ANNEX XVI: ESMS-enhanced ROAM Process Framework

I. Rationale for the ESMS-enhanced ROAM Process Framework

The overall objective of the project is to support the implementation and scaling up of Forest Landscape Restoration in Cameroon to facilitate biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, climate resilience and improved community livelihoods. The project is organized in the following main components each of which is concretized in form of an expected outcome:

Component - Outcome 1: Policy Development and Integration - Increased Policy commitment and improved legislation and regulatory frameworks supporting forest landscape restoration, sustainable land and forest management;
Component - Outcome 2: Implementation of Restoration Programs and Complementary Initiatives - Pilot and assess the effectiveness of restoration using Bambusa spp and other indigenous NTFP and ensure the development of value chains to support biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and GHG emissions reduction;
Component - Outcome 3: Institutions, Finance and Upscaling - Strengthened institutional capacities and financing arrangements in place for large-scale Restoration, Sustainable Forest and Land Management in Cameroon; and
Component / Outcome 4: Knowledge, Partnerships, Project Monitoring and Assessment - Knowledge of best practices of restoration and value-chain development is generated and shared among key national and external audiences

Under *Outcome 1* the project aims at increasing policy commitment and improving legislation and regulatory frameworks in support of forest landscape restoration, sustainable land and forest management. The main activity is carrying out sub national Restoration Opportunity Assessments (ROAM). The sub national ROAM process will be conducted at each of the four identified priority sites and will deliver a) a shortlist of the most relevant and feasible restoration intervention types across the assessment area; b) identified priority areas for restoration; c) quantified costs and benefits of each intervention type; d) estimated values of additional carbon sequestered by these intervention types; e) a diagnostic of the presence of key success factors and identification of strategies to address major policy, legal and institutional bottlenecks; and f) an analysis of the finance and resourcing options for restoration in the assessment area.

Concrete field activities are implemented primarily under *Outcome 2*. Restoration strategies will be piloted by providing technical and logistical support for restoration activities in each of the four selected sites – in the degraded peripheral zones of Waza National Park, the Bakossi segment of the Bakossi-Bayang Mbo Landscape, in degraded forest margins in the Mbalmayo Cluster and in mangrove areas near Douala-Edea. The component includes forest restoration activities such as the development of germplasm collection, production of sourcing manuals, training on propagation and cultivation techniques and the establishment of nurseries. But it also includes activities for promoting livelihood diversification opportunities associated with processing and market development of selected forest resources (bamboo or other species and NTFPs), the development of incentive mechanisms as well as activities around the sustainable production of bamboo charcoal. However, the concrete value chain activities and in particular which species and NTFPs to focus on will only be decided as part of and/or following the sub national ROAM planning process defining each site's concrete restoration strategy. The strength of this approach is that the restoration strategies are locally designed together with relevant stakeholders and developed through a combination of advanced ecological technical expertise, situation analysis and understanding of local interests (across scales and sectors).

Under *Outcome 3* the project will strengthen the institutional capacities and financing arrangements for large-scale restoration, sustainable forest and land management in Cameroon. And *Outcome 4* is about generating and sharing knowledge of best practices of restoration and value-chain development.

Following the provisions of IUCN's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) the project has been screened on environmental and social risks. The screening resulted in the

classification of the project as a moderate risk Project due to a limited number of social risks but most importantly due to the fact that concrete restoration activities and associated livelihood strategies will only be decided during Project implementation. Because the identified social risks are overall considered minor and the fact that in this Project risks would be exclusively associated with the FLR interventions under outcome 2 - defined through the ROAM planning process - motivated the decision to enhance the methodological guidance of the ROAM planning process by incorporating key principles and provisions of the ESMS. Such an ESMS-enhanced ROAM Process Framework is considered equivalent to an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which would usually be required in circumstances where project activities will only be defined during project implementation.

The purpose of this document is to delineate the ESMS-enhanced ROAM process by

- describing key ESMS requirements to be adhered to when implementing the ROAM process in the context of the landscape restoration project in Cameroon and
- establishing a light ESMS review and management procedures for checking risks of the FLR plans for each project site.

II. ESMS enhancements of the ROAM Process

This chapter describes enhancements of the ROAM methodology in order to ensure full compliance with the ESMS principles and provisions. The sub national ROAM planning process will involve five distinct steps as described in the project document. The ESMS enhancement of each of the distinct steps is delineated below.

Step 1 – Stakeholder engagement

In this step it will be critical to ensure an inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy for the local level and that appropriate participants are selected and invited for the local level workshops and other consultation events. The stakeholder analysis conducted during the project design phase is a good start but needs to be disaggregated to provide an appropriate overview of all relevant stakeholders and their respective interest, needs and concerns in each of the four sites selected for field interventions. The stakeholder analysis will be instrumental not only for deciding who to invite for the ROAM planning events but also for pronouncing the wider stakeholder engagement strategy in each site. In this step it will also be essential to map the location of settlements of indigenous communities as well as activities in relation to the project area (including sites and resources of cultural and religious significance).

Stakeholder engagement should aim at a balanced ratio of men and women as well as a balanced representation of groups in terms of other criteria (e.g. indigenous/ethnic groups, different age, status/class, etc.). The engagement strategy should respect IUCN policy reflected in the *ESMS Principle on Stakeholder Engagement* and the *Principle of Protecting the Needs of Vulnerable Peoples* as well as provisions of the *Standard on Indigenous People*. As such it will be ensured that not only stakeholder groups are identified that actively articulate their stake in forest restoration, but also (sub)-groups whose interests and livelihoods might be impacted (positively or negatively) by forest restoration approaches promoted by the project and whose ability to articulate their needs and interests is less pronounced and/or might generally have less access, power and influence on land use decisions processes. Engaging these groups in the project will not only ensure that their needs, rights and concern are appropriately taken into consideration but their engagement is also expected to contribute to their empowerment.

The project team will design the ROAM workshops and other consultation events in a culturally appropriate, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner, free of external manipulation, intimidation or coercion. Information relevant to stakeholders will be shared in a timely fashion in appropriate language and channels of communication. In village meetings, pro-active involvement of stakeholders will be institutionalized by a priori orientation on what the meeting is about. The meeting facilitators ensure that time and location are suitable for all stakeholder groups, in particular for indigenous groups, women and elderly. Wherever sensible the team will set-up separate meetings for

indigenous communities and/or women in order to ensure appropriate levels of participation in the discussion or to accommodate schedules.

It is good practice to document the meetings with minutes describing topics discussed, concerns raised and potential disagreement, together with names/occupation of participants (but participants are not obligated to provide names) and photography or video, where culturally appropriate. Stakeholder consultation will also include other forms of engagement such as interviews with stakeholder or stakeholder groups, results of which should also to be documented.

Step 2 – Clarifying use rights

Before any restoration strategy can be contemplated, it is important to clarify the relevant tenure situation and use rights disaggregated by relevant groups. This will require consultation with local communities in the respective project sites to ensure a good understanding about the actual implementation of land rights. The involvement of relevant government departments is also important in order to ensure that current policies and legal frameworks related to forest management as well as potential reforms and changes are appropriately taken into account.

While recognizing statutory rights it is critical that also customary rights are well understood. The ESMS emphasizes the importance of respecting customary rights but it is also important to recognize potentially ambiguous issues to get the FLR strategy right. As example, customary rights such as the "right of first occupancy" practiced in the humid forest zones in unclassified forests and woodlands might act as barriers to restoration activities as planting of trees might be viewed as an attempt to usurp the land and could constrain the engagement of women and indigenous groups in the restoration strategy.

Through the process of clarifying land rights and consulting with communities grievances related to land issues may be identified, recognized and where possible managed. This relates in particular to indigenous communities as they might have experienced negative impacts from land-use decisions and forest conservation practices including resettlement, eviction and violations of rights.

Step 3 – Undertaking a comprehensive, integrated situation analysis

The purpose of this step is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the bio-physical and socio-economic conditions of each of the four sites to provide the foundation for the decision about the respective restoration strategy and concrete project activities.

The situation analysis should be conducted with multi-stakeholder participation to co-develop a shared understanding and will cover biophysical topics such as state and trend of natural resources (forests, water, agriculture, soil, meadows, fishery etc.) as well as drivers and pressures of environmental change, current flow and trend of ecosystem services (timber, fuelwood, fodder, NTFPs, water, climate regulation, natural hazard, and disease regulation etc.). The latter will segue into the analysis of costs and benefits of ecosystem services as well of these needs for specific services/resources, disaggregated by social groups where relevant and possible (e.g. gender, age and wealth-disaggregated information). The various and potentially competing needs of stakeholders for different ecosystem services from the landscape will be identified, what deficits they suffer, and what opportunities there are to remedy these through FLR - disaggregated by relevant social groups.
It will be critical to determine dependencies on ecosystem services and forest resources of vulnerable members of the community, including ethnic minorities, people who are landless or displaced, elderly or disabled, children and groups that are impoverished, marginalised or discriminated against.

The situation analysis should also provide for a comprehensive understanding about ethnic groups who inhabit or use the project's area of influence, specify their geographic location and describe language and levels of literacy, use of land, land-use practices and means of livelihood. It needs to be determined who of these groups qualify as "indigenous peoples" according to IUCN definition and/or are recognized as such by national legislation. The situation analysis should further suggest measures for ensuring cultural appropriateness of the FLR interventions. Some indigenous groups have already tentatively been pre-identified (Baka, Bakola or Bagyéli, Bedzang and Mbororo), but

their presence in the project sites need to be confirmed, including by mapping the precise locations of their settlements as well as areas of economic or cultural activities.

Project sites should also be analysed on relevant gender differences, e.g. in terms gender specific livelihood strategies, needs and barriers faced by different genders, dependency on ecosystem services and forest products and their current role in forest management. This will allow identifying the potential need for gender differential treatment when designing FLR interventions in order to address a bias or disadvantage due to gender roles or norms. This should also serve to identify opportunities for empowering women and improving gender equality such as promoting women's participation in institutions governing forest management or in restoration activities implemented by the project; the identification of skills and knowledge that could be tapped into as part of the livelihood strategies might another strategy to empower women.

Step 4 – Co-develop FLR plans

The social baseline data gathered as part of the situation analysis will be instrumental for the development of the FLR plans and the livelihood strategies and for ensuring that rights and livelihood context of the different social groups are respected, negative impacts are avoided and social benefits sought wherever possible and in line with the conservation objective. The development of the FLR plans is designed as a participatory process and by following the provision described under step 1 inclusiveness of this process will be ensured.

It is unavoidable that participation in the planning workshops might often be limited to the legitimate representatives elected by the communities at each project site. It is therefore essential that disclosure meetings will be organized at the community level to present the results of the workshops to a wider audience to inform them on the FLR plans and ensure their buy-in as well as feed-back on potential risks. Good practice rules for organizing and documenting community meetings are already described under steps 1.

Step 5 – Implement FLR plan, Review, revise and adapt

During implementation of the FLR plans and the livelihood strategies it will be important that the project team and its partners establish and maintain close relationship with the respective local communities and stakeholders in order to ensure ongoing social acceptance of FLR within the local community. Local stakeholders will be actively engaged in monitoring the implementation of the agreed FLR plans. Monitoring should also provide for checking on new environmental and social risks that might emerge during project implementation.

A project-level grievance mechanism will be established following the guidance provided by the generic IUCN ESMS Grievance Mechanism[1]. This generic mechanism will need to be adapted to reflect local customs and institutions; it will be described in the local language and communicated and disseminated in a culturally appropriate way to all relevant stakeholders, women and men, in the project's area of influence at the beginning of project implementation. To minimise grievances it will be essential that the project team and implementing partners are highly attuned to community concerns and provide for regular consultation during implementation.

III. ESMS review and risk management procedure

1. Screening for potential environmental and social risks

A simplified ESMS procedure has been established to ensure that the FLR plans selected during the local level workshops as well as identified livelihood strategies are screened for potential environmental and social risks. The screening of the identified FLR plans is best done during step four of the ROAM process ("Co-develop FLR plans"). It should be undertaken as early as possible - when information on the FLR plans' individual interventions is available in sufficient detail (e.g. geographical location, activities etc.).

[1] Available on IUCN website at www.iucn.org/esms

The screening step will be supported by a questionnaire (ESMS questionnaire) that is designed to tease out risk issues that could give rise to potential negative impacts. It is structured in three sections.

In its **first section** the ESMS Questionnaire analyses impact issues related to the four ESMS standards:

- Standard on Involuntary Resettlement and Access Restrictions;
- Standard on Indigenous Peoples;
- Standard on Cultural Heritage;
- Standard on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources.

The **second section** of the ESMS Questionnaire focusses on other environmental or social impacts (beyond the four ESMS Standards) that might be caused by the FLR interventions, the proposed policies and the sustainable development plan. It looks at risks such as

- health and safety issues for local communities, project staff and other individuals involved in project implementation (e.g. human-wildlife conflicts, respiratory health issues, exposure to hazardous materials),
- economic, social and cultural risks for women (or other gender groups) including the risk of inadvertently perpetuating or aggravating inequalities between women and men,
- inter-community impacts (e.g. disturbances to patterns of social relations and social cohesion, project benefits leading to discrimination or marginalization of certain groups),
- risks of causing conflicts between communities,
- environmental impacts not covered by the Standard on Biodiversity (e.g. pollution, hazardous waste and generation of significant quantities of GHG emissions).

One aspect to be reviewed in more detail is the risk of health impacts from charcoal production, e.g. the risk of air emissions (in particular charcoal dust) causing respiratory illnesses of people exposed to the fumes. The proposal refers to training of five pilot local communities on bamboo charcoal production, but does not specify whether the project will provide clean technology (e.g. equipment) that would avoid the emission of charcoal dust.

In the **third section** the ESMS Questionnaire addresses risks of the proposed interventions inadvertently increasing the vulnerability of ecosystem and people in the context of climate change.

The results of the screening of the FLR plans and the livelihood strategies for each of the pilot sites will be documented in form of screening reports according to the provided IUCN template.

2. Managing environmental and social risks

If the ESMS screening identifies environmental or social risks of proposed FLR interventions these will be addressed by

- analysing the probability and significance of the identified risks,
- identifying alternative approaches in order to avoid risks and/or
- developing culturally appropriate and agreed measures for mitigating the risks.

These steps will require additional consultations with the affected groups and other concerned stakeholders which should be initiated as early as possible. Where risks of FLR interventions are identified the consultations include a discussion about alternative project design, trade-offs and mitigation measures. Depending on the nature of the risk this step might also require further environmental or social impact assessments (ESIA) and the development of mitigation measures to assist people affected by project activities in their efforts to improve or restore their livelihoods; the latter need to be documented in form of an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

3. Relevant norms of ESMS Standards

The sections below provide guidance on the application of the ESMS Standards.

Standard on Involuntary Resettlement and Access Restrictions

The Standard applies to projects where the conservation objectives require (1) resettlement of communities or (2) restricting peoples' access to areas and/or the use of natural resources with impact on the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits that people accrue from these resources or areas. The access restriction component of the Standard is triggered by projects that involve

- establishing use restrictions under formal frameworks (e.g. legal framework for protected area),
- strengthening enforcement of existing resource restrictions and/or
- designing or redesigning protected area boundaries.

The Standard also covers activities that involve involuntary land acquisition from a community or individual land owners for the purpose of infrastructure development or for the creation of buffer zones around a high biodiversity area.

The Standard does not apply to projects that support local communities in establishing resource use regimes (including access or use restrictions) on a voluntary basis, e.g. for the purpose of sustaining long-term use of resources to which they have legitimate rights. However, the project needs to ensure that these regimes do not put members of the community into a vulnerable position and that the community decision-making process is adequate and reflects voluntary, informed consensus; and if negative impacts on vulnerable groups are expected, that appropriate measures have been put in place to mitigate them.

If a project supports voluntary co-management agreements between relevant agencies and the community or other potentially affected stakeholders such as herders using rangeland within the project's area of influence, a process of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) must be established. This process should start with the identification of legitimate representatives of the community and be accomplished through a series of at least 4 well-documented meetings conducted in good faith (an introductory meeting, a consultation meeting, and meeting to present the draft of an agreement, and a meeting to sign the agreement). These meetings should be combined with an analysis of social impacts to better comprehend potential impacts and their significance. If significant social impacts cannot be avoided by adjustments of project design and/or if the consultation process does not provide for agreement on mitigation measures, the Standard is triggered and the respective provisions need to be followed.

Gender balanced representation of the affected group(s) in these consultations is desirable, although the project should take the community's culture and traditions appropriately into account. An expert on gender, familiar with the local context should be able to advice on the right ways to ensure gender-responsive risk management strategy.

Standard on Indigenous Peoples

Projects that operate on land or territory of indigenous peoples require the analysis of the specific socio-economic and cultural conditions of these groups, their rights and needs. The presence of indigenous peoples has been confirmed at the scale of the larger regions, but not at the actual intervention site as these and the interventions itself will only be known during the ROAM process. Once the sites have been narrowed down, the presence of indigenous communities and their socio-economic situation should be inquired; where indigenous communities are confirmed, they should be provided the opportunity to join the planning process. It will be essential that the situation analysis takes their interests, concerns and needs for ecosystem services appropriately into account and that the involvement of these groups is done in a culturally sensitive manner. This might require specific arrangements (e.g. to provide for inclusion of groups with special needs or seasonal availability) or capacity building measures.

Legitimate representatives of the indigenous groups need to be involved in the design of relevant components of the restoration intervention and their consent sought (following FPIC) to activities that might affect their rights, resources or livelihoods. If negative impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation measures need to be developed and agreed with the respective groups; the measures should be either incorporated in the ESMP or, if measures are substantial, articulated in form of a separate Indigenous Peoples Plan.

FPIC from relevant rights holders is also required in case the project

- involves commercial development of resources from land or territories claimed by indigenous peoples
- seeks to use traditional knowledge or
- promotes the generation of social or economic benefits from cultural sites or resources.

It also needs to be ensured that the interventions respect indigenous people's social and cultural identity, traditions and institutions, including their cultural and spiritual values and perspectives on the environment. Wherever relevant and possible, the project should seek opportunities for providing culturally adequate and gender inclusive benefits to indigenous groups. It is further important to take seasonal non-availability of pastoralist groups into account (e.g. Mbororo) and allow for equitable participation of all communities.

Standard on Cultural Heritage

The Standard applies to projects that could adversely affect peoples' cultural heritage defined as tangible or intangible, movable or immovable cultural resources or natural features of historical, cultural, spiritual or symbolic value.

The Standard is triggered for projects that involve:

- risks of potentially damaging cultural resources when undertaking small scale construction;
- the need of restricting access to cultural resources or sites;
- the development of social or economic benefits from cultural heritage (including traditional knowledge and forms of cultural expressions) in order to ensure equitable sharing of benefits.

Standard on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The situation analysis will provide for extensive analysis and as such is expected to achieve a good understanding of the state and trend of natural resources, drivers and pressures of environmental change, current flow of ecosystem services. The identification of FLR interventions will be carried out in iterative steps where the impacts (positives and also potential negatives ones) on all components of biodiversity are assessed before agreeing on interventions. The FLR interventions in each site should nevertheless be screened on Standard-related impact issues as this might hint to issues potentially overlooked in preceding analytical steps.

Two aspects referred to in the project's Screening Report deserve particular attention. There is a possibility that FLR interventions might include the use of certain species that are either not native to Cameroon (but introduced in the country already decades ago) or are not native to the respective pilot sites (but indigenous to other regions). To mitigate against the risk of these species developing invasive characteristics the project will screen any species to be introduced from beyond its current range for the potential to become invasive (e.g. due to its dispersal mechanism or growth habits) and avoid those species that are likely to be invasive.

Second, when promoting the use of natural resources such as NTFP it will be critical to ensure that this is done in a sustainable way, e.g. by providing appropriate guidelines and mechanism for verifying the sustainability of harvest rates and by ensuring their adherence (during the life of the project and beyond, to the extent possible).

IV. Institutional Arrangements for ESMS

The institutional arrangements for implementing the ESMS review and management procedures are the following:

- High-level oversight will be provided by the Implementing Agency;
- The National Project Management Unit led by the national Project Coordinator will be responsible for implementing the ESMS review steps and risk management procedures, including the drafting of screening reports and ensure implementation of mitigation measures established in the ESMP (if needed); he will also provide brief annual reports demonstrating compliance with the ESMS procedures.
- Technical staff and consultants will provide technical expertise on ESMS-relevant topics on request of the Project Coordinator and/or support him in ESMS-specific stakeholder consultation activities.
- Environmental or social impact assessments (ESIA), where needed, will be carried out through consultancies assignments.
- ESMS Training is provided for all project staff including relevant governmental and non-governmental project partners during the inception phase of the project.

V. Monitoring of ESMP progress and ESMS risks

Monitoring the progress in implementing the mitigation measures presented in the ESMP will be integral part of the project's monitoring system.

ESMS monitoring also involves tracking the measures' effectiveness in mitigating the identified environmental and social risks. If FLR plans require the establishment of new restrictions on the use of forest resources or the enforcement of existing restrictions, this will require the development of dedicated indictors at village level to monitor livelihood impacts.

Baseline information on socio-economic conditions of the villages and households will be available through the situation analysis. Depending on the nature of identified social impacts, these baseline data can be used as the basis for designing measures to assist people affected by project activities in their efforts to improve or restore their livelihoods. Follow-up assessments, conducted at the mid-term review and the close of project, will update these data for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of mitigation strategy.