will generate large-scale ecosystem restoration, while simultaneously addressing key drivers of degradation by embedding labor-intensive activities that create employment and improve forest governance.

The planting timeline of the second phase of the project is expected to spread over 10 years (2026-2036), due to the scale of operations (approximately 16,600 hectares to be actively managed and 4 technical itineraries), and due to the higher need of maintenance in the three initial years of forest establishment. As there are only a few forest operators with experience in large-scale forest plantation and restoration in the project region, there will be a strong effort and a whole array of resources allocated to capacity building, aiming at ensuring a stable scaling-up of planting activities year by year, while ensuring the correct maintenance of the previous planting campaigns together with proper risk management. In addition, the necessary infrastructure is not yet in place and will need to be developed progressively as the project is deployed. A stable supply of high-quality seeds is also paramount for the project's success, both for commercial and non-commercial species. To address this point, the project will involve local communities in establishing seed production fields, identifying mother trees and setting up nurseries to secure a reliable supply of seedlings over the long term. These points justify a scale-up based on conservative assumptions, ensuring that expansion remains realistic while safeguarding quality and operational efficiency.

2. Sustainable Pastoralism

To reduce pressure from uncontrolled grazing, the project will plan dedicated livestock corridors, establish water points and promote fodder production outside the core forest areas. These interventions will structure pastoralist movements and protect both regenerating forests and cultivated land from degradation.

By reducing unregulated grazing and encouraging sustainable rangeland management, the project aims to minimize conflict between farmers and herders, improve animal health, and maintain the ecological integrity of the forest edge. These efforts will contribute to the long-term social and ecological stability of the landscape.

3. Livelihood Diversification & Local Economic Development

Beyond the local employment for timber and restoration activities (land preparation, plantation, forest management, etc.), this component invests in sustainable income-generating activities (IGAs) that provide viable, gender-inclusive alternatives to forest exploitation. Key value chains include shea, honey, and organic horticulture, supported by training, access to inputs, and market facilitation.

Shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) is one of the essential forest resources in the northern half of Côte d'Ivoire. There are numerous shea trees in the project zone (an average of 13.5 trees/ha in the classified forests), and the processing of shea nuts is a common activity for women in the surrounding villages. N'zi Wildlife Conservation Foundation (NWCF) has launched a shea nuts processing and marketing program in collaboration with GIZ, and a processing unit has been built at the edge of the classified forests in the Southern zone.

However, the supply of shea nuts is insufficient to fully utilize the processing unit's capacity. Therefore, as part of the project, management of natural regeneration of shea trees will be incentivized in areas with higher resilience, while shea trees planting will be carried out in areas with few individuals. Already established shea trees are also expected to be marked and tracked for a better organization in terms of nut collection. By employing this flagship, commercial, vulnerable species, the goal is to contribute to reforestation by creating additional areas for nut collection while promoting and re-valuing women's work.

4. Inclusive Governance & Capacity Building

The project will strengthen the capacity of community members, local authorities, and traditional leaders to engage in sustainable forest management. Training will cover forest regulations, rights and responsibilities, and conflict resolution. Participatory platforms will be established to support inclusive decision-making and community monitoring.

A key focus will be placed on gender-responsive approaches, ensuring that women and youth are prioritized in training, benefit-sharing, and leadership opportunities. The project assumes that, once equipped with secured access to sites of cultural value within the classified forests (such as sacred forests), livelihood alternatives, and inclusive governance structures, communities will be more likely to act as long-term stewards of forest resources.

Ultimately, these efforts aim to foster a governance system that is socially equitable, ecologically sound, and economically viable. Through capacity building and institutional development, the project intends to create lasting impacts that persist beyond the funding cycle, anchored in policy reform, community ownership, and resilient local value chains.

Other activities

Maintenance and enrichment of existing planted forests

Part of the project zone in the Mafa Classified Forest was planted with teak for timber production in the 1990s. However, due to a lack of financing and supervision, these plantations have not been maintained. The absence of timely thinning operations at the correct time has resulted in excessively high stem

densities, increased intra-specific competition and reduced individual stem growth. These plantations, which currently cover 3,650 ha, offer limited biodiversity value, though natural regeneration of indigenous species has been observed. The project aims at improving the management of these areas, ensuring their proper maintenance with low-impact thinning and, in a second stage, harvesting operations. By reducing stand density, thinning will free up light, water and nutrients for regenerating native species, progressively transitioning the monoculture plantation towards a more diverse and structurally complex forest stand with greater biodiversity and enhanced ecosystem services. As those areas are currently forested, they do not comply with eligibility criteria under VM0047 and are therefore excluded from activities that will generate VCUs in the project. However, this activity will result in value generation and job creation as well as in the reduction of illegal logging activities due to the increased presence of workers, dissuading illegal intruders from entering and cutting trees illegally.

Surveillance and fauna protection

The N'zi Wildlife Conservation Foundation's main activity is the protection and monitoring of the N'zi Voluntary Nature Reserve (RNVN) and, by extension, the whole forest massif, with a focus on Mafa and Bessé-Boka Classified Forests. The objective of the ranger teams is to deter poachers and illegal loggers from entering the classified forests and harming biodiversity. These rangers also participate in identifying and locating wildlife for ecotourism activities, and they guide tourist groups during visits to the reserve. They are also in charge of detecting areas of tension, working hand in hand with local authorities to arrest individuals engaging in illegal activities, such as poachers and, particularly, illegal gold miners, who are very active in the eastern part of Bessé-Boka. Although the classified forests of Laka and Fétèkro are currently less monitored due to the lack of resources and distances, the project expects to reinforce surveillance and biodiversity monitoring in those areas as well when activities are implemented. Therefore, the total area to be under surveillance and conservation activities will be the whole project zone, representing a total of 35,192 ha.

Theory of Change

The project's theory of change responds directly to the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation identified in the baseline. It assumes that by restoring forest ecosystems, improving land governance, and diversifying local livelihood systems, the conditions that currently lead the local population to use the forests in non-sustainable ways can be transformed. Forest restoration activities, including active planting, natural regeneration, and maintenance, will rebuild ecosystem health and functionality, while creating jobs, additional revenues through income-generating activities, and training to the local population. Investments in sustainable agriculture, value chains, and income-generating activities will reduce, on a wider scale, the economic dependence on forest exploitation and ensure the permanence of change. Improved governance, land use planning, and secure user rights will create enabling conditions for long-term resource stewardship. The theory of change assumes that when communities are offered viable alternatives, clear rules, and a stake in landscape management, they will shift from unsustainable use to active restoration, leading to enduring environmental, social, and economic benefits. Overall, the expected outcomes resulting from the project activities are: (i) halting

deforestation and ecosystems degradation, (ii) restoring degraded ecosystems and (iii) improving livelihoods (mainly economic, cultural and health-related).

The theory of change will be further detailed in the second version of this document, to account for the results from the workshops that will be held during the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

2.1.18 Sustainable Development Contributions (VCS, 3.17)

The project supports Côte d'Ivoire's revised 2025 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), which set binding emission reduction targets against a 2012 business-as-usual baseline. The NDC targets a 33% unconditional reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 (equivalent to 51,700 Gg CO₂e), rising to 74% with international support (equivalent to 116,170 Gg CO₂e). The forestry sector is central to achieving these goals, accounting for 64% of expected reductions under the unconditional scenario and 68% under the conditional scenario. As a forest restoration project, the N'zi-Mafa initiative directly contributes to these sectoral targets. Beyond its climate commitments, the project also aligns with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) by prioritizing ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation.

Furthermore, the project contributes to the broader attainment of the UN SDGs. Table 2 presents the proposed project activities, the related SDGs and the goals the activities aim to contribute to.

Table 2. SDGs, goals and the contribution of project activities

SDG	Goals	Project activities
1 - No poverty	1.1, 1.4	The project aims to improve livelihoods and income generated as a result of project activities. Beyond formal employment, the project will invest in community development and livelihood diversification, adapted to the socio-economic realities of each area. Potential interventions include support for shea and non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains, promotion of community-based eco-tourism, training in sustainable agriculture and input provision. These activities reduce dependency on forest degradation and build long-term resilience by strengthening diversified, sustainable income streams. The benefit-sharing plan will secure an annual budget for community projects.
4 - Quality education	4.4	Empowerment and capacitation of local population will rely on both capacity-building related to income-

		generating activities, and governance bodies (e.g. local committees).
5 - Gender Equality	5.5	The project will ensure full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership for women. Native species seed collection, tree nursery operations and management, and shea nuts collection and processing facilities will particularly target women. Women's leadership in decision-making structures will be promoted by ensuring their representation in community governance bodies, benefit-sharing mechanisms and participatory forest planning processes.
8 - Decent work and economic growth	8.4, 8.5	The project will create jobs for community members in key project activities, which will provide steady income and training opportunities in a context where most of the population is in the informal economy. Preference will be given to women and youth to promote inclusive economic participation, as well as to farmers currently planting within the classified forests.
12 - Responsible consumption and production	12.a, 12.2	The project aims to ensure sustainable forest management through international standards certification, resulting in value generation while maximizing ecosystem services and carbon sequestration. Local shea and honey value chain strengthening will increase commodities selling price.
13 - Climate action	13.1, 13.3	The project is designed to increase climate resilience and aims to generate long-lasting global environmental benefits such as carbon sequestration. The positive economic development impact of the project will enhance the ability of affected communities to adjust to climate change and variability.
15 - Life on land	15.1, 15.2	This project is designed to halt deforestation and degradation, and restore degraded forest ecosystems through sustainable, inclusive land use and livelihood practices. It will lead to improved ecosystem services that directly support community well-being such as enhanced soil fertility, erosion control, and improved water retention and availability.

The project will also strive for biodiversity enhancement, protection and monitoring.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), associated with each of these SDGs, will be monitored and reported annually. In the second version of this document, Section 3.3 will include more details on the monitored KPIs and the Monitoring Plan.

2.1.19 Implementation Schedule (CCB, G1.9)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.1.20 Risks to the project (CCB, G1.10)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.1.21 Benefit Permanence (CCB, G1.11)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.1.22 Financial Sustainability (CCB, G1.12)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.2 Without-project Land Use Scenario and Additionality

2.2.1 Conditions Prior to Project Initiation and Land Use Scenarios without the project (VCS, 3.13; CCB, G2.1)

Ecosystem type

As mentioned in Section 2.1.14, the project zone is located within the Guinean forest-savanna ecoregion. More specifically, the project is carried out within the Mafa Massif, comprised by four classified forests (*forêts classées*), defined in Côte d'Ivoire as forest areas legally designated for long-term protection and sustainable management, where land use is regulated by the State to prevent degradation and preserve ecological functions (SODEFOR, 2016).

The vegetation in the project zone consists of a mosaic of forests and savannas, predominantly on ferrallitic soils. The dominant vegetation type is wooded/shrubby savanna, followed by light forest/wooded savanna.

The region forms part of the intermediate or transitional pre-forest zone of Côte d'Ivoire, characterized by a diverse mosaic of mesophilic (semi-deciduous) forest and Guinean savanna. Vegetation belongs to both the Guinean domain (mesophilic sector) and the Sudanese domain (sub-Sudanese and Sudanese sectors). The mesophilic sector features pre-forest savannas (wooded, tree-covered, or shrubby) interspersed with forest islands, including light forest and dense dry forest that vary in their degree of preservation. The sub-Sudanese sector contains sparse forests and several types of savanna (Guillaumet & Adjanohoun, 1971). Gallery forests and dense forest islands of a drier type are also present (Aubréville, 1959), while the Sudanese sector is dominated by wooded savanna with trees, shrubs, and areas of sparse forest.

An initial forest inventory carried out in 2025 in the project zone has found a total of 179 tree species belonging to 42 families. The inventory corroborates another study carried out in the region (Kouadio, 2020) that has identified an important diversity of plant species, including *Khaya grandifoliola* (Meliaceae), *Khaya ivorensis* (Meliaceae), *Celtis* spp. (Ulmaceae), *Triplochiton scleroxylon* (Sterculiaceae), and *Nesogordonia papaverifera*. Among the species found in the forest inventory, it is worth noting the presence of endangered species as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Endangered species identified in the forest inventory (hummingbirds & AETS, 2025b). IUCN statuses: VU: vulnerable, EN: endangered, NT: near threatened.

IUCN status	Species
VU	<i>Afzelia africana</i>
NT	<i>Albizia ferruginea</i>
VU	<i>Antrocaryon micraster</i>
VU	<i>Berlinia occidentalis</i>
VU	<i>Cordia platythyrsa</i>
NT	<i>Cordia vignei</i>
VU	<i>Cryptosepalum tetraphyllum</i>
VU	<i>Haplormosia monophylla</i>
VU	<i>Homalium smythei</i>
NT	<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>
VU	<i>Khaya anthotheca</i>
VU	<i>Khaya senegalensis</i>
NT	<i>Milicia excelsa</i>
NT	<i>Nauclea diderrichii</i>
VU	<i>Nesogordonia papaverifera</i>
VU	<i>Placodiscus boya</i>

EN	<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>
VU	<i>Pterygota bequaertii</i>
VU	<i>Rhodognaphalon brevicuspe</i>
VU	<i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i>

Current and historical land use

The project zone has experienced significant forest loss and ecosystem degradation over recent decades, driven by a complex and interacting set of pressures operating at multiple scales. The landscape has become increasingly fragmented, now composed largely of degraded natural forests, fallows, and small plantations, with forest cover progressively replaced by savanna and agricultural land (MPD, 2022; IGN FI, 2021; Critchley et al., 2021).

The predominant land uses are subsistence agriculture and cashew farming, characterised by low productivity due to limited access to inputs, training, and finance. Rapid demographic growth in the Gbêkê region — approximately 30% since 2014 — combined with intra-national migration, is driving many households to expand cultivation into forested areas through traditional slash-and-burn practices. Communities also rely directly on forest resources for fuelwood, bushmeat, and livestock grazing, further intensifying pressure on remaining forests. Illegal artisanal gold mining, while not the primary driver of degradation, reflects the broader economic vulnerability of the population and the absence of viable alternative livelihood options (hummingbirds & AETS, 2025a; RGPB, 2014, 2021, 2024).

Key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation therefore include unsustainable agriculture, recurrent bushfires, fuelwood harvesting, illegal logging, and artisanal mining (MPD, 2022; Critchley et al., 2021). Climate change compounds these pressures by intensifying droughts and bushfires, reducing the forest's capacity to regulate rainfall and support agricultural productivity (GGGI, 2022). These environmental changes disproportionately affect women, youth, and pastoralist communities, who typically have less secure access to land and natural resources.

If current trends persist, forest cover will continue to decline, biodiversity will deteriorate, and the region will become increasingly vulnerable to climate-related risks and land use competition, threatening the long-term viability of the resource-based livelihoods on which local populations depend.

2.2.2 Most-Likely Scenario Justification (CCB, G2.1)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.2.3 Community and Biodiversity Additionality (CCB, G2.2)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.2.4 Benefits to be used as Offsets (CCB, G2.2)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.3 Safeguards and Stakeholder Engagement

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.4 Management Capacity

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5 Legal Status and Property Rights

2.5.1 National and Local Laws (VCS, 3.1, 3.6, 3.7, 3.14, 3.18, 3.19; CCB, G5.6)

Table 4 below identifies and demonstrates compliance of the project with relevant laws and regulatory frameworks.

Table 4. Identification of national and local laws and project’s compliance

National, regional and local Laws	Project activities
Code Forestier Forestry Code (Law No.2019-675 dated 23 July 2019)	Articles 40, 57, 58 and 62 of the Code Forestier collectively lay the foundation for how forest concessions are regulated and managed in Côte d'Ivoire, ensuring that forest resources are handled sustainably. All forests must be registered in the owner's name, as mandated by the 2019 Forestry Code, to resolve ownership disputes and clarify responsibilities. The project is located within four classified forests secured through a forest concession and a Voluntary Natural Reserve that are both regulated by a participative forest management plan approved by the Ministry of Forests developed according to the rules of the Forestry Code, guaranteeing compliance of the project activities with the Forestry Code.
Politique Nationale de Préservation, de	The PNPREF is a national plan validated by the Ministry of Waters and Forests (MINEF), focusing on sustainable forestry practices,

Réhabilitation et d'Extension des Forêts

National Policy for Forest Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Expansion (PNPREF – 2018)

responsible forest management, and ecosystem restoration. As the project aims to enhance the protection of remaining forest massifs within classified forests, while enabling investors in forest conservation or tree planting to reap the benefits once the trees reach maturity, it fully aligns with the recommendations set by PNPREF.

Law No.96-766 dated 3 October 1996 on the Environment Code, revised in 2023.

The purpose of this law is to protect and preserve the environment within the framework of sustainable development. Several articles of the Environment Code align with the implementation and management of forests as part of the REDD+ process.

By conducting a participative forest management plan and an in-depth social and environmental impact study, the project has been developed with the objective of addressing all the deforestation factors in the forest management activities at the landscape level, by integrating the surrounding communities and their current uses of the forests in the project design. As primary stakeholders, the surrounding communities are the first actors of the project implementation and the beneficiaries of the project activities.

Decree No.2024-595 dated June 26th 2024, on Environmental and Social Impact Assessments Procedures

The Environmental and Social Impact Study (ESIA) primarily concerns development, infrastructure and forestry projects.

According to the decree, forest management projects over 1,000 ha are subjected to detailed ESIA. The preparation or validation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) is the first step. As per Article 11, paragraph 2 of the ESIA decree, only ANDE (National Environment Agency) is authorized to prepare or define the ToR in consultation with the project developer and the relevant ministry. This is to ensure that the developer prepares an ESIA report in compliance with the regulations and provides a methodological framework that includes the project's key environmental and social issues.

At the submission of this document, ANDE has validated the Terms of Reference. The project will conduct an Environmental Social Impact Assessment over the four classified forests, the Voluntary Natural Reserve and the surrounding communities impacted by the project and will seek ANDE validation.

Decree 2024-658 dated 1st August 2024 on the creation of the Bureau Marché Carbone (BMC)

The Bureau Marché Carbone (BMC) serves as the central entry point for the implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's carbon market framework. It operates under the National Commission for the Fight Against Climate Change (Commission Nationale de Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques), established by Decree No. 2024-594 of 26 June 2024. As part of this national framework, a sustainable financing platform has also been created to monitor climate-related

	funding and support the development of innovative financial instruments. Since its establishment, the BMC has been kept informed of the project's development, and the project has followed the BMC's procedures for national registration.
<i>Plan de convergence pour la gestion et l'utilisation durables des écosystèmes forestiers en Afrique de l'Ouest</i> Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (2013)	The plan aims to conserve forest biodiversity through the management of forest ecosystems in each country, in line with sub-regional standards and guidelines. However, the 2013 Convergence Plan for Sustainable Forest Ecosystem Management has not yet led to concrete actions, dedicated funding, or enforceable measures, and its implementation remains limited. Nevertheless, the project is fully aligned with the plan's objectives of sustainability and ecosystem preservation. While reforestation initiatives are being promoted across the sub-region, effective large-scale implementation has yet to materialize.
Revised version of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (2025)	Following the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (2005) and the Paris Agreement (2015), Côte d'Ivoire has adopted a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), including targets to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as targets to enhance sequestration due to the reforestation of classified forests. Côte d'Ivoire's NDC has been updated in 2025, raising its climate ambition to 33% (unconditional) and 74% (conditional), respectively corresponding to a reduction of 52 million and 116 million tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions from Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) across all sectors, including Forestry and other Land Use (FOLU), by 2035 compared to the business-as-usual scenario.
International Convention on Endangered Flora and Fauna Species (CITES)	The CITES Convention regulates international trade in endangered species of wild animals and plants to ensure it does not threaten their survival. In Côte d'Ivoire, the government applies CITES through laws protecting wildlife, controlling trade in ivory, timber, and other species, and enforcing penalties for illegal trafficking. As a voluntary natural reserve dedicated to the protection of wildlife and habitat of large mammals, the N'zi River Lodge is benefitting directly from the CITES and its surveillance activities are organized in collaboration with the Ivorian Organization of Parks and Reserve (OIPR), the entity in charge of the fight against illegal trafficking in the forests.
Convention to Combat Desertification (1994)	Côte d'Ivoire applies the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) through national policies and local actions aimed at restoring degraded land and preventing

desertification.

The government implements a National Action Programme (NAP) that promotes sustainable land and water management, reforestation, and community-based farming practices. The restoration activities planned by the project will indirectly contribute to the slowing down of desertification in the Transition Zone of Côte d'Ivoire.

2.5.2 Relevant Laws and Regulations Related to Worker's Rights (VCS, 3.18.2; CCB, G3.11)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.3 Human Rights (VCS, 3.19)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.4 Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage (VCS, 3.18, 3.19)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.5 Statutory and Customary Property Rights (VCS, 3.18, 3.19; CCB, G5.1)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.6 Recognition of Property Rights (VCS, 3.7, 3.18, 3.19; CCB, G5.1)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.7 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (VCS, 3.18; CCB, G5.2)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.8 Benefit Sharing Mechanisms (VCS, 3.18, 3.19)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.9 Property Rights Protection (VCS, 3.18, 3.19; CCB, G5.3)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.10 Illegal Activity Identification (VCS, 3.19; CCB, G5.4)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.11 Ongoing Disputes (VCS, 3.18, 3.19; CCB, G5.5)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.12 Approvals (CCB, G5.7)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.13 Double Counting and Participation under Other GHG Programs (VCS, 3.23; CCB G5.9)

2.5.13.1 No Double Issuance

Is the project receiving or seeking credit for reductions and removals from a project activity under another GHG program, or any other form of community, social, or biodiversity unit or credit?

☐ Yes

☒ No

2.5.13.2 Registration in Other GHG Programs

Has the project registered under any other GHG programs?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Is the project active under the other program?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5.13.3 Projects Rejected by Other GHG Programs

Has the project been rejected by any other GHG programs?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5.14 Double Claiming, Other Forms of Credit, and Scope 3 Emissions (VCS, 3.24)

2.5.14.1 No Double Claiming with Emissions Trading Programs or Binding Emission Limits

Are project reductions and removals or project activities also included in an emissions trading program or binding emission limit? See the *VCS Program Definitions* for definitions of emissions trading program and binding emission limit.

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5.14.2 No Double Claiming with Other Forms of Environmental Credit

Has the project activity sought, received, or is planning to receive credit from another GHG-related environmental credit system? See the *VCS Program Definitions* for definition of GHG-related environmental credit system.

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5.14.3 Supply Chain (Scope 3) Emissions

Do the project activities affect the emissions footprint of any product(s) (goods or services) that are part of a supply chain?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes:

Is the project proponent(s) or authorized representative a buyer or seller of the product(s) (goods or services) that are part of a supply chain?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes:

Has the project proponent(s) or authorized representative posted a public statement on their website saying, "Carbon credits may be issued through Verified Carbon Standard project [project ID] for the greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals associated with [project proponent or authorized representative organization name(s)] [name of product(s) whose emissions footprint is changed by the project activities]."?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2.5.15 Additional Information Relevant to the project

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.16 Leakage Management (VCS, 3.11, 3.15)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

2.5.17 Further Information

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development”, and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 Application of Methodology

3.1.1 Title and Reference of Methodology (VCS, 3.1)

Type (methodology, tool or module).	Reference ID, if applicable	Title	Version
Methodology	VM0047	Methodology for Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation	1.1
Module	VMD0054	Module for Estimating Leakage from ARR Activities	1.0
Tool	N/A	AFOLU Non-Permanence Risk Tool	4.2

3.1.2 Applicability of Methodology (VCS, 3.1)

Methodology ID	Applicability condition	Justification of compliance
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VM0047, v.1.1	Project activities increase vegetative cover.	The project will restore severely degraded lands by increasing vegetation cover.
VM0047, v.1.1	Where area-based and census-based approaches are used together, they are applied in non-overlapping areas defined at the project start.	Project employs only the area-based approach.
VM0047, v.1.1	For lands enrolled in a project, the quantification approach is selected at the project start date and used for the entire project crediting period.	Project will employ only the area-based approach for the entire crediting period.
VM0047, v.1.1	The project start date is documented as the earliest of the following: a) The date on which site preparation activities began; b) The land use change date	Project start date is the date in which site preparation started.
VM0047, v.1.1	Where projects take place on organic soils or wetlands, ARR activities are developed using a multiple project activity design, applying this methodology to account for aboveground biomass and using a Wetland Restoration and Conservation methodology.	Project activities do not occur on wetlands or organic soils.
VM0047, v.1.1	Project activities involve direct planting activities (e.g., manual planting, broadcast seeding), indirect activities associated with assisted natural regeneration (e.g., liana cutting, weed management, or barriers that prevent animal grazing), or a combination of direct and indirect activities.	Project activities involve both direct planting (of native seedlings, commercial timber seedlings and multifunctional trees), and additional indirect activities, such as ANR, including weed management and protection from fire and grazing.

VM0047, v.1.1	Project proponents establish a $t = 0$ carbon stock estimate for all significant carbon pools. The method for establishing $t = 0$ estimates depends on the activity that initiates the project start date. Where the project start date is initiated by site preparation (e.g., clearing invasive species), the following conditions must be met: i) Before site preparation, project proponents establish $t = 0$ carbon stock estimates for all significant carbon pools. ii) To ensure accuracy, $t = 0$ estimates are established no more than two years before the start date (e.g., if the start date is 2025, plots must have been established no earlier than 2023). iii) Where plot-based measurements are not established before site preparation, a remote sensing-based estimate found in Section 8.2.1.2 may be used, but only for pre-existing woody biomass.	Carbon stock estimates at $t = 0$ will be established meeting the three conditions set in the methodology.
VM0047, v.1.1	Leakage must be monitored and quantified using VMD0054. It must not be assumed to be <i>de minimis</i>.	VMD0054 will be employed to monitor and quantify leakage.
VM0047, v.1.1	The methodology is not applicable for projects using the area-based approach under the following conditions: 1) The project occurs on lands that have met the definition of managed forest at any point in the 10-year	1) The lands where the project activities will be established do not meet the definition of managed forests, as they are degraded natural forests, savannas and agricultural land

period immediately preceding the project start date.	2) No clearing of pre-existing woody biomass is carried out in the project.
2) Clearing of pre-existing woody biomass involves timber harvesting or results in degradation of native ecosystems.	3) Depending on the technical itinerary and degradation level, the project is expected to plant between 200 and 1,111 trees/ha; therefore, census-based approach is not applicable to the project.
3) The project is planting fewer than 50 planting units per hectare and could use the census-based approach.	

3.1.3 Project Boundary (VCS, 3.12)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.1.4 Baseline Scenario (VCS, 3.13)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.1.5 Additionality (VCS, 3.14)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.1.5.1 Regulatory Surplus (VCS, 3.14)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.1.5.2 Additionality Methods (VCS, 3.14)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.1.6 Methodology Deviations (VCS, 3.20)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.2 Quantification of Estimated GHG Emission Reductions and Removals

3.2.1 Baseline Emissions (VCS, 3.15)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.2.2 Project Emissions (VCS, 3.15)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.2.3 Leakage Emissions (VCS 2.5, 3.2, 3.6, 3.15, 4.3)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.2.4 Estimated GHG Emission Reductions and Carbon Dioxide Removals (VCS, 3.15, 4.1)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Data and Parameters Available at Validation (VCS, 3.16)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.3.2 Data and Parameters Monitored (VCS, 3.16)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.3.3 Monitoring Plan (VCS, 3.16, 3.20)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

3.3.4 Dissemination of Monitoring Plan and Results (VCS, 3.18; CCB, CL4.2)

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

4 COMMUNITY

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

5 BIODIVERSITY

This is a draft project description document aiming to list the project as “under development” and this section has been intentionally omitted according to guidance in Section 3.1.3 of Verra Registration and Issuance Process v4.5.

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APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER DESCRIPTION TABLE

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APPENDIX 2: PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND THEORY OF CHANGE TABLE

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APPENDIX 3: PROJECT RISKS TABLE

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