

Evaluation of the ICRC's ECOSEC PROGRAMME IN CAMEROON (2019-2024)

Evaluation Report Version Final

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Acronyms

AFD	Agence française de développement
CRC	Cameroon Red Cross Society
DG	Director General
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
EAG	Evaluation Advisory Group
Ecosec	Economic Security
EM	Evaluation matrix
EoM	End of mission
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation Report
ET	Evaluation team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCS	Food consumption Score
FGD	Focus group discussion
HoD	Head of Delegation
HoSD	Head of sub-delegation
HQ	Headquarters
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HR	Human Resources
ICRC	the International Committee of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IR	Inception report
KII	Key informant interview
KSF	Key Success Factor
KOU	Kousseri
LM	Logic Model
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MINDADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINEPIA	Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries
MINSANTE	Ministry of Health
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups

NWSW	North West and South West regions of Cameroon
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PHM	Post-Harvest Monitoring
PFR	Planning for results
QA	Quality assurance
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index rCSI
RD	Regional Director
SC	Steering Committee
SSF	State Security Forces
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water and Sanitation
YAO	Yaounde

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Executive Summary

How well was the programme designed to meet the economic security needs of conflict-affected communities? How did the programme ensure it stayed relevant, and adapt as needed?

The evaluation found that the objectives of the EcoSec programme are closely aligned with the needs of targeted populations. This is true even as these needs vary sharply, depending on the region covered. The scale of needs far exceeds the capacity of the programme, which makes prioritisation especially critical.

Needs assessments are consistently and rigorously conducted, and there is a strong rationale for supporting the programme's approach to prioritising affected groups. However, the application of this rationale is challenging, as criteria for beneficiary selection are often too broadly formulated. This makes it difficult to select beneficiary groups whose sizes are in line with the more modest targets set after the programme's downsizing (started in 2022.) To ensure that beneficiary selection is consistent and equitable, selection criteria should be reviewed with a view to providing a clear basis for tighter selection. This process is underway, with the revision of SOPs for beneficiary selection; nonetheless, it remains to be completed, with the piloting of new criteria across the programme, and their adjustment if needed.

Programme cycle management is applied to the EcoSec programme in a context-appropriate manner. It has provided a solid basis for managing operational partnerships with government and other programme stakeholders.

Faced with budget cuts that culminated in a 50% reduction in programme funding in 2023, the EcoSec team has opted to prioritize emergency assistance related to forced displacement and resilience-building activities over repeated emergency interventions targeting chronic food insecurity. This strategic decision was the right one for two reasons. First, the livestock and agricultural components of the programme yield substantive benefits for affected populations. Notably, the sustainability of these benefits is significantly greater than those of emergency assistance. Second, the cost of these resilience components, relative to emergency assistance, is lower. It has therefore enabled the EcoSec programme to maintain relatively high beneficiary numbers, despite the budget cuts.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is deeply engrained in EcoSec programme practice. Close community-level consultations take place both during needs assessments and in subsequent monitoring activities. However, the limited capacity of community-based committees is an impediment to AAP, as they do not serve as relays for the processing of grievances. As a result, some grievances remain unaddressed. Community members often have to address their grievances directly to the EcoSec staff to have them resolved, adding to the workload of the under-staffed EcoSec team.

A strong protection-driven perspective informs the EcoSec programme, as reflected by the fact that one of its PfR General Objectives (GOs) is geared to a Protection outcome. More generally, the programme is designed to support a multidisciplinary Protection impact. Although conflict sensitivity is not formally applied, the programme does successfully adhere to the principle of do-no-harm, which it upholds by other means linked to traditional ICRC practice.

Clear processes are in place to ensure equity in prioritization and beneficiary selection, which are designed to rely heavily on broad-based participatory processes. However, there are significant challenges to operationalising these processes, given that the criteria applied for beneficiary selection often do not enable prioritisation to the extent required. Another challenge that equitable and inclusive beneficiary selection often cannot fully rely on community-based Targeting and Accountability Committees, whose capacities are limited.

How successful were the interventions –and the implied programme processes—in enabling the objectives of the programmes to be met? What were the enabling and hindering factors (internal and external) that affected the delivery of interventions and the attainment of outcomes?

Training is a central feature of the EcoSec programme and has been key to enabling intended outcomes to be met. Training has been dispensed to a broad and varied range of stakeholders, from recipient households and communities to government and Red Cross partners.

Where training was delivered directly to affected households, it served to provide substantive support to resilience and income-generation. On the other hand, training aimed at developing the institutional capacity of partners did not always have the intended effect, due in part to the challenge of retaining trained staff, the lack of incentives, or the inability of training alone to resolve deep-rooted systemic obstacles to institutional performance.

Regarding EcoSec staff, a widely shared perception among interviewees was that skills and knowledge available needed to be complemented with an increase in HR resources.

Some planning and delivery delays occurred during the implementation of programme. These delays were often caused by external factors, such as deteriorating access conditions caused by conflict or adverse weather. In several cases, however, delays were caused by lengthy internal procedures, which became more demanding on departments following the financial crisis of 2023.

Monitoring for the EcoSec programme has been widely and consistently carried out to high standards. By necessity, the standards attained have been resource intensive.

In their planning and delivery, are the distinct sector components of the programme consistent and mutually reinforcing?

The three main pillars of the EcoSec programme form a coherent range of activities. This is true even as these activities are often conducted independently of each other, and do not always contribute to the same geographically circumscribed outcomes. Given the strong diversity of environments in which it operates, the ability of the programme to achieve a broad range of differentiated outcomes is an asset, as it enables the programme to be adaptive and context appropriate.

As with the programme as a whole, its emergency pillar is composed of a coherent bundle of activities that can be carried out independently of each other. This adds to the programme's adaptiveness to diverse and fluid environments.

The EcoSec programme contributes to protection results at both the level of protection activities, and at the more strategic level of Protection impact pursued in a multidisciplinary perspective.

While the data and evidence are limited, they suggest that the multidisciplinary approach adopted in the EcoSec programme adds significantly to the administrative burden which staff must reckon with. There was a sense among interviewees that multidisciplinary assessments were heavily focused on field work, when they should instead focus on analysis. While some staff also felt that a multidisciplinary outlook was sometimes imposed on them with few clear benefits, most interviewees expressed support for it in principle and acknowledged that it was still a work in progress.

How well does the programme complement the actions of other actors? How well does it contribute to developing the capacity of partners, to support resilience and the sustainability of programme results?

Programme partnerships and cooperation have measurably contributed to building local capacity. However, questions remain about the overall contribution of this capacity to the

broader sustainability of partners, and their ability to eventually receive ownership of the programme.

Synergies with other departments in ICRC operations in Cameroon are strong, but could be further improved through closer coordination and joint planning. There are indications of synergies achieved with external partners, although further evidence would be required to confirm this conclusively.

At community level, ownership of the EcoSec programme depends heavily on the capacity of local committees (and other local actors) to take active part in the programme, and to articulate a vision for it. In the Far North, community ownerships are generally more pronounced, thanks to the stronger presence of the CRC and “Relais communautaires” at the local level. In NWSW, where no such presence exists in a meaningful way, community ownership is markedly weaker, and continues to require sustained ICRC attention.

How well has the programme achieved the desired outcomes, and thereby contributed to improving the economic security and resilience of affected populations? (Effectiveness, Impact)

In both the Far North and NWSW, there is strong evidence that the EcoSec programme has markedly and meaningfully improved conditions for the target population.

The EcoSec programme has taken clear and deliberate measures to target women and girls and to empower them, notably through its Resilience pillar. In KIIs and FGDs, as well as through PDM exercises, women who have been supported by the programme have generally expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the assistance provided.

Through its agricultural and livestock support interventions, as well as through cash transfers geared to income-generation among targeted households, the EcoSec programme has contributed to the resilience of affected populations by allowing them to protect and develop their economic assets in highly adverse conditions.

The evaluation found no evidence of unforeseen negative effects caused by the programme. Likewise, all positive effects appear to have been documented; few such effects remain unforeseen at this stage. A number of positive outcomes can be assumed regarding the use of capacities developed for the programme. However, they remain to be verified.

Key Recommendations *(see Section 6 for full version)*

- **Consolidation.** If further downsizing is required, maintain a core capacity for emergency assistance, but prioritise community-based Resilience as the programme’s main component, with a particular focus on the protection and recovery of household economic assets in priority zones affected by conflict.
- **Community participation and ownership.** Consider the greater participation of communities in the programme as a strategic priority.
- **Beneficiary selection.** In NWSW especially, review and tighten the beneficiary selection criteria used for the programme, with the aim of enabling the consistent, equitable and needs-based selection of smaller caseloads. Across the EcoSec programme, continue to be attentive to the vulnerabilities of women and girls, and opportunities for their economic empowerment.
- **Community messaging.** In consultation with other departments, develop clear messages aimed at beneficiary communities and local stakeholders, providing clarity on the scale, nature and timing of any intended EcoSec programme scale down.
- **Workflow streamlining.** Given under-staffing in the EcoSec team, aim to alleviate the workload of EcoSec staff by exploring possibilities to integrate needs assessment and monitoring, drawing on monitoring data for needs assessments where possible.

- **Operational planning.** To minimise the risk of delays in implementation, improve the screening of suppliers to ensure that orders can be fulfilled in the timeframes and to the standards required.
- **Multidisciplinary approach.** As much as possible, enable a multidisciplinary perspective through informal and ongoing exchanges between Ecosec and other relevant Departments, at Sub-delegation level, rather than through formal processes and procedures. Mobilise HoSD leadership to drive this, and promote a culture of informal exchanges between the relevant departments, including EcoSec.

1 Introduction

1. The evaluation was conducted between December 2024 and June 2025. The two-person evaluation team (ET) travelled to Cameroon in two separate country visits between 16/02 and 15/03 2025. The timeline and key deliverables of the evaluation are provided in Annex 1.

1.1 Evaluation Purpose & Audience

2. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify programme's effectiveness and the continued relevance of EcoSec interventions implemented in Cameroon over the past five years. No independent external evaluation has yet been conducted of the programme. The need for an evaluation is all the more critical as since 2022, the EcoSec budget has been reduced by 50 percent, even as humanitarian needs have continued to increase. These cuts were particularly pronounced in 2023 in the wake of the financial crisis which the ICRC underwent at that time.¹

3. Faced with these challenges, the delegation since 2021 has sought to rationalise available resources and to focus on livelihoods interventions aimed at building resilience. A key purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether decisions underpinning this rationalisation are sound, and whether effectiveness has been maintained in the delivery of outcomes. Another critical purpose of the evaluation related to these reduced resources is to support a better understanding of the programme's performance and effectiveness in strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable populations.

4. The timing of the evaluation is informed by the ICRC's programme management cycle, in which planning for any given year begins in June of the preceding year.

5. Findings and recommendations from this evaluation will be used to inform the delegation's strategy in Cameroon, and how EcoSec interventions can be adapted/adjusted to achieve better results for target populations affected by conflict and crisis

6. The audience for the evaluation is composed of ICRC staff in Cameroon and at Geneva Headquarters, as well as external partners including government actors and the Cameroon Red Cross Society. Table 1 below provides an overview of the evaluation's primary (internal) and secondary (external) stakeholders.

1.2 Evaluation Objectives

7. The three main objectives of the evaluation as formulated in the ToR are listed below. These objectives provide the basis for a set of questions which form the evaluation's framework, and will serve to guide and structure data collection and analysis.

- **Objective 1 – (Effectiveness):** To determine the extent to which EcoSec program interventions have contributed to the strengthening of the economic security and resilience of affected people.
- **Objective 2 – (Effectiveness):** To draw lessons learnt on the applicability of multidisciplinary approaches in both emergency response and economic resilience interventions.
- **Objective 3 – (Relevance):** To propose ways in which the EcoSec interventions can have relevance going forward for people affected by conflict, within the resources available, and in line with the new institutional strategy (2024-2027) with a focus on protection outcomes.

8. The evaluation does not involve specific assessments of human rights and gender equality, although these themes have been considered within a broader Protection perspective. Specific sub-questions are included within the evaluation framework to assess these themes.

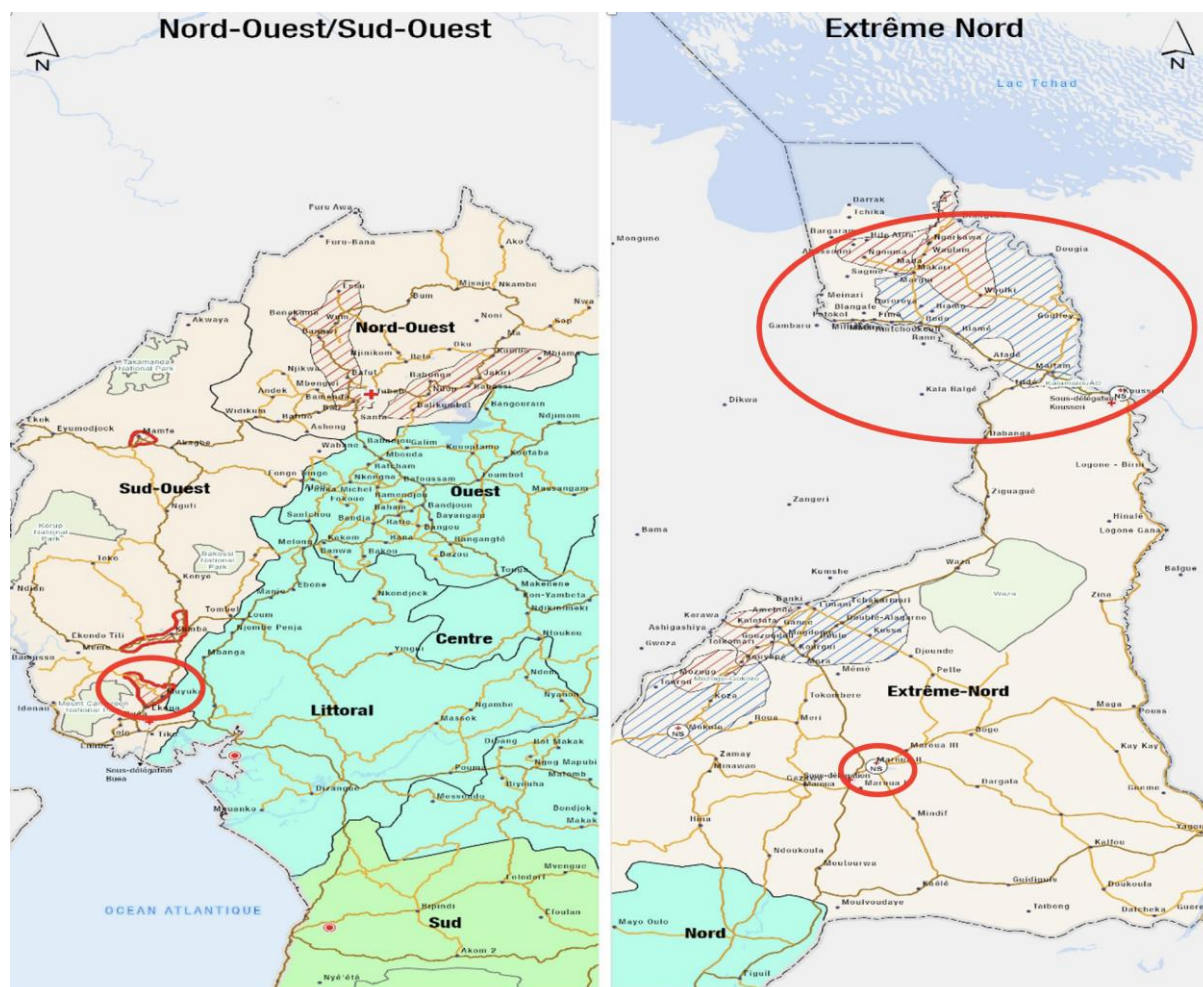
1.3 Context of the intervention

9. The internal situation in Cameroon continues to be marked by internal crises. Conflict in the Far North and in the Northwest and Southwest regions (NWSW) of the country began in 2014 and 2016 respectively, and is still ongoing. It has adversely affected these regions and Cameroon as a whole. In the regions affected by armed violence, hostilities between Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) and State

¹ ICRC, Food Insecurity Sensecheck_Cameroon (Internal), 20 March 2024.

Security Forces (SSF), as well as between competing NSAG factions, has triggered large-scale forced displacements. These displacements have occurred within the regions affected, and to other areas of Cameroon², notably the urban centres of Mbouda, Foumban, Bafoussam, Douala and Yaoundé.

Map 1. Coverage of EcoSec programme: Red striped areas are areas of priority, blue striped areas are areas of interest. Circled areas are those visited for the evaluation.



10. **Economic context:** Cameroon remains a lower middle-income country, although it is richly endowed with immense mineral, hydropower and tourism potential³. The country has experienced moderate economic growth in recent years, although this growth is often concentrated in urban areas and does not benefit all regions and segments of the population equally. Despite economic growth, poverty remains a major challenge in Cameroon. Approximately 62% of the labour force is in the agricultural sector (80 per cent of whom are women), 9% in the industrial sector and 29% in services. Key challenges include lack of quality infrastructure and difficulties in accessing factors of production - including credit, adequate human resources and affordable energy⁴. The high inflation rate is largely driven by food price inflation which is expected to reach 10% in 2022. Cameroon's economy is characterised by a relatively low unemployment rate and the preponderance of the informal economy.

² The UNHCR report (2023) reported that as of August 2023, the crisis had displaced almost 670,000 people internally within Cameroon and across the borders to Nigeria. The majority of the 358,000 IDPs in the North-West and South-West regions displaced in 2021 or before, while per cent fled in 2023, with almost 60,000 temporary displacements recorded from January to September in 2023.

³ UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (2020 - 2025).

⁴ Cameroon Country Climate and Development Report, World Bank Group, 2022.

Unemployment in the formal workforce stands at 3.5%⁵. The youth unemployment rate is moderate at 6%, indicating a lack of opportunities to find work⁶.

11. Food, nutrition and agriculture: Cameroon continues to face challenges of acute and chronic food and nutrition insecurity. In the 2022 Global Hunger Index, Cameroon ranks 80th out of the 121 countries. With a score of 18.9, Cameroon has a level of hunger that is moderate overall; however, there are sharp regional disparities. Food insecurity is very high in the conflict-affected regions, particularly in the Far North, Northwest and Southwest regions⁷. Of the 3.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, 2.5 million are affected by food insecurity; 52% are women and 56% are children⁸.

12. In terms of resilience and livelihoods in conflict-affected regions, increasing insecurity including inter-communal violence, as well as frequent exposure to climate shocks such as floods and droughts, impact production and affect the food systems, worsening food insecurity. The continued use of traditional agricultural practices, as well as high post-harvest losses, fragmented markets, and the now limited availability of affordable fertiliser from Ukraine, also affect productivity, especially among the smallholder farmers.

13. Health and nutrition: In Cameroon, the share of the state budget allocated to health has been fluctuating between 5.01% and 3.89% between 2015 and 2020. This is much lower than the 15% recommended by the Abuja Declaration adopted by African states in 2001.

14. About 1.7 million people are in need of medical assistance at any time, of whom 52% are women and 59% are children⁹. According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is 2.7% among adults aged 15-49 years.¹⁰ Young women and adolescent girls aged 10-19 are 6 times more infected with HIV than their male counterparts.

15. Limited access water and sanitation (WASH) has consequences in terms of health and nutrition. More than 2.3 million people need emergency water, hygiene and sanitation in conflict-affected areas. The situation is particularly alarming in the Far North region, where more than half the population does not have access to an improved source of water¹¹.

16. Security and protection: The 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) report for Cameroon estimates that about 1,7 million people need general protection, of whom 50% are women and 53% are children. Despite overall progress towards stability in recent years, in 2023 there was a further deterioration of the security situation in the Far North. Displacement and human rights violations continued due to armed conflict, intercommunal tensions, and climatic events. In the North-West and South-West regions, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were especially vulnerable. The general security situation in these regions has deteriorated further in recent years, as UN data show a 38% increase in security incidents between August 2022 and August 2023¹².

17. Women and girls are the most left behind group in terms of social entitlements and protection. This includes their rights for housing, land and property, as a result of discriminatory laws that give more rights to men. As reported in the 2024 HNO report, about 72% of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) disputes involve women, most of whom are heads of displaced households. People living with disabilities are also among the most vulnerable¹³. Children with disabilities, in particular, face a higher risk of malnutrition due to various factors, including feeding difficulties, frequent illnesses, societal stigma, and discrimination and neglect.

18. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Despite women representing 51% of the total population in Cameroon, gender inequality and limited women's empowerment remain largely unresolved¹⁴. The National Gender Policy (NGP) highlights some areas of gender inequality in

⁵ World Bank data, 2024.

⁶ Labour Market Survey in North-West, South-West regions of Cameroon for the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus, IOM, April 2022.

⁷ WFP Zero Hunger, Food security and Nutrition Strategic Review, 2017.

⁸ Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 2024.

⁹ HNO, 2024

¹⁰ DHS (Cameroon). MIS, 2022.

¹¹ HNO, 2024.

¹² HNO, 2024.

¹³ Voices from Cameroon, GBV AoR, November 2023.

¹⁴ National Human Development Report, 2019.

Cameroon, notably education. The number of women without an education is more than 1.7 times that of men. Gender-based violence is common, with almost 1 million people suffering from GBV, of whom 96% are women and 47% are children¹⁵. While gender disparities are slowly narrowing, they are rooted in social norms and long-standing patterns of exclusion from family and community decision-making that limit women's opportunities. This situation has been exacerbated by the different layers of the crisis, insecurity, and natural disasters. Some measures taken have not yielded expected results despite the resources mobilised¹⁶. The 2011-2020 National Gender Policy, based on SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, aims to create an environment that protects women and ensures their equal access to social services, as well as their equal rights and opportunities. However, it has not been effective due to weak institutional capacity¹⁷.

2 Subject of the evaluation

2.1 Subject evaluated

19. The subject of the evaluation is the EcoSec programme which began in 2014 in response to the multi-country Lake Chad humanitarian crisis, which impacted the Far North region of Cameroon. In 2016, the programme expanded to the anglophone North-West and South-West regions following a deterioration of the security situation there. That year, these regions entered a period of political instability that gradually culminated in armed violence. The ICRC's decision to extend EcoSec interventions took place against a backdrop of growing needs and reduced coverage by other humanitarian actors. The situation today in the northern and northwest-southwest (NWSW) regions, which are those primarily covered by the programme, remains highly fluid.

20. The programme's overall objective is to support populations whose food and economic security is adversely affected by armed violence in Cameroon, and to ensure that they are able to meet their basic needs in a sustainable and dignified manner. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as well as returnees and conflict-affected populations, including communities hosting IDPs, make up the majority of the programme's caseload. In addition, the programme provides assistance to a small number of households referred by the Protection and Health departments.

21. The assistance provided under the programme spans multiple sectors, organised across three main components that aim to be complementary and self-reinforcing. The three main components are: a) emergency relief assistance, b) livelihoods support to affected populations, and c) capacity-building support to the Ministry of Agriculture and other government actors. In turn, each of these components is composed of diverse interventions, as described below:

- **Emergency relief** is intended to support households that have recently been affected by a sudden humanitarian shock, such as forced displacement. Emergency aid, in the form of food support, cash and essential household items, targets displaced, returnee and host populations, to meet their immediate needs and reduce their likelihood of adopting irreversible coping strategies.
- **Resilience interventions** aim to introduce an element of sustainability in the assistance provided. These interventions are geared to reinforcing the resilience of vulnerable populations through agricultural and livestock support, as well as income-generation activities and other cash-based forms of livelihoods support. Households with access to land are provided with agricultural inputs (seeds, tools) and cash transfers to restart production cycles and build food security. Livestock vaccination campaigns are conducted to protect livestock and sustain agro-pastoral livelihoods, enhancing income-generating capacity.
- **Capacity-building support:** The component of the EcoSec programme is relatively modest in budget terms, but fulfils the key strategic objective of enabling local actors to play a meaningful role in programme implementation. With a view to this objective, the ICRC cooperates with the Ministries of Livestock and Agriculture, among other government actors, as well as with the Cameroon Red Cross, to develop capacities required in the implementation of activities.

22. The programme is designed to converge with other ICRC interventions, such as an Agence Française de Développement (AFD)-funded intervention aimed at the delivery of agricultural

¹⁵ HNO, 2024.

¹⁶ National Human Development Report, 2019.

¹⁷ Voices from Cameroon, GBV AoR, November 2023.

assistance, livestock vaccination and capacity building to almost 1 million people in the North of Cameroon.

23. Since 2019, the number of households targeted by the EcoSec programme has varied significantly. Having reached a peak of 120,000 targeted households in 2021, the programme underwent significant downsizing the following years, to reach a minimum targeted coverage of 80,000 households in 2023 (See Table 6 below). This reduction was mainly due to the financial crisis which affected the ICRC from 2022 onward.

24. For the most part, downsizing affected the programme's emergency component, which fell from 57,000 to 10,000 targeted households from 2021 to 2024. The resilience component, composed mostly of agricultural and livestock support, remained more stable during this period, only fluctuating between 60,000 and 80,000 targeted households.

2.2 Activities and objectives

25. The three main objectives of the evaluation as formulated in the Terms of Reference (Annex 7) are listed below. These objectives provide the basis for a set of questions which form the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2), and served to guide and structure data collection and analysis.

- **Objective 1 – (Effectiveness):** To determine the extent to which EcoSec program interventions have contributed to the strengthening of the Economic Security and resilience of affected people.
- **Objective 2 – (Effectiveness):** To draw lessons learnt on the applicability of multidisciplinary approaches in both emergency response and economic resilience interventions.
- **Objective 3 – (Relevance):** To propose ways in which the EcoSec interventions can have relevance going forward for people affected by conflict, within the resources available, and in line with the new institutional strategy (2024-2027)¹⁸ with a focus on protection outcomes.¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-launches-2024-2027-institutional-strategy>

¹⁹ Per UN_SWAP guidelines, the evaluation will not involve specific assessments of human rights and gender equality, although these themes will be considered in a broader Protection perspective.

2.3 Stakeholder analysis:

Table 1 Key EcoSec Programme Stakeholders and Role in the Evaluation

Stakeholders	Role in EcoSec programme	Role in the evaluation
Internal stakeholders		
EcoSec Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Programme owner	Facilitator, Information Source
EcoSec Unit, Reg. Del	Technical Advisory Support	Information Source
Senior Management, Yaoundé Delegation	Programme Supervisor	Information Source
Protection Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
Health Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
Cooperation Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
Administration Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
AAP Officer, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
WatHab Unit, Yaoundé Delegation/Reg. Del	Internal Stakeholder	Information Source
EcoSec Unit, Geneva (GVA) Headquarters (HQ)	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
Africa OPS, GVA HQ	Internal Stakeholder, Technical Support/Facilitation	Information Source
External stakeholders		
Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture, Central and local levels	Programme partner	Facilitator, Information Source
Cameroon Ministry of Livestock, Central and local levels	Programme partner	Facilitator, Information Source
National Centre for Research	Programme Partner	Facilitator, Information Source
Regional and local authorities (Governor's Office, Prefecture)	Stakeholder	Information Source

Cameroon Red Cross Society (CRCS), Central and local levels	Programme Partner	Facilitator, Information Source
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2.4 Scope of the evaluation

26. The scope of the evaluation has three aspects. Specifically:

- **Geographic scope:** Northwest and Southwest (i.e. Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, as well as the Far North region.
- **Temporal scope:** will cover activities conducted by the EcoSec program between 2019 and 2024.
- **Technical scope:** The Evaluation only focuses on EcoSec interventions that were funded primarily by the ICRC, excluding those that were funded and implemented with other humanitarian partners.

3 Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations

27. The evaluation approach and methodology were developed based on the ToR and further refined through the inception phase. The evaluation is framed around its three main objectives, as set out above. These objectives reflect the two core criteria of **Effectiveness** and **Relevance** against which the ICRC's EcoSec programme in Cameroon will be evaluated.

28. Aside from these two main criteria, the Logic Model and Evaluation Matrix proposed for this evaluation (Annexes 5 and 2) have been designed to capture key programme functions and attributes that will be evaluated on the basis of additional evaluation criteria (see section below). Inclusion of these criteria will enable the evaluation to achieve more depth of analysis.

3.1 Evaluation criteria and questions

29. The evaluation aims to provide answers to five sets of evaluation questions (EQs), which have been formulated on the basis of the three objectives listed in section 2.2. These EQs are intended to generate evidence on the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, connectedness²⁰, sustainability** and **impact** of the EcoSec Programme.

30. Within this overall framework, particular attention has been placed on the cross-cutting themes of **Accountability to Affected People (AAP)** and **monitoring**, which will be examined, respectively, in a *relevance* and *effectiveness* perspective.

31. Under each EQ, sub-sets of evaluation questions have been developed to capture insights into **Key Success Factors (KSF)**. These KSFs are determinant of the **quality** of the programme and, by extension, of its adequacy for achieving the desired **outcomes** and **impact**.

32. A summary of the evaluation questions and sub-questions to be included in the evaluation is provided in below.

Table 2 Evaluation questions and related Key Success Factors

1. How well was the programme designed to meet the economic security needs of conflict-affected communities? How did the programme ensure it stayed relevant, and adapt as needed?
KSF: Beneficiary selection and prioritisation (Relevance)
How have the programme's objectives (in food relief, cash transfers and nutrition) aligned with the priority economic security needs of conflict-affected beneficiaries/communities? How have needs been monitored and prioritised?
How has programme cycle management enabled course-correction over time, and ensured that the programme remained relevant to the needs of affected populations?
How has prioritisation evolved to accommodate budget cuts in the programme?

²⁰ This ALNAP evaluation criteria relates closely to Sustainability, and aims to capture programme-level efforts to connect emergency responses with more long-term interventions geared to resilience. See, ALNAP, *Review of the OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Humanitarian Action – Summary brief*, 2023.

To what extent have beneficiaries been consulted and involved in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
To what extent has the programme incorporated accountability to affected populations, protection, and conflict sensitivity?
To what extent are EcoSec approaches adequate to promote equity and inclusion of vulnerable groups?
2. How successful were the interventions –and the implied programme processes—in enabling the objectives of the programmes to be met? What were the enabling and hindering factors (internal and external) that affected the delivery of interventions and the attainment of outcomes?
KSF Core Area: Programme Management (Effectiveness/Efficiency)
To what extent have EcoSec interventions improved staff skills and knowledge pertaining to food relief, cash transfers and nutrition?
In the three sectors examined, were outcomes delivered in a timely manner?
Were internal ICRC mechanisms - notably monitoring-- effective in supporting interventions?
How have management systems enabled the efficient use of resources?
3. In their planning and delivery, are the distinct sector components of the programme consistent and mutually reinforcing?
KSF Core Area: Programme Convergence (Effectiveness/Coherence)
How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are the three main thematic pillars of the EcoSec Programme?
How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are interventions within the emergency pillar of the programme (emergency food, cash transfers, nutrition)?
How and to what extent does the EcoSec programme contribute to Protection outcomes?
How resource-intensive is the programme's multidisciplinary approach, and is the value of synergies achieved commensurate with the investment made?
4. How well does the programme complement the actions of other actors? How well does it contribute to developing the capacity of partners to support resilience and sustainability of programme results?
KSF Core Area: Partnerships and Cooperation (Effectiveness/Connectedness/Sustainability)
To what extent have programme partnerships and cooperation with local stakeholders contributed to building local capacity?
To what extent have programme partnerships and cooperation contributed to the sustainability of programme outcomes?
To what extent have partnerships and cooperation been consistent with the respective comparative advantage of stakeholders involved?
To what extent have EcoSec interventions created synergies with other programmes, including outside of ICRC?
How have partnerships and cooperation contributed to local ownership and community leadership of interventions carried out?
5. How well has the programme achieved desired outcomes, and thereby contributed to improving the economic security and resilience of affected populations? (Effectiveness, Impact)
With particular focus on food relief, cash and nutrition, to what extent have the interventions improved the situation of the target population?
Have interventions empowered specific groups (women, girls) and met their needs?
What is the evidence of increased economic resilience among target populations? To what extent have interventions reduced the vulnerability of households to asset depletion?
Have there been positive or negative unintended effects of interventions?
What is the potential for sustainability post-intervention (financial, social, knowledge transfer)?

3.2 Theory of change and Key Success Factors

33. A Theory of Change (ToC) does not exist for the EcoSec programme. Given that the programme has an intricate architecture, composed of three main pillars and eight specific sectors of interventions, it was deemed impractical to design a dedicated ToC for the evaluation. Instead, a simpler Logic Model (LM) was developed and agreed upon at inception. The purpose of the LM is to provide a causal hypothesis to guide the evaluation, and to help structure data-collection and analysis.

34. The LM draws on Key Success Factors (KSFs) to interrogate four core programme areas, i.e.: a.) beneficiary selection and prioritization, b.) programme management, c.) programme convergence, and d.) partnerships and cooperation (See Box below). For each of programme areas, an assumption is made about a desired outcome. The central assumption in the LM is that desired outcomes in each of the four core programme areas will culminate in a desired impact. A diagram of the logic model is attached as Annex 5.

Core programme areas and KSFs

For the four core programme areas below, Key Success Factors (KSFs) will be examined. These KSFs are reflected in the Evaluation Framework and provide a basis for the Logic Model.

1. Beneficiary Selection and Prioritization (Relevance)

Key Success Factors:

- Selection Criteria & Target-setting
- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
- Needs assessments / needs monitoring

2. Programme Management (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

Key Success factors:

- Logistics and systems
- Personnel (incl. training)
- Programme Cycle Management (incl. M&E)

3. Programme Convergence (Effectiveness/Coherence)

Key Success Factors:

- Consistency and coherence of multidisciplinary approach across the 3 main programme GOs
- Convergence with and contribution to broader ICRC Protection outcomes

4. Partnerships and Cooperation (Effectiveness/Connectedness/Sustainability)

Key Success Factors:

- Cooperation with Govt actors
- Community-level engagement
- Cooperation with CRCS and other Implementing partners
- Liaison/coordination with UN actors

3.3 Evaluability assessment

35. Evaluability refers to the extent to which an activity or programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion; it implies having adequately defined objectives and verifiable results.

36. The ICRC's EcoSec programme in Cameroon has had clearly defined objectives at institutional level from the outset, as featured in annual Planning for Results (PfR) documentation.²¹ Likewise, activities and their results have been regularly reported on, notably through consistently released QERs,²² among other documents. Thus, a framework and a basic body of evidence exist which generally enable the ICRC's EcoSec programme to be evaluated.

37. Specific results relating to human rights and gender equality will not be measured for this evaluation, although these themes will be considered within a broader Protection perspective. The evaluation will draw on secondary gender-disaggregated data where available, and this may provide some reflection of gender equality. However, the evaluation will not generate primary quantitative data itself.

3.4 Methodological approach

38. In assessing the evidence collected against its objectives, the evaluation has drawn on complementary methods and approaches, as follows:

39. **Theory-based analysis.** To guide analysis, a series of working assumptions (i.e. a "theory") have been made at the outset on the results which the ICRC's EcoSec programme in Cameroon

²¹ As seen, for example, in the *PfR Structure/EcoSec program/2024* Document

²² Such as, for example, https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_YAO/_layouts/15/DocIdRedirect.aspx?ID=TSYAO-5-549187

intended to achieve. These desired results have been broadly mapped in the form of a cause-and-effect pathway, known as a Logic Model. The purpose of the logic model is to provide a causal hypothesis to guide the evaluation, in both its data-collection and analysis phases. Using evidence gathered in the data-collection phase, the evaluation has assessed the EcoSec programme against results pathways set out in the Logic Model, to determine the extent to which activities carried out have led to the intended change. It draws on KSFs to interrogate four key programme areas: a) beneficiary selection and prioritization, b) programme management, c) programme convergence (multi-disciplinarity), and c) partnerships and cooperation.

40. **Process review.** Where appropriate in the evaluation of KSFs, specific programme systems and processes (e.g. monitoring, AAP, programme cycle management) have been assessed against the relevant ICRC guidelines and directives; that is, not only in terms of results, but also in terms of compliance to set prescriptions.

41. **Mixed Methods, Participatory & Inclusive Approach.** The evaluation has adhered to a participatory and mixed method approach. Recognising that AAP is a key focus area in this evaluation, the Evaluation Team has engaged communities directly in data collection to ensure that the voices of affected populations—including especially vulnerable groups such as women and internally displaced persons (IDPs)—are heard and their voices are incorporated into the analysis.

42. **The evaluation has drawn on Most Significant Change (MSC)** — a qualitative method that aims to capture meaningful change in narrative form, based on first-hand accounts provided by the recipients of interventions. This participatory approach involves gathering stories of change from affected populations, community leaders, and field staff through focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews. These stories have served to illustrate key outcomes — intended or unintended — by exploring how specific interventions (such as cash transfers, agricultural inputs or partner training) have impacted individual lives or community dynamics.

Data collection tools

43. Data and evidence for this evaluation has been collected primarily through three methods: 1) a document review, 2) a series of KIIs conducted with key stakeholders, and 3) FGDs with members of affected communities that receive ICRC assistance.

- **Document review:** For this evaluation, a selection of relevant documents was made available by the Yaoundé Delegation's EcoSec team. Data and evidence was extracted from this material and logged against the EQs in the evaluation framework. Most of the documents reviewed were internal to the ICRC. They included planning documents such as annual EcoSec Operational Plans, as well as Quarterly EcoSec Reports (QERs), needs assessments, and field mission reports.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** In total, 68 informants were approached in KIIs for this evaluation, spanning the main stakeholder groups relevant to the EcoSec programme (see list in Annex 3). It is worth noting that KII informants only included four women. The Evaluation team had little latitude to increase this number, as informants were selected primarily for their relevance to the programme.

Table 3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted

Stakeholder Groups	Kousseri	Maroua	Buea	Younde	TOTAL	Of whom Women
Community members/leaders	2	0	4	0	6	0
ICRC staff	5	3	4	3	15	1
Government staff	5	11		7	23	1
Cameroon RC	9	2	0	0	11	0
UN agencies	0	6	2	2	10	2
Private veterinarians	0	3	0	0	3	0
TOTAL	21	25	10	12	68	4

- Focus Group Discussions: A total of 11 mixed-gender Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted during the data collection phase, totalling 212 participants in eight communities, as follows:

Table 4. FGDs conducted

	Regions	FGDs conducted	Communities covered	Total n. participants	Of whom Women	% Womenl
1	Far North	6	3	121	59	48%
2	South West	5	5	92	46	50%
TOTAL		11	8	212	105	49%

44. Originally, six FGDs were planned in the South-West; however, one of these could not take place for security reasons. As reflected in the tables above, there was a good representation of women in the FGDs in both regions, amounting to 49% of all participants in total. It had been agreed with the EcoSec team beforehand that single-gender FGDs were not necessary, as none of the topics covered in the discussion required gender segregation.

3.5 Limitations and Mitigation Measures

45. The main challenge to the evaluability of the EcoSec programme was the fact that it spans a broad range of diverse sectors of activity. For example, the emergency relief component includes food and household items assistance, as well as nutrition and multi-purpose cash grants. The resilience component includes agricultural and livestock support, as well as multiple types of cash grants aimed at income-generation support. There was a risk that the broad range of activities conducted under the EcoSec programme exceeded the capacity of the Evaluation Team to assess it.

46. To address this risk, it was initially agreed during the inception phase that the evaluation would focus only on selected programme workstreams, consisting of food relief, multi-purpose cash transfers and nutrition.

47. However, this decision was subsequently revised to include a broader range of sectors for assessment. The main reason for this was that it emerged, during the data collection phase, that livestock and agricultural support are the two sectors that account for most of the programme's added value. They were therefore incorporated in the evaluation.

48. Another reason for including other EcoSec activities was that food relief and nutrition are not prominent activities in the Southwest, which was one of the two regions included for data collection. To enable data-collection to proceed in that region, the evaluation therefore incorporated key activities implemented locally (i.e. agricultural support and Micro-Economic Initiatives).

49. The inclusion of additional programme sectors in the evaluation was feasible thanks to the use of Key Success Factors, which are not sector-specific, but instead relate to critical strategic and organisational dimensions of the programme. By focusing on KSFs, the evaluation was less reliant on a close review of all sectors of activity covered by the EcoSec programme.

50. The inclusion of additional programme sectors was managed through extra time spent by the evaluation team on data-collection and analysis. Despite the extra time dedicated, not all programme sectors could be examined in-depth. For example, nutrition activities, as well as some forms of agricultural support (i.e. drilling of agro-pastoral wells) and some forms of income-generation grants (e.g. SMS) could not be given close attention.

3.6 Ethical considerations and safeguarding

51. The evaluation was conducted in a high-quality and ethical manner guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles. The evaluation team complied with the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) [2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations](#) and 2014 [Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#). The evaluation team adhered to humanitarian principles, the [ICRC Code of Conduct](#) and relevant policies on ethics and safeguarding including: [ICRC's Rules on Personal Data Protection](#) and the all encompassing [ICRC October 2022 Integrity and](#)

[Ethics for Independent Evaluators](#) which also includes Professional Standards for Protection Work; the ICRC's Code of Ethics for Procurement; and ICRC's guiding principles and approach on Accountability to Affected People. The evaluation team had no conflicts of interest and were able to work independently. Findings and evaluative judgment are free from undue influence.

52. The main ethical and safeguarding concerns in the evaluation related to confidentiality, anonymity and privacy, most notably with regards to the conduct of KIIs and FGDs in conflict-affected areas. The evaluation's design was approved by an independent Ethical Review Board (ERB). Informed consent was obtained from all informants prior to data collection events, in line with the consent protocols approved by the ERB.

53. Additionally, key features of KonTerra's ethical evaluation conduct include:

- Respecting gender and human rights principles throughout the evaluation process, including the protection of confidentiality; the protection of dignity and welfare of informants; and ensuring informed consent
- Maximizing the degree of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation itself
- Disaggregating data by gender and social group (and other relevant characteristics such as seniority, etc.) where feasible
- Ensuring data protection of all personal information and sensitive personal data of beneficiaries. KonTerra will follow and respect the ICRC data protection policies as noted above, and
- Ensuring that outputs use human rights and gender-sensitive language.

54. The evaluation team confirms that members did not have any conflict of interest. They were able to work independently and free from undue influence to produce their findings and evaluative judgements.

4 Evidence and findings

4.1 How well was the programme designed to meet the economic security needs of conflict-affected communities? How did the programme ensure it stayed relevant, and adapt as needed?

Summary of Findings:

- *The objectives of the EcoSec programme are closely aligned with the needs of targeted populations. This is true even as these needs vary sharply, depending on the region covered. The scale of needs far exceeds the capacity of the programme, which makes prioritisation especially critical. The evaluation found that assessments are consistently and rigorously conducted, and that there is a strong rationale for supporting the programme's approach to prioritising affected groups. However, the application of this rationale is challenging, as criteria for beneficiary selection are too broad.*
- *Programme cycle management is applied to the EcoSec programme in a context-appropriate manner. It has provided a solid basis for managing operational partnerships with government and other programme stakeholders.*
- *Faced with budget cuts that culminated in a 50% reduction in programme funding in 2023, the EcoSec team has opted to prioritize emergency assistance related to forced displacement and resilience-building activities over repeated emergency interventions targeting chronic food insecurity. This strategic decision was the right one for two reasons. First, the livestock and agricultural components of the programme yield more substantive benefits for affected populations. Second, the cost of these resilience components, relative to emergency assistance, is lower. It has therefore enabled the EcoSec programme to maintain relatively high beneficiary numbers.*
- *Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is deeply engrained in EcoSec programme practice. Close community-level consultations take place both during needs assessments and in subsequent monitoring activities. However, the limited capacity of community-based committees is an impediment to AAP, as they do not serve as relays for the processing of grievances. As a result, community members tend to address their grievances directly to the EcoSec teams.*
- *A strong protection-driven perspective informs the EcoSec programme, as reflected by the fact that one of its PfR General Objectives (GOs) is geared to a Protection outcome. More generally, the programme is designed to support a multidisciplinary Protection impact. Although conflict sensitivity is not formally applied, the programme does successfully adhere to the principle of do-no-harm, which it upholds by other means linked to traditional ICRC practice.*
- *Clear processes are in place to ensure equity in prioritization and beneficiary selection, which are designed to rely heavily on broad-based participatory processes. The EcoSec team acknowledges the practical challenges involved in operationalising these processes. One reason for this is that the criteria applied for beneficiary selection are very broad, and often do not enable prioritisation to the extent required. Another reason is that equitable and inclusive beneficiary selection is demanding in terms of project management. The processes involved often cannot fully rely on community-based Targeting and Accountability Committees, whose capacities are limited.*

4.1.1 How have the programme's objectives aligned with the priority economic security needs of conflict-affected beneficiaries / communities? How have needs been monitored and prioritised?

Finding 1: Overall, the objectives of the EcoSec programme are closely aligned with the economic security needs of targeted populations in Cameroon. This is true even as these needs vary sharply depending on the region covered. The volume of these needs far exceeds the capacity of the EcoSec programme, which makes prioritisation especially critical. The evaluation found that needs assessments are consistently and rigorously conducted, and that there is a strong rationale for supporting the programme's approach to prioritising affected groups.

55. One of the main features of the EcoSec programme is that it is composed of multiple pillars, and combines emergency relief activities, including interventions aimed at the prevention and management of malnutrition (GAM and SAM), with resilience interventions. In the two main geographical regions covered by the programme ---the Far North and Northwest-Southwest (NWSW)—needs in both the emergency relief and resilience sectors have exceeded the capacity of the aid community as a whole in recent years.

56. For example, in the area of food security, the total size of the population in need identified in the UN's Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) averaged 2.8 million from 2021 to 2024, or slightly over 10% of the country population.²³ The total volume of needs in the area of resilience is harder to assess precisely, given their roots in a complex combination of macroeconomic, environmental and security factors. However, because much of the Far North and NWSW are exposed to armed violence or extreme climate events, large populations in these regions suffer high economic insecurity and an acute lack of resilience, due mainly to the loss or depletion of household economic assets caused by the conflict.²⁴ Despite the scale and severity of needs, the number of people provided with food and economic security support (including resilience) through the UN system in Cameroon has not exceeded 1.1 million annually since 2020. This consists of less than one-third of people in need in the past five years.^{25 26}

57. Set against this backdrop, a number of preliminary observations can be made on the ICRC's EcoSec programme. First, the programme places the ICRC among the larger contributors to economic security in Cameroon. Over the past six years, the size of the programme's caseload has averaged slightly under 600,000 people annually; in comparison, the number of people assisted by WFP across the range of food and livelihoods programmes is slightly over 900,000.²⁷ Compared with WFP, however, the ICRC has placed very strong emphasis on resilience support, which covers most of its caseload, with emergency food security targeting significantly fewer households. In the former category, support to production (i.e. agro, livestock) and cash for livelihoods target 76% of the households assisted by the programme, while emergency relief (i.e. food security, nutrition and household items) is provided to 23% of the programme's caseload.²⁸ As discussed in further detail below (Findings 3 and 20) this programme profile is highly appropriate to the Cameroon context, where acute food insecurity is narrowly circumscribed and addressed by other actors like WFP. In this context, resilience interventions are feasible and offer opportunities for outcomes that are more sustainable than those achieved through emergency assistance alone. In part, the

²³ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview (Annual), 2021 to 2024.

²⁴ The operational definition of resilience used in this evaluation is that set out by the ICRC in 2019, namely, "the ability of individuals, communities, institutions and systems to anticipate, absorb, adapt, respond to and/or recover from shocks and stressors derived from conflict, violence and hazards, without compromising their long term prospects. Source: *ICRC Position on the Resilience Policy Debate*, DP/POL 2019 (Internal)

²⁵ WFP, Annual Country reports, 2021 to 2024.

²⁶ UNCT, UN Country Annual Results Reports, 2021 to 2024.

²⁷ Since 2019, WFP's annual caseload in Cameroon has averaged 904,000 people annually.

²⁸ ICRC data.

programme's focus on resilience is an outcome of the consolidation of activities that took place following the budget cuts of 2023.

58. The second key observation about the ICRC's EcoSec programme relates to its focus on geographical areas which other humanitarian actors are less inclined to cover, given access constraints. These areas are clearly delineated into six Priority Zones in the Far North and NWSW regions. The programme's focus on areas of lesser coverage by other actors, given security and access challenges, is a distinctive feature of the programme. It is a key contributor to the ICRC's added value in the area of economic security in Cameroon, as it enables the programme to complement the geographical coverage of other actors on the basis of its specificity, and related access modalities.

59. In community-based FGDs in both the Far North and NWSW, participants were clear that the focus placed by the programme on resilience support was strongly valued. In NWSW, community members in all FGDs stated that the combination of seeds, cash, tools and training contributed meaningfully to both their economic and food security, by enabling them to develop both cash crops and food crops. Estimates of the marketable surplus produced with the assistance provided varied from 30% to 50%, depending on households.²⁹ Asked to make a hypothetical choice between ICRC EcoSec or another form of assistance, such as Health or Education, participants in all FGDs stated that EcoSec support would remain their first preference, even if other forms of assistance were proposed to them. They explained this by stating that EcoSec support gave them the possibility of monetizing the surplus produced with this assistance, and thereby to access health or education services as required (See Finding 19 for monitoring data illustrating this.)

60. The document review conducted for the evaluation provided strong evidence that the EcoSec programme was firmly based on quality assessment data collected in the field. The main examples of this are Beneficiary Needs and Vulnerability Assessments (BNVAs) conducted annually.³⁰ Economic security is typically a strong thematic focus of these multidisciplinary assessments, which draw on large samples. For example, the BNVA conducted in March 2023 in Logone et Chari drew on a sample of 753 households.³¹ The sample for the BNVA carried out in July 2024 in the localities of Kolofata, Kerawa, Moskota and Tolkomari was composed of 539 households.³² As described further below (Finding 9), monitoring activities also generate data that supports an in-depth understanding of needs and vulnerabilities. This includes quantitative profiling data including the status of affected populations (i.e. displaced, host, returnees), as well as their age groups and gender, and information on their consumption patterns and any negative coping mechanisms.³³

61. Thematic prioritisation and objective-setting are based on strong rationales derived from needs assessments, and data to document vulnerabilities, as referenced above. While beneficiary selection aims to capture these vulnerabilities, the evaluation team found that beneficiary selection in the EcoSec programme was challenged by the use of eligibility that

²⁹ Source: Community FGDs

³⁰ See, for example, Rapport d'évaluation multidisciplinaire, Cameroun – Evaluation des besoins des populations vulnérables dans le Logone et Chari, March 2023, and Rapport d'évaluation multidisciplinaire, Cameroun – Evaluation des besoins des populations vulnérables dans les localités de Kolofata, Kerawa, Moskota and Tolkomari, July 2024.

³¹ Rapport d'évaluation multidisciplinaire, Cameroun – Evaluation des besoins des populations vulnérables dans le Logone et Chari, March 2023.

³² Rapport d'évaluation multidisciplinaire, Cameroun – Evaluation des besoins des populations vulnérables dans les localités de Kolofata, Kerawa, Moskota and Tolkomari, July 2024.

³³ See, for example, the PDM survey conducted in Kousséri in October 2024, to collect data on results obtained from a round of food assistance to 2,500 households. In addition to generating data on the appropriateness of the support provided, the data also shed light on beneficiary behaviour, such as the extent to which food rations were shared among assisted households. Source: QER IV, 2023.

are often difficult to use in practice.³⁴ In all communities where FGDs took place, participants mentioned that the number of households eligible for assistance based on these criteria was significantly higher than the limit set by programme targets. Challenges with the current selection criteria are known to the EcoSec team. This topic is discussed in further detail in Finding 6 below.

4.1.2 How has programme cycle management enabled course-correction over time, and ensured that the programme remained relevant to the needs of affected populations?

Finding 2: Programme cycle management is applied to the EcoSec programme in a context-appropriate manner and has allowed the team to acquire strong awareness of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the context. It has also provided a solid basis for managing operational partnerships with government and other programme stakeholders.

62. Programme cycle management³⁵ is well in place of the EcoSec sector, as activities have been ongoing for several years. Hence, the EcoSec programme has undergone multiple annual cycles, in the course of which the EcoSec team has become familiar with aspects of it that require special attention. In KIIs and FGDs, it emerged that EcoSec staff spend significant time in the field, engaging with stakeholders as part of programme implementation. This strong field presence reinforces contextual knowledge attained through formal assessment and monitoring activities and supports operational decision-making. Specifically, several iterations of the programme cycle, and the successive assessments and analyses which they have implied, have allowed the EcoSec team to acquire a detailed understanding of the contextual particularities of both main regions covered. This, in turn, has enabled the programme to offer a distinct portfolio of assistance to meet specific needs in the Far North and NWSW. The main distinction is the programme's strong focus on livestock support in the Far North, and the more ambitious scope of its capacity-development pillar there, which is enabled by the presence in the Far North of more viable partners (MINEPIA, MINADER, CRC). Critically, a cycle management approach applied over several years has allowed the programme to develop nuanced insights on the protection dimension of the support provided, in a multidisciplinary perspective. This is described in further detail in Finding 13 below.

63. The evaluation team could verify that mission and monitoring reports are consistently filed upon completion of field outings, adding to the body of data and knowledge available to inform programme decisions. This is supplemented by specific monitoring products, such as Post-Harvest and Post-Distribution Reports. The use of monitoring data in EcoSec programme cycle management is discussed further in Finding 9 below.

64. In terms of overall programme processes, ICRC staff and government counterparts interviewed for the evaluation confirmed that bilateral consultations are structured and timed on the basis of the ICRC's annual programme cycle. The processes described are distinctly bottom-up, with joint planning workshops held in the field, for example with MINADER and MINEPIA departmental staff.³⁶ Proceedings of these discussions are then "sent up" both ICRC and Ministry management lines for final consideration by senior decision-makers. At one of these workshops, which the evaluation team attended, practical challenges encountered in

³⁴ For a list of the EcoSec selection criteria, see *Standard Operating Procedures*, EcoSec Cameroon, 2023. These criteria aim to capture levels of food and economic insecurity at community level by capturing, for example, the number of daily meals per household, whether households rely on food donations, whether they own cattle or other assets, and the extent of debt they have contracted. The criteria also aim to capture gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as whether households are female-headed or composed of single mothers.

³⁵ Programme cycle management is taken here to consist of an annual sequence of activities composed broadly of needs appraisal, design, implementation/monitoring and evaluation.

³⁶ MINADER: Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement durable, MINEPIA: Ministère de l'Élevage, des Pêches et des Industries Animales.

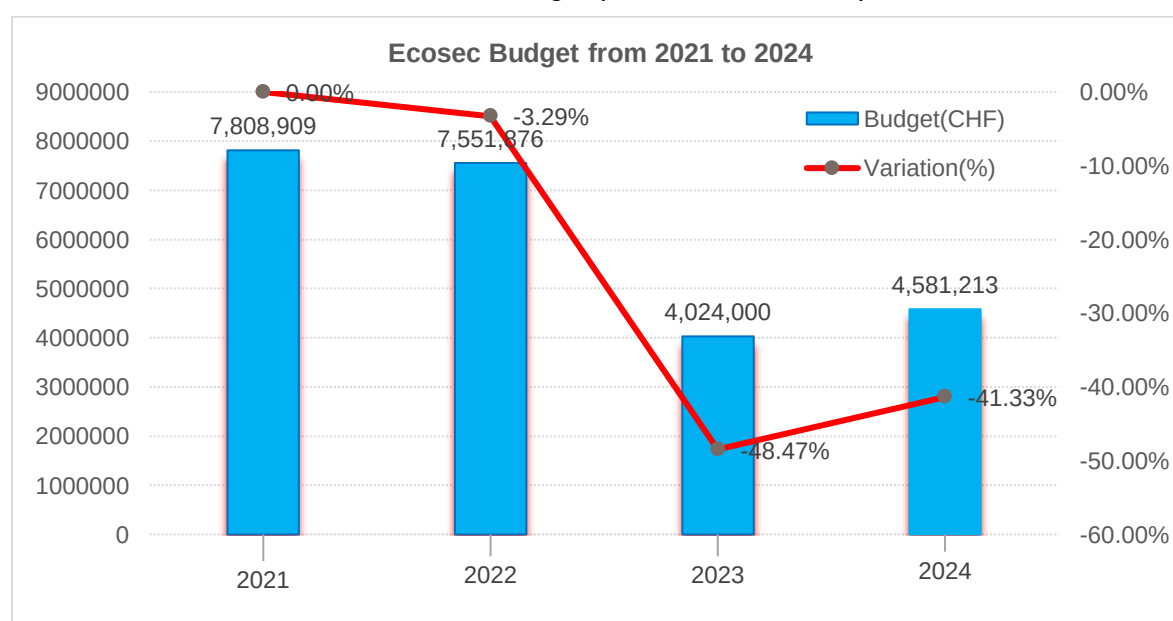
the course of implementation were discussed with local-level ministry officials, and measures to overcome them were debated. Attendance was high and the event was funded by the ICRC.

4.1.3 How has prioritisation evolved to accommodate budget cuts in the programme?

Finding 3: Faced with budget cuts that culminated in a 50% reduction in programme funding in 2023, the EcoSec team opted to prioritise resilience activities (Livestock and agricultural support) over emergency interventions (i.e. Multi-purpose cash). This strategic decision was the right one for two reasons. First, the livestock and agricultural components of the programme yield more substantive benefits for affected populations, as these benefits are sustainable over time. Second, the cost of these resilience components, relative to emergency assistance, is lower. It has therefore enabled the EcoSec programme to maintain relatively high beneficiary numbers.

65. One of the major events which the EcoSec programme has had to adapt to in recent years is the series of significant budget reductions conducted since 2022. From 2021 to 2023, budgetary allocations to the programme declined by almost 50%, due to the budgetary crisis which the ICRC underwent that year. In 2024, the budget recovered by about 7%, but remained far below its 2021 peak. This is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Annual decreases in EcoSec Budget (Source: EcoSec Department, ICRC Cameroon)



66. Faced with these budgetary contractions, the response of the EcoSec team has been to prioritize emergency assistance related to forced displacement and resilience-building activities --specifically livestock and agricultural support--over repeated emergency interventions targeting chronic food insecurity (e.g., through multi-purpose cash transfers). This decision is strategically sound in the context of Cameroon. Indeed, a key feature of the context is that food insecurity is widespread but remains generally moderate, with 90% of the country classified as IPC 1 or IPC 2.³⁷ Only 10% of the country is classified as IPC 3, and no

³⁷ Corresponding to Minimal or Stressed for Insecurity. Source: Global Report on Food Crises, Cameroon, 2025.

region has so far crossed over to IPC 4 and IPC 5. The localities in IPC 3 are all in the Far North and NWSW.³⁸

67. Populations in IPC 3 suffer food consumption gaps but, unlike those in IPC 4 and IPC 5, those in IPC 3 are able to meet their minimal food requirements without yet having to resort extensively to negative coping mechanisms, such as the selling off of household economic assets.³⁹ In this sense, IPC 3 is described as “an early warning precursor to impending Humanitarian Emergency”.⁴⁰ In this type of context, filling emerging food gaps with tightly targeted food relief is key, but should be “combined with resilience-building actions to support stabilisation and recovery from livelihood asset depletion.”⁴¹ The same element of good practice is recommended by ECHO, which states that “Nexus opportunities should be pursued, combining emergency assistance with emergency agricultural and livelihoods recovery actions for IPC 3 populations, when feasible.”⁴²

68. Although conditions for the evaluation did not enable the conduct of a value-for-money analysis, evidence collected in KIIs and the document review strongly suggests that the cost-per-beneficiary of resilience support activities is significantly lower than for emergency assistance. This is illustrated by the fact that while resilience activities accounted for only 45% of the total programme budget in 2024⁴³, it allowed the provision of support to 55% of the total population assisted by the programme.⁴⁴ The value-for-money of resilience interventions becomes even higher when the sustainability of these interventions is taken into account, and their continued benefit is assessed over several years.

69. In 2024, the priority given to resilience activities allowed the programme to cover a high number of households, given the comparatively low cost of these activities. Hence, while the total programme budget only increased by 13% from 2023 to 2024, the total number of households assisted during that period increased by 22%.

70. The lower cost-per-beneficiary of resilience interventions is reflected in the diagram below, where livestock and agricultural support (labelled “Support to production”) accounts for most of the assistance provided to households, while making up less than half of the programme budget in 2024. This is thanks to the high number of households assisted with cattle and poultry vaccination, which is relatively low-cost yet provides effective protection to their main economic assets in subsistence conditions. A similar low-cost/high-benefit ratio is found in the distribution of seeds, which is the programme’s main form of agricultural support to households.

71. In the emergency relief pillar of the programme, the food emergency that occurred in 2024 prompted a sharp increase in MPCA cash grants that year, relative to the initial target. Hence, the implementation rate (IR) for cash was 224%, following an emergency budget extension. Nutrition coverage was also ramped-up and reached an IR of 151%. Initial programme targets show that if this sudden-onset emergency had not occurred, resilience support would have been channeled to 59% of the beneficiary population, rather than 55%. While the initially planned prioritization of resilience activities would have been appropriate in a context of lesser emergency, adjustments made to slightly increase the proportion of MPCA cash and nutrition support in 2024 reflects the programme’s adaptiveness to the deteriorating environment at that time.

³⁸ Corresponding to Crisis, Emergency and Catastrophe/Famine. Source: Global Report on Food Crises, Cameroon, 2025.

³⁹ IPC, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 2023.

⁴⁰ https://www.fao.org/4/i0275e/i0275e02.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

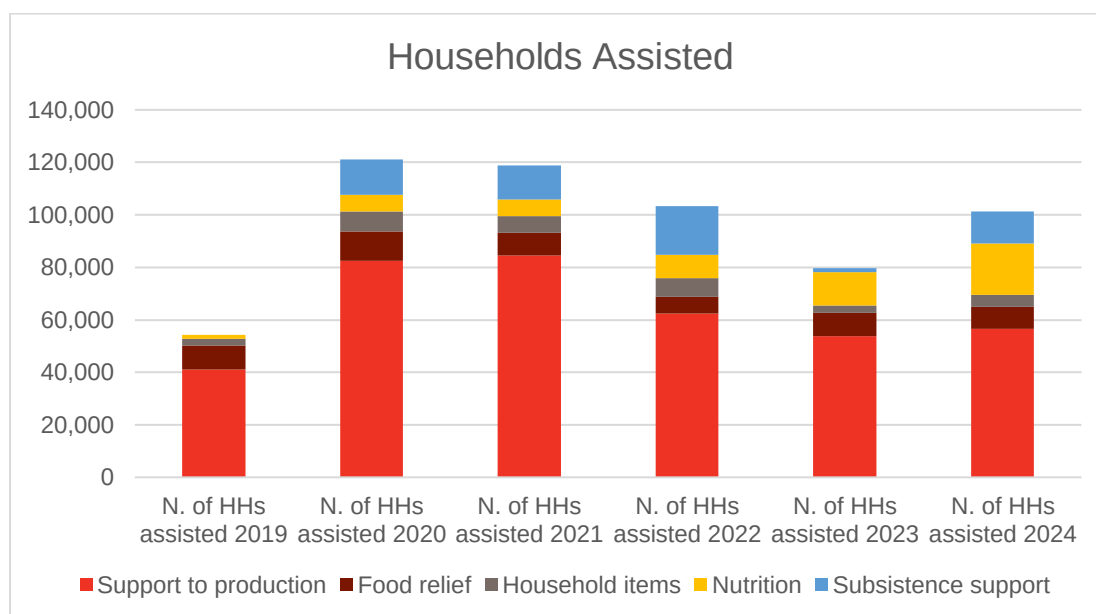
⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² DG ECHO, Reports on Food Security, Release 7, March 2024.

⁴³ ICRC, Food Insecurity Sensecheck_Cameroon (Internal), 20 March 2024.

⁴⁴ Source: EcoSec Department, ICRC Yaounde.

Table 6. Number of Households assisted per sector of intervention, 2019-2024 (Source: EcoSec Department, ICRC Cameroon)



4.1.4 To what extent have beneficiaries been consulted and involved in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation?

Finding 4: Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is deeply engrained in EcoSec programme practice. Close community-level consultations take place both during needs assessments and in subsequent monitoring activities. However, the evaluation team observed that the limited capacity of community-based committees was an impediment to AAP, as they do not serve as relays for the processing of grievances. As a result, some grievances remain unaddressed. Community members often have to address their grievances directly to the EcoSec teams to have them resolved. This adds to the workload of EcoSec staff.

72. As part of the ICRC's policy of accountability to affected population (AAP), an inclusive and participatory approach to the design of interventions is as stated objective of the programme.⁴⁵ Until 2023, when the template of EcoSec Operational Plans was modified, AAP was formally incorporated as a section in the document. On an annual basis, the narrative under this heading repeatedly confirmed that community-level engagement was taking place, and described the measures and processes involved.

73. In particular, post-distribution monitoring (PDM) provides a critical opportunity for recipient communities to provide feedback on the assistance received. Based on the documentary review conducted for the evaluation, there is strong evidence that PDM has been regularly and extensively carried out across the EcoSec programme (See Finding 9 below). EcoSec reporting shows that at least two PDM exercises on average have been conducted every quarter from 2021 to 2023. The sample size of these PDM rounds totaled 550 households in 2021; it exceeded 700 households in 2023. It is worth noting that in 2022, monitoring for the EcoSec programme began to incorporate Food Consumption Scores

⁴⁵ For example, AAP is formally described as a feature of the EcoSec programme in the 2019 to 2022 Operational Plans. Source: ICRC Cameroon, EcoSec Operational Plans, 2019 to 2022.

(FCSS) and measures against the Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), which enabled the more systematic tracking of food insecurity across localities and times periods.⁴⁶

74. In KIIs and FGDs, all participants at community level likewise stated that direct community engagement takes place on a regular basis, and provides appropriate opportunities to discuss the assistance received. According to FGD participants, these exchanges not only take place during formal PDM rounds but also more informally, during routine field visits by the EcoSec team.

75. In multiple FGDs, participants stated that the ICRC is the organisation with the most consistent and regular field presence in the localities and expressed strong appreciation of this. They also stated that dialogue with ICRC staff was good and enabled them to express any grievances openly.

76. In NWSW, however, a recurrent issue raised by FGD participants was the low capacity and performance of committees set up at community level, to support beneficiary selection and the handling of grievances. In all FGDs carried out, a significant number of participants said that the handling of grievances by their local committees was unsatisfactory. As a fallback option, community members tended to approach ICRC staff directly to express grievances. Their ability to do so was one of the reasons why a strong ICRC outreach presence in the field was appreciated.

77. In NWSW, this denotes the limitations of the current governance system established for the EcoSec programme, as the limited capacity of local committees requires EcoSec staff to spend more time and resources on direct community engagement.

78. The issue of limited organisational capacity at community-level does not appear as pronounced in the Far North, where the Cameroon Red Cross (CRC) is generally more active and operates in an important support role at community level, where it facilitates local engagement in the EcoSec programme. In contrast, the CRC is significantly less present in NWSW, where its perceived affiliation with the government exposes its volunteers to added risk. As a result, it was noted that in the Far North, communities participate more directly and actively in programme activities, notably training and sensitization.

79. One important area where this is visible is nutrition, where a key objective has been the recruitment of young mothers at community level in activities aimed at nutrition surveillance and the dissemination of good feeding practices. For this purpose, young mothers have been recruited and trained as volunteers at community level since at least 2021, and have played an important role in enabling the dissemination of good nutrition practices. This approach, which has been rolled out both in local communities and in the health spaces of Kérawa, Tolkomari, Mozogo et Ouzal, has often enabled to reach more than 1,000 households per quarter in each of the localities where it has been applied.⁴⁷

80. On a more modest scale, the training of community members in NWSW has also taken place, and enabled them to disseminate good agricultural practices, such as composting. In FGDs, the principle whereby community members are trained to dispense onward training at local level was widely viewed as useful; however, there was a sense in discussions that onward training activities were not always consistently carried out by local trainers, and that the set-up of basic supervisory systems may be helpful to ensure good outcomes.

⁴⁶ For an example of how both these indexes are used, see for example the PDM exercise conducted among 691 Mamfe beneficiaries assisted with food, essential household items and multi-purpose cash by the ICRC in 2023. Source: QER IV, 2023.

⁴⁷ Quarterly EcoSec Report III, 2023.

4.1.5 To what extent has the programme incorporated accountability to affected populations, protection, and conflict sensitivity?

Finding 5: A strong protection-driven perspective informs the EcoSec programme, as reflected by the fact that one of its PfR General Objectives (GOs) is geared to a Protection outcome. More generally, the programme is designed to support a multidisciplinary Protection impact. Although conflict sensitivity is not formally applied, the programme does successfully adhere to the principle of do-no-harm, which it upholds by other means linked to traditional ICRC practice (e.g. in-depth context analysis and dialogue based on neutrality and independence).

81. As described in Finding 4 above, AAP and the principles of inclusion and participatory programme design are firmly embedded in the practices of the EcoSec team. These principles are at the core of the SOPs which the EcoSec programme developed in 2023 for beneficiary selection and the management of grievances.⁴⁸ Although, in NSW, capacity constraints at community level limit the more substantive involvement of affected populations in programme design and delivery, the evidence overall strongly suggests that community participation and empowerment are core operative principles in the conduct of EcoSec activities. For example, in all six communities where FGDs were conducted in NSW for the evaluation, attempts were made by the EcoSec team to establish targeting and accountability committees, in line with programme SOPs. During all FGDs conducted in the region, a majority of participants reported that these committees generally did not perform well, but that direct engagement with the EcoSec team remained possible. This engagement was highly valued by community members, according to FGD feedback.

82. Regarding the incorporation of a protection component in the EcoSec programme design, this has been actively promoted, as part of the delegation's multidisciplinary approach. This topic is discussed in further detail in section 13 below. For now, it is worth mentioning that the EcoSec operational plan contains one GO that formally linked it to Protection; that is, the provision of cash support for Micro Economic Initiatives (MEI) to up to 180 families of missing persons. This programme activity was evaluated internally in late 2023. Findings were generally positive, with 93% of affected households reporting that the level of income generated was in line with their expectations.⁴⁹

83. Regarding conflict sensitivity, a review of the EcoSec programme documentation shows, first, that conflict risk is at the core of the contextual analysis that underpins the programme. In other words, the risk posed by armed violence in areas covered by the programme, whether it be protection risk, security risk for ICRC staff, or the risk of unforeseen harmful consequences of the programme, was closely examined. Second, it is apparent that conflict sensitivity as a principle is not formally applied in programme planning and implementation. That is, conflict sensitivity is not conducted as a standalone exercise in isolation of broader contextual analysis. This is unsurprising, as established ICRC practice is to place conflict and conflict-related risks at the centre of context analysis. In this latter approach, the application of neutrality, impartiality and independence effectively serve the purpose of conflict sensitive programming, by reducing the risk of adverse consequences in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

84. While conflict sensitive programming *per se* is not formally practiced in the context of EcoSec, there is strong evidence that the principle of do-no-harm is proactively upheld in programme design. For example, the risk implied in the use of *cash in counter* in certain areas covered by the programme has been taken into consideration.⁵⁰ Likewise, the potential risk that targeting might generate tensions among vulnerable groups has also been examined,

⁴⁸ Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), EcoSec Cameroon, 2023.

⁴⁹ Quarterly EcoSec Report n. 4, December 2023

⁵⁰ See, for example, ICRC, Food Insecurity Response Sensecheck_Cameroon, 20 March 2024.

particularly during the *periode de soudure*⁵¹, when food insecurity in the Far North can be particularly acute. To mitigate this latter risk, the EcoSec Team at the time had planned dedicated engagement with affected communities, to ensure appropriate targeting and well-functioning grievance mechanisms.⁵²

4.1.6 To what extent are EcoSec approaches adequate to promote equity and inclusion of vulnerable groups?

Finding 6: Clear processes are in place to ensure equity in prioritization and beneficiary selection, which are designed to rely heavily on broad-based participatory processes. The EcoSec team acknowledges the practical challenges involved in operationalising these processes. One reason for this is that the criteria applied for beneficiary selection are very broad, and so often do not enable prioritisation to the extent required. Another reason is that equitable and inclusive beneficiary selection is demanding in terms of HR resources. The processes involved often cannot fully rely on community-based Targeting and Accountability Committees, whose capacity is too limited.

85. For the purpose of this evaluation, equity is defined as the principle whereby a needs-based approach is applied systematically across the diverse vulnerable groups covered by a programme. In practice, equity depends on the quality of needs assessments, within the sectoral scope of programmes, and the consistency of prioritization processes. Inclusion is the practice of engaging with all stakeholders involved in a programme, most notably vulnerable groups, and more particularly during needs assessments and monitoring, in order to ensure that those affected by the most acute vulnerabilities are taken into account and duly prioritised.

86. In the case of the EcoSec programme in Cameroon, there is strong evidence that equity and inclusion are central to decisions made on coverage and prioritisation. This is illustrated by the EcoSec department's SOPs for beneficiary selection, referenced above, as well as its conduct of needs assessments and monitoring exercises inclusive of multiple groups and diverse vulnerabilities, as described above. Inclusion was also confirmed by participants in FGDs, who rated the ICRC highly for it relative to other agencies. Inevitably, however, and as acknowledged by ICRC interviewees, decisions relating to coverage must reckon with logistical, security and resource constraints, so that last-mile delivery as actually carried out in the field often contains an element of compromise. Nonetheless, the evaluation team found that the EcoSec programme has developed processes and capabilities to limit the impact of these obstacles, wherever possible. For example, its focus on dialogue with Non-State Armed Groups, and efforts over the years to reinforce the capacity of local CRC committees, have helped mitigate barriers to community engagement.

87. The main framework for prioritisation and beneficiary selection for EcoSec in Cameroon is the programme's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which were produced in 2023 and are currently being updated. The SOPs establish specific steps for key stages in the programme's implementation, and set detailed criteria for the prioritisation of locations to be included in the programme's coverage, and the identification and selection of eligible households.

88. Regarding programme locations, selection involves the conduct of multi-disciplinary needs assessments, as well as considerations relating to the presence of adverse security conditions and coverage by other humanitarian actors. Key determinants in the selection of assisted localities include the presence of displaced persons among local communities, and the level of vulnerability of these mixed (displaced/host) populations. Vulnerability is assessed

⁵¹ That is, the time between the exhaustion of existing food stocks and the next harvest.

⁵² ICRC, *Extreme Nord – Possible dynamiques sécuritaires pendant la période de soudure 2024 dans un contexte de crise alimentaire*, March 2024.

qualitatively through group discussions with key stakeholders. These discussions are conducted by local Red Cross committees trained by the ICRC. Locations selected on that basis are then submitted for approval to the relevant Head of Sub-delegation.

89. At community level, criteria for the selection of households are again aimed at identifying and capturing the most vulnerable.⁵³ It is worth noting that displaced and host populations are assessed separately, yet based on the same criteria. These criteria articulate notions of vulnerability that cut across the income of households and the gender, age and health of household members. The selection process, as prescribed in the SOPs, is heavily participatory, and involves local Targeting and Accountability Committees established for this purpose. The committees consist of community representatives. Their overall composition must be gender-balanced and representative of the community as a whole; and be approved in community assemblies.

90. Quarterly EcoSec reporting makes clear that both displaced and host communities, including returnees where relevant, are well represented in the programme's caseload. Indeed, the reports confirm that these groups are systematically covered in needs assessments and the delivery of assistance. It is worth noting that some programme interventions are more appropriate to certain beneficiary groups than others; thus, emergency assistance is directed mostly at displaced households, while livestock and agricultural support tends to benefit sedentary communities primarily. This, however, does not reflect a status bias; rather it is in line with the appropriateness of assistance, based on the circumstances and prevailing needs of affected populations.

91. Despite these general trends, the evaluation team got a clear sense from FGDs and KIIs that EcoSec assistance is provided on the basis of need and not based on beneficiary status or category. Thus, in multiple communities visited, agricultural support was delivered to displaced households with access to land, as well as to host communities. It was also very apparent in FGDs that a large proportion of women, including heads of households, had direct access to EcoSec assistance. Participants in FGDs widely agreed that those receiving ICRC assistance, however diverse in their profile, were selected from among the vulnerable.

92. At policy level, the intention of the EcoSec programme to achieve equity and inclusion is clear. Likewise, the objective of upholding these principles is manifest in the conduct of needs assessments, which consistently encompass displaced and host communities, as well as a diverse range of vulnerable households within these groups.

93. Despite this clear intent, there was evidence that equity and inclusion are often adversely impacted by the use of excessively broad selection criteria. As mentioned in Finding 1 above, in almost all FGDs conducted, a large number of participants pointed out that these criteria, in their current form, apply to the quasi-totality of households in communities covered by the programme. As a consequence, prioritisation to arrive at the targeted numbers must be done by other methods, in addition to the application of existing criteria. Given the lack of specific guidance for this, local committees run the risk of making arbitrary decisions in this prioritisation process. This risk is often enhanced by the limited capacity of local committees to process grievances after distributions have taken place. Indeed, numerous eligible households reported in FGDs that they had not received EcoSec assistance, despite being eligible, and that their grievances had not been appropriately addressed by local committees.

⁵³ EcoSec selection criteria are listed in the Department's *Standard Operating Procedures*, EcoSec Cameroon, 2023. These criteria aim to capture levels of food and economic insecurity at community level by capturing, for example, the number of daily meals per household, whether households rely on food donations, whether they own cattle or other assets, and the extent of debt they have contracted. The criteria also aim to capture gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as whether households are female-headed or composed of single mothers.

4.2 How successful were the interventions –and the implied programme processes—in enabling the objectives of the programmes to be met? What were the enabling and hindering factors (internal and external) that affected the delivery of interventions and the attainment of outcomes?

Summary of Findings

- *Training is a central feature of the EcoSec programme and has been delivered to a broad range of stakeholders, from recipient households and communities to government and Red Cross partners. Where this training was dispensed directly to affected households, it was viewed as highly valuable to support resilience and income-generation. On the other hand, training aimed at developing the organisational capacity of partners did not always have the intended effect, due in part to the challenge of retaining trained staff, or the lack of incentives. Regarding EcoSec staff, a widely shared perception was that skills and knowledge available needed to be complemented with an increase in HR resources.*
- *Some planning and delivery delays occurred during the implementation of programme. These delays were often caused by external factors, such as deteriorating access conditions caused by conflict or adverse weather. In several cases, however, delays were caused by lengthy internal procedures, which became more demanding on departments following the financial crisis of 2023.*
- *Monitoring for the EcoSec programme has been widely and consistently carried out to high standards. By necessity, the standards attained have been resource intensive.*

4.2.1 To what extent have EcoSec interventions improved local skills and knowledge?

Finding 7: Training is a central feature of the EcoSec programme, and has been delivered to a broad range of stakeholders, from recipient households and communities to government and Red Cross partners. Interviewees and participants in FGDs confirmed the quality of the training provided. Where this training was dispensed directly to affected households, it was viewed as highly valuable to support resilience and income-generation. On the other hand, training aimed at developing the organisational capacity of partners did not always have the intended effect, due in part to the challenge of retaining trained staff, or the lack of incentives. Regarding EcoSec staff, a widely shared perception was that skills and knowledge available needed to be complemented with an increase in HR resources.

94. Training constitutes a key element of the EcoSec programme and has received significant attention across the range of stakeholders in recent years. Training activities have been developed and conducted for Cameroon Red Cross Volunteers, Government workers involved in agricultural and livestock support, and Communities and recipients of cash support for livelihoods. In addition, the delegation's own EcoSec staff has received programme management training where relevant.

95. The following is a brief overview of training dispensed to stakeholder groups. The current Finding then discusses key observations made during the evaluation.

Cameroon Red Cross (CRC)

96. Strategically, the training of CRC participants in the EcoSec programme is critical, given the role of the National Society in establishing an operational link between the ICRC and recipient communities. The training of CRC volunteers at community level, department and national levels takes place annually, and aims to provide basic skills in the design, monitoring and evaluation of EcoSec activities. Where relevant, CRC volunteers have also been trained in data collection for needs assessments and post-distribution monitoring purposes, as well as cash voucher assistance and value chain analysis.

Government Workers

97. Under the EcoSec programme, government staff from the Ministry of Livestock (MINEPIA) have been trained as technical agents to enable to participation at local level in the programme's livestock and poultry vaccination activities. Training has also been dispensed under the 2022 MoU with the Ministry of Agriculture (MINADER) to develop staff capacity, including at the seed quality control laboratory established in Maroua with ICRC funding.

Community and Other Recipients of ICRC Assistance

98. The EcoSec programme has a strong and diverse portfolio of training activities aimed at recipients of its assistance. At community level, it has trained farmers to take part in the vaccination project aimed at their poultry and livestock. It has also trained community members in cultivation practices and the use of agricultural equipment.

99. Recipients of EcoSec cash grants for livelihoods (mainly MEI but also SMS) have also received vocational training, and well as basic training in business management. In part, this has taken place under three partnership agreements with the Ministry of Employment and Professional Training (MINEFOP).

100. Finally, the community-based component of the EcoSec programme's nutrition pillar has involved significant training, which was dispensed via CRC trainers, to enable the participation of local volunteers in the sensitization of mothers to good hygiene and cooking practices, as well as the early detection of malnutrition. These activities rely on a cascading down of training and sensitization to achieve significant coverage.⁵⁴ In addition to these community-level activities, the ICRC has also held higher-level nutrition workshops aimed at community health workers, as well as CRC volunteers and health centre staff.

101. Given the wide scope of the training described above, the evaluation could not conduct an in-depth technical assessment of the activities involved. It did, however, inquire with stakeholders and community members on outcomes achieved with these activities. It emerges from this feedback that training dispensed directly to community members and programme recipients was extremely well received. For example, FGD participants who had been trained in the use of specific agricultural tools and practices were very satisfied with the knowledge acquired, which they said had helped them achieve efficiencies and maximise their outputs. Likewise, there is good evidence that the sensitization of households to better nutrition practices has yielded good outcomes. For example, a 2023 study of the knowledge and practices of young mothers regarding the feeding of their young children, it emerged that the proportion of children being fed at least four types of food had increased to 59%, from a baseline of 13%.⁵⁵

102. Regarding training aimed at increasing institutional capacity, rather than improving the welfare of recipients, results are more mixed. The reason for this is that, in an institutional or organisational context, the effective application of knowledge received through training is often more complex and challenging. Thus, a recurrent comment in KIIs was that the training of CRC volunteers has not had optimal impact, because the most capable individuals trained were not always those assigned to the EcoSec programme. Other concerns related to the high

⁵⁴ In 2022, for example, 1,400, 1,600 and 1,700 households, were sensitized in three separate quarterly sensitization rounds in Blangoua districts. Source: Quarterly EcoSec reports II and III, 2022.

⁵⁵ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023

turnover of CRC staff, as well as their supervision and incentivisation, and practical limits to their deployment in EcoSec programme locations. Likewise, despite the quality of the training provided to MINEPIA personnel, it emerged in some KIIs that the professional performance of this group was closely tied to the payment of per diems for activities related to the EcoSec programme. This raises obvious concerns regarding the goal of building programme sustainability through training and knowledge transfer to the MINEPIA, whose own resources remain insufficient to cover staff per diems.

Training and Capacity of EcoSec staff

103. While it is not an objective of the evaluation to assess EcoSec staff competences, it is worth noting that EcoSec's eighteen team members⁵⁶ include skilled professionals to fill programme requirements in agricultural, livestock and nutrition support, as well as Generalists, including Field Officers with key supervisory roles. EcoSec personnel have also received on-the-job training, as appropriate. For example, this has included the dedicated EcoSec course (Module 1) as well as training in the use of Device Magic data collection software. Internal training on cash assistance and value chain analysis was also provided.⁵⁷

104. In KIIs with EcoSec staff, it emerged that the key concern regarding capacity did not relate to the team's skills set, but to the overall volume of management capacity needed to implement an operation of the size of the EcoSec programme. Several staff interviewed felt that the programme was understaffed. They noted that their workload was heavy, and that the demands of the programme were significant. Notably, this was true of the administrative processes involved in programme planning and compliance, which they felt were particularly burdensome. To address this, a request was made for extra staff, consisting of one delegate and one generalist. The request is pending while the Institution-wide freeze on new recruitment is in place.

4.2.2 In the three sectors examined, were outcomes delivered in a timely manner?

Finding 8: Some planning and delivery delays have occurred during the implementation of programme. These delays were often caused by external factors, such as deteriorating access conditions caused by conflict or adverse weather. In several cases, however, they were caused by lengthy internal procedures, which became more demanding on departments following the financial crisis of 2023.

105. During the period under review, a number of delays have occurred in the delivery of assistance. These delays relate to agricultural and livestock support, the distribution of electronic vouchers and in-kind food assistance, and the delivery of specialised equipment for the IRAD/MINADFER seed quality control laboratory set up by ICRC in Maroua.

106. Delays can be problematic for time-sensitive activities; for example, the late distribution of seeds raises the risk that recipient communities will miss part of the planting season, as occurred for example in some NWSW communities in 2023. Likewise, delayed food relief can have an adverse impact on food-insecure households, as was the case in Kousseri and Maroua in 2022.⁵⁸

107. In some cases, the delays reported were the result of contextual factors, such as security obstacles or barred access to communities due to floods.⁵⁹ More frequently, delays in last-mile deliveries were because purchasing was hindered by external supply chain problems, including adverse market conditions or regulatory constraints. For example, the equipment intended for the IRAD/MINADER seed lab was not available locally, and required

⁵⁶ Four Mobiles and 14 Residents

⁵⁷ Quarterly EcoSec Report II and IV, 2022

⁵⁸ Quarterly EcoSec Report II, 2022

⁵⁹ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2022

international purchasing which is slower and more complex.⁶⁰ In another instance, some of the vaccines required for livestock support could not be procured on time because local production was delayed.⁶¹ In other cases, the vaccines required technical certifications which took time to be delivered. Similarly, the procurement of some of the food items distributed was delayed by the need for preliminary quality testing.⁶²

108. While a challenging context for procurement is certainly an issue, there is a sense from EcoSec reporting that some of the delays incurred have been due to the complexity of internal procurement processes, or to the fact that the required programme systems and frameworks were not yet in place at the time. As an example of the latter, electronic community vouchers could not be made available on schedule in 2022, because the activity was new and the relevant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) had not yet been signed with implementing partners. In the case of equipment for the MINADER seed lab, delays in procurement were reportedly compounded by slow internal procedures requiring validation from the ICRC's Abidjan Logistics Hub.⁶³ EcoSec reporting also mentions belated procurement planning for the seeds used in its agricultural support activities.⁶⁴ Similar delays were confirmed by a MINADER interviewee, who noted that it had been problematic for the commercial supplier involved.

109. Several interviewees for the evaluation stated that the administrative burden involved in logistics and procurement had become significantly heavier since the financial crisis of 2023, when additional controls on purchasing were introduced, and advance planning became more difficult given financial uncertainty. However, it should be noted that this administrative burden was mentioned as problematic in EcoSec reporting as early as 2020.⁶⁵ It was again stated as a problem, and a cause of delay in the distribution of relief, in late 2023.⁶⁶

4.2.3 Were internal ICRC mechanisms - notably monitoring- effective in supporting interventions?

Finding 9: Monitoring for the EcoSec programme, which consisted mostly of Post-Distribution (PDM) and Post-Harvest (PHM) Monitoring exercises, has been widely and consistently carried out to high standards. By necessity, the standards attained have been resource intensive.

110. Key programme mechanisms, notably needs assessments, procurement, and programme cycle management more broadly, are discussed above (Findings 9, 8, and 4). This section therefore provides a more in-depth discussion of monitoring, following on from the broad preliminary comments made in Finding 4 above.

111. As mentioned in earlier findings, EcoSec programme monitoring has been taking place rigorously and consistently during the period under review. The type of monitoring examined here is primarily for needs and results analysis. For this purpose, monitoring primarily takes the form of Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), which is conducted following in the 2 to 4 weeks following a distribution round. According to evidence collected during the evaluation, PDM has systematically taken place following deliveries of assistance in the areas of in-kind food relief, Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), Cash for Livelihoods (MEI, SMS), and agricultural support. Some PDM was also conducted following capacity-building activities aimed at the Cameroon Red Cross.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Quarterly EcoSec Report III, 2022.

⁶² Quarterly EcoSec Report I, 2021.

⁶³ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2022.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2020.

⁶⁶ Quarterly EcoSec Report III, 2023.

112. In the area of food security, the data collected has helped to measure levels of vulnerability, as well as results achieved by the EcoSec programme. A baseline was typically established prior to food deliveries.⁶⁷ Food Consumption Scores and Reduced Coping Strategies Indexes (rCSI)⁶⁸ were then established, based on the data collected.⁶⁹ These two measures capture, respectively, household food consumption levels and the extent to which recipients are able to limit their reliance on (often negative) coping strategies to secure food, following a distribution. As such, they reflect the extent to which the food assistance delivered (cash or in-kind) has helped curb vulnerabilities in relation to baseline.

113. In other sectors, such as agricultural support, cash for livelihoods or improvement in living conditions, PDM served to capture the utility of the assistance provided, through proxies such as the timeliness of the distribution, the extent to which the assistance was used as intended by recipient households, any alternative usage, and the type of results obtained. The evaluation found the agricultural support was the component of the EcoSec programme for which PDM was carried out most extensively. For **cash for livelihoods (MEI)**, which targets considerably fewer households, monitoring was less extensive, in line with the more limited use of this modality; however, it was equally detailed. For example, in the case of MEI support provided in Bamenda in late 2023, PDM monitoring involved the collection of data on the state of progress of the micro-enterprise, any correlation with the type of business activity supported, as well as the number of employees and the type of client base secured.⁷⁰

114. Alongside PDM, Post-Harvest Monitoring (PHM) has also been carried out to gather data on yields, assess their contribution to household food and economic security, and adapt EcoSec assistance as required. For example, the PHM exercise conducted in early 2023 in the Maroua and Kousseri regions was based on sample of 291 households, out of 12,500 households assisted, and allowed to establish –among other insights—that three quarters and two-thirds of recipients, respectively, had been able to improve their food production and to generate sufficient revenue from the assistance provided.⁷¹ Another PHM round, conducted later the same year on a sample of 500 recipient households, used a Livelihood Coping Strategy (LCS) Index to assess the extent to which the agricultural support provided enabled recipients to reduce their reliance on negative coping strategies.

115. Based on KIIs and a document review, the evaluation found that the monitoring conducted for the EcoSec programme was granular and of consistently high quality. It is worth noting that monitoring activities of this quality are, by necessity, resource intensive.

4.2.4 How have management systems enabled the efficient use of resources?

Aside from needs assessments, procurement, monitoring, and programme cycle management, which are discussed in earlier sections, the key aspects of management systems for discussion in this evaluation relate to the multidisciplinary approach adopted in ICRC operations in Cameroon, including in EcoSec activities.

This topic calls for an operations-wide perspective. Given that it is closely related to question 3.4, both questions are addressed in the same section below (Findings 13 and 14).

⁶⁷ See, for example, Quarterly EcoSec Report I, 2022.

⁶⁸ <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/reduced-coping-strategies-index>

⁶⁹ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Quarterly EcoSec report I, 2023.

4.3 In their planning and delivery, are the distinct sector components of the programme consistent and mutually reinforcing?

Summary of Findings

- *The three main pillars of the EcoSec programme form a coherent range of activities. This is true even as these activities are often conducted independently of each other, and do not always contribute to the same geographically circumscribed outcomes. Given the strong diversity of environments in which it operates, the ability of the programme to achieve a broad range of differentiated outcomes is an asset, as it enables the programme to be adaptive and context appropriate.*
- *As with the programme as a whole, its emergency pillar is composed of a coherent bundle of activities that can be carried out independently of each other. This adds to the programme's adaptiveness to diverse and fluid environments.*
- *The EcoSec programme contributes to protection results at both the level of protection activities, and at the more strategic level of Protection impact pursued in a multidisciplinary perspective.*
- *While the data and evidence are limited, they strongly suggest that the multidisciplinary approach adopted in the EcoSec programme adds significantly to the administrative burden which staff must reckon with. There was a sense among interviewees that multidisciplinary assessments were heavily focused on field work, when they should instead focus on analysis. While some staff also felt that a multidisciplinary outlook was sometimes imposed on them with few clear benefits, most interviewees expressed support for it in principle and acknowledged that it was still a work in progress.*

4.3.1 How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are the three main thematic pillars of the EcoSec Programme?

Finding 11: The three main pillars of the EcoSec programme --emergency relief assistance, resilience and livelihoods, and capacity development—form a highly coherent range of activities. This is true even as these activities are often conducted independently of each other, and do not always contribute to the same geographically circumscribed outcomes. Given the diversity of environments in which it operates, the ability of the programme to achieve a broad range of differentiated outcomes is an asset, as it enables the programme to be adaptive and to remain relevant to context-specific needs.

116. As described in earlier sections, the three main thematic pillars of the EcoSec programme consist of emergency relief assistance, resilience and livelihoods, and capacity-development.

117. Taken as a whole, the evaluation found that these three pillars constitute a highly coherent “toolkit” for improving the economic security of vulnerable groups in areas affected by armed violence in Cameroon. The evidence collected for the evaluation shows that these three pillars generally serve their intended purpose. The emergency relief pillar addresses sudden onset food and non-food needs, such as those of forcibly displaced households. The resilience and livelihoods pillar measurably contributes to reducing vulnerabilities across host, returnee and displaced groups, where conditions allow. Capacity development, meanwhile, helps to introduce an element of sustainability and cost-efficiency to the delivery mechanisms deployed for the programme.

118. The starting assumption for the evaluation was that the three pillars of the EcoSec programme were interlinked, and shared results pathways that could be mapped in a common theory of change. Following data collection in the field, the evaluation team found that the notion of “toolkit” is more accurate to describe the relation between the programme’s three pillars. While consistent in their common purpose of improving the food and economic security of affected populations, they have often been applied independently of each other, and do not necessarily stand in the same results chains.

119. The evaluation found that the “toolkit” profile of the EcoSec programme is, in fact, well suited to the contextual reality of Cameroon’s diverse operating environments. It has allowed the programme to adapt to security conditions that have often been specific to distinct localities. While it is sometimes true that, in the case of a given group or community, emergency relief assistance has been closely followed by resilience or livelihoods interventions that have added to the same impact, the reality on the ground is more complex. Emergency food needs often occur among populations who, being displaced or under threat, do not have viable access to land. Conversely, populations who do enjoy access to land, and can therefore engage in resilience/livelihoods activities, often tend to be less dependent on emergency food assistance. For this reason, it is appropriate that the emergency relief and resilience/livelihoods pillars of the programme be allowed to operate independently of each other, in a way that does not always culminate in added benefits for the same groups or communities.

120. Similarly, the evaluation found that the feasibility of capacity development interventions varies considerably depending on the operating environment. In the Far North, government and National Society (NS) counterparts are well established, and give the ICRC the possibility of engaging in bilateral cooperation aimed at developing local capacities. No such opportunity exists in NWSW, where government and NS actors are largely absent at local level. In this case, again, it is appropriate that interventions geared to capacity development be deployed pragmatically and sometimes independently of the programme’s two other pillars. In the Far North, the feasibility of capacity development has allowed the programme’s resilience/livelihoods pillar to attain a large scale, as it could draw on local government and NS capacities that were developed largely thanks to the ICRC. This clearly demonstrates the synergies that can be achieved between the programme’s resilience/livelihoods and capacity development pillars. In NWSW, where prospects for capacity development are more limited, resilience/livelihoods activities have remained comparatively more modest.

4.3.2 How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are interventions within the emergency pillar of the programme (emergency food, cash transfers, nutrition)?

Finding 12: As with the programme as a whole, its emergency pillar is composed of a coherent bundle of activities that can be carried out independently of each other. This adds to the programme’s adaptiveness to diverse and fluid environments.

121. The programme’s emergency pillar is composed of a.) in-kind food relief, b.) multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), c.) nutrition support (GAM and SAM), and d.) improvements to living conditions (i.e. non-food items including emergency shelter).

122. As with the main pillars of the programme as a whole, emergency interventions are largely deployed on a “toolkit” basis, to ensure that appropriate assistance can be provided in diverse emergency contexts and situations. Hence, emergency assistance can be delivered both in-kind and in cash, depending on the most suitable option. Where *cash in counter* poses a security risk, as has been the case in NWSW, *mobile money* can be used as an alternative. Other forms of emergency assistance, too, are context appropriate. For example, in nutrition support, the supply of Plumpy Nut to local malnutrition treatment centres (CNAS) is confined to the Far North, as rates of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in NWSW do not warrant this type of intervention.

123. While the above activities all serve the same goals, they can be carried out on a standalone basis and are not necessarily linked in the same results chain. This does not detract from their relevance. On the contrary, the fact that these interventions are interchangeable (i.e. cash or in-kind) provides the programme with the agility needed to ensure that assistance is well adapted to the context.

124. Within the emergency pillar, two clusters of activity were identified as providing enhanced and complementary outcomes for specific groups. The first is the combination of food relief (cash or kind) and non-food items aimed at improved living conditions. Most often, both types of assistance are distributed to the same group (typically consisting of IDPs), to address their immediate needs while in displacement. The other is the combination of nutrition support for under-fives and food rations for the households to which they belong. Here, a causal link is present, as the intended purpose of food rations is to improve the food security of all household members, and thereby to provide a family environment more conducive to the recovery of the malnourished child.

4.3.3 How and to what extent does the EcoSec programme contribute to Protection outcomes?

Finding 13: The EcoSec programme contributes to protection results at both the level of protection activities, and at the more strategic level of Protection impact pursued in a multidisciplinary perspective.

125. The EcoSec programme aims to contribute both to Protection outcomes in a technical or operational sense (i.e. Detention, PCP, etc.), as well as “Protection with a capital P”⁷²; that is, Protection in a more strategic and multi-sectoral perspective, where results across multiple programmes converge at impact level towards an overall reduction of the exposure to risk of vulnerable groups targeted.

EcoSec contribution to Protection programme activities

126. In terms of protection in an operational sense, as noted in Finding 5 above, the EcoSec programme has a formal PfR General Objective (GO) geared to a protection outcome, with is to provide MEI support to families of missing persons.

127. Currently, about 200 households are assisted through this activity.⁷³ The workflow involved in the review and selection of MEI-eligible households is detailed in a dedicated document produced in 2024.⁷⁴ For Protection cases, the referral process generally works well, although some ICRC staff reported that it relied heavily on time-consuming consultations between the relevant departments. (The same was said of referrals from the Health department, for families of patients with weapon injuries.)

128. In part, the complexity of referrals appeared to be linked to a lack of clarity on which of the several Departments involved held responsibility for final decision-making. These procedural difficulties have since been addressed in a revision of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing the referral of Protection and Health cases to the EcoSec programme. Independently of them, the quality of MEI support provided to referred cases was high and contributed measurably to their income, according to recipient heads of household interviewed for the evaluation.

Impact-level Protection (“Protection with a capital P”)

129. Regarding the EcoSec programme’s contribution to more impact-level protection results (i.e. “Protection with a capital P”), this derives more from the multi-disciplinary outlook

⁷² Stephane Bonamy, Cadre opérationnel de la délégation (email), 15 April 2024.

⁷³ EcoSec Operational Plan, 2024.

⁷⁴ Schema d’Octroi de l’Appui aux MEIs, July 2024.

adopted by the EcoSec department, along with other departments. The framework for this multi-sectoral approach to Protection impact is set out in a note to staff from the Head of Delegation, dated April 2024, in which Protection is broadly defined as a reduction of vulnerable groups' exposure to risk, notably in situations of armed violence.⁷⁵

130. The approach described calls for the identification of geographical priority zones, based on vulnerability and access considerations, and within these zones, the rollout of *coordinated* interventions drawing on multiple sectors or *métiers*. This model is used by other Protection actors⁷⁶. In it, "Protection with a capital P" is envisioned as a set of area-based interventions that are multi-sectoral in nature, and whose intended result at impact level is to lower the risk to which vulnerable groups are exposed.⁷⁷ Risk reduction is seen as depending on multisectoral outcomes that cut across three key thematic areas: a.) threat reduction through dialogue with arms carriers and other actors, b.) Support to affected populations to reduce their vulnerability, and c.) Capacity-building support aimed at vulnerable populations, to help them protect themselves and cope with identified risks.⁷⁸

131. At the outset, these three thematic areas highlight the relevance of the EcoSec programme to a multi-sectoral approach; indeed, two of these areas –resilience and assistance—are core to EcoSec activities. An analysis of the operating environment in Cameroon makes clear that armed violence is a root cause of economic insecurity in the Far North and NWSW; in this sense, EcoSec interventions are central to Protection outcomes, as envisioned in the multi-sectoral approach described above.

132. One of the main entry points for the EcoSec's contribution to this multi-sectoral approach is the conduct of Beneficiary Needs and Vulnerability Assessments (BNVAs). As shown in BNVA reports produced in 2023 and 2024⁷⁹, these assessments are multi-sectoral and are carried out through a strong Protection prism. Notably, they illustrate the direct causal links between armed violence and economic insecurity, and document, for example, how security risk and limited access to land can severely constrain agricultural production.⁸⁰ The information collected allows EcoSec to profile the needs and coping behaviours of affected communities, and to design interventions that address economic insecurity in a protection perspective.

133. One concrete example of the protection dimension of EcoSec activities was provided by IDPs in the community of Malende, in NWSW. In an FGD, heads of displaced families explained that they still had access to the land they cultivated before the conflict. For security reasons, however, they had opted to displace themselves and their families to Malende nearby. Once there, they received cash support from the EcoSec programme, which allowed them to pay rent and daily public transport to and from the land they cultivated. Asked what they would have done without EcoSec assistance, participants said they would have been forced to return to their home community, despite the continued security risk. Several of these displaced households were also referred to the Protection department for RFL assistance, as some of their members had been arrested by the security forces.

⁷⁵ Stephane Bonamy, Cadre opérationnel de la délégation (email), 15 April 2024.

⁷⁶ For example, the UNHCR uses area-based programming to enable cross-sectoral outcomes, often in a community-based protection perspective. For more information, see for example, UNHCR, Area-based programming and Humanitarian Early Recovery, April 2024.

⁷⁷ Stephane Bonamy, Cadre opérationnel de la délégation (email), 15 April 2024.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Source: EcoSec Department, ICRC Cameroon.

⁸⁰ For example, a BNVA summary issued for 2024 states that 16% of households surveyed were the victims of abuse (looting, extortion, damage of property) and 52% felt exposed to risk when they worked their land. A previous BNVA, conducted in March 2023, found that 76% of the host population and 85% of the local IDP population in Logone et Chari struggled to secure food due to insecurity.

134. Another example is provided by a Post-harvest Monitoring exercise conducted in Bamenda in 2023. In an FGD conducted during the exercise, participants said that thanks to agricultural support provided by the EcoSec programme, community members could organise returns to their fields in large groups and thereby reduce the risk of harassment and attacks. 96% of the recipients also stated that the assistance had allowed them and their households to reduce their dependence on negative coping mechanisms.⁸¹

4.3.4 How resource-intensive is the programme's multidisciplinary approach, and is the value of synergies achieved commensurate with the investment made?

Finding 14: While the data and evidence are limited, they suggest that the multidisciplinary approach adopted in the EcoSec programme adds significantly to the administrative burden which staff must reckon with. There was a sense among interviewees that multidisciplinary assessments were heavily focused on field-based data collection, when they should instead focus on analysis. While some staff also felt that a multidisciplinary outlook was sometimes imposed on them with few clear returns on efforts invested to date, most interviewees expressed support for it in principle and acknowledged that it was still a work in progress.

135. A multidisciplinary approach aims to break down departmental silos and enable synergies between distinct sectors of activity, in view of improving the quality and appropriate outcomes. It also aims to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale in programme delivery, by combining resources. An examination of this topic would normally require an in-depth review of quantitative data sources, such as programme budgets and staff timesheets. Given time and resource limitations, these types of datasets could not be examined. The response to the evaluation below, is based primarily on qualitative evidence gathered during staff interviews.

136. In interviews, delegation staff generally felt that the multidisciplinary approach applied to programme planning was time-consuming, and that efforts invested had not yet yielded clear benefits. However, the approach itself was not put in doubt, even if its benefits were still seen to be hypothetical at this stage. There was broad acknowledgement that the approach was still a work in progress, and that much of the time spent on it was to develop tools and processes that would, in the end, be worth the resources invested.

137. It should also be noted that in interviews, the time spent on multidisciplinary programme processes could not be clearly distinguished from time dedicated to other aspects of programming, such as needs assessments and monitoring. The sense from staff interviewed was that these programmes processes were arduous and demanding, and that expectations of a multidisciplinary approach were adding further to their complexity, by requiring extra planning and reporting work, using unfamiliar tools and templates.ⁱ

138. Among the observations made during interviews, three in particular are worth highlighting. First, there was a sense among some staff that multidisciplinary needs assessments were not always conducted in an optimal way. According to these sources, the multidisciplinary nature of assessments is mainly to simplify the logistics involved, by organising single convoys to the locations where they are due to take place. Once multidisciplinary assessment teams arrive on site, however, it can be a challenge to complete assessments in a single day. This is especially true as the multiple *metiers* involved require sector-specific bilateral discussions with the same stakeholders. As a result, some departments organise individual follow-up visits in the following days to complete their assessments. Based on discussions with staff, it appeared that the main focus was currently

⁸¹ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023.

on the *conduct* of multidisciplinary assessments, rather than on an *integrated analysis* of the resulting data.

139. On a more positive note, several interviewees noted that with the adoption of Device Magic data collection software, and the development of promising assessment templates like the one used for BNVAs, multidisciplinary data analysis was likely to become easier and more efficient.

140. Several staff interviewed also felt that, in some cases, a multidisciplinary approach seemed somewhat artificial and unnecessarily process driven. Where this was the case, outcomes tended to be limited, relative to time spent. For example, several staff were sceptical about the benefits of the multidisciplinary Plans of Action (PoAs) to which they had contributed at sub-delegation level. They felt that these PoAs were overly complex and added little to established programme practices. The same risk is present in multisectoral results monitoring, where set indicators may fail to capture positive outcomes that are highly context-specific and difficult to predict in advance.⁸² Where this is the case, a more open and qualitative approach to results monitoring may be better suited.

141. Several interviewees pointed out that a multidisciplinary approach should be pragmatically implemented and remain driven by operational common sense, rather than being enforced through procedural requirements. This outlook converges with the guidelines circulated to staff in April 2024⁸³, which place emphasis on cross-sectoral *coordination*, and makes clear that multidisciplinary interventions need not take place if they are not justified.⁸⁴

142. To conclude on this topic, it emerged from interviews that the added demands of multidisciplinary programming, in terms of staff time and resources spent, relate primarily to procedural requirements that are yet to demonstrate their value. Staff were committed to a multidisciplinary approach but were consistent in their view that it should not come at the cost of extra administrative burden. A common assumption among staff was that multidisciplinary could and should be achieved without the need to add substantially to this burden.

⁸² Like, for example, the protection outcomes described in Finding 13 above.

⁸³ Stephane Bonamy, Cadre opérationnel de la délégation (email), 15 April 2024.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

4.4 How well does the programme complement the actions of other actors? How well does it contribute to developing the capacity of partners, to support resilience and the sustainability of programme results?

Summary of findings

- *Programme partnerships and cooperation have measurably contributed to building local capacity. However, given a challenging context, questions remain about the overall contribution of this capacity to the broader sustainability of partners, and their ability to eventually receive ownership of the programme.*
- *Synergies with other departments in ICRC operations in Cameroon are strong, but could be further improved through closer coordination and joint planning. There are indications of synergies achieved with external partners, although further evidence would be required to confirm this conclusively.*
- *At community level, ownership of the EcoSec programme depends heavily on the capacity of local committees (and other local actors) to take active part in the programme, and to articulate a vision for it. In the Far North, community ownerships are generally more pronounced, thanks to the stronger presence of the CRC and “Relais communautaires” at the local level. In NWSW, where no such presence exists in a meaningful way, community ownership is markedly weaker.*

4.4.1 To what extent have programme partnerships and cooperation with local stakeholders contributed to building local capacity? To what extent have partnerships and cooperation contributed to the sustainability of programme outcomes? To what extent have partnerships and cooperation been consistent with the respective comparative advantage of stakeholders involved? ⁸⁵

Finding 15: Programme partnerships and cooperation have measurably contributed to building the local capacity of CRC and Ministry partners, aimed in general at specific programme tasks like field-based data collection and vaccination campaigns. However, given a challenging context, questions remain about the overall contribution of this capacity to the broader sustainability of partners, and their ability to eventually receive ownership of the programme.

143. As described in Finding 7 above, capacity development is a core component of the EcoSec programme and is most often carried out through training activities aimed at its stakeholders. While FGDs showed clearly that training to increase the resilience capacity of households was very well received, efforts to improve the organisational capacity of government partners and the Cameroon Red Cross was often more challenging. Indeed, their performance is constrained by deep-rooted systemic weaknesses that cannot be resolved through training alone. In NWSW, the limited presence of these actors limits the feasibility of increasing the sustainability of outcomes through the development of local capacities.

144. Despite these obstacles, training provided by the ICRC to the Cameroon Red Cross (CRC) has allowed to build a critical base of local volunteers that play an important role in the programme's implementation in the Far North, notably in the areas of needs assessments and monitoring. While this volunteer base is key to the programme's implementation, there was a sense from interviews that it is perfectible, and that continued efforts are still required to reinforce the organisational capacity of the CRC, so that it might perform to the required

⁸⁵ Note that these two questions are under separate EQs in the Evaluation Framework. However, being closely related, there are responded to here in the same finding to ease the report's narrative flow.

standards. Several interviewees in the Far North noted that the CRC at the sub-division level generally remains very weak and requires close supervision from both the ICRC and CRC Offices at Division level. Some ICRC staff also stated that the capacity of the CRC at Division level was, itself, limited, and required close, ongoing and resource-intensive engagement. The issues mentioned in interviews included an occasional lack of impartiality of CRC volunteers, which adversely impacted beneficiary selection. Some cases of fraud were also reported, although they appeared to be isolated. More generally, the performance of the CRC at Division and Sub-division levels was reportedly affected by a high turnover rate, which meant that individuals who had received ICRC training did not always remain in their positions.

145. The picture that emerged regarding the development of MINADER and MINEPIA capacity was broadly similar to that of the CRC. The EcoSec programme provided substantial support to the training of MINEPIA technical agents for vaccination campaigns. In addition to supporting the establishment of the MINADER/IRAD seed quality control laboratory in Maroua, it also trained staff attached to this facility. While there is good evidence that this transfer of technical knowledge has been largely successful, the extent to which it has translated into sustainable institutional capacity remains uncertain. Indeed, the MINADER, like other government ministries, remains chronically under-resourced. Among other adverse consequences, this impacts its capacity for effective project management and staff supervision.

146. In the case of both CRC and MINEPIA, there was evidence that management and supervisory capacity still needed reinforcement, independently of the technical skills acquired through ICRC training. With both these partners, the retention in programme activities of staff trained by the ICRC is closely linked to the continued payment of per diem. In the case of CRC staff, some frustration was reported in interviews about the reduction of ICRC per diem, from CFA 15,000 to CFA 12,000 of CFA 5,000.⁸⁶ Regarding MINEPIA technical agents, several interviewees reported that their participation in programme events, such as training or planning meetings, was directly dependent on the receipt of compensation.

147. An immediate obstacle to the sustainability of outcomes achieved by the programme is that neither the CRC nor Government partners can take over the payment of per diems in the foreseeable future. Beyond this, MINEPIA officials in interviews made clear that they are heavily reliant on the EcoSec programme for renewables such as vaccines, as well as critical equipment and small infrastructure such as cold chains and vehicles.

148. The question of the EcoSec programme's sustainability is made more challenging by the fact that the ICRC, to date, is the only aid actor in Cameroon which provides substantive agricultural and livestock support to vulnerable rural communities. In interviews, MINEPIA officials expressed hope that the ICRC might extend its vaccination programme beyond the three border districts affected by armed violence in the Far North. The reason for this is that since a World Bank-funded vaccination campaign across the entire region several years ago, rates of immunity against sheep and goat plague in the local livestock population have gone down to 50% in the Far North, from 86% after the campaign was completed. At the time of data collection for this evaluation, no actor other than the ICRC appeared able to cover the resilience needs of rural communities in the far North, let alone to expand this coverage beyond the three conflict-affected districts where the ICRC is active.

149. Aside from the scarcity of aid actors involved in agricultural and livestock support in Cameroon, another challenge to the continuity of EcoSec activities is the defunding by USAID of its aid programmes in the country. In a note dated 20 March 2024, the EcoSec department proposes to mitigate the impact of the ICRC's own budget cuts by advocating for other actors, notably WFP, to step up their food and economic security programmes. However, their capacity to do so is now severely curtailed. In interviews for the evaluation, several UN sources

⁸⁶ Source: KII with CRC staff, Kousseri, March 2025.

mentioned that USAID usually accounted for 70% of WFP's annual operating budget in Cameroon and expressed grave concerns about the continuity of this agency's programme in the country.

150. Against this backdrop, an assessment of the respective comparative advantage of stakeholders involved in the EcoSec programme highlights a pronounced lack of balance between the significant strengths of the ICRC and the relative lack of added value offered by other programme stakeholders. Among the ICRC's more notable strengths are its better access to hard-to-reach areas, and the operational agility which it derives from its know-how and the "toolkit" approach applied in EcoSec activities. Despite severe challenges, another notable strength of the EcoSec programme is the continued scale of its coverage. Weighed against these advantages, other stakeholders in the programme have comparatively little to offer, other than limited opportunities to localise certain activities. Given their lack of independent revenue streams and their uneven geographical coverage, government and National Society partners in the programme are likely to remain dependent on the ICRC.

4.4.2 To what extent have EcoSec interventions created synergies with other programmes, including outside of ICRC?

Finding 16: Synergies with other departments in ICRC operations in Cameroon are strong, but could be further improved through closer coordination and joint planning. There are indications of synergies achieved with external partners, although further evidence would be required to confirm this conclusively.

151. Within ICRC operations in Cameroon, the synergies and complementarity between Protection and EcoSec interventions are strong, as discussed in Finding 13 above. Outside of these, synergies exist between EcoSec and WatHab. Through nutrition, as well as the referral of war wounded for MEI support to their families, synergies are also present between EcoSec and Health.

152. Regarding WatHab support of EcoSec resilience activities, this has consisted of the drilling of four agro-pastoral water wells for livestock in the Far North (Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga districts). In addition, the WatHab department has led and overseen the construction and fitting of the MINADER/IRAD seed laboratory in Maroua. More indirectly, improved hygiene conditions enabled by WatHab activities have contributed to the prevention of malnutrition among infants, by limiting the spread of water-borne diseases.

153. While the synergies achieved in these activities are clear, a number of practical lessons have emerged from their implementation. Regarding pastoral wells, the timing of activities is key, according to WatHab staff interviewed, as seasonal rainfall can vary the level of underground water tables. Drilling must ideally take place in the dry season, when levels at their lowest, to ensure it reaches a sufficient depth. In some cases, late planning between the two districts involved caused work on the wells to be delayed to the rainy season, when conditions for drilling were sub-optimal.

154. Regarding the MINADER/IRAD seed laboratory project, interviewees explained that delays were incurred because the original terms of reference ("cahier des charge") for the construction of the building were not specific enough. After construction was completed, additional work needed to be carried out to ensure that the facility complied with the required standards. According to interviewees, the resulting delays could have been avoided or minimised if this extra work had been stipulated at the outset.

155. Regarding synergies with the Health Department, these are most visible in nutrition activities, which span both Moderate Acute (MAM) and Severe Acute (SAM) malnutrition. Cooperation between the EcoSec and Health Department reflects the fact that nutrition support spans both food security and medical interventions. In the EcoSec programme, this consists of the medically supervised supply of Plumpy Nut to four Ambulatory Nutritional Centres for the Severely Malnourished (CNAS), along with targeted training aimed at CNAS

staff, and the community-based surveillance and sensitisation activities described in Finding 4 above. As mentioned in Finding 12 above, these nutrition support activities are complemented by the distribution of food rations to households with severely malnourished children treated at EcoSec-supported CNAS. In addition, households with malnourished pregnant and lactating women also receive food support in localities covered by the EcoSec programme.

156. As with WatHab, it is clear that synergies between the EcoSec and Health departments are central to the added value achieved in nutrition activities jointly conducted. In interviews, however, there were indications that there was some room for improvement in the coordination between both Departments. For example, the exit of the Health department from Kolofata appears to be done with little or no advance notice to EcoSec counterparts. Conversely, the fact that Malnutrition is placed under the EcoSec programme involves planning and procurement processes that are not always the simplest for the Health department, according to interviewees. Nonetheless, these challenges were described as relatively minor by the Departments concerned.

157. Externally to the ICRC, close working relations with MINADER on the quality control and seeds has helped to minimize delays in procurement, according to ICRC and MINADER interviewees. More broadly, there are strong grounds for assuming that the capacity development support provided under the EcoSec programme yields valuable benefits beyond it. For example, the training of MINADER technical agents and the seed laboratory built for the MINEPIA are highly likely to contribute to agricultural resilience across the Far North region as a whole, and possibly beyond it. However, data to quantify this could not be collected, given time constraints.

4.4.3 How have partnerships and cooperation contributed to local ownership and community leadership of interventions carried out?

Finding 17: At community level, ownership of the EcoSec programme depends heavily on the capacity of local committees and other local actors to take active part in the programme, and to articulate a vision for it. In the Far North, community ownership is generally more pronounced, thanks to the stronger presence of the CRC and Relais communautaires at the local level. In NWSW, where no such presence exists in a meaningful way, community ownership is markedly weaker.

158. Overall, there were indications that community participation and leadership in EcoSec interventions was stronger in the Far North than in NWSW. This was due in part to the presence of local CRC committees which, despite their limited capacity, helped to instil momentum in community organisation around EcoSec activities. Alongside CRC committees, the *relais communautaires* that often existed at local level also enabled a strong element of community ownership over activities carried out. Both these actors play an important role in EcoSec activities locally, notably in the areas of beneficiary registration and community sensitisation (protection, nutrition).

159. It should be noted that, in some localities, a degree of tension was occasionally reported between CRC volunteers and the *relais communautaires*, whose activities sometimes overlap. Where this was the case, local communities appeared more supportive of the latter. In one FGD conducted in the Far North, some participants indicated that the CRC was not welcome, unless their visit was to provide assistance. In Kolofata, similarly, the Head of District gave instructions in 2023 for all health and nutrition activities to be carried out by the *relais* and not the local CRC committees. Although notable, these tensions appear minor overall and are a sign that the communities involved are mobilised enough that they can convey clear expectations regarding the local conduct of activities.

160. In NWSW, community mobilisation over the EcoSec programme was markedly more limited. An important contributing factor to this is the absence of CRC and local government structure to underpin community-based organisation. Another factor to consider is that in

several of the communities covered by the programme, the local population has only returned relatively recently, with some local inhabitants remaining displaced. The security climate in NWSW remains uncertain and is not yet, at this stage, conducive to the full resumption of community activities. In these conditions, the performance of local registration and grievance committees has generally remained low. As mentioned in Finding 4 above, an indication of this is the fact that the many grievances expressed by local households regarding the limited scale of EcoSec assistance have been conveyed to the ICRC directly, with local committees playing a very limited role in their resolution.

4.5 How well has the programme achieved the desired outcomes, and thereby contributed to improving the economic security and resilience of affected populations?

Summary of Findings

- *In both the Far North and NWSW, there is strong evidence that the EcoSec programme has markedly and meaningfully improved conditions for the target population.*
- *The EcoSec programme has taken clear and deliberate measures to target women and girls and to empower them, notably through its Resilience pillar. In KIIs and FGDs, as well as through PDM exercises, women who have been supported by the programme have generally expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the assistance provided.*
- *Through its agricultural and livestock support interventions, as well as through cash transfers geared to income-generation among targeted households, the EcoSec programme has contributed to the resilience of affected populations by allowing them to protect and develop their economic assets in highly adverse conditions.*
- *The evaluation found no evidence of unforeseen negative effects caused by the programme. Likewise, all positive effects appear to have been documented; few such effects remain unforeseen at this stage. A number of positive outcomes can be assumed regarding the use of capacities developed for the programme. However, they remain to be verified.*

4.5.1 To what extent have the interventions improved the situation of the target population?

Finding 18: *In both the Far North and NWSW, there is strong evidence that the EcoSec programme has markedly and meaningfully improved conditions for the target population.*

161. In both FGDs and programme reporting, there was strong evidence that the range of EcoSec activities improved the situation of the target population. As mentioned in Finding 1 above, participants in FGDs placed very high value on the type of assistance they received from the programme; their grievances, if any, related more to beneficiary selection and occasional delays in the delivery of this support. In FGDs, these grievances were generally described as minor compared to the benefits of the programme.

162. Likewise, PDM and PHM data referenced in Quarterly EcoSec report has been consistently positive since 2020 (the earliest year for which reporting data is available). This

is true for emergency food assistance⁸⁷, nutrition⁸⁸, items to improve living conditions⁸⁹, agricultural support⁹⁰, and MPCA⁹¹ and Livelihoods cash⁹² (MEI and SMS).

163. For livestock support, monitoring activities do not collect direct feedback from households; however, MINEPIA staff interviewed for the evaluation were clear that EcoSec support added considerable value to efforts made to increase the resilience of rural communities in the Far North. A compelling indication of this is that immunity rates among small ruminants in the three districts covered by the EcoSec programme was at 66% in late 2023, while in other districts it has declined below 50% and continues to fall. In ICRC-covered areas, monitoring data highlighted evidence that the size of the livestock population was growing as a result of vaccinations.⁹³ Given these results, as noted above, MINEPIA has appealed to the ICRC to expand its livestock support to the entire Far North region.

4.5.2 Have interventions empowered specific groups (women, girls) and met their needs?

Finding 19: The EcoSec programme has taken clear and deliberate measures to target women and girls and to empower them, notably through its Resilience pillar. In KIs and FGDs, as well as through PDM exercises, women who have been supported by the programme have generally expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the assistance provided.

164. Women and girls are proactively targeted by EcoSec interventions in Cameroon. Notably, the programme's selection criteria capture multiple facets of vulnerability among women, by including female heads of household, as well as young single mothers and women with no support or source of revenue. This is in line with the findings of PDM conducted by the EcoSec department, which highlight markedly higher levels of vulnerability among women in affected populations. For example, in a PDM exercise conducted after the distribution of

⁸⁷ For example, in the first quarter of 2023, several PDM exercises conducted in the far North found that almost all targeted households had received food assistance as intended. Of these, only 2% adopted highly negative coping mechanisms during the period under review, which signals improved food security. However, 30% of them consumed their rations faster than intended (under 4 weeks), and 50% to 65% found that the assistance was distributed too late (due to procurement and access issues). This suggests that although the assistance improved the situation of recipients, their vulnerability remains pronounced.

⁸⁸ For example, data for the last quarter of 2023 across the four CNAS shows an acceptable rate of recovery among children under five treated for SAM. This averaged 94.5%. However, as noted in the QER report covering this period, recovery rates were adversely impacted by multiple pipeline breaks in the supply of Plumpy nut, which affected the continuity of treatment. Results were also good for MAM treatment among under-fives and pregnant and lactating mothers.

⁸⁹ For example, following the distribution of material to repair the roofs of housing destroyed in inter-communal conflict in Kousséri, 98% of respondents said the assistance was appropriate, although they also noted delays in the provision of this support (due to procurement issues). Only 2% of the respondents sold the materials provided to purchase more urgent items.

⁹⁰ For example, in the third quarter of 2022, a PDM exercise showed that 97% of the farmers who received seeds from the EcoSec programme in the Kousséri region reported good or very good agricultural outputs. In the fourth quarter of the same year, a PDM exercise in NWSW reported 82% positive feedback from farmers in that region.

⁹¹ For example, as part of an emergency intervention that also involved in-kind food and household items, MPCA cash grants provided in NWSW in the last quarter of 2024 contributed to increase of "acceptable" food consumption score from 19% at baseline to 50% of at the time when PDM was conducted. In 24% of cases, cash support was used for food, to complement in-kind rations; it also served to cover education (34%) and health (19%) expenses.

⁹² For example, in a monitoring exercise conducted among 81 recipients of MEI/SMS in Mayo Sava in the second quarter of 2023, 85% of respondents reported that income generated from the support delivered was sufficient to provide for their livelihoods; 12% reported that it was above their expectations. None of the respondents was relying on negative coping mechanisms. But 31% overall said that the income generated was too limited to grow their business.

⁹³ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023.

MPCA cash to 697 households in Bamenda in early 2023, it emerged that female-headed households were significantly more inclined to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number of meals per day, reducing the size of portions, or reducing foods consumption among adults to provide for children. Likewise, women made up 83% of those beneficiaries who spent a very large share (more than 65%) of the cash received on food, denoting a high level of food insecurity.⁹⁴

165. Across the programme's multiple pillars, women make up a significant proportion of those who receive assistance. This is true even outside of nutrition, which by nature targets mothers along with their children.

166. Although gender-specific indicators are not available for programme-wide results, gender-disaggregated data for set programme interventions confirm a substantive proportion of women among the programme's beneficiaries. For example, among the 18,759 households who benefitted from the EcoSec-supported vaccination of their livestock and poultry in 2021, some 2,574 (or 14%) were headed by women.⁹⁵ Likewise, among the 22,625 beneficiary households for the livestock vaccination campaign carried out in late 2023, some 4,112 (or 18%) were female headed. The proportion of female-headed households who benefitted from poultry vaccination was even higher, as poultry farming is more widely practiced by women. Of the 37,941 households whose poultry was vaccinated in 2023, some 14,982 (or 39%) were headed by women.

167. In the area of cash for livelihoods, where more latitude exists for the proactive targeting of women, a particularly large proportion of female recipients was noted. For example, among the intake of 60 eligible beneficiaries for MEI assistance carried out in NWSW in late 2023, some 45 (or 75%) were women. Perhaps unsurprisingly, female-headed households also form the majority of recipients of MEI assistance provided to families of the missing, accounting for 52% of the total caseload in 2022.⁹⁶

168. In FGDs, in which the participation of women was consistently strong, that were was clear sense that the assistance provided at community level benefitted women as well as men. In some communities, an informal division of labour existed whereby men in the households were in charge of cash crops, while women were responsible for food crops. Where this was the case, ICRC assistance (for example seeds and sprayers) was described as helpful across both cash and food crops, involving both men and women. In FGDs, several female heads of families reported that they had received ICRC assistance (emergency food, cash and agricultural support) which had been helpful to them. During the same FGDs, some male participants also noted what they viewed as the high proportion of women among recipients of EcoSec assistance.

4.5.3 What is the evidence of increased resilience among target populations? To what extent have interventions reduced the vulnerability of households to asset depletion?

Finding 20: Through its agricultural and livestock support interventions, as well as through cash transfers geared to income-generation among targeted households, the EcoSec programme has contributed to the resilience of affected populations by allowing them to protect and develop their economic assets in adverse conditions.

169. Through its livestock and agricultural support components, as well as its cash for livelihoods interventions, the EcoSec programme is heavily geared towards resilience. In terms of scale, the most significant resilience-building component of the programme relates to vaccination. The direct objective of this programme component is to protect small ruminants,

⁹⁴ Quarterly EcoSec Report I, 2023.

⁹⁵ Quarterly EcoSec Report II, 2021.

⁹⁶ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023

which are the main economic asset of beneficiary households and are therefore critical to their resilience. Poultry vaccination is also key to sustainable food security among the vulnerable communities covered.

170. In 2023, the EcoSec programme enabled the vaccination of slightly over 800,000 heads of livestock, and about 460,000 units of poultry.⁹⁷ Assuming results were comparable for preceding years (for which no quantitative reporting is available), this intervention has contributed significantly to the protection of household assets in the three districts covered by the programme.

171. Similarly, in terms of agricultural support, the programme's outcomes have contributed substantively to resilience, by providing inputs that enabled recipient communities to sustain higher levels of agricultural production over time. Hence, in the case of the 110 farmer groupings established in NWSW under the programme, pastoral well drilling, as well as the provision of seeds, fertilizer and equipment in the Far North has been a significant contribution to economic resilience in this region. In NWSW, similar support, albeit on a more modest scale for reasons discussed above, has helped more than 5,000 recipient households to generate meaningful income streams. The contribution of this support to local livelihoods was confirmed by participants in FGDs in the region.

172. In the area of MEIs and SMS, annual PDM exercises indicate that small businesses set up with ICRC support, along with the vocational and management training provided, were largely successful in generating modest but viable income for recipient households. For example, PDM exercises conducted in 2022 showed that of the 47 households supported with MEIs in Douala and Yaounde, at least 41 were generating an income, with a net average monthly profit of CFA 98,000 per household.⁹⁸ Similarly, 2023 monitoring data from 81 recipients of EcoSec cash grants in Wum and Esu, in the Northwest, shows that 74% of them have achieved the economic capacity to cover their basic needs.⁹⁹ There is some evidence that income generation support can yield results rapidly. Hence, in Tolkomari in 2022, one-third of the 308 households who received cash grants were already covering 30% of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) with the resulting income, only two months after they received this support.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, of the 254 small businesses set up in Kumba with EcoSec cash support in late 2022, 28% were registering earnings in the first quarter of 2023, with most of this being spent on food, rent and essential household items.¹⁰¹ Some of the recipient households had enough disposable income to reinvest in their businesses and hire new staff. These examples provide indications that income-generating support provided under the EcoSec programme has a strong potential to help recipients build their economic assets, thereby improving their resilience.

4.5.4 Have there been positive or negative unintended effects of interventions?

Finding 21: The evaluation found no evidence of unforeseen negative effects caused by the programme. Likewise, all positive effects appear to have been documented; few such effects remain unforeseen at this stage. A number of positive outcomes can be assumed regarding the use of capacities developed for the programme. However, they remain to be verified.

173. The evaluation found no evidence of negative effects produced by EcoSec interventions. This is despite the fact that, as noted in programme documentation¹⁰², there is

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Quarterly EcoSec Report III, 2022.

⁹⁹ Quarterly EcoSec Report II, 2023

¹⁰⁰ Quarterly EcoSec Report IV, 2023.

¹⁰¹ Quarterly EcoSec Report I, 2023

¹⁰² ICRC, Food Insecurity Sensecheck_Cameroon (Internal), 20 March 2024.

a relatively high risk that acute food insecurity during seasonal *periodes de soudure* exacerbate tensions among vulnerable households at community level. The EcoSec team has planned to mitigate this risk through early engagement with vulnerable communities, to ensure that distributions were as equitable as possible. Although the evaluation found no follow up reporting on these initiatives, FGDs and KIIs conducted for the evaluation in affected localities found that grievances following EcoSec distributions, while clearly problematic, had not escalated to unmanageable levels. As noted in Finding 4 above, there are strong indications that the resolution of these grievances has required disproportionate involvement of EcoSec teams at sub-delegation level, to compensate for the limited capacity of local grievance committees at community level to address these problems themselves.

174. Regarding positive unintended effects, it is worth noting that in NWSW, participants in FGDs reported using the equipment donated to them, such as sprayers, for cash crops like cocoa. Thus, the use of this equipment contributed to generating or sustaining income streams for recipient households.

175. More generally, as mentioned in Finding 16 above, there is a likelihood that MINDADER and MINEPIA capacities developed for the EcoSec programme, notably the Maroua seed laboratory and training provided to technical agents for vaccinations, might yield benefits well beyond the programme's scope. However, no evidence could be collected in support of this hypothesis.

5 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Cameroon's EcoSec program effectively addresses humanitarian needs in conflict zones, leveraging ICRC's unique access. Despite budget cuts, its focused strategy works, though beneficiary selection needs improvement. Strong community engagement is crucial for continued success.

176. In the context of Cameroon, the EcoSec programme fills a very distinctive niche. Its geographical focus on areas affected by armed violence, combined with its strong focus on resilience, give the programme a profile that is unique in Cameroon. The evaluation found that this profile was highly relevant to the context, and enabled the programme to meet urgent humanitarian needs which other actors are less well equipped to address. In large measure, this added value stems from the ICRC's specificity, and its principled modalities which provide it with safer access to conflict-affected areas.

177. Ultimately, the program's strategy of downsizing its caseload and sharpening its focus on conflict-affected populations, while maintaining its balance of emergency and resilience interventions, has proven **effective, appropriate** in the face of significant budget cuts since 2022. This approach has allowed the program to continue addressing critical needs despite its specialized operational space and the overwhelming demands of the population.

178. Given rising needs and the programme's increasingly constrained resources, prioritisation and beneficiary selection have become strategically key in recent years. While geographical prioritization through the establishment of priority zones is an effective approach, the program currently faces the problem of **overly broad beneficiary selection in some local contexts, notably NWSW**, leading to potential inefficiencies. This is compounded by **limited community involvement** in beneficiary selection and grievance management processes, due to insufficient community capacity to engage in these areas. In turn, these capacity limitations are an **obstacle to the greater empowerment of communities** in the programme.

179. As noted in programme documentation, budget cuts and downsizing have reinforced the importance of community-level engagement and good communication with affected populations. While these efforts will likely have to be scaled up, given the possibility of continued downsizing, the programme is standing a strong base in this area, as the quality of its engagement at community level was widely viewed as a strong point by participants in FGDs.

Conclusion 2: Effective beneficiary training drives program success, unlike institutional capacity building hindered by systemic issues. EcoSec needs to strategically streamline its complex structure and optimize limited HR and monitoring to boost operational efficiency.

180. Across the range of sectors of activity covered by the programme, training has been core to the delivery of results. In general, training delivered directly to beneficiaries has contributed measurably to the quality of outcomes. For example, vocational training and small business management has supported income generation among households that received EcoSec cash grants. Training in the use of appropriate agricultural equipment and practices has, likewise, compounded the benefits of seed distributions. In these cases, success in the training delivered was due largely to the strong and direct incentives of recipient households to use the knowledge received.

181. In contrast, training aimed at increasing the organisational capacity of institutional partners has had more limited results. While the transfer of technical know-how has been a success, this training has not resolved the more deep-rooted systemic weaknesses that undermine the institutional sustainability of partners, such as chronic under-resourcing and generally poor governance. Among other factors, and in the more specific context of the programme, high staff turnover and weak incentives have adversely impacted the performance of these partners, independently of the training provided.

182. Regarding EcoSec staff, the level of technical skills is not at issue, but the overall volume of HR resources available for the programme is clearly limited, given the scale of coverage, the high-performance standards set for programme management, and the challenges inherent in the operating environment. The further downsizing of the programme, as planned in 2026, may help to address this. In addition, measures to streamline programme workflows may also help.

183. Related to this, the dense architecture of the programme, consisting of three main pillars and eight distinct sectors of intervention, adds up to a significant management burden for the EcoSec department. This is compounded by the challenges of the current situation in which the ICRC finds itself, which imposes extra demands on staff in the area of administrative compliance and accountability. Given these challenges, the next EcoSec planning cycle may be an opportunity to streamline and consolidate some of the programme's management processes, notably in view of the ICRC's planned phase-out of its vaccinations activities in late 2026.

184. In the area of monitoring, the evaluation noted the particularly high standards attained in PDM and PHM. This, however, comes at the cost of significant staff time spent on reporting activities. As with other programme processes in general, it may be possible to streamline the workflows involved in view of alleviating some of the programme's administrative burden.

Conclusion 3: EcoSec's flexible, multi-pillar program effectively delivers emergency and resilience aid. While it contributes to ICRC's multidisciplinary goals, current collaboration is resource-intensive. Future improvements should focus on pragmatic, adaptive inter-departmental approaches over formal planning.

185. The three main pillars of the programme provide a coherent range of assistance, spanning emergency and post-emergency (early recovery) conditions, and including a capacity-building component geared to the programme's sustainability. Likewise, the multiple interventions that compose each of the pillars are consistent and complementary, as they all provide means of reducing food insecurity and, in the longer term, of improving the economic security of recipient households. At the level of both programme pillars and the interventions that compose them, activities can be carried out in sequence or independently of each other, as appropriate. This "toolkit" attribute gives the programme the flexibility to adapt to distinct and fluid environments. For example, while the programme has placed a strong focus on the

emergency food needs of displaced groups in NWSW, it has capitalised on the feasibility of long-term resilience support activities in the Far North and given these activities broad coverage in that region.

186. In terms of contributing to a multidisciplinary approach in the broader context of ICRC operations in Cameroon, there is clear evidence that the EcoSec programme has taken steps to achieve synergies with other departments, and to contribute to Protection impact at the more strategic level ("Protection with a capital P"). This builds on the multidisciplinary approach promoted institutionally and by the Delegation. In the case of EcoSec and other Departments, there are indications that the multidisciplinary approach adopted for Cameroon is quite process-led and resource-intensive. As such, there is a sense from staff that it constitutes an added burden, given an already demanding workload. While the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach are widely accepted in principle, it may be worth exploring ways of operationalising this approach that are as pragmatic as possible, and only rely minimally on formal process requirements.

187. In this regard, it is worth noting that the multidisciplinary outcomes achieved by the EcoSec programme, as described in this report, are heavily dependent on context and circumstances, and are therefore difficult to plan in advance. This is all the more true given limited HR resources and the heavy management burden involved in planning processes. As such, a successful multidisciplinary approach may hinge on ongoing lesson-learning, based on informal exchanges between the relevant departments, more than on formal planning conducted at set times in the programme cycle.

Conclusion 4: EcoSec effectively builds community resilience via direct aid and training. However, program sustainability is threatened by partner resource dependency, exacerbated by shrinking donor support for other actors. Empowering communities and leveraging priority zones are strategic imperatives to ensure lasting gains and foster multidisciplinary collaboration

188. There is conclusive evidence from community FGDs that the programme has contributed to the resilience of households in targeted communities. This result has been attained through direct assistance to vulnerable households, including training to provide them with appropriate know-how in agricultural methods, good business practices and marketable basic skills.

189. Regarding its complementarity with government and CRC actors, the programme has had to achieve a difficult balance between building and sustaining the capacity of partners, while avoiding to substitute for them. Despite progress made on this path, the lack of independent resources of the MINEPIA and MINADER remains a significant impediment to the programme's sustainability, and to its eventual handover. Looking ahead, this local dependency on the EcoSec programme is likely to grow as other humanitarian actors, notably WFP, adapt to the sharp decrease in global donor support by curtailing their programmes.

190. Seen in this perspective, the increased participation and leadership of communities in the programme appears to be one of the most viable avenues for securing the sustainability of gains achieved to date. Here, the establishment of priority zones in the Far North and NWSW should be viewed as an asset, as it has the potential of facilitating an approach to capacity-building at community level that is continuous over time, and benefits from the regular presence and ongoing engagement of ICRC staff. Priority zones also present the notable advantage of enabling an approach to community engagement and capacity development that is truly multi-sectoral, and enables synergies across multiple departments. Strategically, the space and opportunity available there for a multidisciplinary approach is of considerable significance.

Conclusion 5: EcoSec demonstrably improved economic security and welfare for targeted households, especially women, through effective livestock, agricultural, and MEI support. Strong monitoring ensured no significant unforeseen outcomes, validating the program's positive impact.

There was a clear perception on the part of interviewees and FGD participants that the EcoSec programme has achieved the desired outcomes, by improving the economic security and welfare and targeted populations, and enabling recipient households to sustain these gains over time. The resilience pillar of the programme, consisting mainly of community-based livestock and agricultural support, along with MEIs, has in particular contributed to these outcomes, by helping households to protect their economic assets and to develop them further, where possible. The sustainability and cost-effectiveness of these resilience gains, relative to emergency assistance, is worth highlighting here. It should be further documented where possible, to inform future programme decisions.

It is notable that the programme's beneficiaries have included a large proportion of women and women-headed households.

Given the programme's strong monitoring function, any unforeseen outcomes had already been identified prior to the evaluation. At the time when it took place, the evaluation identified no new unintended outcomes of significance, whether positive or negative.

6 Recommendations

The recommendations below have been developed from the evaluation findings. Where these findings articulate a problem statement, the Evaluation Team has a.) considered a range of possible remedial actions, and b.) assessed the feasibility of each remedial action, and c.) selected the remedial action that offers the best balance between feasibility and appropriateness, in the context.

Once the remedial actions with the best “fit” have been identified, the evaluation team has prioritised them, to select no more than 6 or 7 top priority lines of action. These lines of action have then been prioritised among them, to establish which are the highest priority.

The selected lines of action have then been reviewed collectively, to ensure their complementarity and explore any opportunity for synergies. Where necessary, remedial actions have been adjusted at this stage to ensure their overall coherence.

Where appropriate, the selected lines of action have then been broken down into more specific action points.

Once finalized, lines of action have been categorized as recommendations, and thematic headings have been assigned to them.

Finally, the intended “owner” of each recommendation was identified; that is, the organizational unit responsible for driving the action recommended.

	RECOMMENDATIONS	 Principal owner	Priority	 Timeline	Addresses issue identified in
1.	Consolidation. If further downsizing is required, maintain a core capacity for emergency assistance, but prioritise community-based Resilience as the programme’s main component, with a particular focus on the protection and recovery of household economic assets. - To support the decision, conduct a detailed value-for-money (VfM) analysis of the programme, matching the cost-per-beneficiary of each programme strand against its value, as defined in terms of beneficiary preference and added beneficiary welfare, protection and resilience. - Draw on established best practice to conduct the VfM analysis.	EcoSec, Head of Ops	High	tbc	Finding 3, Conclusion 1.

2.	Community participation and ownership. Consider the greater participation of communities in the programme as a strategic priority. - In the short term, reinforce working relations with CRC volunteers and staff to strengthen local committees in ICRC priority areas, in view of improving beneficiary targeting and the processing of grievances, and ensuring that these activities are carried out to the required standards. - In the longer term, and with the support of the Cooperation Department and the CRC where relevant, design a strategy set in a multi-year timeframe, to build the capacity of communities to play a greater role in the delivery of the EcoSec programme. Develop this strategy in a multidisciplinary perspective, to ensure that synergies are built with the community-based interventions of other departments, notably Protection, Health and WatHab. At strategic level, approach community inclusion and participation as a holistic process relevant to multiple ICRC departments, and involving concerted community engagement and messaging at the local level (see below).	EcoSec, Head of Ops	High	tbc	Findings 6, 17, Conclusions 1, 4.
3.	Beneficiary selection. In NWSW especially, review and tighten the beneficiary selection criteria used for the programme, with the aim of enabling the consistent, equitable and needs-based selection of smaller caseloads. Across the EcoSec programme, continue to be attentive to the vulnerabilities of women and girls, and opportunities for their economic empowerment.	EcoSec	Medium	tbc	Findings 1, 6, Conclusion 1.
4.	Community messaging. In consultation with other departments, develop clear messages aimed at beneficiary communities and local stakeholders, providing clarity on the scale, nature and timing of any intended EcoSec programme scale down. Ensure that messaging is consistent across EcoSec and other programmes, and provides clarity on the possibility of distinct timelines for different programme scale downs.	EcoSec	Medium		Finding 21, Conclusion 1.

	• Ensure that messages are delivered with enough advance notice to allow stakeholders to prepare for any programme downsizing. • For clarity across the delegation, produce a brief document outlining the messaging strategy.				
5.	Workflow streamlining. Given under-staffing in the EcoSec team, aim to alleviate the workload of EcoSec staff by exploring possibilities to integrate needs assessment and monitoring, drawing on monitoring data for needs assessments, where possible. • Develop reporting templates that build on the BNVA format to enable a multidisciplinary approach to programme design and implementation. • Design monitoring templates so that narrative inputs can be kept to a minimum, notably through the use of data dashboards that can be rapidly updated with key information. • In the areas of monitoring and reporting, prioritise institutional requirements, and minimize requirements for ad hoc reports where possible.	EcoSec, Head of Ops	Medium	tbc	Findings 7, 8, 14, Conclusion 2.
6.	Operational planning. To minimise the risk of delays in implementation, improve the screening of suppliers to ensure that orders can be fulfilled in the timeframes and to the standards required. • Agree EcoSec workplans and timelines with the relevant ICRC departments (i.e Logistics) and external partners, identifying key activities and setting clear target dates for their completion. • Consider the use of Gantt charts to clarify to all stakeholders how activities should be organised over set periods (e.g. 3 or 6 months), and which activities are dependent on others for completion.	EcoSec, Log	Medium	tbc	Findings 8, 16, 18, Conclusion 2.
7.	Multidisciplinary approach. As much as possible, enable a multidisciplinary perspective through informal and ongoing exchanges between EcoSec and other relevant Departments, at Sub-delegation	EcoSec, Head of	Medium	tbc	Finding 13, 14,

	level, rather than through formal processes and procedures. Mobilise HoSD leadership to drive this process, and promote a culture of informal exchange between the relevant departments, including EcoSec. • Organise lesson-learning sessions at Delegation and Sub-delegation levels, to build on Monitoring and Evaluation exercises. These sessions should serve as platforms to identify lessons learned and ensure they are effectively integrated into the next programming cycle. • Identify core objectives relevant to both EcoSec and other Departments, such as local messaging and increased community participation, where a cross-departmental approach is in the benefit of all. Set these objectives in the specific context of Priority Zones, and derive specific actions to be carried out locally, in a multidisciplinary perspective. • On the use of area-based programming to enable a multidisciplinary approach, and the challenges involved, consider exchanging with UNHCR and organising joint lesson-learning exercises, given the strong similarities in both organisations' efforts to achieve multidisciplinary in their operational planning.	Ops, HoSDs			Conclusion 3.
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7 Annexes

Annex 1. Indicative Evaluation Timeline and Outputs

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Announcement and proposal								
Recruitment and contracting								
Inception phase								
Draft inception report & QA								
Quality Assurance process								
Presentation of the inception report								
Final inception report								
Data collection								
Data analysis								
Preliminary findings Presentation								
Draft evaluation report								
Presentation of the draft report								
Quality Assurance process								
Final evaluation report								
Visual presentation to larger set of stakeholders								

Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Questions	Lines of Inquiry	Methods	Analyses
1. How well was the programme designed to meet the economic security needs of conflict-affected communities? How did the programme ensure it stayed relevant, and adapt as needed?			
Key Success Factor: Beneficiary selection and prioritisation (Relevance)			
How have the programme’s objectives (in food relief, cash transfers and nutrition) aligned with the priority needs of conflict-affected beneficiaries / communities? How have needs been monitored and prioritised?	Alignment of interventions with humanitarian needs & evolving socio-political context	• FGDs with affected people • Document review (project plans, needs assessments) • KIIs with stakeholders	Design-level inquiry using ToC as the underlying framework: • Needs-Gap Analysis • Thematic Analysis • Alignment with Accountability, Protection and Conflict Sensitivity Frameworks of ICRC • Equity and Inclusion Analysis
How has programme cycle management enabled course-correction over time, and ensured that the programme remained relevant to the needs of affected populations?		•	
How has has prioritisation evolved to accommodate budget cuts in the programme?		•	
To what extent have beneficiaries been consulted and involved in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation?	AAP, Level of community participation and inclusion in decision-making	• FGDs with affected people • KIIs with EcoSec and field staff	
To what extent has the programme incorporated accountability to affected populations, protection, and conflict sensitivity?	AAP, Use of feedback mechanisms, adherence to conflict sensitivity principles	• Review of accountability reports • KIIs with staff & volunteers	
To what extent are EcoSec approaches adequate to promote equity and inclusion of vulnerable groups?	Targeting criteria and strategy for marginalized groups (e.g., women, IDPs)	• FGDs with vulnerable groups	
2. How successful were the interventions –and the implied programme processes—in enabling the objectives of the programmes to be met? What were the enabling and hindering factors (internal and external) that affected the delivery of interventions and the attainment of outcomes?			

Key Success Factor: Programme Management (Effectiveness/Efficiency)			
To what extent have EcoSec interventions improved staff skills and knowledge, pertaining to food relief, cash transfers and nutrition?	HR management incl. training	• Document review • KIIs with logistics staff	Elements of process review to be applied in conjunction with theory-based inquiry
In the three sectors examined, were outcomes delivered in a timely manner?	Programme cycle management, adherence to timelines and workplans	• Document review (QERs) • Financial data review • KIIs with EcoSec staff	
Were internal ICRC mechanisms - notably monitoring-- effective in supporting interventions?	Programme capacity, capabilities, processes	• KIIs with staff and management	
How have management systems enabled the efficient use of resources?	Programme efficiency, economy, processes	• KIIs with staff and management	
3. In their planning and delivery, are the distinct sector components of the programme consistent and mutually reinforcing?			
Key Success Factor: Programme Convergence (Coherence)			
How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are the three main thematic pillars of the EcoSec Programme?	Programme development, design	• Document review • FGDs with affected people	Some read-across seen here with effectiveness questions above: • Gap Analysis • Internal Process Review • Skills/capacity review
How consistent and mutually-reinforcing are interventions within the emergency pillar of the programme (emergency food, cash transfers, nutrition)?	Programme development, design	• Document review • KIIs with project staff	
How and to what extent does the EcoSec programme contribute to Protection outcomes?	Synergies between EcoSec programme and protection interventions.	• KIIs with internal departments (Admin, Logistics)	
How resource-intensive is the programme's multidisciplinary approach, and is the value of synergies achieved commensurate with the investment made?	Programme design, processes	• Document review • KIIs with internal departments (Admin, Logistics)	

4. How well does the programme complement the actions other actors? How well does it contribute to developing the capacity of partners, to support resilience and the sustainability of programme results?			
Key Success Factor: Partnerships and Cooperation (Coherence/Connectedness/Sustainability)			
To what extent have programme partnerships and cooperation with local stakeholders contributed to building local capacity?	Local capacity development	• KIIs with partner organizations • Document review	Effectiveness criteria is operative here as partnerships will be assessed, in part, in terms of their contribution to outcomes. Connectedness relates primarily to livelihoods interventions, as well as capacity-building and long-term cooperation with govt partners. Some read-across with effectiveness and coherence questions above: • Systems and process design extend also to modalities for partnerships • Gap analysis / capacity review apply also to partners
To what extent have programme partnerships and cooperation contributed to the sustainability of programme outcomes?	Sustainability of outcomes	• FGDs with affected populations • KIIs with partner organizations • Document review	
To what extent have partnerships and cooperation been consistent with the respective comparative advantage of stakeholder involved?	Added value, complementarity and comparative advantage of acrtors involved in the programme	• KIIs with partner organizations	
To what extent have EcoSec interventions created synergies with other programmes, including outside of ICRC?	Collaboration and synergy with other programmes and partners	• KIIs with partner organizations • Document review	
How have partnerships and cooperation contributed to local ownership and community leadership of interventions carried out?	Localisation, community leadership	• FGDs with affected populations • KIIs with partner organizations and community leaders • Document review	
5. How well has the programme achieved desired outcomes, and thereby contributed to improving the economic security and resilience of affected populations? (Effectiveness, Impact)			
With particular focus on food relief, cash and nutrition, to what extent have the interventions improved the situation of the target population?	Programme result on livelihoods and welfare	• FGDs with affected populations	Using the MSC techniques, the ET will aim to capture the results of the interventions.

Have interventions empowered specific groups (women, girls) and met their needs?	Empowerment outcomes for vulnerable groups	• FGDs with women and youth	This criterion also combine effectiveness (from affected populations' perspective), sustainability.
What is the evidence of increased resilience among target populations? To what extent have interventions reduced the vulnerability of households to asset depletion?	Indicators of economic resilience (income stability, food security)	• KIIs with local partners • Consultations with affected populations	
Have there been positive or negative unintended effects of interventions?	Identification of unintended effects	• KIIs with stakeholders • FGDs with affected populations	
What is the potential for sustainability post-intervention (financial, social, knowledge transfer)?	Sustainability across financial, social, and knowledge dimensions	• Document review • KIIs with stakeholders	
How have interventions helped mitigate negative coping strategies?	Reduction in use of coping strategies (e.g., asset sales)	• FGDs with affected people	

Annex 3. List of participants

Role	Location	Gender	Remote/in person
1. Directeur de la production végétale, MINADER	Yaounde	Male	In person
2. Sous-Directeur en charge du contrôle qualité des semences, MINADER	Yaounde	Male	In person
3. Directeur des services vétérinaires, MINEPIA	Yaounde	Male	In person
4. Chef des Services de l'Epidémio-Surveillance, MINEPIA	Yaounde	Male	In person
5. Chef des Services de la Santé des Animaux Domestiques, MINEPIA	Yaounde	Male	In person
6. Chef des Services du Secteur Privé Vétérinaire, MINEPIA	Yaounde	Male	In person
7. Chef de cellule Cooperation, IRAD	Yaounde	Male	In person
8. Country Team Leader, FAO	Yaounde	Male	In person
9. Coordonateur Programme Pays, FAO	Yaounde	Male	In person
10. Coordinateur EcoSec	Yaounde	Male	In person
11. Assistant au Coordinateur, EcoSec	Yaounde	Male	In person
12. Chef des operations	Yaounde	Male	Remote
13. Coordinatrice protection	Yaounde	Male	Remote
14. Delegee nutrition	Maroua	Female	Remote
15. Delegue sante	Maroua	Male	Remote
16. Delegue WatHab	Yaounde	Male	Remote
17. Cheffe de Sous-delegation, CICR	Maroua	Male	In person
18. Cheffe de Sous bureau de Maroua, WFP	Maroua	Female	In person
19. Program Officer, WFP	Maroua	Female	In person
20. Délégué Régional de l'Extreme-Nord, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
21. Délégué départemental du Mayo Sava, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
22. Délégué départemental du Logone et Chari, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person

23. Délégué départemental du Mayo Tsanaga, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
24. Chef section des services vétérinaires du Logone et Chari, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
25. Chef section des services vétérinaires du Mayo Sava, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
26. Chef service régional des services vétérinaires, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
27. Directeur Général, Cabinet vétérinaire privé	Maroua	Male	In person
28. Vice-Président du comité départemental du Mayo Tsanaga, MINEPIA	Maroua	Male	In person
29. Directeur Général, Cabinet vétérinaire privé	Maroua	Male	In person
30. Représentant du Directeur Général, Cabinet vétérinaire privé	Maroua	Male	In person
31. Président du comité départemental du Mayo Sava, CRC	Maroua	Male	In person
32. Vice-Président du comité départemental du Mayo Tsanaga, CRC	Maroua	Male	In person
33. Déléguée régionale, MINADER	Maroua	Male	In person
34. Point focal nutrition pour la Région de l'Extrême-Nord, MINSANTE	Maroua	Female	In person
35. Chef de la brigade de contrôle sanitaire, MINSANTE	Maroua	Male	In person
36. Assistant Community Based Protection Officer, UNHCR	Maroua	Male	In person
37. WASH and SHELTER Officer, UNHCR	Maroua	Male	In person
38. Chef de Sous Bureau, OCHA	Maroua	Male	In person
39. Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA	Maroua	Female	In person
40. Délégué Régional, MINEFOP	Maroua	Male	In person
41. Chef service des formations, MINEFOP	Maroua	Male	In person
42. Cheffe Sous-délégation	Buea	Female	In person
43. Assistant Chef de Sous-délégation	Buea	Male	In person

44. Delegue EcoSec	Buea	Male	In person
45. Coordinateur terrain	Buea	Male	In person
46. Quality Control Officer, MINADER	Buea	Male	In person
47. Local representative, FAO	Buea	Male	In person
48. Head of local and community development departmental section, MINADER	Kousseri	Male	In person
49. Local representative, MINADER	Kousseri	Male	In person
50. Field Officer, Protection	Kousseri	Male	In person
51. Field Officer, EcoSec	Kousseri	Male	In person
52. EcoSec Delegate	Kousseri	Male	In person
53. Field Officer, EcoSec	Kousseri	Male	In person
54. Filed Coordinator	Kousseri	Male	In person
55. EcoSec Generalist 3, ICRC Yaounde	Kousseri	Male	In person
56. Division President for Logone & Chari, CRC	Kousseri	Male	In person
57. Division Delegate, MINEFOP	Kousseri	Male	In person
58. Trainer, MINEFOP	Kousseri	Male	In person
59. Disaster Manager, CRC	Kousseri	Male	In person
60. President of the Subdivision, CRC Mada	Kousseri	Male	In person
61. Organisational Director, CRC Mada	Kousseri	Male	In person
62. President of the Subdivision Office CRC Blangoua	Kousseri	Male	In person
63. Community Leader, Koussouma Village	Kousseri	Male	In person
64. Community Chief Assistant, Blangoua	Kousseri	Male	In person
65. Vice-President, Subdivision Office, CRC Blangoua	Kousseri	Male	In person
66. Secretary, CRCC Blangoua	Kousseri	Male	In person
67. Vice-President, CRC Hile-Alifa	Kousseri	Male	In person
68. President, CRC Hile-Alifa	Kousseri	Male	In person

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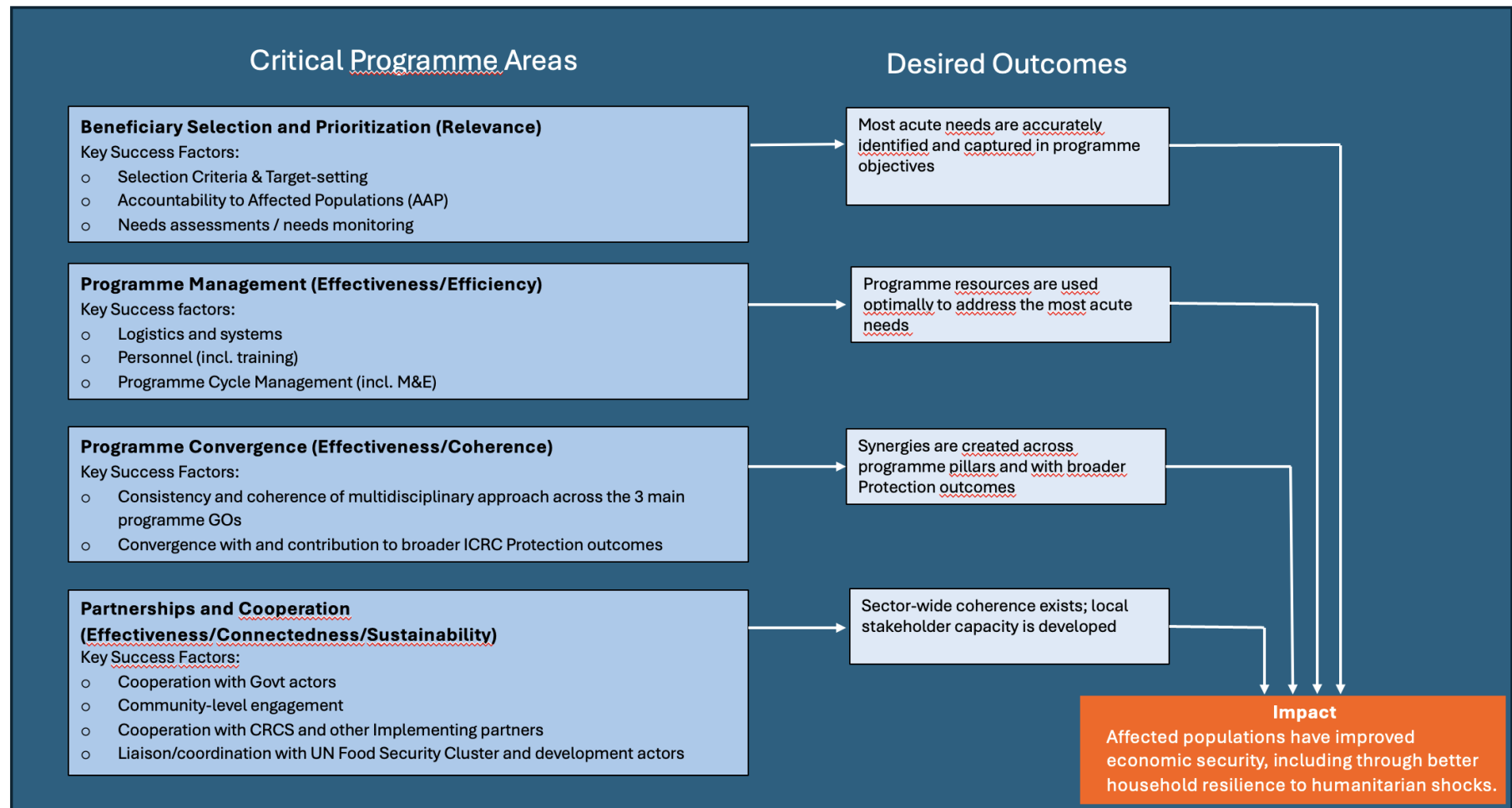
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Annex 5. Logic Model

EcoSec Programme Cameroon – Logic Model



Annex 6. Ethical Review Board certificate

Attachments:

- EcoSec Cameroon_KII Guide incl. Consent Protocol.pdf
- EcoSec Cameroon_FGD Guide incl. Consent Protocol.pdf
- Expedited Review Approved: IRB #2811.pdf



Expedited Review Approved: IRB #2811

To: Pierre Townsend

Institution: ICRC

From: HML IRB

Subject: Study #2811

Date: 02/06/2025

Dear Pierre Townsend, MSc,

The protocol **EVALUATION OF THE ICRC'S ECONOMIC SECURITY PROGRAMME IN CAMEROON (2019-2024)**, 2811 was assessed through an expedited research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received research ethics review approval on 02/06/2025 in accordance with the requirements of the US Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45CFR46 & 45CFR46.110) and were expedited by (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior.

You may rely on this IRB for review and continuing ethical oversight of this study. You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to: 1) ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, subject risks, informed consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials; 2) conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects; 3) promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study; and 4) notifying the IRB when your study is complete.

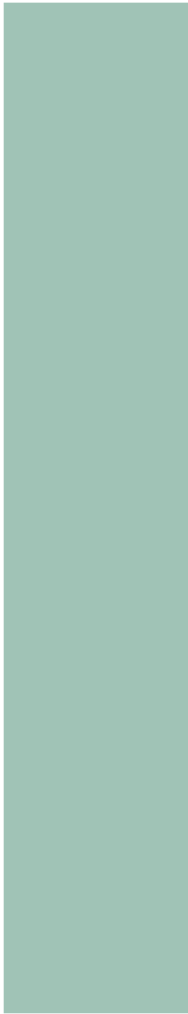
The approval of your study is valid through 02/05/2026, by which time you must submit an annual check-in report either closing the study or requesting permission to continue for another year. Please submit your report by **01/29/2026** so that the IRB has time to review and approve your report prior to the expiration date. For instructions on how to manage an approved study refer to: [How to Manage an Approved Study](#).

Please note that we have changed our fee schedule for 2025. For details, please see [2025 HML IRB Fees](#).

HML IRB is authorized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #00001211, IORG #0000850), and has DHHS Federal-Wide Assurance approval (FWA #00001102).

If you have any questions, please contact us at admin@hmlirb.com.

Annex 7. Terms of Reference



Evaluation of the EcoSec Programme in Cameroon

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: 22nd October 2024



ICRC

