Sustainable Landscape Eastern Madagascar (SLEM) Project: Key points from the 1st year of the project (May 8, 2018 – December 31, 2018)
The Sustainable Landscape in Eastern Madagascar project (Project) achieved Effectiveness on May 8, 2018. In the eight months of implementation in 2018, CI-Madagascar, as the Executing Entity (EE) of the project, updated its implementing framework (budget, workplan and other planning documents), hired and trained staff, revised its baseline data and indicators for assessment, initiated implementation of required GCF procedures (including gender plans and creation of a grievance mechanism), conducted a formal launch of the project, coordinated with the government of Madagascar and other Project partners, and began implementation of Project activities. While some delays have occurred in order to revise baseline data and create a more robust impact-assessment framework for the Project, the Project is now well underway and will accelerate implementation in 2019. As reflected in the updated implementation timeline, it is not anticipated that delays and challenges encountered during the first reporting period will affect the project's ability to complete all activities and achieve its targets.

Project Start-Up
Budget, planning documents, and baseline indicators: Upon formal approval of the Project, CI-Madagascar the Executing Entity revised and updated the Project workplan and budget for Year 1 and for the Project's five-year period, as much of the baseline data, population data, and information on community and government structures included in the Project proposal were developed in 2015. The revised five-year workplan, budget and other planning documents are now finalized and approved by the CI-GCF Agency (Accredited Entity). The implementation plan was developed, with key local partners from the DREEF (Regional Directorate for Environment Ecology and Forest) and DRAE (Regional Directorate for Agriculture and Livestock). In addition, a review of baseline datasets and implications for indicators and targets was undertaken.

Project staff recruitment and training: As of the end of Year 1, 25 project staff have been hired including: 2 in Antananarivo (Deputy Chief of Party [DCOP] and Grants Manager), 11 in CAZ (1 accounting, 1 grant coordinator, 1 ecological monitoring coordinator, 1 GIS coordinator, 1 driver, and 6 field agents) and 12 in COFAV (1 accounting, 1 forestry coordinator, 1 GIS coordinator, and 9 field agents). Multiple rounds of training for Project staff took place in Year 1. In June 2018, a kick-off meeting was held between AE staff, EE staff, and officials from the National Office for Climate Change Coordination (BNCCC) focused on workplan development and training on GCF policies and procedures. AE, EE, and BNCCC staff also attended two trainings on impact assessment, held in July and October 2018. Training for new Project staff was held in December 2018.

Impact evaluation LORTA: FP026 was selected as one of the pilot projects for the GCF Independent Evaluation Unit's (IEU) Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) program. LORTA will be used for implementing real-time impact evaluations to assess the Project's progress. Practically implementing the methodology proposed by LORTA impacted the EE's internal coordination and staff schedules: All technical staff participated in finalizing the methodology, devoting considerable time and effort to collect data and coordinate with the IEU. Roughly 70% of technical staff time in November and December 2018 was devoted to this activity, which needed to be completed prior to undertaking activities with community associations for forest management (VOIs). The LORTA methodology includes dividing implementation into three phases, with activities to be undertaken with a third of beneficiary VOIs in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

In addition, a control group was identified for data collection but no activities, in order to better measure the impact of the Project. Survey data will be collected at annual intervals throughout project implementation to allow for statistical power in the final analysis as well as to allow for adaptive management of the project through modification of activities to increase impact. LORTA's rigorous monitoring and assessment will enable adaptive management, improve project effectiveness, and better improve resilience outcomes in target communities.

Project launch/stakeholder engagement: The Project was officially launched at the national level in Antananarivo in June 2018, in coordination with the BNCCC. The event had 101 participants, including the General Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Ecology and Forestry (MEEF), and a field visit to COFAV. Sub-national events were also conducted: two events in COFAV (109 total participants) and two in CAZ (110 total participants). The events were well reported by national and local newspapers, radio, and local television. Conducting this series of key stakeholder engagement events was critical prior to project implementation. Most subnational and local authorities are willing to collaborate with the EE to achieve the project goals; however, some mayors raised concerns about the slow process of awarding grants, which may not meet the agricultural calendar, an issue that is being considered by the team.

Project pre-steering committee meetings: The first Project Steering Committee meeting was conducted under the leadership of the General Secretary of the Ministry of Environment Ecology, and Forest. During this meeting, the steering committee calendar was defined, and the members of this committee identified: 7 region chiefs, 7 MEEF regional directors, and representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Mining, and Regional Agriculture Directors. It was decided to develop MOUs between the Project and the MEEF, and between the Project and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (*Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Elevage* [MAE]). Drafts of these MOUs were developed and they are expected to be signed in early 2019.

Grievance mechanism record-books in place: The EE provided a grievance record book for each of the 73 municipalities impacted by the Project. Project participants can submit complaints, which will be collected and reviewed per the project grievance mechanism process. Project staff will regularly review the record book so that issues can be addressed. The EE also provided Project participants and partners with the telephone numbers of Project technical agents and information on CI's Ethics Point hotline, which can be used to file grievances. CI will respond to all grievance submissions, keep records of all grievances, and follow up to find appropriate solutions.

Gender action plan: Implementation of the gender plan began in Year 1, including collection of data on female participation and ensuring that work planning is inclusive and gender-sensitive. Ten women's associations were identified and targeted for activities in CAZ and COFAV. Implementation of the gender action plan continues and will be intensified in 2019. Gender training is scheduled for February 2019 for both Project and non-Project personnel. 10 women's associations will also receive grants from the Project to support sustainable agriculture.

Climate data: Equipment for collecting climate data was set up in Maroseranana municipality in CAZ to collect daily temperature and precipitation data, designed to be transferred to CI via data storage for analysis and interpretation and then shared with target farmers in the municipality. However, there were problems transferring this data. Actions were taken to solve the problem, including the purchase of four weather stations and downloading data from the national weather

website. The Project is now receiving information on climate data every month from the meteorological services, which will be made available to the Project's 73 municipalities.

Component A7.0
Project land-use planning tool: CI developed an approach using zonation software to support conservation and land-use planning based on scenario analysis, as well as guidelines for its application to incorporate equitable and climate-smart alternatives into land-use decisions for conservation. A Land-Use Plan at the sub-national level for CAZ was then validated at the national level in August 2019. The Ministry of Land Management agreed to use this tool as a model to develop the Regional Planning Scheme (*Schema d'Aménagement Régional)*. The results from this tool, such as land-use maps and plans, will be used to support interventions in component A8 for the development of regional and national development plans, and in the component M9 for the identification of restoration zones and areas for protection.

Component A5.0
Project monitoring and evaluation: From July to December, the EE reviewed and analyzed key baseline data sets**.** The beneficiaries within target landscapes were updated and mapped and a revised baseline spreadsheet was developed. It was necessary to review the target beneficiaries due to changes on the ground: some of the original target villages are now not socially secure for reasons outside of project control, and CI needed to identify new target villages and beneficiaries. However, the total number of beneficiaries remains unchanged. To compensate for fewer VOI members, other beneficiary groups and organizations were identified for Project interventions. For the vulnerability index, households from VOIs and control households were identified, and a survey questionnaire was developed in coordination with LORTA and validated via a pilot survey undertaken in December 2018. Thirty-four enumerators for the survey were hired in December 2018, and materials were developed for enumerator training sessions to be held in early 2019.

Component M9.0
Restoration activities: In Year 1, restoration activities were conducted in two municipalities in CAZ in cooperation with the Helmsley Charitable Trust. Nine nurseries produced 11,302 seedlings that were managed by eight community-based associations for forest management (VOIs) and then used to plant 2,500 trees, covering 8 hectares. This restoration activity was conducted by the Project's mitigation technical lead, the Project's forest manager in CAZ, and the Ministry of Environment, Ecology, and Forest (MEEF), which provided support for nursery worker training and planting of trees. Monitoring and management of the 2,500 trees and planting of additional seedlings will continue in 2019.

Business model strategy working session: In September 2018, CI held a working session with the COFAV team to identify and develop business models for two products (ginger and vanilla) in three municipalities based on promising value chain analyses and designed a conservation-agreement model with a long-term vision for communities focused on sustainable production, governance, and human well-being. The value-chain analysis and business development activities will be used to determine which additional commodities the Project will invest in.

Partnership development: CI met with the new director of BNCCC in September 2018 to highlight the Project's priorities and provided support to BNCCC to develop its workplan and budget for GCF Project activities. Signing of the sub-grants with BNCCC was delayed due to turnover at the BNCCC but is expected in early 2019. The EE also explored potential collaboration with the

Catholic Relief Service (CRS), as there is potential for synergy between the mitigation and adaptation activities of the SLEM and CRS projects. Meetings with CRS are planned to explore this collaboration.

Financial overview:

Budget and Expenditure[1]

	Budget Y1	Expenditure Y1	Expenditure Rate Y1	Budget Project Total	Expenditure Project Total	Expenditure Rate Project Total
GCF financing	$ 3,402,882	$ 490,883	14%	$ 18,500,000	$ 490,883	3%
Co-financing	$ 176,662	$ 185,605	105%	$ 771,318	$ 185,605	24%
Project total	**$ 3,579,544**	**$ 676,487**	**19%**	**$ 19,271,318**	**$ 676,487**	**4%**

Disbursements

Number of Disbursements Y1	Disbursement Amount Y1	Number of Disbursements Project Total	Disbursement Amount Project Total
1	$800,000	1	$800,000

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[1] Expenditure figures exclude reported commitments