

CI-GEF PROJECT AGENCY

GEF Project Document

Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape

Liberia/West Africa

OCTOBER 2024

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
Region:	West Africa	GEF Project ID:	11144
Project Start Date:	January 2025	Project End Date:	FEBRUARY 2030
Country(ies):	Liberia	Type of Project	MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT
GEF Agency(ies):	Conservation International (CI)	GEF Agency Project ID:	
Anticipated Executing Entity(s) and Type:	The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Government	
	The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)	NGO	
GEF Focal Area(s):	Multi-focal Areas	Submission Date:	June 2024; Sept 2024; October 2024
Type of Trust Fund:	GEF TRUST FUND (GEF TF)	Project Duration (Months)	62 months
GEF Project Grant: (a)	\$ 3,103,823	GEF Project Non-Grant (b)	N/A
Estimated MTR Date:	June 2027	Estimated TE Date :	July 2029
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	\$ 279,343	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant: (d)	N/A
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	\$ 3,383,166	Total Co-financing:	15,094,863
PPG Amount (e):	\$ 150,000	PPG Agency Fee(s) (f):	\$ 13,498
Total GEF Resources (a+b+c+d+e+f)	\$ 3,546,664		
Project Tags:	<input type="checkbox"/> CBIT <input type="checkbox"/> NGI <input type="checkbox"/> SGP <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation		
Project Sector ¹ (CCM only)	N/A		

¹ For ITS, this is the same pulldown menu that we have for GEF-7

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: To enhance ecosystem services and improve socioeconomic conditions in Northwest Liberia by promoting integrated and inclusive management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and supporting collaborative transboundary watershed management.						
Project Components/ Programs	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas	Technical Assistance	<u>Outcome 1.1:</u> Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)	<u>Output 1.1.1:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) updated and implemented <u>Output 1.1.2:</u> Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas <u>Output 1.1.3:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to the Forestry Development Authority (FDA). <u>Output 1.1.4:</u> Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola Protected Area (PA), Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA <u>Output 1.1.5:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettelement of PAs, and PA co-	GEF TF	762,364	4,062,872

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					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
			management delivered to government PA staff and local communities			
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises	Technical Assistance	<u>Outcome 2.1:</u> Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved	<u>Output 2.1.1:</u> Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs. <u>Output 2.1.2:</u> Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods <u>Output 2.1.3:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs. <u>Output 2.1.4:</u> Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises)	GEF TF	722,922	3,243,795

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Project Components/ Programs	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
			Output 2.1.5: Access to financial services provided to conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations, and producers (with emphasis on access for women)			
Component 3: Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano watershed	Output 3.1.1: The functioning of the committees established under the Mano River Union (MRU) to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU. Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built. Output 3.1.3: Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented	GEF TF	954,476	3,192,490
Component 4: Capacity building and	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination,	Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and	GEF TF	361,070	3,158,110

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					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing		learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)	<p>Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)</p> <p><u>Output 4.1.2:</u> Participation in the Guinean Forests Integrated Programme (GFIP) 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife</p> <p><u>Output 4.1.3:</u> Learning and exposure visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project (RCP))</p> <p><u>Output 4.1.4:</u> Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the</p>			

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Project Components/ Programs	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
			project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)			
Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework	Technical Assistance	Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project	Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies	GEF TF	155,191	718,800
Subtotal				GEF TF	2,956,023	14,376,066
Project Management Cost (PMC)				GEF TF	147,800	718,796
Total project costs					3,103,823	15,094,863

Core Indicators

Project Core Indicators		Expected at CEO Endorsement
1.	Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)	373,912 ha
2.	Marine protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)	
3.	Area of land and ecosystems under restoration (hectare)	
4.	Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare)	89,174 ha
5.	Area of marine habitat under improved practices (hectare)	
6.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric ton of CO ₂ e)	33.68 million metric tons of CO ₂ e
7.	Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management (count)	Level 2
8.	Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric ton)	
9.	Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced (metric ton of toxic chemicals reduced)	
10.	Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced (gram of toxic equivalent gTEQ)	
11.	People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count)	30,020 direct beneficiaries, of which 40% women

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

CORE INDICATOR 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (hectare)

The target area of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management is **373,912 Hectares** outlined below.

Table 1: Core Indicator 1 (Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (Ha)

NAME OF PROTECTED AREA/PROPOSED PROTECTED AREA		WDPA ID	IUCN CATEGORY	AREA (HECTARES)	METT Score ² (At CEO-Endorsement)
Core Indicator 1.1: Terrestrial protected areas newly created					
1	Kpo Mountains Proposed Protected Area ³	555512166	No formal determination, but aligns with Category II	83,709	0

² METT score has been provided for Gola NP. The others are proposed protected areas meaning they are not yet gazetted, hence no METT scores. The METT Scores of the proposed protected areas will be calculated at the implementation phase once they are gazetted.

³ Gazettement is being done by the Liberia Forest Sector Project. Thus, the child project will develop a management plan upon gazettement as a Protected Area

	NAME OF PROTECTED AREA/PROPOSED PROTECTED AREA	WDPA ID	IUCN CATEGORY	AREA (HECTARES)	METT Score ² (At CEO-Endorsement)
2	Wonegezi Nature Reserve ⁴	7414 ⁵	No formal determination, but aligns with Category II	27,600	0
3	Foya Proposed Protected Area ⁶	555512165	No formal determination, but aligns with Category II	164,628	0
Total 1.1				275,937	
Core Indicator 1.2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Ha)					
1	Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) ⁷	9171	No formal determination, but aligns with Category VI	97,975 ⁸	38
Total 1.2				97,975	
TOTAL CORE INDICATOR 1				373,912	

CORE INDICATOR 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare)

Core Indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity.

The target under Core Indicator 4 is the area of community lands around the Gola Forest National Park and the proposed protected areas, namely, the Foya and Kpo Mountains Proposed Protected Area and Wonegizi Nature Reserve that will be targeted by the project for their contributions to connectivity and enhanced buffer zone management. The target of **89,174 ha** is based on GIS mapping of community lands around existing and proposed protected areas conducted for the FOLUR project.

CORE INDICATOR 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric ton of CO₂e)

Core Indicator 6.6: Carbon sequestered, or emissions avoided in the sectors of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (indirect).

The estimated target of **33.68 million metric tons of CO₂e** mitigated under Core Indicator 6 was generated using the FAO EX-ANTE Carbon-Balance Tool, modelled as reduced deforestation rates in existing and proposed protected areas as well as surrounding community lands as a result of improved management. Conservative parameters were selected for the baseline deforestation rate and the reduction in this rate applied to 397,799 hectares for an accounting horizon of 20 years, starting in 2025. The estimate also includes CO₂e sequestered as a result of investing in agroforestry on degraded community lands, with a conservative assumption of 50 hectares per community, for each of three communities around the three protected area sites, for a total of 450 hectares (default agroforestry values were used, as the specific value chains remain to be determined through analysis and participatory prioritization during the implementation phase).

⁴ Gazettement package being developed under FOLUR project.

⁵ Wonegizi (33, 462 Ha) and Wologizi (99,538 Ha) Nature Reserves share the same WDPA number, and their combined area is: 133,000 ha.

⁶ Gazettement is being done by the Liberia Forest Sector Project. Thus, the child project will develop a management plan upon gazettelement as a Protected Area

⁷ Management plan will be revised under the child project

⁸ Gola Forest National Park WDPA page: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/9171>

CORE INDICATOR 7: Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management.

Core sub-Indicator 7.4: Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone received additional resources from the GEF's International Waters pot of funding to focus on Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management (Component 4), with the Mano Watershed being the target site. With support from the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination project and the European Union-Funded Nature Africa Program, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and **Liberia** target reaching **Level 2** of engagement in the IW: LEARN platform through participation and delivery of key products.

CORE INDICATOR 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count):

The number of direct beneficiaries in Core Indicator 11 reflects estimates of the sizes of communities around existing and proposed protected areas where the project will implement activities relating to participatory planning, co-management and livelihoods, and enterprise development. The total population in the areas of interest is 149,305 (75,425 men and 73,880 women) as per the Liberia National Household Income and Expenditure Survey carried out in 2016. The project will target approximately 20% of the total population in the area of interest approximately **30,020 people (40%women)**. This number is broken down below.

In order to reach a high number of female beneficiaries, the project will put in place intentional and context-specific measures that address both structural and cultural barriers. Also, it is important to note that the project will invest significant efforts in supporting SMEs and in Liberia, according to the gender analysis for this project, 80 percent of women own small enterprises, compared to 57% of men. Examples of the measures that will be put in place to increase the number of female direct beneficiaries are outlined below. Details are also in the Gender Action Plan.

- Setting gender-specific targets, and mandating a certain percentage of resources, training, and opportunities be allocated to women.
- Providing capacity-building programs focused on empowering women with skills, leadership training, and access to financial and technical resources.
- Prioritize creating safe spaces for the participation of women and girls, ensuring their voices are heard, and engaging local communities in dialogues that challenge patriarchal norms.
- Ensure the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) is widely disclosed whilst making sure that women feel safe and comfortable to raise grievances.
- Collaborating with female leaders, women's groups, and women-led SMEs to enhance outreach and ensure sustained, equitable benefits for women and girls throughout the project's lifecycle.
- Design a gender-sensitive knowledge management and communications strategy with a tailored action plan for reaching diverse audiences (including women and girls)
- Sponsor women and girls from the local community to participate in the events organised by the Guinean Forests Integrated program

Table 2: Breakdown of the number of direct beneficiaries based on the Results Framework

COMPONENT	OUTPUT	OUTPUT TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
COMPONENT 1	Output 1.1.5: Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on	Target 1.1.5: At least 9 capacity-building workshops (3 workshops per PA: GFNP; Foya and Kpo Mountains; Wonegizi), with the	300	300	600

COMPONENT	OUTPUT	OUTPUT TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
	Customary Land Formalization (CLF), gazettement of Protected Areas (PAs), and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities.	participation of at least 600 (50% women) government PA staff and local community members in total			
COMPONENT 2	Output 2.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.	Target 2.1.3: At least 29,360 community members at the household level (at least 40% women) around the three PAs benefiting from gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical support for sustainable livelihoods.	17,616	11,744	29,360
	Output 2.1.5: Access to financial services provided to conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations, and producers (with emphasis on access for women)	Target 2.1.5: At least 10 beneficiaries with access to financial services, of which 50% are women	5	5	10
COMPONENT 3	Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built.	Target 3.1.2: At least 20 people trained (30% women) in three 3 trainings undertaken by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project on applied research to inform decision-making in watershed management.	14	6	20
COMPONENT 4	Output 4.1.2: Participation in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife	Target 4.1.2: At least 2 Liberia participants in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project Annual Forum (1 rep from the government of Liberia and 1 rep from the PMU, both sponsored by the project), <i>[Total 10 participants (2 per year for 5 years, 50% female)]</i>	5	5	10
	Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable	Target 4.1.3: At least 5 learning and exposure trips (1 trip per year, 2 representatives from the Government of Liberia per year), <i>[Total 10</i>	10	10	20

COMPONENT	OUTPUT	OUTPUT TARGET	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
	coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project)	<i>participants (2 people per year for 5 years), 50% women]</i> <i>This output will also support Liberia government officials to participate in peer exchange visits within the Gola Landscape, with a focus on learning visits to Sierra Leone (2 people per year for 5 years), 50% women]</i>			
TOTAL			17,950	12,070	30,020

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

°C	Degrees Celsius
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
ARREST	Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism
ASGM	Artisanal Small-scale Gold Mining
BIOPAMA	Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDA	Cooperative Development Agency
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CI	Conservation International
CIFOR-ICRAF	Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry
CI-GEF PA	CI-GEF Project Agency
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLF	Customary Land Formalization
CO ₂ e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Conservation Science Program
CSSL	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone
CWT	Combat Wildlife Trafficking
EA	Executing Agency
EBA	Endemic Bird Area
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguard
EU	European Union
EX-ACT	Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCI	Foundation for Community Initiatives
FDA	Forestry Development Authority

FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FOLUR (IP)	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (Impact Program)
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSC	Forestry Stewardship Council
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework Fund
GBFF	Global Biodiversity Framework Fund
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCP	Green Commodities Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFIP	Guinean Forests Integrated Program
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLP	Green Livelihoods Project
GOL	Government of Liberia
GOLD+	Global Opportunities for Long-term Development
GRCLG	Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited by Guarantee
GRNP	Gola Rainforest National Park
Gt	Gigaton
ha	Hectares
HCS	High Carbon Stock
HCSA	High Carbon Stock Approach
HCVF	High Conservation Value Forest
IA	Implementing Agency
IBA	Important Bird Area
IDH	Sustainable Trade Initiative
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Integrated Program

IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IW	International Waters
IWRM	International Water Resources Management
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KHFR	Kambui Hills Forest Reserve
LACRA	Liberia Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority
LCF	Liberia Conservation Fund
LDF	Least Developed Country
LCRP	Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection
LFSP	Liberia Forest Sector Project
LISGIS	Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LUP	Land use plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCS	Moore Center for Science
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
mm	Millimetres
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRU	Mano River Union
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification
Mt	Megaton
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAP	National Action Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action
NBC	National Bureau of Concessions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ND-GAIN	University of Notre Dame's Global Adaptation Initiative
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-government organization
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
NW	Northwest
OBAPAO	Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa
OFP	Operational Focal Point
PA	Protected Area
PADEV	Partners in Development
PAPBio	Sustainable management of biodiversity and protected areas in West Africa
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PAPFor	Support Programme for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPA	Proposed Protected Area
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RCP	Regional Coordination Project
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SADS	Skills and Agricultural Development Services
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCNL	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	Sustainable Development Institute
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

TE	Terminal Evaluation
TCC	Technical Coordination Committee
TNC	The Nature Compact
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UL	University of Liberia
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WA-BiCC	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
WABILED	West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development
WACSAA	West Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance
WANTi	West Africa Nature Transformation Initiative
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Biodiversity	This is the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part and includes diversity within species, between species, and ecosystems.
Conservation Agreement	Communities commit to implementing conservation actions, such as patrolling activities, forgoing logging and hunting and carrying out more sustainable resource extraction practices. In exchange, communities receive a benefits package defined through participatory processes to address local development needs and priorities.
Free, Prior, and Informed Consent	<p>A framework for ensuring that the rights of indigenous peoples are guaranteed in any decision that may affect their lands, territories, or livelihoods. Composed of four separate components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free—Without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat, or bribery. • Prior—Indicates that consent has been sought sufficiently in advance before any project activities have been authorized or commenced and that the time requirements of the indigenous community's consultation/consensus processes have been respected. • Informed—Information is provided in a language and form that are easily understood by the community, covering the nature, scope, purpose, duration and locality of the project or activity as well as information about areas that will be affected; economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, all involved actors, and the procedures that the project or activity may entail. • Consent—The right of indigenous peoples to give or withhold their consent to any decision that will impact their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.
Greenhouse gas	A greenhouse gas is a gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range. Increasing greenhouse gas emissions cause the greenhouse effect. The primary greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.
Indicators	Measurable entities related to a specific information need, such as the status of a target, change in pressure or progress towards achieving an objective, outcome, and/or output. By identifying indicators, the project can develop a rigorous monitoring plan, evaluate the program's responses and progress towards success, and enable adaptive management. Indicators should be measurable, precise, consistent, and sensitive.
Key Biodiversity Area	'Sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity', in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems. Sites qualify as global KBAs if they meet one or more of 11 criteria, clustered into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and irreplaceability. The KBA criteria can be applied to species and ecosystems in terrestrial, inland water and marine environments. Although not all KBA criteria may be relevant to all elements of biodiversity, the thresholds associated with each of the criteria may be applied across all taxonomic groups (other than micro-organisms) and ecosystems.
Outcomes	Are the intended or achieved short- and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, usually requiring collective efforts of partners. Outcomes represent changes in development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impact. Outcomes respond to the question "What are the short- and medium-term impacts or results of the project?" There can be several outcomes for each component.

Outputs	Products and services which result from the completion of activities within a development intervention. Outputs respond to the questions “What does the project do? Who does the project reach/benefit?” There can be several outputs for each outcome. Outputs need to be quantified whenever possible (hectares, tons of CO ₂ , percentage of coverage, number of staff trained, and number of participants among others).
Payment for Ecosystem Services	Payments to farmers or landowners who have agreed to take certain actions to manage their land or watersheds to provide an ecological service.
Rights-based Approach	An approach to conservation that promotes and integrates human rights into conservation policy and practice by emphasizing the positive connections between conservation and the rights of people to secure their livelihoods, enjoy healthy and productive environments, and live with dignity.

CI-GEF PROJECT AGENCY
Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape

PROJECT OUTLINE

Changes from the PIF

1. The target for Core Indicator 1.1 has been reduced from **347,875 ha** to **275,937 ha** by substituting the Wologizi Proposed Protected Area (PPA) for the Wonegizi Nature Reserve PPA. The Wologizi PPA was dropped due to significant obstacles from growing mining interests in the area, mainly for iron ore, which could impede the gazettement process.
2. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia will be supported by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) to undertake its Executing Agency functions.
3. The project core indicator targets have been updated and justifications provided under the core indicators section.
4. Executing partners have been identified and their roles defined.
5. The project's cofinancing has reduced at PPG Phase because government institutions have not yet shared their signed cofinancing letters. Conservation International is following up with the government institutions.

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Government, business, and civil society in Liberia are striving to balance the urgent need for employment, food security and economic development with the conservation and sustainable use of the country's natural resources. This is particularly evident in the Northwest (NW) Liberia Landscape, an area identified as a conservation priority for carbon and biodiversity as well as key ecosystem services such as freshwater provision, which is also experiencing the expansion of commercial agroforestry. The NW Liberia Landscape is a 2.7 million ha area with over 1.2 million inhabitants and one of the largest intact forest blocs in the Guinean Forest hotspot. It is exceptionally important for biodiversity, containing many of the country's 25 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The NW Liberia is located in the upper Guinean biodiversity hotspot and represents an important contribution to the Guinean Forests Critical Forest Integrated Program (GFIP). Its importance to the Guinean Forest Biome is further amplified by its transboundary linkages to forest landscapes and protected areas in Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Park) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve).
2. The proposed Project will build on past and current investments in this critical forest landscape and contribute to gazettement packages for **proposed protected areas totaling 275,937 ha including the Foya and Kpo Mountains Protected Area and the Wonegizi Nature Reserve and update the management plan for the Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha)**, both within the context of wider landscape-level land use planning. An additional **89,174 ha of forest adjacent to Gola and the proposed protected areas will be under improved management by local communities**, combining sustainable livelihood, maintenance of forest connectivity and generating socioeconomic benefits for about **30,020 people (at least 40% women)**. These actions will also contribute to the **mitigation of an estimated 33,683,289 million MtCO₂e of GHG emissions and increase engagement of Liberia on the**

GEF's International Waters (IW) knowledge sharing platform (IW: LEARN https://iwlearn.net/abt_iwlearn) to Level 2 through participation and sharing of key knowledge products, as part of the project's wider knowledge management and learning activities and contributions to the GFIP, in coordination with the Regional Coordination Project. The management plans will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory, inclusive land-use planning and to develop effective economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems. These Outcomes will be reinforced through transboundary linkages in watershed management planning and activities, in close coordination with GFIP Country Child Projects in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

3. The NW landscape is experiencing several main barriers including but not limited to; i) Incomplete information on Liberia's natural capital, ii) Limited institutional capacity and coordination in government ministries, iii) limited sustainable economic opportunities, iv) limited financing for protected area management and v) sustainable landscapes and Insufficient capacity for effective transboundary coordination. It is on this basis that this project has laid out interventions to overcome the various environmental problems and root causes currently affecting the NW Liberia Landscape. The Theory of Change underlying the project aligns with that of the GFIP, which emphasizes the need for investment in expanding the data and information base to guide management planning and activities; technical, institutional, and governance capacity for gender-responsive effective forest management; gender-responsive and climate-resilient sustainable livelihood alternatives and nature-friendly enterprise development; and policy reform and coordination. The project will respond to these needs through five main components below:
 - Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and Foya and establish Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi as Proposed Protected Areas
 - Improving management of landscapes outside protected areas
 - Strengthening institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed
 - Strengthening coordination, learning and sharing between this project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)
 - Enhancing capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management on the part of government and civil society
 - Strengthening an effective and gender-sensitive M&E system
4. Thus, the project will pursue levers of transformation to achieve systems change as follows:
 - Collection and dissemination of knowledge and best practices, informing land use/spatial planning, design of governance arrangements, and support for alternative livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises.
 - Multi-stakeholder dialogue, to enhance co-management of PAs and surrounding areas and multi-country management of shared watersheds and forest landscapes.
 - Enhanced ability to secure innovative sustainable financing, in terms of both technical capacity and regional policy alignment, to sustain conservation and sustainable management in the long term.
 - Improved incentive environment through income generation and supportive policies that reinforce social, economic, and environmental drivers of sustained, positive behaviour change.

- With regard to Innovation: To catalyze the identification and adoption of alternative livelihood options, the project will also pursue innovation in financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), producer associations and producers, with emphasis on access for women **(Output 2.1.5)**; innovation in this respect will involve developing rural finance solutions for remote areas with little access to the formal banking system. These measures will enable an enormous, transformative advance on the ambition of the National Forestry Reform Law and help consolidate Community Forests, providing a model for replication elsewhere in the country as Liberia seeks to complete its national PA network and promote OECMs as an effective conservation and economic sustainability strategy. They will be reinforced by new and updated financing plans for the Gola, Foya, Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi protected areas, which will explore innovative area financing solutions for protected areas and surrounding community lands such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) **(Output 1.1.4)**.
5. The Project will contribute to policy coherence through concrete, integrated activities that respond to Liberian government policy commitments. Advancing the gazettement of proposed protected areas will realize a long-standing policy commitment with respect to the national protected area network; doing so by investing in the CLF process achieves coherence between protected area establishment and the government's policy commitments to community land rights. Improved management of PAs and the areas around them in the NW Liberia Landscape, as the central link between contiguous conservation areas in Sierra Leone and Guinea, aligns protected area management with regional commitments, through enhanced integration with transboundary agreements.
 6. Expected project results include:
 - a. Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and Foya and establish Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi as Proposed Protected Areas
 - b. Improved management of landscapes outside protected areas
 - c. Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed
 - d. Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between Liberia and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels
 - e. Enhanced capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management on the part of government and civil society
 - f. Strengthened an effective and gender-sensitive M&E system.

A. Project Context

Global Importance of the Guinean Forest of West Africa

7. The Guinean Forests of West Africa comprise a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot spanning the southern part of West Africa into the northern region of Central Africa. Covering approximately 620,000 km², the region includes two sub-regions: the Upper Guinean Forests (starting in Guinea and extending eastward to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and part of Benin); and the Lower Guinean Forests extending from southern Nigeria into southwestern Cameroon and including São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea's islands (Carr et al. 2015) (See Figure 1).
8. The Guinean Forests support globally important levels of biodiversity (including high levels of species richness and endemism) and provide valuable ecosystem services to well over 200 million inhabitants of the region. Despite high levels of biodiversity richness and reliance on healthy ecosystems to provide critical services, the Guinean Forests have been classified as one of the most endangered ecoregions in Africa (Brugiere and Kormos 2009). An estimated 10 million hectares of forest have been lost in the Guinean Forests since the beginning of the 20th century, resulting in over 85% of the original forest cover being converted to other uses (Mittermeier et al. 2004; Johnson 2015; FFI 2021). Decades of poor natural resource governance have left the region's ecosystems in a precarious state, making the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services upon which the population depend all the more challenging and urgent. Principal threats to the Guinean Forests include agricultural expansion, unsustainable logging and fishing, bushmeat hunting and trade, industrial and artisanal mining, and climate change and pollution.



Figure 1: The Guinean Forests of West Africa
(Source: Mittermeier et al. 2004)

9. Expansion of the agricultural frontier for both subsistence and commercial crops is the leading cause of forest loss, such that approximately 80% of the region's original habitat is considered an "agriculture-forest" mosaic (Carr et al. 2015). Root causes of these threats include weak governance of natural resource use and management, high levels of poverty and wealth inequality, intense pressure for economic development, expanding infrastructure and settlements, and inadequate definition and recognition of land tenure and resource rights. Forests continue to be lost and degraded across West Africa, with Nigeria having one of the world's highest deforestation rates, and Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire's primary forest loss rates increasing by 60% and 26% respectively from 2010-2020 (Global Forest Watch 2023). Failure to address forest loss and degradation will result in continued habitat and ecosystem service loss, and loss of natural capital will erode the socio-economic well-being of forest-dependent communities and foreclose sustainable economic development options.
10. **Liberia's Importance to the Guinean Forests of West Africa:** Liberia is an exceptionally important country in this hotspot, housing approximately 40% of the ecoregion's total Western Guinean Lowland Forest (Carr et al. 2015). Liberia's forests cover over 40% of the country (roughly 4.2 million ha), a far higher percentage than any other country in West Africa. Significant forest blocks within its borders are adjacent to other important relatively large blocks in neighbouring Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Forest) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve). Along Liberia's border with Sierra Leone is the Mano River and its surrounding basin, which links to the Niger River basin, the third most biodiverse sub-regional watershed in the world after the Amazon and Congo basins, providing West Africa with roughly 80% of its freshwater (Liberia EPA 2023).
11. Recognizing the country's globally significant biodiversity and its importance to sustainable development, and the threats undermining it, the Government of Liberia (GOL) has committed to placing 30% of the country under some form of legal protection by 2030 (from its current 4%) and has set a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target of lowering deforestation rates by 50% (Liberian Governance Commission 2020). To reach these targets, the GOL has undertaken a multi-pronged effort with a diverse set of national and international partners to promote protected area establishment, develop effective models for community co-management and secure long-term sources of financing. Regionally, the GOL has supported its national efforts through adoption of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS's) Environmental Policy and Action Plan, being party to the Mano River Declaration (and subsequent formation of the Mano River Union – MRU), endorsing the African Forest Restoration Initiative (AFR100), and entering into Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with Sierra Leone and Guinea to promote transboundary protected area management (Liberia EPA, 2023).
12. Despite a relatively large percentage of national forest cover, as with other countries in the Guinean Forests biome, Liberia's ecosystems are subject to several significant threats. Pressures from logging, small- and large-scale mining, small-scale and industrial agriculture, charcoal production and illegal bushmeat hunting continue to cause forest loss and degradation, with the effects being exacerbated by climate change. Drivers of these threats are a combination of limited government capacity to enforce existing laws and regulations and ensure effective and sustainable natural resource management (with acute capacity shortfalls in land use planning); lack of economic alternatives to current unsustainable practices; and widespread poverty, particularly in rural areas. As a result, from 2001 to 2022, Liberia has lost over 2.2 million ha of tree cover, or roughly a 23% decrease in total tree cover since 2000, resulting in over 1.25 Gt of CO₂ emissions (Global Forest Watch 2023).

13. **The Northwest Liberia Landscape:** The proposed project (the Project) will focus on the Northwest (NW) Liberia Landscape, a roughly 2.7 million ha area in Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Bong counties. The NW Landscape is one of the largest intact forest blocs in the Upper Guinean Forest (FAO 2014), hosting a wide variety of habitats from mangroves along coastal areas, rainforests in the plains and inter-mountainous areas and deciduous forests at higher elevations. The climate is tropical, with temperatures averaging 27 °C and annual rainfall averaging between 3,500-4,600 mm (See Figure 2).

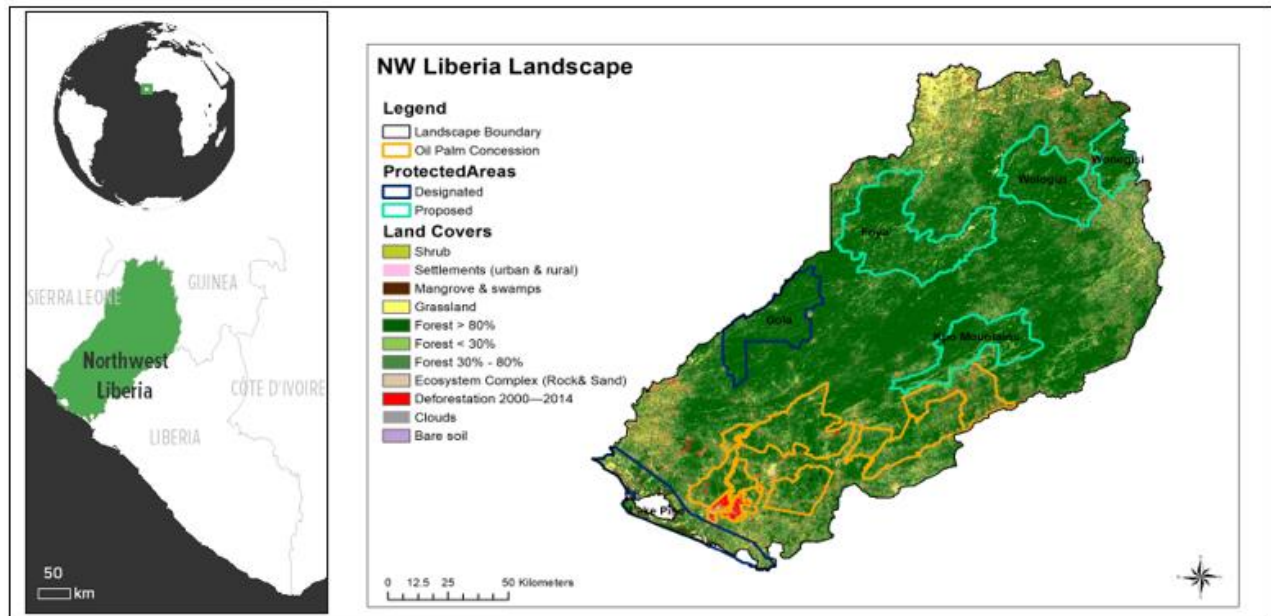


Figure 2: Northwest Liberia Landscape (CI-GEF 2021)

14. The NW Liberia Landscape consistently ranks as one of the region’s most important areas for biodiversity. It has been designated as one of the World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) “Global 200” areas of outstanding and representative biodiversity, an Endemic Bird Area and a Center of Plant Diversity (Olson et al. 2001). It houses four of the country’s Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), including Lake Piso, the Lofa-Mano-Gola Complex, Kpelle Forest, and the Wologizi and Wonegizi Mountains (BirdLife 2023). The landscape’s relative intactness and high levels of biomass also make it an important carbon sink, with some estimates suggesting its forests may have some of the world’s highest per-hectare densities of biomass carbon (Polinni et al. 2018).
15. Several regionally endemic Red List Endangered species are found in the landscape, including the western chimpanzee, (*Pan troglodytes verus*), pygmy hippopotamus (*Hexaprotodon liberiensis*), and forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*). Threatened and Vulnerable Red List species found in the Landscape include Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus Diana*), the West African red colobus (*Procolobus badius*), Jentik’s duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*), the Nimba flycatcher (*Melaenornis annamarulae*) and the white-necked rock fowl (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) (IUCN 2023). The NW Landscape is a particularly important area for primates, with over 90% of the 30 primate species found there being endemic, its flora is also diverse and shows high levels of endemism, with 1,800 of approximately 9,000 species of vascular plants being endemic (Mittermeier et al. 2004; Oates 2011).

16. **Biodiversity:** Currently, the NW Landscape is home to approximately 1,243,339 inhabitants, most of whom rely extensively on local ecosystems to support their livelihoods, including regular use of potable water, food, fuel, construction materials and medicine (Liberia EPA 2023). Small-scale shifting subsistence and commercial agriculture are the primary sources of employment, though persistent low productivity leaves most of the NW landscape's households experiencing various levels of food insecurity. Primary crops in the NW Landscape include rice, bananas, cassava, cacao, palm oil and rubber. The NW Landscape's abundant natural resources have also attracted interest from private sector companies, primarily from logging, mining and commercial agribusiness (notably oil palm and cacao) sectors. While development from these sectors is not yet widespread, the sectors, notably oil palm and cacao, pose threats to the area's forests and protected areas absent improved land-use planning capacity, economic alternatives, and better resource governance in the region. The NW Landscape's many often-overlapping agribusiness, mining and timber concessions demonstrate the GOL's intention to promote more activity in these sectors as part of its national economic development strategy (Carr et al. 2015).
17. Owing to high levels of biodiversity and endemism, low population density and extensive, relatively intact forest cover (over 70% of the total area), the GOL and its partners have defined and begun development on several new proposed protected areas for the NW Landscape, including the Foya and Kpo Mountains, Bong Mountain, and the Wonegizi and Wologizi Nature Reserves (**see Figure 2**). The NW Landscape has two established PAs: the Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha) and the Lake Piso Multiple Use Protected Area (97,159 ha).
18. The conservation importance of the NW Landscape's current and proposed protected areas is further heightened by transboundary connections to other significant forest blocks in neighbouring Sierra Leone and Guinea. Gola Forest National Park is part of the Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation Corridor, a priority area for conservation in the Guinean Forests that includes areas in Sierra Leone and Guinea (**See Figure 3**). It is also part of the larger transboundary conservation complex that includes Sierra Leone's 350,000-ha Gola Rainforest National Park, together forming the transboundary Gola Peace Park, the largest remaining intact block of forest in the Upper Guinean Forest. Sierra Leone and Liberia signed an MoU in 2011 to work together to conserve the Gola Forest, a commitment that was reaffirmed in 2020 to jointly manage the area as the Gola Forest Peace Park. The Lofa-Gola-Mano corridor links to the Zياما-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex shared by Liberia and Guinea. This complex, encompassing 257,000 ha, has been defined by the two governments as a transboundary conservation area extending from the NW Liberia Landscape's proposed Wologizi and Wonegizi Nature Reserves to Guinea's 119,019 ha Zياما Biosphere Reserve (**see Figure 4**).

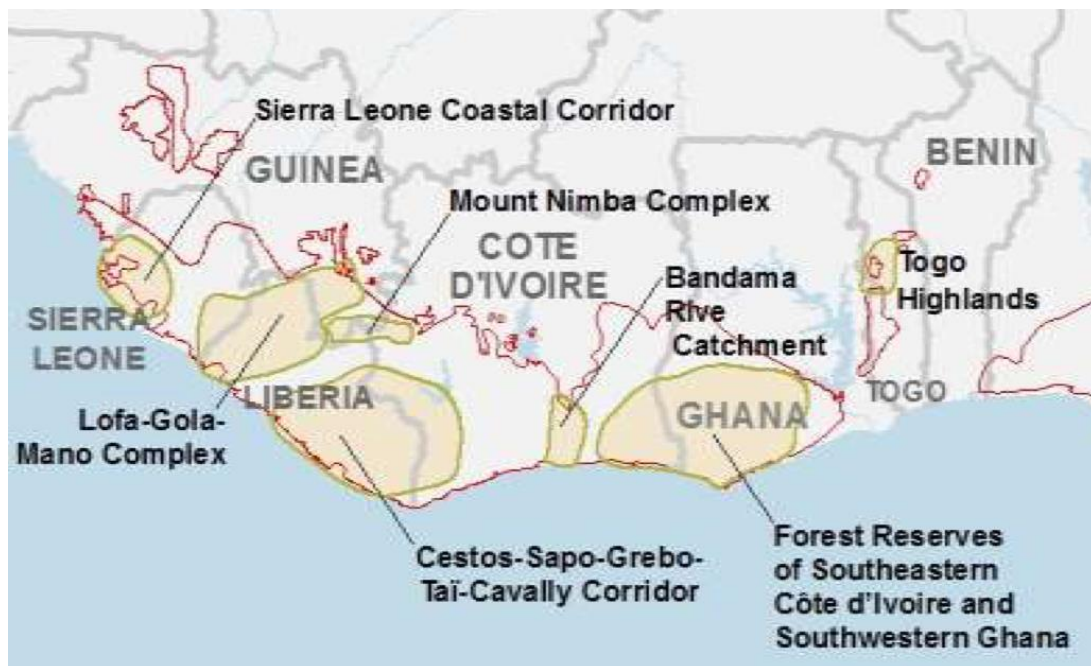


Figure 3: Transboundary Conservation Corridors
(Source: Carr et al. 2015)

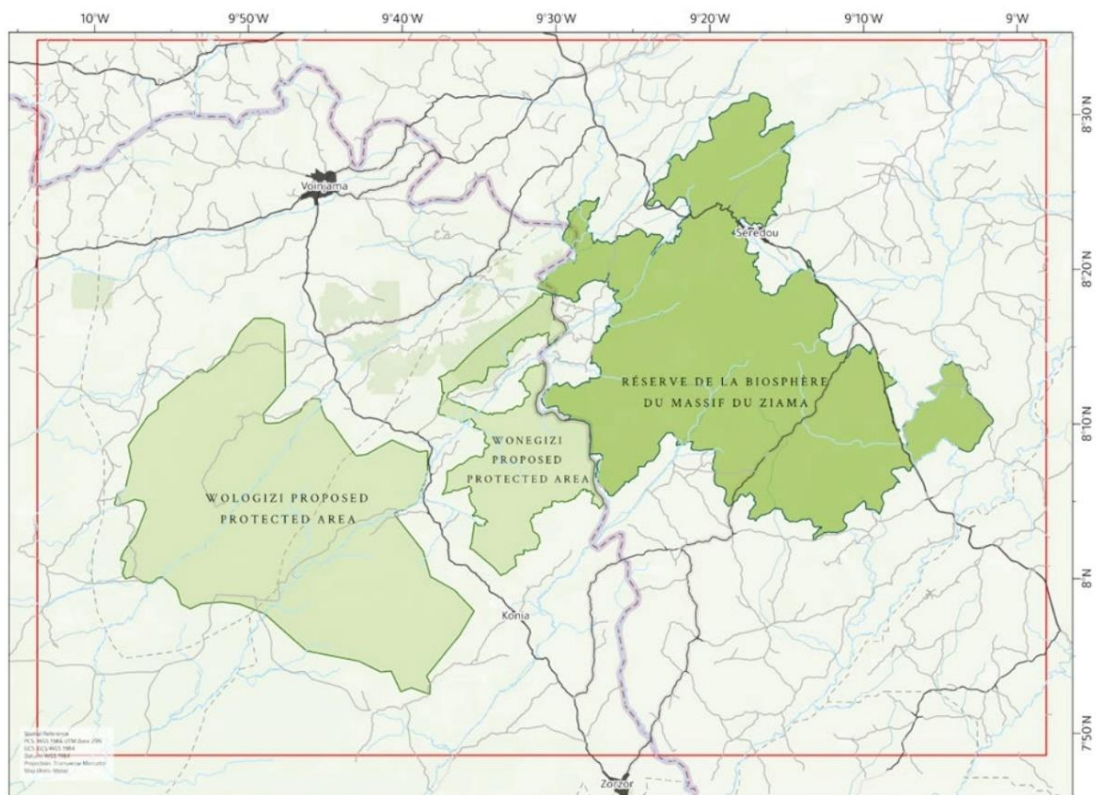


Figure 4: Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi Complex
(Source: PAPFor 2023)

19. **The Project within the NW Liberia Landscape:** The Project will help advance gazettement packages for the proposed protected areas of the Foya and Kpo Mountains protected area and Wonegizi Nature Reserve (collectively totalling 275,937 ha) and revise the 97,975 ha Gola Forest National Park's current management plan. A key element of this process will be to advance Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes, formalize land tenure and ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with communities prior to gazettement. In addition, the Project will improve the co-management of 89,174 ha of community lands adjacent to the Gola Forest National Park and the proposed protected areas. Recent and ongoing work in the Landscape has already initiated national and local capacity building to restore and manage Community Forests. The Project will build on these efforts to further strengthen the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory land-use planning and to develop effective, inclusive economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems.
20. Given the proximity to PAs in Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Park) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve), the Project will strengthen transboundary linkages in forest management, building on prior investment in developing and strengthening transboundary watershed management under the aegis of the Mano River Union (MRU). Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire are members of the MRU, a regional collaborative agreement to manage the larger Mano River watershed (**see Figure 5**). The Project will work with MRU members Sierra Leone and Guinea to strengthen capacity-building and knowledge sharing as well as apply nature-based solutions to improve the Mano River watershed's ecosystem health and address the impacts of climate change.

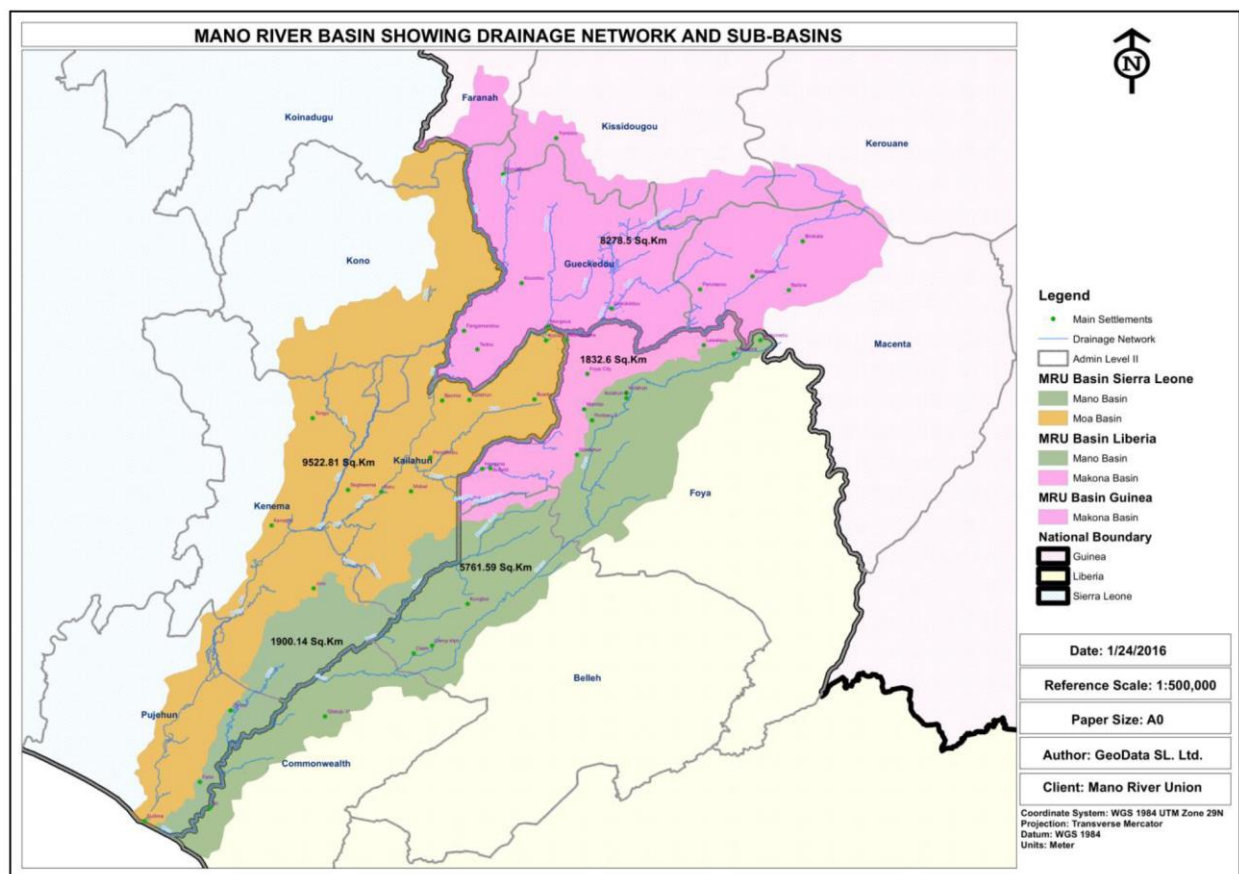


Figure 5: Mano River Basin (Sankara-Bassonon et al. 2018)

Socio-Economic Context

21. **Population:** Liberia's 5.3 million people are comprised of 28 ethnic groups and languages, making it one of the world's most ethnically diverse countries (Mbaka et al. 2016). Administratively, Liberia is divided into fifteen counties, which are subdivided into 90 districts; districts are further subdivided into clans, which are the smallest unit of governance. The fifteen counties are administered by superintendents appointed by the President of Liberia. The country's history is somewhat unique in West Africa, with the US sending freed slaves to settle the region in the early 19th century, leading to the establishment of Africa's first republic in 1874. The country continues to strive for recovery following decades of instability and conflict. While once one of West Africa's best performing economies, civil wars in 1989-1996 and 1999-2003 that left 250,000 people refugees and another half million internally displaced, the 2014-16 Ebola epidemic, and the 2020-22 COVID pandemic have exacerbated the country's development challenges (Flomo et al. 2023).
22. Currently, an estimated 149,305 people (75,425 men and 73,880 women) live around the Project's area of interest (Liberia National Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016). Project activities will target approximately 20% of this population. Like many rural communities in Liberia, most of these inhabitants engage in shifting cultivation and rely heavily on locally available natural resources, notably bushmeat as a source of protein and charcoal for fuel; however, they also rely on forest conservation and management for their livelihoods. Many are co-managers of adjacent PAs and Community Forests and have played a key role in past and current land-use planning efforts. Moreover, as guaranteed by the 2018 Land Rights Act, which recognizes customary land tenure, these communities now have legal recognition of their ownership of these lands (Liberia EPA 2023).
23. Classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC), Liberia currently ranks 177th out of 193 countries on the Human Development Index, with a per capita annual GDP of just over \$754 (UNDP 2023; World Bank 2024). Over a quarter (27.6%) of Liberia's population earns around \$2 per day, while over half of the population (50.9%) lives below the national poverty line, with higher percentages in rural areas (World Bank 2024). As a region, West Africa is currently experiencing one of the world's highest population growth rates (approximately 2.5% a year), with Liberia's overall annual population growth rate somewhat lower (2.18%), though it tends to be higher in rural areas (World Population Review 2023).
24. Gender inequalities are widespread, based on patriarchal values and manifested in cultural practices: Liberia has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.65, ranking it 156 out of 162 countries (UNDP 2023). Women and girls in the Project's focal area in the NW Liberia Landscape are particularly disadvantaged in virtually all spheres, whether it is about economic power, political voice, or intra-household decision-making, due to structural injustice and social norms and traditions. For instance, 37% of women have access to assets and resources as compared to 63% of males, while 17% of females have control over assets and resources as compared to 63% of males (see Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan).
25. **Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Liberia has a rich natural resource endowment, with iron ore, gold and rubber making up the country's primary exports. Principal economic sectors include agriculture, fisheries, forestry and mining (World Bank 2020). Approximately three-quarters of Liberia's population engages in shifting agricultural practices to support all or part of their livelihoods, accounting for around 40% of the country's GDP. Women play a particularly important role in the sector, producing over 60% of all agricultural products and making up over half of the total agricultural labour force (World Bank 2020). However, low productivity in the sector limits incomes and the ability

to ensure regular access to sufficient, high-quality food, and the constant need to find new areas for cultivation leads to forest loss and degradation. Given the low levels of productivity, subsistence farming is often accompanied by efforts to generate cash through destructive practices such as bushmeat hunting and wood collection for charcoal production and sale—about 75% of animal protein consumed in Liberia consists of bushmeat and over 95% of Liberia’s population relies on charcoal as a primary source of fuel for cooking and heating (USAID 2020).

26. Given the importance of agriculture and natural resources to its economy, the sectors have been central components of GOL’s development strategies. As detailed in “Vision 2030,” the GOL has set a goal to have Liberia become a middle-income country by 2030 (Liberian Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 2018). The Pro-Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity 2018-2023 (PAPD) of the previous government was the second of a series of National Development Plans (NDP) used to achieve the Vision 2030 framework, positing that while Liberia is rich in natural and human resources, the country is unable to achieve its full development potential owing to the lack of capacity to successfully use those resources to generate wealth. The recently installed administration has issued the Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism (ARREST) agenda, which likewise signals intent to leverage natural resources for development.
27. **Legislative frameworks:** The GOL has implemented laws, policies and legislative frameworks to both manage the country’s natural resources in a sustainable manner and contribute to broad-based economic development. Liberian law requires that 30% of the country’s remaining forests be under some form of protection by 2030. To date, five PAs have been established and more than ten have been proposed and are currently going through the gazettelement process, with support from a diverse range of bi-lateral (USAID), multi-lateral (GEF, World Bank) and international NGOs (CI, WWF, FF, BirdLife International) donors and partners. To support the country’s growing PA network, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is currently working to expand the Liberia Conservation Fund, a financial framework that supports PA management and community-based conservation. Legal recognition of communities’ customary land rights has been secured through the passage of the Community Rights Act (2009) and Land Rights Act (2018), with the latter legislation also recognizing women’s land rights for the first time in the country’s history.
28. The Community Rights Act allows for legal recognition and designation of Community Forests, as well as for conditional use of forest resources by communities, including permitting small-scale contracts to harvest timber and non-timber forest products. The Land Rights Law provides the framework for customary land ownership and management and provides the basis for protection from land grabs. Together, these have enabled Liberia to pave the way for Community Forests to become a key component of PA co-management strategies that include local communities in the management of PAs and surrounding areas. Additional measures to safeguard and empower communities include the EPA and FDA’s guidance on Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) for economic activities such as logging taking place on community land, and the development of environmental and social information systems to support critical activities such as land-use planning.
29. To support its national environmental efforts, the GOL is party to several multilateral agreements including: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change; Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); and UN

Convention to Combat Desertification/Land Degradation (UNCCD). Though Liberia has signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury, it has to date not ratified the treaty.

30. At the regional level, Liberia is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in 2013 adopted the Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa and has endorsed the African Forest Restoration Initiative (AFR100). At the sub-regional level, with Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia is a member of the Mano River Union (MRU), which has entered into a collaborative agreement to manage ecosystems shared by its members. The GOL's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is mandated to coordinate these various conventions and agreements and is also the GEF Operational Focal Point. As the GEF Operational Focal Point, the EPA is responsible for overseeing the coordination of all GEF projects and activities that take place in Liberia (Liberia EPA 2023).
31. The Project will support Liberia's international and regional commitments in several ways. It will directly contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by advancing Goals A and B (relating to conservation and sustainable use respectively), and particularly GBF Targets 1-5 (spatial planning, biodiversity conservation, and management, including the 30x30 target for PAs and OECMs), 8 (climate change), 9-11 (sustainable use and management of biodiversity and ecosystem services), 14 (policy and planning), 19 (financing), 20 (capacity building), 22 (IPLCs) and 23 (gender). The Project will also contribute to the advancement of the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action Plan, and Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, African Convention on Nature and Natural Resources, and AFR100, which contributes to the Bonn Challenge and the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative.
32. By consolidating and expanding on recent and ongoing work, the Project will bring about transformational change in the ability of government and communities to work collaboratively in the effective management of existing and new protected areas in NW Landscape, including those with transboundary linkages to Sierra Leone and Guinea, to manage forests effectively and sustainably in the NW Liberia Landscape. Advancing the completion of Liberia's proposed PA network, strengthening PA management, and providing support for sustainable community livelihoods in a PA-economy context will yield an enormous, transformative advance on the ambition of the National Forestry Reform Law. This will be a model for replication elsewhere in the country as Liberia seeks to complete the remainder of its national PA network and promote additional OECMs such as Community Forests.

Climate Change in Liberia

33. The impacts of climate change on Liberia will be multidimensional, from rising average temperatures, rising sea levels, changing precipitation patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather events. Average annual temperatures are projected to rise in Liberia at slightly higher levels than global averages, with most projections showing a 0.7°C to 0.9°C increase, (resulting in an average of 25.8°C to 26.7°C) from 2080-2100. Liberia already receives more rainfall than most countries in the world (mean annual precipitation between 1991–2020 was 2,467 mm, three times higher than in France) (IMF 2023). Climate change projections currently do not show a large change in total precipitation, but there is a greater likelihood of more frequent and more extreme weather events, notably heavy rains and flooding, with the potential for regional droughts. With over 560 km of coasts that span the entire southern border and the world's 8th largest percentage of population living in a low-elevation coastal zone (including the capital, Monrovia), Liberia is exceptionally vulnerable to sea level rise.

Impacts from sea level rise already have been evident, displacing over 6,500 people in the Monrovia township of West Point (UNDP 2023).

34. Liberia's readiness to adapt to projected climate change impacts is low. The University of Notre Dame's Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) ranks countries annually on both their vulnerability and readiness to implement effective adaptive measures. In 2023 Liberia ranked 174th out of 177 countries in overall vulnerability, and 165th in readiness, making it one of the ND-GAIN index's least adaptation-ready countries (ND-GAIN 2023). Absent substantially improved adaptation readiness measures, the impacts of climate change could have a profoundly negative impact on Liberia's population, economy and biodiversity (IMF 2023).

Global Environmental Problems, underlying drivers and root causes

35. The project will address the following global environmental problems affecting the Northwest Liberia Landscape.
36. **Continued high rates of deforestation and degradation in the tropics** pose significant risks to biodiversity, climate mitigation and ecosystem services. Primary tropical forest loss in 2022 was 10% higher than in 2021, with over 4.1 million ha lost, the equivalent of losing 11 football fields of forest per minute, or one year of India's fossil fuel emissions (~2.7 gigatonnes – Gt) (WRI 2023). The West African region has lost an estimated 10 million hectares since the beginning of the 20th century, with only around 15% of the original forest cover still intact. The region's forests continue to be lost and degraded at globally high rates, with Nigeria having one of the world's highest deforestation rates and Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire's primary forest loss rates increasing by 60% and 26% respectively from 2010-2020. Between 2000-2020, Liberia lost 334,000 ha of forest, approximately 3.6% of the country's total tree cover (Global Forest Watch 2023).
37. **Expanding agriculture drives** about 80% of deforestation worldwide and is estimated to have already cleared or converted 27% of tropical forests, with particularly severe impacts on biodiversity as tropical forests support approximately 70% of all terrestrial plant and animal species. According to FAO (2014), tropical countries lost seven million hectares per year between 2000 and 2010, with the conversion of forest land to agriculture comprising 73% of the land use change. Moreover, after conversion, most agricultural lands are not sustainably managed. The other agriculture drivers are:
 - a. *Replacing forests with unsustainable agriculture leads to an erosion of vital soil ecosystem services*, including but not limited to the production of biomass; filtration of chemical and biological deposits; water purification; maintenance of hydrological cycles; preservation of genetic diversity; and climate regulation through storage of carbon and other greenhouse gases.
 - b. *Growing global population and demand*. With the world's population set to increase to nine billion by 2050 and incomes expected to rise, food consumption is predicted to double (IFAD 2019). For example, global demand for palm oil in particular is growing precipitously as a key ingredient for food, biofuels, and other consumer products, and meeting this burgeoning demand with conventional practices will continue to drive deforestation and degrade lands. In addition to the expansion of the agricultural frontier, additional demand-driven environmental pressures in Liberia include commercial logging (and at a smaller scale,

informal logging by rural community members), small- and large-scale mining, charcoal production and bushmeat hunting.

- c. *Immediate stresses on natural forested ecosystems from development activity* such as logging, mining and conversion to agroforestry are exacerbated by impacts from climate change, which in turn increases expansionary pressures. The agricultural sector alone contributes nearly a quarter of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (19-29% of total anthropogenic GHG), with land use change contributing an additional 11%, with some estimates at 15% or higher (Vermeulen et al. 2012). Emissions from agriculture (including the forestry sector) have nearly doubled over the past fifty years and may increase by 30% or more by 2050 (Tubiello et al. 2014). As noted above, impacts from climate change could be particularly severe in Liberia, ranking 174th out of 177 countries in overall vulnerability, and 165th in readiness.

Root Causes

1. **Poverty and pressure for economic development:** A primary driver behind these threats in developing countries in the tropics is high levels of poverty and the pursuit of economic development at national and local levels. Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 178th out of 191 countries on UNDP's Human Development Index, with more than half of the population living below the poverty line and even higher poverty rates in rural areas such as the NW Landscape (UNDP 2023). Limited employment opportunities and pervasive poverty result in heavy local community dependence on natural resources for subsistence and local commerce (shifting cultivation for subsistence agriculture, non-timber forest product (NTFP) collection, wood for energy and housing materials, bushmeat for food consumption and sale, etc.).
2. **Population growth:** Population growth, particularly in rural areas where birthrates are higher than in urban areas, adds additional pressure on development needs. The combination of these economic and population pressures and limited awareness of ecosystem function and value result in unsustainable extraction methods and levels, undermining the viability of forests in NW Liberia (FFI 2021).
3. **Poor natural resource governance:** Combined with limited governance capacity and an absence of participatory land use planning, the pressing need for livelihoods and food security is driving unplanned and destructive land conversion, responding to short-term needs at the expense of long-term sustainability. A dearth of participatory land-use planning leads to uncoordinated development activities, and consequently, partner interventions are not yielding as much impact as they could be due to missed synergies and limited sharing of lessons between localities.
4. **The absence of land-use planning** is one symptom of a more general governance deficit: Others include regulation, monitoring and enforcement, and participation and inclusion of stakeholders needed for integrated landscape scale solutions. Without land-use planning at the landscape level in rural areas, there is no mechanism to manage competing land uses, incorporate the needs and priorities of different stakeholders, or optimize investments and minimize inefficiencies and conflicts. Inadequate or unenforced regulation also contributes to uncertainty, conflict, and poor decision-making. Effective land-use planning and forest management require community participation, as local stakeholders will have the greatest influence on actual outcomes on the ground. This includes a strong role in decision-making. Absent such participation, the prevailing

context will continue to be characterized by conflict and uncertainty, inhibiting investment, socioeconomic development, and sustainable resource management.

Key Data on the quantity and quality of natural resources in Liberia such as land, water, biodiversity,

The Project will address the following barriers to overcoming the various environmental problems and root causes currently affecting the NW Liberia Landscape:

- a) ***Incomplete information on Liberia's natural capital:*** Data on the quantity and quality of natural resources in Liberia such as land, water, biodiversity, fish, soils, forests, minerals and energy, and changes in these stocks over time, is scarce. Liberian government institutions face shortages of scientific information on environmental management. The Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) houses the nation's statistical spatial and non-spatial data and produces the System of National Accounts, but despite some progress in capacity building LISGIS and other national statistical systems remain weak. Data that do exist tends to be scattered across different institutions with unclear ownership and is typically in an analogue or paper format which limits external investigator access. Data gaps and poor collaborative links between agencies pose an obstacle to effective, participatory planning, including for land use, protected area management and implementing viable and sustainable economic alternatives for local communities.
- b) ***Limited institutional capacity and coordination in government ministries.*** Institutional and individual capacity at both national and local levels in Liberia is limited. There is limited capacity in the Liberian government to assess, plan, and monitor the use of land and natural resources and to determine how these resources contribute to the economy. There is also a lack of integrated inter-sectoral planning between different government ministries and agencies, leading to duplication of efforts, gaps in project and program design, and poor delivery. Limited capacity is particularly notable for regulatory authorities such as the EPA, which currently do not have sufficient human and financial resources to fully execute monitoring and enforcement responsibilities in the NW Liberia Landscape, such as verifying compliance of agroforestry operations with environmental regulations. Likewise, the FDA is limited in its capacity to execute key processes such as Customary Land Formalization, community engagement, and financial planning which are key steps towards gazettelement and effective management of protected areas.
- c) ***Limited sustainable economic opportunities:*** The NW Landscape continues to struggle with creating viable and sustainable economic opportunities for local communities, who urgently need socio-economic development. Rural populations in the NW Liberia Landscape struggle to meet food needs through subsistence shifting cultivation, and, as populations grow, fallow periods are becoming shorter and soils more impoverished, driving a push deeper into intact forests in search of new land to cultivate, including into current and proposed protected areas. Subsistence farming is accompanied by efforts to generate cash through destructive practices such as bushmeat hunting and wood collection for charcoal production and sale—about 75% of animal protein consumed in Liberia consists of bushmeat and over 95% of Liberia's population uses charcoal (USAID 2020).
- d) ***Limited financing for protected area management and sustainable landscapes:*** A global funding gap in the support needed for the world's protected areas is undermining management

effectiveness. Waldron et al. (2020) determined that approximately \$68 billion is needed annually to effectively manage the world's current PA systems, but just under \$25 billion currently is provided, a shortfall of more than 64%. In Africa, the gap is particularly acute, with current funding levels only supporting 10-20% of the continent's PA management needs (Waldron et al. 2020). In Liberia, about 2% of the FDA's budget is allocated to protected areas, amounting to around US\$135,000 which is woefully inadequate for effective management of existing PAs.

- e) ***Insufficient capacity for effective transboundary coordination:*** Critical habitats and ecosystems often transcend national borders, making transboundary cooperation and coordination in management activities essential. This is particularly the case in the Guinean Forests of West Africa, where many priority Conservation Corridors extend across multiple countries' national borders. The Lofa-Gola-Mano Complex, which overlaps with Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, has been designated by CEPF as all three countries have initiated a priority Conservation Corridor and transboundary cooperation. While efforts such as the transboundary MRU and the Gola Peace Park between Liberia and Sierra Leone have established a foundation for transboundary coordination, significant capacity gaps remain ineffective transboundary management of shared ecosystems.

Incremental cost reasoning

38. Liberia's population is growing rapidly at over 2.1% per year, and along with it the demand for land, food, fuelwood and charcoal, and building materials. In the absence of changes in production systems and improved governance and resource management, the subsistence and development needs of the expanding population will place ever-increasing pressure on natural resources and ecosystems. In forest areas, this is evidenced by continued land conversion and shortening fallow periods in shifting cultivation cycles. Without this Project, and GEF support, the Liberian Government is not likely to further develop or apply integrated land-use planning and management capacity; agricultural development planning and policies will continue to ignore critical ecological factors; PA establishment will continue to languish and the proposed areas will not be effectively managed or help Liberia reach the goal of 30% of its territory under some form of protection by 2030; commercial agroforestry and other extractive sectors will expand at the expense of forest ecosystems; and forest communities will continue to rely on unsustainable resource use. These business-as-usual trends place Liberia on a trajectory to degrade a significant portion of its natural capital, including extensive tracts of primary forest and their associated biodiversity and ecosystem services, which ultimately will have negative ramifications for critical ecosystem services, agricultural productivity and food security.
39. Liberia has rich biodiversity and immense natural capital that has not yet been systematically assessed, measured, or valued. As the value of ecosystems is not fully recognized by decision-makers, they continue to be lost and degraded. National planning and development agencies are focused on the immediate need to improve the well-being of people; the notion that conserving natural resources is a critical element of human well-being in Liberia is not sufficiently recognized by decision-makers. The true costs of exploiting Liberia's natural resources are not being accounted for in development decision-making, which if not changed will allow unsustainable exploitation to persist.
40. Although Liberia's environmental protection policies have proposed that key ecosystems be gazetted as protected areas (30% of the country's land area), resources and capacity to move forward with the gazette process have been limited. As a result, of the seven proposed protected areas in the NW

Liberia Landscape, only two have been fully established (Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve and Gola Forest National Park). Without gazettement and land-use planning that incorporates additional proposed protected areas, continued deforestation and forest degradation will undermine the ecological integrity of these areas. Continued forest loss in NW Liberia will have significant negative impacts on biodiversity. As one of the largest remaining forest blocks in West Africa, the region is vital for endangered species that require large areas of habitat, such as the chimpanzee, pygmy hippopotamus, and forest elephants. Continued forest loss and fragmentation will erode some of the last remaining large tracts of intact habitat for these species, which also serve as indicators of overall ecosystem health.

41. In terms of food security, without interventions, the most severe effects of climate change on agricultural production in Liberia are anticipated in Bong and Lofa counties, which comprise a significant portion of the NW Landscape (USAID 2020). These counties were the country's primary agricultural areas before Liberia's civil war destroyed the nation's agricultural production system. Successful interventions therefore need to focus on adapting agriculture to anticipated changes, but this will not happen in the absence of integrated land-use planning that incorporates climate considerations and their implications for ecosystem services. Among the most problematic climate change implications that will be exacerbated by forest loss are hydrological impacts; in addition to undermining food security due to impacts on quantity, quality and timing of available water for agriculture, these impacts will affect watershed services pertaining to planned hydroelectric development as well as urban water supplies.
42. Liberia has entered into formal bilateral agreements with Sierra Leone and Guinea to jointly manage transboundary PA landscapes. In 2011, the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest (amended in 2020), committing both countries to jointly manage the area as the Gola Forest Peace Park, the largest intact forest block in the Guinean Forests. In 2019, Liberia entered into a bilateral agreement with Guinea to collaboratively manage the Ziamawonegizi-Wologizi forest complex, which includes Guinea's Ziamawonegizi Biosphere Reserve. At the regional level, Liberia is part of ECOWAS, and in 2013, member states the Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, while at the sub-regional level, Liberia is part of the Mano River Union (MRU), which has agreed upon a coordination framework to manage MRU members' shared ecosystems. Current low levels of government capacity in land-use planning, effective PA management and weak collaborative links with and within neighbouring countries will continue to undermine Liberia's transboundary commitments, impacting important areas for Guinean Forest biodiversity and the region's ability to maintain key ecosystem services, notably freshwater supplies and mitigation of impacts from climate change.
43. The current baseline scenario involves ongoing efforts of a broad array of stakeholders, including government, non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). Key actors relevant to the institutional and regulatory framework in the NW Liberia Landscape, relating in particular to land rights, conservation and food production, include: **Table 3** summarizes their roles in the project.

Land rights

1. Government – **Liberia Land Authority (LLA)**: develop policies continuously, undertake actions and implement programs in support of land governance, including land administration and management in Liberia.
2. NGOs /CSOs– **Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)**: piloting land use planning in Lofa and conducting community awareness and sensitization to the Liberian Land Rights Law,

particularly on land ownership in general and specifically on Customary Land and key questions related to Customary Land Rights; **Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)**: Promoting SDI's community rights and food security with good governance in forest and climate policy of Liberia, Fauna and Flora (FF).

Conservation

1. Government – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Mano River Union (MRU)
2. NGOs/CSOs – Conservation International (CI), Fauna and Flora (FF), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Sustainable Development Initiative (SDI), The Nature Compact (TNC)
3. Academia – Forestry Training Institute (FTI), University of Liberia (UL)

Food production

1. Government – Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Cooperative Development Agency (CDA)
2. Local communities in project sites
3. Cooperatives who produce and buy food and cash crops.

Table 3: Project Roles of Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Contribution/Role in the Project Implementation	Enduring Benefits from the Project
Government (National)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) • Ministry of Finance and Development Planning • Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) • Forestry Development Authority (FDA) • Liberia Land Authority (LLA) • Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) • Liberia Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (LACRA) • Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection • Ministry of Internal Affairs • Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services • Cooperative Development Agency (CDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead in project execution and coordination and provide strategic oversight (EPA) - Provide policy guidance - Monitor implementation of project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved coordination of conservation efforts - Sustainable economic benefits for communities - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Improved capacity - Increased knowledge - Strengthened co-management conditions - Enhanced transboundary management

Stakeholders	Contribution/Role in the Project Implementation	Enduring Benefits from the Project
Government (County/District)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local County Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate engagement of local communities - Provide guidance with respect to local government policies and plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable economic benefits for communities - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change
CSOs & NGOs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society for the Conservation of Nature (SCNL) Partners in Development The Nature Compact Fauna and Flora Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) Skills and Agricultural Development Services Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in the development of land use plans - Support implementation and monitoring of community-based project activities - Help ensure that Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes are followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable economic benefits for communities - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Improved coordination of conservation efforts
Local Communities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Communities in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Bomi, and Gbarpolu Counties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in processes related to the development of land use plans, co-management plans and CLF - Support implementation and monitoring of community-based project activities - Participate in training capacity building and enterprise development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable economic benefits - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Increased knowledge - Improved capacity - Strengthened co-management conditions - Strengthening of land tenure
Private Sector		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and existing SMEs, producer associations, producers Mano Palm Oil, Liberia Agriculture and Asset Development Company, Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly enterprises - Participation in land use planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of ecosystem services that benefit operations - Enhanced linkages to financial service providers - Technical assistance and training
Technical/Research Institutions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forestry Training Institute (FTI) University of Liberia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide expertise for land use planning processes and development of alternative livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New data and platforms for knowledge exchange

Stakeholders	Contribution/Role in the Project Implementation	Enduring Benefits from the Project
Transboundary Bodies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government counterparts in Sierra Leone and Guinea Mano River Union Transboundary Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing multi-country dialogue and coordination in the management of shared transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved coordination - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Increased capacity

Lessons from past and ongoing initiatives and planned cooperation

44. GEF has a long history in Liberia, including several investments relating to the development of Liberia's protected area network, notably:

- Establishing the Basis for Biodiversity Conservation in Sapo National Park and in South-East Liberia (GEF 3, Project ID 1475, 2005-2011)
- Consolidation of Liberia's Protected Area Network (COPAN) (GEF 4, Project ID 3284, 2008-2012)
- Biodiversity Conservation through Expanding the Protected Area Network in Liberia (EXPAN) (GEF 4, Project ID 3837, 2011-2015)
- Improve sustainability of mangrove forests and coastal mangrove areas in Liberia through protection, planning and livelihood creation – as a building block towards Liberia's marine and coastal protected areas (GEF 5, Project ID 5712, 2016-2019)

45. Over the many years in which these projects have taken place, the Liberian context has gone through considerable evolution as the country rebuilt in the immediate aftermath of civil war, reformed its forestry sector, formalized the protected area establishment process, and elaborated the legal framework for community land rights, among other developments. Nevertheless, the experience accumulated through these initiatives offers a set of lessons that are reflected in the design of this project, particularly through the input of the EPA, FDA, and local civil society. These are summarized as follows:

- It is critical to mindfully sequence investments in alternative livelihoods within overall protected area establishment and strengthening processes and communicate and manage expectations of local communities accordingly. Extensive community engagement must ensure that community members see that protected areas do not undermine livelihoods, and indeed that co-management models intend to give communities a voice and hand in shaping land use and protected area management decisions. Since co-financed and other parallel activities in the landscape will be important in how communities view the relationship between alternative livelihoods and protected areas, this also requires close attention to coordination and alignment with other work.
- Legal, constitutional and central government procedures and approvals must be well understood for successful project planning and execution, with a realistic view of the time required for the steps involved. The understanding of timelines, sequencing, and dependencies must be shared among project implementers, partners and stakeholders.

- iii. Effective skills and knowledge transfer are fundamental to the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes in capacity-poor areas. A systematic effort is needed to achieve this capacity transfer, including anticipation of ongoing capacity development after the project is completed. Significant capacity constraints in Liberia (on the part of government, communities, and civil society) need to be taken into account with respect to project execution and compliance with GEF and Implementing Agency requirements. This means that the project design itself must be clear and streamlined, the roles of partners explicit and well-defined, and the required technical support identified and budgeted for.
 - iv. While seeking transformation, activities need to be aligned in scope, scale, and complexity with business as usual, to maximize the likelihood of sustained impact and continuity after the project. Investment in infrastructure and human capital that will endure after project completion depends on long-term cost implications for the government, therefore such investments need to be consistent with the standard cost parameters of the government of Liberia.
 - v. Many GEF projects in Liberia have relied heavily on external consultants as a means to meet project timelines and ensure delivery of outputs; however, this led to a lack of ownership and commitment, particularly on the part of senior management, in key partner agencies and organizations. The project must cultivate ownership within key partners (particularly EPA and FDA) at multiple levels since over the course of a 5-year project management and staffing changes are inevitable.
 - vi. Several of the projects included actions intended to secure medium to long-term sustainability of project outcomes but did not develop full sustainability plans. A key lesson is that Liberia's protected areas need long-term financing plans that do not unduly depend on government budget allocations, and the development of such plans needs to be a deliberate step in the establishment process.
 - vii. Recognizing that interventions involving land and natural resources can touch on important sensitivities, the projects demonstrate that concerted efforts with respect to stakeholder engagement can result in shared project ownership and collaborative relationships conducive to project implementation. In addition to local stakeholders, this relates to the constellation of government agencies implicated in land use and management, for which engagement and coordination are crucial to navigating the configuration of statutory functions of the various government agencies participating in the project.
46. Supplementing the aggregated lessons from older initiatives summarized above, **Table 4** presents the current investment landscape of more recent, current, and planned investments for related work in Liberia.

Table 4: Recent, current and planned investments for related work

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
Food Systems Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR; GEF ID 10201, under implementation)	2022-2027	GEF Grant Amount: US\$ 7,139,450 Co-financing (including the commitment from CI): US\$ 66,999,065	To promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable food systems for enhanced livelihood opportunities in North West (NW) Liberia Landscape through land use planning, restoration of degraded lands, and strengthening governance, policies, and market incentives for nationally replicable models of deforestation-free cocoa and palm oil value chains.	1. Development, adoption, and implementation of National and NW Liberia Landscape land-use plans; 2. Promotion of sustainable production practices for food crops, palm oil, and cocoa, supported by responsible value chains; 3. Biodiversity loss reduction and restoration of natural habitats; 4. Coordination, collaboration, and Monitoring and Evaluation	The FOLUR project promotes both biodiversity conservation and a sustainable food system in the NW Liberia Landscape through land use planning, restoration of degraded lands, and strengthening governance, all of which complement the Project and offer opportunities for knowledge sharing and leveraging. Geographically, there are opportunities for the Project to leverage knowledge and expertise from FOLUR, as it advances efforts to create the Wologizi Nature Reserve (99,538 ha) by developing the necessary documents (gazettement package) and support restoration activities to re-establish connectivity, sequester carbon and promote sustainable livelihoods. The project will coordinate with the FOLUR project to align where possible the selection of clans with whom to conduct Customary Land Formalization processes and the areas where FOLUR is advancing land use plans. This coordination will avoid duplication of effort and ensure efficient use of collective resources; for example, the project advances land use planning at clan level, while FOLUR works at the landscape level.

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
					<p>Further lessons from FOLUR experience to date that inform the design of this project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure strong engagement and coordination with mining concessions in the landscape. 2. Increase emphasis on involvement of the private sector partners in the landscape to avoid tension 3. Coordinate regularly with other NGOs and partners to avoid duplication in activities 4. Improve information sharing by working with EPA on its EKMS to develop a dashboard on partners and projects, as a repository for GOL to track projects to measure impact.
GOLD/GOLD+ Program,(GEF ID 10569, under implementation)	2021-2026	Co-financing Total: US\$342,323,325 GEF Project Grant: US\$74,318,526	To reduce the use of mercury in the ASGM sector in the participating countries through a holistic, multisectoral integrated formalization approach, and increasing access to finance leading to the adoption of sustainable mercury-free technologies and access to	1. Enhancing formalization in the ASGM Sector; 2. Access to finance enhanced by financial inclusion and responsible supply chains; 3. Enhancing uptake of mercury-free technologies; 4. Knowledge sharing, communication and local capacity-building support; 5. Monitoring and evaluation of country-level	The ASGM sector is one of the drivers of environmental degradation in West Africa, with mercury contamination and habitat conversion being the biggest impacts. Sierra Leone is participating in the GOLD+ Framework and the GFIP project, allowing the Project opportunities to access knowledge and expertise on how best to address the sector's impacts and improve sustainability.

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
			traceable gold supply chains.	child projects; 6. Global coordination, knowledge management and outreach	
Liberia Forest Sector Project	2016-2023	World Bank (US\$37 million)	Improve management of, and increase benefit-sharing in, targeted forest landscapes.	1. Strengthened Regulatory and Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of REDD+; 2. Strengthened Capacity for Management of Targeted Forest Landscapes; 3. Forest Monitoring Information System; 4. Project Management, Monitoring, and Communication.	The Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) built on the Liberia REDD+ Readiness Project, improving the management of the forest and increasing benefit-sharing in forest landscapes. The World Bank rated the final results as moderately successful, providing the Project with potential examples of how to develop more sustainable development economic alternatives for communities in the NW Liberia Landscape. The LFSP also established FPIC procedures and grievance mechanisms that provide the foundation for the Project's rights-based conservation.
West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED)	2021-2025	USAID (US\$ 49 million)	WABILED work with partners to strengthen the capacity of national and regional networks and institutions to enforce and prosecute wildlife trafficking laws across the region; implement regional and transboundary cooperation and	1. Support combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) and great ape conservation through improved regional coordination and operationalization of national and regional policies, laws, and regulations; 2. Reduce deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss in key forests	WABILED works with partners to strengthen the capacity of national and regional networks and institutions to enforce and prosecute wildlife trafficking laws across the region; implement regional and transboundary cooperation and biodiversity conservation strategies in the key forested countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and improve capacity for economic planning and development of low

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
			biodiversity conservation strategies in the key forested countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and improve capacity for economic planning and development of low emissions development strategies to reduce West Africa's greenhouse gas emissions, thus contributing to national and global climate commitments.	through technical and knowledge management support; 3. Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase carbon sequestration from land use.	emissions development strategies to reduce West Africa's greenhouse gas emissions, thus contributing to national and global climate commitments. Lessons learned from WABiLED on how to successfully address deforestation/degradation and implement effective restoration practices could potentially benefit the Project, both in Liberia and the transboundary Mano River watershed.
Community-based Forestry & Protected Area Management	2022-2026	SIDA (US\$8 million)	Strengthen the management of community forests and protected areas in Liberia through improved governance of community forest management bodies.	1. Strengthened institutional and community capacity, and regulatory framework for community forest management; 2. Improve the habitat and status of key species, using participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation approaches; 3. Supporting sustainable	The UNDP-FAO program strengthens the management of community forests and protected areas in Liberia through improved governance of community forest management bodies, capacity building of forest regulatory institutions, and promotion of sustainable livelihood incentives for forest-dependent communities. The overlap of objectives and strategies with the Project offers opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange and leveraging

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
				livelihood options for forest fringe communities to strengthen their capacities to become less forest-dependent and more climate resilient; 4. Facilitating the establishment and strengthening of a knowledge management system that supports gender-balanced community forest management and co-management of protected areas by communities.	resources and expertise to achieve mutual goals.
Programme to Support the Conservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor)	2020-2023	EU (US\$ 3.8 million)	Transboundary project implemented between Sierra Leone and Liberia on the Gola landscape with three key Strategic Partners: the Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL), the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), and Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited by Guarantee (GRCLG)	1. Participatory land use planning; 2. Participants are trained in establishing and managing community forestry; 3. Effective community participation in conservation by implementing a co-management approach mechanism in conserving the GRNP and KHFR; 4. Shared learning with other sister country projects and incorporated learning into the implementation.	PAPFor was implemented in forest-edge communities in ten chiefdoms adjacent to Gola Rainforest National Park, and the Kambui Hills Forest Reserve, building on existing work and experience of the earlier WABICC Project in the Gola Landscape and the JENSEN Project in Kambui Hills Forest Reserve. Its experiences and knowledge with community engagement, participatory land use planning and transboundary collaboration provide a number of lessons learned and prior investments that the Project could build from.

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
Connecting Forest and People (GolaMA)	2020 – 2022	EU(USD 6.8 million).	Enhance the value of the protected areas to biodiversity by allowing this forest to form 'wildlife corridors', but will also reduce the threats to the protected areas that originate in these corridors (agricultural encroachment, mining, bushmeat hunting) while increasing the well-being of forest communities.	1. Establish Community Forest Management Agreements and financial sustainability business plans; 2. Ensure forest communities are benefiting from new, sustainable, alternative income-generating activities under the agreement while contributing to forest protection; 3. To reduce bushmeat hunting/trading of protected species in the project area; 4. Establishing self-regulated sustainable artisanal mining practices; 5. determine the potential of carbon trading to provide sustained finance	Implemented by RSPB and SCNL with additional local partners, the project supported biodiversity conservation in protected areas in the NW Liberia Landscape, including Gola Forest National Park and the proposed Foya protected area, as well as in neighbouring community-managed forests. Its shared geography, objectives and participation of SCNL all provide the Project potential opportunities for lessons learned and building off of prior investments.
Community Forestry project in the Gola Landscape	2020-2021	Rainforest Trust (US\$ 519,000)	Consolidate work carried out in five community forests near Gola Forest National Park and extend this model to other communities.	1. Sustainable management of Community Forests; 2. Legal designation intended to enable communities to pursue commercial timber and NTFP extraction, subject to	Implemented by SCNL the project used a landscape-level land-use plan that prioritizes ecological connectivity between Gola and Foya community forests and the larger NW Liberia Landscape, including identifying sites for potential restoration. The significant geographical overlap between the projects

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
				sustainable management; 3. Land-use planning that also considers conservation and agriculture	provides opportunities for lessons learned and building off of prior investments.
Communities as Environmental Stewards of the Largest Guinea Rainforest Block	2017-2022	CEPF US\$480,000	Empower local communities to engage in sustainable management of 40 priority sites and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale	1. Empower and support 15 communities to engage in rainforest-friendly and climate-smart income-generating activities in and around their community forests; 2. Build the capacity of 2 Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs) to govern community forests on behalf of their communities; 3. Support 2 Community Forest Management Bodies to manage a small loan scheme that supports community members to take up rainforest-friendly and climate-smart activities as well as securing resources for community forest	SCNL worked with 15 communities around Gola Forest to engage in rainforest-friendly and climate-smart income-generating activities in and around their community forests. This initiative also included work to strengthen community capacity with respect to governance and sustainable financing. The experience of SCNL informs the design of this Project and allows the application of lessons learned to new areas in the landscape.

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
				management; 4. Deepen the capacity of SCNL, FDA and MME to engage communities for biodiversity conservation; 5. Sub-grantee RSPB provides livelihoods technical advice, support coordination and monitoring for compliance; 6. Build financial capacity of SCNL and address audit findings; 6. Build joint capacity of artisanal miners and personnel of 5 Community Forests to carry out responsible artisanal mining; Improve ASM policy to better incorporate Conservation objectives	
Gola Cocoa: Protecting Forests and Empowering People project	2020-2023	Partnerships for Forests (US\$ 1,000,000)	Support smallholder farmers in the Greater Gola landscape to produce “green” cocoa sustainably and protect important biodiversity and forest resources.	1. Support smallholder farmers in the Greater Gola landscape to produce cocoa sustainably and protect important biodiversity and forest resources; 2. Develop the Gola Cocoa brand as a bespoke form of rainforest-friendly cocoa	The project developed a roadmap for the implementation of the National Cocoa Development Strategy, including sustainable production, product certification, capacity building for smallholders, and access to markets and safeguards. This work will inform the Project’s strategies for climate-smart SME development.

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
				that is produced within biologically diverse agroforestry systems and attracts higher premiums for smallholders	
West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA-BiCC)/Community Landscape Management to Reduce Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss in the Gola Transboundary Forest Landscape	2015-2020; 2017-2020	USAID (USD 48.9 million; USD 1.9 million)	Improve conservation and climate-resilient, low-emissions growth across West Africa.	1. Combatting Wildlife Trafficking; 2. Increasing Coastal Resilience to Climate Change; 3. Reducing Deforestation, Forest Degradation, and Biodiversity Loss	WA-BiCC focused on efforts to strengthen policies and systems to improve natural resource management and the health and resilience of coastal and upland forest ecosystems. In Liberia, the project focused on the Porkpa District in Grand Cape Mount County. The Project will build on these initiatives by implementing successful aspects of the intervention in other communities.
Wonegizi REDD+ Pilot Project	2016-2020	Norad (USD 4.6 million)	Establish a new kind of rural economy in Liberia that conserves forests for development, biodiversity and climate objectives.	1. Liberian stakeholders empowered to support the development of international policy and global learning on REDD+; 2. National REDD+ policies enable the flow of climate finance to stakeholder communities at project and landscape scales, and align with frameworks for green growth and sustainable land use planning; 3. The operational REDD+ pilot	The project worked with national actors and local communities to establish the Wonegizi protected area and REDD+ pilot to promote sustainable forest management and improve rural livelihoods. This project set the stage for the Liberia Child Project by providing baseline socio-economic, cultural, and ecological information required for relevant interventions. Moreover, the Child Project will build on and strengthen livelihood activities around Wonegizi. The Project will also take learnings from the REDD+ pilot and incorporate them into the

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
				protects forests and supports rural livelihoods in Wonegizi PPA and the wider landscape.	landscape financing strategy.
Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID 4953)	2017-2020	GEF (USD 6.9 million)	Conservation and sustainable use of the transboundary watersheds of the Mano River Union member states of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire	1. Strengthening coordination and management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits; 2. Improving livelihoods for the forest-adjacent communities within the larger Mano River basin.	The Project will build upon and strengthen the transboundary platform created by the IWRM, operationalizing priority committees to allow for improved coordination and enforcement within the larger watershed and promoting nature-based solutions for shared challenges, such as erosion and riverbank stabilization.
The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme	2011-2023	EU (€60 million)	Support for the establishment of the Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa (OBAPAO), housed by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) as the institutional host	1. Track progress in achieving conservation goals; 2. Assess the performance of protected areas; 3. Analyze conservation scenarios or simply browse facts, figures and maps.	The West Africa Regional Reference Information System provides access to maps, reports, data and other relevant information on the status of biodiversity and protected areas. The Project can use the knowledge management system to inform its interventions and build its own knowledge management and sharing.
Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project	2024-2030	GEF (USD 7,000,000)	Enhance and catalyze effective transboundary forest governance and watershed management through a	1. Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication; 2. Coordination; 3. Financing solutions and	The Guinean Forest Regional and Learning Project provides technical support and capacity building; learning, knowledge exchange, and dissemination of innovations; and facilitation of

Project Name	Duration	Funding Source	Objectives	Components and Achievements	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
			coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, and regional policy harm.	innovation; 4. Support for regional policy harmonization; Program-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E); 5. Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	transboundary forest landscape management and regional policy dialogue to the Liberia Child Project, as well as other Child Projects in the Guinean Forest region.

B. Project Description

Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT

47. The NW landscape is experiencing several main barriers including but not limited to; i) Incomplete information on Liberia's natural capital, ii) Limited institutional capacity and coordination in government ministries, iii) limited sustainable economic opportunities, iv) limited financing for protected area management and v) sustainable landscapes and insufficient capacity for effective transboundary coordination all of which are directly and indirectly catalyzed by the effects of climate change.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF PROJECT INTERVENTIONS/PROPOSED APPROACH

48. Addressing key barriers in Liberia such as a) ***incomplete information base (Barrier 1)***, b) ***deficiencies in a management capacity (Barrier 2)***, c) ***limited access to sustainable livelihoods for local communities (Barrier 3)***, and d) ***insufficient capacity for transboundary coordination (Barrier 4)*** reflects direct attention to principal transformation levers to achieve system change below:

1. Collection and dissemination of knowledge and best practices, informing land use/spatial planning, design of governance arrangements, and support for alternative livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises **(Barrier 1)**.
2. Multi-stakeholder dialogue, to enhance co-management of PAs and surrounding areas and multi-country management of shared watersheds and forest landscapes **(Barrier 2)**.
3. Enhanced ability to secure sustainable financing, in terms of both technical capacity and regional policy alignment, to sustain conservation and sustainable management in the long term **(Barrier 3)**.
4. Improved incentive environment through income generation and supportive policies that reinforce social, economic, and environmental drivers of sustained, positive behaviour change **(Barrier 4)**.

49. The proposed project's integrated approach directly responds to and reflects the Guinean Forests Integrated Program's Theory of Change through three transformation pathways. Specifically:

Barrier: incomplete information base

- a) ***Landscape-level gender-responsive multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms and spatial planning:*** By supporting landscape-scale spatial planning and gender-responsive governance mechanisms with a broad range of local, national, and regional stakeholders, the proposed child project supports more sustainable co-management of protected areas and generates knowledge needed to better inform local, national and regional policies and actions.

Barrier: deficiencies in a management capacity

- b) ***Gender-responsive community co-management of conservation areas:*** Prior investments in the Guinean Forests have demonstrated the efficacy of community co-management of areas important for conservation. This has been the case, particularly in the NW Landscape, where communities have played critical roles in co-management activities of protected areas and OECMs, notably Community Forests. The proposed project will continue to build on prior investments in community co-management, improving protected area management, and

biodiversity conservation and contributing to greater habitat connectivity and delivery of ecosystem services.

Barrier: limited access to sustainable livelihoods for local communities

- c) ***Investment in innovative alternative climate-resilient livelihoods:*** Through this lever, the proposed project utilizes knowledge from spatial planning processes to develop integrated land-use plans, which will lay the foundation for more sustainable, climate-resilient use of natural resources and improved livelihoods. Support for improved land tenure rights and policies as well as engagement of the private sector (notably those involved in value-added/certified products) will contribute to securing more sustainable, climate-resilient, inclusive and equitable livelihoods.

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. The Government of Liberia will allocate sufficient resources and personnel to carry out the PA management plan update for Gola Forest National Park and officially create the Project's two PPAs.
2. A sufficient number of communities around existing and proposed PAs are willing to enter into co-management agreements and agree to restoration and sustainable management activities around existing and new PAs.
3. Project capacity-building activities in target geographies around existing PPAs can enable communities to successfully implement inclusive, economically sustainable land use practices compatible with conservation.
4. Sustainable livelihood options are economically viable in the NW Liberia Landscape.
5. The three countries involved in transboundary management arrangements have sufficient political will to dedicate the personnel and resources necessary to improve coordination and collaboration in the Conservation Corridor.
6. Knowledge-sharing mechanisms of the Project are sufficiently robust and allow for relevant and timely exchanges of information that enhance the capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management.

LOGICAL PATHWAY

50. The Theory of Change for the GFIP holds that **IF**: the areas of forest under improved management in existing and new protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) are expanded, and **IF** areas outside PAs and OECMs in forest landscapes are under improved sustainable management and governance, and **IF** these changes are reinforced by supportive policy changes that enhance the enabling environment for conservation and sustainable management of forests,

THEN improved forest landscape management will reduce forest loss and degradation and the accompanying loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity decline due to habitat loss and overexploitation of natural resources, and help mitigate climate change. Achieving this transformation will require investment in expanding the data and information base to guide management planning and activities; technical, institutional, and governance capacity for gender-responsive effective forest management; gender-responsive and climate-resilient sustainable livelihood alternatives and nature-friendly enterprise development; and policy reform and coordination.

51. The GFIP further emphasizes transboundary management of forest landscapes shared across national borders; joint efforts on activities that benefit from scale such as sustainable financing solutions; and policy alignment to amplify the regional voice in international arenas. Noting the central roles of Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) in the use and management of forest and other natural resources, and the importance of gender dynamics in shaping this use and management, the design of these interventions must reflect equity and inclusivity, prioritizing participation, Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and gender mainstreaming.
52. The Liberia Project approach corresponds closely to the GFIP Theory of Change, by furthering effective management of new and existing PAs, working with communities outside PAs on livelihoods, and investing in multi-stakeholder forest management capacity inside and outside of PAs (notably with Community Forests). The Project also consolidates transboundary coordination efforts, including building additional capacity within the MRU and strengthening management of the Gola Peace Park shared with Sierra Leone and of the Zياما-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex, which includes Guinea's Zياما Biosphere Reserve.
53. Thus, the Theory of Change for the Liberia GFIP child project holds that: IF forest areas in existing and new PAs and OECMs such as Community Forests are under improved management, guided by participatory land use planning as well as transboundary coordination for forest landscapes shared with Sierra Leone and Guinea, and **IF** sustainable, forest-friendly community livelihoods are strengthened in an inclusive and gender-responsive way, including restoration of degraded areas, **THEN** improved forest landscape management will reduce forest loss and degradation and the accompanying loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity decline, and help mitigate climate change.

OUTCOMES

54. The anticipated positive changes (or Project Outcomes) include:
 - i. Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and Foya and establish Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi as Proposed Protected Areas
 - ii. Improved management of landscapes outside protected areas
 - iii. Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed
 - iv. Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)
 - v. Enhanced capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management on the part of government and civil society
 - vi. A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework for the project
55. The impact pathway includes the attainment of the long-term goal of global benefits namely; terrestrial protected areas are sustainably managed for conservation of biological diversity, continuous flow of ecosystem services and climate change mitigation. The indicators of this desired change are reduced threats to biodiversity in protected areas, secured wildlife habitats, a population of threatened species increase, and sustainable resilient livelihoods. The main pre-conditions (or mid-term outcomes) are:
 - i. **275,937 Ha** of Terrestrial protected areas newly created.
 - ii. **97,975 Ha** of Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness.
 - iii. **33.68 million metric tCO₂e** Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated; and
 - iv. **30,020 direct beneficiaries' people** (At least 40% Women).

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

56. **Transformative change** will be achieved through anchoring the interventions on the GEF's Levers of Transformation as described below and elaborated in the Theory of Change section.

- A. **Governance and Policy:** This project's interlinked outcomes and outputs are aligned with creating policy and governance systems that will promote effective conservation by establishing a robust framework for inclusive and sustainable management of protected areas. For instance, strengthening enabling conditions for co-management of the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) and the Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi) (**Outcome 1.1**) will ensure that local communities, including women and marginalized groups, are involved in conservation efforts, hence fostering ownership and compliance. Thus, the transformative value add of the project will be to strengthen resource governance by cultivating local ownership. The gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for GFNP (**Output 1.1.1**) will reinforce this ownership by incorporating diverse perspectives and equitable practices in park management. Similarly, completing and submitting gazettment packages for the PPAs (**Output 1.1.3**) formalizes these regions' protection under inclusive governance arrangements, ensuring that conservation measures are legally recognized and community-supported, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of conservation initiatives. Collectively, these outputs will represent a large, transformative step forward to actualizing the Government of Liberia's policy commitments with respect to a national protected area network.
- B. **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues:** Multi-stakeholder dialogues will be enhanced through **Output 1.1.5** by providing gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops focused on Customary Land Formalization, gazettment of Protected Areas (PAs), and PA co-management. These workshops will create a structured environment where government PA staff and local communities can come together to learn, discuss, and collaborate on these critical topics. By prioritizing inclusivity and gender responsiveness, the workshops will ensure that all voices, particularly those of women and marginalized groups, are heard and respected. This approach will promote equitable participation and foster mutual understanding, leading to stronger, more collaborative relationships among stakeholders. The shared knowledge and perspectives gained through these dialogues will enhance the effectiveness of conservation strategies and ensure that they are community-supported and sustainably implemented. Shifting from historically contentious relations between communities and protected area management (and other government land and resource management agencies) to multi-stakeholder dialogue, collaboration and co-management will constitute a significant transformation. Additionally, in **partnership with the Guinea and Liberia Guinean Forests Child projects, this project will contribute to the re-activation of the committees from a previous GEF-funded Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) project (GEF ID: 4953)** in order to improve multi-stakeholder dialogue and governance of the Mano River Basin at National, Local and Regional levels, with substantial value added by moving from a management vacuum to active transboundary management and collaboration. Lastly, regarding fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues at Regional and Global Levels, the **Liberia Guinean Forests Child Project with support from the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project**, will engage in dialogues at regional and global events, sharing experiences and implementing best practices from other regions with critical forest Biomes such as the Congo Basin, Amazon, Meso-America and Indo-Malay.

- C. **Learning and Innovation** will be enhanced through the Liberia project via (a) Providing technical training to stakeholders on priority topics to improve forest governance and the sustainable utilization of natural resources and (b) Sponsoring Liberia representatives to participate in learning and knowledge-sharing events organized by the GEF's Critical Forests Integrated Programs. Additionally, representatives from marginalized and vulnerable groups will be nominated by Liberia and sponsored by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project to participate in these events; (c) provision of support to conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with emphasis on women-led enterprises; (d) Implementation of innovative nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration. Given the severe capacity constraints prevalent in Liberia, investment in learning and innovation has particularly significant transformative potential. Examples of anticipated innovations to be learned through these various interactions and applied in Liberia include application of appropriate technology to reduce costs of PA monitoring and surveillance, and low-cost nature-based solutions for riverbank and watershed management that can be applied by local communities.
- D. **Leveraging Financing**: This project will result in leveraging financing by creating a supportive ecosystem for conservation-friendly and climate-resilient Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and producer associations, particularly those led by women. For instance, by providing access to financial services (**Output 2.1.5**), the alternative livelihoods and enterprises supported by the project can secure the necessary capital to grow and sustain their environmentally friendly practices. Consequently, supporting the development of these SMEs (**Output 2.1.4**) ensures they are equipped with the knowledge and resources to thrive, further attracting investment. Furthermore, this project's comprehensive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy (**Output 4.1.1**) will highlight the successes and potential of alternative livelihoods and enterprises, thereby enhancing their visibility and appeal to investors. By emphasizing gender, equality, and inclusion, these outputs will cumulatively ensure a broad base of support and credibility, making it more attractive for financiers to invest in these initiatives, thereby driving more sustainable and inclusive economic growth. For example, the project anticipates that linking aggregated livelihood investments in sustainable landscapes to effective co-management of protected areas will be attractive to the impact investment sector. Lastly, **reviving and institutionalizing the committees established under the Integrated Water Resources Management Project (GEF ID: 4953) will create an enabling environment for the governance of the Mano River watershed**. The institutionalized committees will establish a strong foundation for implementing the Mano River Union Strategic Action Plan, ultimately unlocking investments in the region. Additionally, collaboration and partnerships built through this project could potentially unlock financing for biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as leverage ongoing investments.

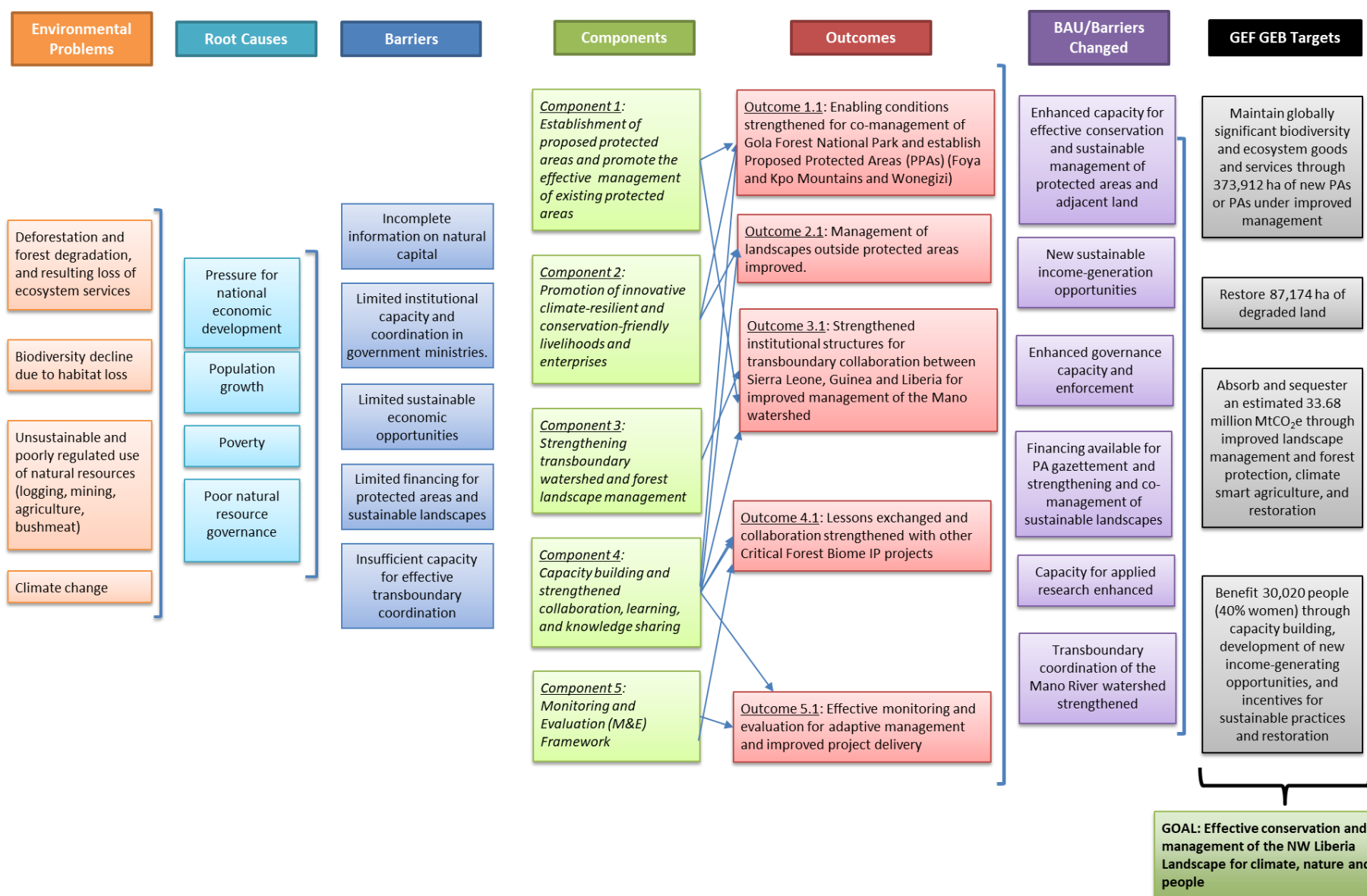


Figure 2: Theory of Change for the Liberia GFIP Child Project

Project Components

57. **Project objective:** To enhance ecosystem services and improve socioeconomic conditions in Northwest Liberia by promoting integrated and inclusive management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and supporting collaborative transboundary watershed management.
58. **Project Duration:** 62 months (6 months implementation set up; Actual project execution 48 months; 8 months Terminal Evaluation and closeout)

COMPONENT 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas

OUTCOME 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)

Target 1.1a: 97,975 ha (Gola FNP) areas with at least 60% improvement in METT Score (hence the target is reaching at least 61 METT score)

Target 1.1b: At least 275,937 ha of the PPAs with completed gazettelement packages register at least a 30% improvement in METT Score (hence the target is reaching at least 30 METT score for each PPA)

59. Component 1 will address the barrier of limited institutional capacity and coordination in government ministries, as it relates to protected area establishment and management. This component will be led by FDA in collaboration with LLA with support from SCNL. The Project will revise the existing management plan for Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha) and advance gazettelement packages for the proposed protected areas of the Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi, totalling 275,937 ha. An additional 89,174 ha of community land adjacent to Gola Forest National Park and the proposed protected areas will also be under improved co-management with local communities. The creation or updating of protected area management plans will involve inclusive participatory processes consistent with co-management that involves collaboration between protected area management authorities and neighbouring communities. This includes Liberia's Customary Land Formalization (CLF) process, which occurs prior to the formal gazettelement of a proposed protected area and subsequent preparation of management plans. During CLF, a community's customary tenure rights are recognised and safeguarded as part of the formal process of designating land for conservation. Both the project's management and CLF process require inclusive community participation to ensure that marginalised groups are represented, and gender considerations are also incorporated. Thus, the project will pursue transformation to apply governance arrangements, support alternative livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises, and catalyze multi-stakeholder dialogue to enhance the co-management of PAs and surrounding areas. It also will advance policy coherence to sustain conservation and sustainable management in the long term by aligning protected area establishment and management with community rights as enshrined in the Community Rights Law, grounded in Customary Land Formalization and equitable co-management arrangements.
60. Effective co-management of protected areas requires that local communities have the capacity to fulfil their management commitments and benefit from sustainable socioeconomic activities, and government agencies can carry out their management duties, including enforcement of laws and regulations. To ensure the basis for effective, gender-inclusive co-management of the Gola Forest National Park and the Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi proposed protected areas, the Project will support several enabling conditions, including required community engagement measures

(notably Liberia's CLF processes), developing and submitting gazettelement packages and implementing gender-responsive and inclusive co-management capacity-building in strategic areas of need. Lessons learned and knowledge from prior similar investments in the area will be applied, such as the UNDP/FAO/SIDA-supported Community-based Forestry and Protected Area Management, the Norad-supported Wonegizi REDD+ Pilot and the Rainforest Trust's Community Forest project, with opportunities for building on or complementing these investments identified.

Output 1.1.1: *Gender-responsive and inclusive management plan for Gola Forest National Park updated and implemented.*

61. The 97,975-ha Gola Forest National Park's most recent co-management plan was finalized in 2019, making an update important to ensure the area is being effectively co-managed between government agencies and local communities. Doing so will follow the best practice of 5-yearly updates to respond to changes in context; allow the incorporation of new developments such as improved technologies and practices for monitoring and surveillance; and incorporate emerging arrangements for transboundary management coordination with the Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone. The Project will assess the effectiveness of the current co-management plan, identify areas for improvement and produce an updated plan based on that analysis, in a participatory multi-stakeholder process. Particular attention will be given to ensuring the updated co-management plan is inclusive, gender-responsive and generates tangible, sustainable benefits for local communities. Notably, activities toward this Output will be coordinated with those relating to transboundary management with Sierra Leone in Component 3, to ensure that the updated co-management plan reflects provisions for enhanced coordination and aligns with nature-based solutions for watershed management.

Output 1.1.2: *Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs).*

62. The proposed protected areas of Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi are priority sites for enhanced conservation management in the NW Liberia Landscape; advancing their gazettelement offers a significant contribution to Liberia's legal commitments, its GBF 30x30 goal and the GFIP aim to strengthen management of Intact Forest Landscapes throughout the Guinean Forests Biome. A key step towards gazettelement will be to complete CLF processes with communities around the proposed protected areas, per legal provisions protecting community land rights in Liberia. The CLF process results in the recognition and approval of a community's customary land rights by the Liberian Land Authority, a necessary step prior to undertaking protected area gazettelement and management plan development. Activities towards this output will draw on lessons and knowledge generated from SCNL's previous work on facilitating CLF steps, including with communities near Foya. The CLF approach requires that women are represented throughout the process, e.g. awareness-raising of women's land rights, women working groups at meetings, female focus groups, and equal representation of women on the various process committees. SCNL will coordinate the identification and engagement of clans to pursue CLF processes with related initiatives in the landscape, especially Nature Africa and FOLUR work on land use planning. The project will support the CLF process in 5 of the 11 clans in the landscape; the Nature Africa project will provide additional support to the CLF process in additional clans, and also support the establishment of community forests in and around the PPAs.

Output 1.1.3: *Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.*

63. Once CLF processes have been completed for proposed protected areas, formal gazettement packages can be developed and submitted to the FDA for government approval. These packages are compilations of relevant biological, socio-economic, cultural and land tenure information, as well as summaries and results of key consultation processes of key constituencies. Given that gender considerations and inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups are Project priorities, the gazettement packages for both proposed protected areas will be structured to ensure optimal participation and representation in the management of the proposed protected areas. In order to assist in overcoming cultural barriers to women's participation and leadership, the Project will engage men and traditional leaders in participatory assessments and sensitization workshops regarding gender dynamics and norms and the Project's gender principles.

Output 1.1.4: *Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA.*

64. To ensure co-management activities for Gola and the PPAs can be effectively implemented, financing plans will be updated (in the case of Gola) or drafted for the PPAs. This will address the barrier pertaining to limited financing for protected area management and sustainable landscapes. Financing plans will include estimates of co-management costs for each area and identify potential financing sources that could be accessed to cover costs at various levels of implementation (minimum, intermediate and optimal). Plans will also identify a variety of potential domestic and international financing sources from the public, private and philanthropic sectors, and define initial fundraising strategies. Financing plans will also include budgets for gender mainstreaming activities.

Output 1.1.5: *Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettement of PAs, and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities.*

65. During the CFL process and development of gazettement packages, the co-management capacity-building needs for each proposed protected area will be identified and used to structure focused, gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops. Key objectives of the workshops will centre on ensuring that co-management plans for the existing and proposed protected areas can be successfully and sustainably implemented, with particular emphasis on delivering tangible, conservation-compatible socioeconomic benefits. Workshop participants will include key stakeholders such as government staff and members of adjacent communities, notably women and historically marginalized groups.

COMPONENT 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises:

OUTCOME 2.1: *Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved.*

Target 2.1a: 89,174 ha of land outside protected areas under improved management.

Target 2.1b: 30,020 people (17,950 male, 12,070 female) benefiting from the project and undertaking improved land-use practices.

66. Component 2 will address the barrier relating to limited sustainable economic opportunities. This component will be led by MOA in collaboration with FDA with support from PADEV. Given the pressing need for economic development and growing negative impacts from climate change in the Project's focal area, developing innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises is critical to both create prosperity and safeguard the region's globally important biodiversity. The Project will take lessons learned and knowledge from recent projects in the NW Liberia Landscape that have promoted enhanced livelihood opportunities through more sustainable

food production systems that also help conserve biodiversity, such as the current GEF-funded FOLUR project. As with the FOLUR project, this Project will support land use planning, capacity-building and creating links between local enterprises and sources of financing. By the Project's end, approximately 30,020 inhabitants (40% women) in clans and local communities adjacent to PAs will have enhanced income opportunities through the promotion of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises.

67. The Project will improve the management of landscapes outside of protected areas by promoting climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises most appropriate for the baseline conditions in adjacent clans and communities. Potential activities to be supported include sustainable forestry, climate-resistant agricultural products, non-timber forest product production, and deforestation-free palm oil and cacao. The pursuit of these opportunities will be guided by clan and community-level land use plans.

Output 2.1.1: *Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs.*

68. Enhancing the incomes of local communities and clans adjacent to PAs will depend in part on developing and implementing land use plans that optimize climate-resilient and conservation-friendly opportunities for improved livelihoods and enterprises. Using land use planning information from government and other sources, the Project will work closely with clans and communities adjacent to the focal PAs to map how natural resources are currently being used and where areas for climate-resilient, conservation-friendly activities can be developed. During this process, emphasis will be given to identifying opportunities for women and marginalized groups to improve incomes. As the process involves considerable inter-agency coordination, this Output also helps address the barrier related to limited institutional capacity and coordination in government ministries. Once developed, the Project will support the implementation of the land use plans, including support for needed capacity-building and technical training identified during the land use plan development (see Output 2.1.3).

Output 2.1.2: *Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods.*

69. Sustainable improved management of landscapes outside of the focal PAs will only happen if activities align closely with the socioeconomic priorities of local clans and communities. To identify these priorities and where project-supported training and technical support can be most effective, gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments will be undertaken for the clans and communities in areas identified as priorities for improved landscape management. The assessments will include identifying barriers women face in livelihoods and accessing financing and markets for their products, gender roles at the family level and impacts on women as decision-makers in livelihood activities, and participation of women in decision-making spaces.

Output 2.1.3: *Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.*

70. Based on the results of the socio-economic assessments in Output 2.1.2, the Project will provide gender-responsive, inclusive technical training and technical support for improving landscape management in areas around the three Project PAs. Training and support will be aligned with clan and community priorities, and designed to deliver enhanced incomes, climate-resiliency and help conserve biodiversity. Expertise gained from past and current projects undertaken by both government (EPA, FDA, MoA) and NGOs (SCNL, BirdLife International, FF, CI-CEPF) in technical training and support for climate-smart, sustainable agriculture in Liberia (notably FOLUR) will be leveraged, as

will knowledge and lessons accessed from other GEF Critical Forest IPs via the GFIP's knowledge-sharing portal (see Component 4).

Output 2.1.4: *Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises).*

71. Enhancing local community incomes will in part depend on developing strong Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that can successfully produce and market climate-resilient and conservation-friendly products. With local community land use plans as a base, the Project will strengthen existing SMEs in the focal area or support the development of new SMEs. Women-led SMEs, either existing or new, will receive particular emphasis, with over half of the target for SMEs receiving support being women-led. Activities toward this Output will draw on knowledge and lessons from other GEF-supported SME-development projects, such as the current FOLUR project and in other Critical Forest IPs.

Output 2.1.5: *Access to financial services provided to conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations, and producers (with emphasis on access for women).*

72. The success of conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations and producers will be contingent on accessing financial services, such as credit and loans. To ensure such financial services are available, the Project will assess current and prior financial links with similar projects (GEF-FOLUR, CI-CEPF, Darwin Initiative, Gola Cocoa) to determine which are most viable, then develop strategies to create linkages between financial service providers and producer groups in the Project's focal areas. Lessons learned and knowledge on supporting women-led groups both in Liberia and in other GEF Critical Forest IPs will also inform how the Project can best link women-led SMEs and producer groups with financial services. Approaches such as women's savings circles and revolving loans will be assessed, as well as lessons from the World Bank Liberia Women Empowerment Project. This output also helps address the barrier related to limited financing for protected area management and sustainable landscapes.

COMPONENT 3: Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management
OUTCOME 3.1 will be achieved through the following outputs:

Target 3.1a: At least 1 strengthened institutional structure in place to facilitate joint transboundary management of the Mano Watershed

Target 3.1b: At least 5 gender-responsive knowledge management products shared on the IW platform (at least 1 per year)

73. Component 3 addresses the barrier pertaining to insufficient capacity for effective transboundary coordination. This component will be led by FDA with the support of TNC (with a corresponding budget allocation). This component aims to enhance collaboration and coordination between Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone as they execute activities promoting sustainable management of selected transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes. The Mano River watershed is part of the Niger Basin, one of the most biodiverse sub-regional watersheds in the world along with the Amazon and Congo basins. The Mano River ecosystem is an important watershed known for its contribution to water resources needs within the Gola Forest landscape and contributes to the region's socioeconomic well-being.

74. Interventions under this Component are aligned with the GEF-8 Programming directions under the International Waters (IW) Thematic Area while building on the countries' transboundary collaboration

aspirations provided in the Strategic Action Program (SAP) of Mano River Union Basins (MRU, 2023)⁹. The development of the SAP was funded by the GEF, under the IUCN-led International Waters project titled: Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) (GEF ID: 4953). In particular, the SAP provides for the operationalization of the Transboundary Committees, emphasizes the importance of water catchment protection and the need for evidence-based decision-making for transboundary natural resources management.

75. With regards to the GEF-8 Programming directions, this Component responds to the IW Objective 3 and the activities below that were ranked high priority during the PPG Phase:
- a. **Build capacity** to gather and synthesize scientific, local and people science and mainstream them into decision-making processes.
 - b. **Nature-based Solutions** to improve water quality, and freshwater ecosystem health, including wetlands and curb floods, droughts, climate change impacts, river/lake shoreline deterioration and further aquifer recharge.
 - c. **Implementation of SAP priorities** through regional and national actions. Operationalisation and institutionalisation of the Transboundary Committees established under the IUCN-led GEF-funded IWRM Project (GEF ID: 4953) and ensuring their sustainability will lay the foundation for implementation of the Mano River Union SAP (2023).
76. In 2011, the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest. This agreement was amended in 2020, reaffirming their commitment to joint forest management and biodiversity protection of their two adjoining protected areas as the Gola Forest Peace Park, (MRU, 2011¹⁰; PAPFor, 2022¹¹). In 2019, the Governments of Liberia and Guinea signed a bilateral agreement for collaboration in the management of the Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex. The project will build on the policy commitments in these MoUs to further consolidate transboundary collaboration.
77. The IUCN-led GEF-funded IWRM Project (GEF ID: 4953) established Interministerial, National and Community-level committees in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, however, these committees became inactive after the IWRM project concluded. Recognizing that these committees are essential for supporting the MRU and the countries in governing the Mano watershed, the three Guinean Forests Child Projects will reactivate their respective committees and support their operationalization and institutionalization to ensure they can function sustainably beyond the project's lifespan. The institutionalization process will involve the MRU, local communities, local governments, and national governments to secure broad-based acceptance of and adherence to agreed-upon structures and operational modalities. Thus, compared to the Business-as-usual scenario of non-functioning institutional arrangements, the project will pursue levers of transformation to achieve systems change by facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue to catalyze multi-country management of shared watersheds and forest landscapes and contribute to regional policy alignment.

⁹ Mano River Union, 2023. Strategic Action Program (SAP) of Mano River Union Basins. The Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management Project implemented by IUCN, with the Mano River Union (MRU) as the executing agency. Project GEF ID 4953.

¹⁰ Mano River Union, 2011. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Republic of Liberia on the Cooperation in management, research, protection and conservation of the Greater Gola Transboundary Peace Park (May 2011). Website: https://www.papfor.org/IMG/pdf/signed_mou_sl-lib-october2011.pdf

¹¹ PAPFor, 2022. Fact Sheet: Gola Foya Landscape. May 2022. Website: https://papfor.org/IMG/pdf/fact-sheet-gola_foya.pdf

78. With support from the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project, the three Guinean Forests Child projects will collaborate with the European Union (EU) Funded project NaturAfrica Program (2021-2027) which is also working towards supporting the countries to revive and operationalize these committees.
79. The project will collaborate with the GEF International Waters Program to ensure its case studies align with the IW-Learn system. Overall, this project will increase Liberia's engagement with the IW: LEARN platform through the publication of gender-responsive knowledge management products emanating from the results of Component 3.

Output 3.1.1: *The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalised and institutionalized within MRU.*

80. The three Guinean Forests child projects in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone with support from MRU and the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP) will collaborate with the six-year EU-funded NaturAfrica Program (2021-2027) to revive, operationalize and institutionalize the Transboundary Committees that were established under the MRU through the IWRM Project (GEF ID: 4953). Specifically, these are the MRU Ministerial Council, the National Consultative Platform for Water Users and the community-based Basin Management Committees.
81. Each country will convene national and community level meetings to determine transboundary issues that are priority at the local and national levels (based on the SAP), to inform regional engagements. This approach will ensure ownership and continuity in implementing country-level agendas for transboundary natural resources management and promote lesson sharing among countries of the MRU.
82. The community-level Basin Management Committees will meet at least twice a year to set priority actions to be implemented as well as assess progress in implementation against the developed monitoring framework. Specific to this project, the Committees will identify the specific priority nature-based solutions to be actioned under Output 4.1.3, whilst considering factors such as feasibility, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and co-benefits. The Project will provide resources to facilitate the operationalization of their respective Committees and ensure complementarity between the interventions by the child projects as well as with earlier PAPFor interventions.
83. Concerning the MRU Ministerial Council, the MRU and the three child projects will liaise with the Guinean Regional Coordination Project and the NaturAfrica Program to convene this committee. Through this meeting, the MRU and the countries will learn and share lessons and best-case practices as well as discuss how the three 3 committees will be institutionalised in order to ensure their sustainability. The output will be delivered by the following activities:
 - a) Develop the ToRs for the transboundary Watershed Management Committees
 - b) Orientation meeting for the Transboundary Watershed management committees
 - c) Determine priority community-level watershed management interventions – Consultation platforms for users of water resources in basins will convene meetings at community-level, in close collaboration with other relevant partners such as the University of Cambridge and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and others, to discuss and build consensus on priority activities to be implemented. An initial meeting will be held with the stakeholders to harmonize technical and coordination mechanisms and avoid duplication. Potential for

collaboration with the University of Cambridge and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative should be explored, particularly in the framework of the West Africa Nature Transformation Initiative (WANTi) - currently leading participatory research (Delphi process) for developing a Theory of Change, integrating conservation with socio-economic development and working one watershed at a time (towards sustainable socio-bio-economies, leveraging healthy forests and rivers as foundations for future prosperity, among others).

- d) Determine priority national-level watershed management interventions - Review the transboundary governance landscape and address gaps by reinforcing existing governance and advisory structures such as the Transboundary Committee and establishing new technical subcommittees to guide management, enforcement and work on any aspects that may be important for effective transboundary watershed management. The process will include setting targets for representation, leadership and decision-making of women in Transboundary Watershed management Committees and technical subcommittees.
- e) Develop strategies for the implementation of priority watershed management activities at the community and national levels.
- f) Monitoring the implementation of watershed management interventions at national and community levels facilitated by the project.
- g) Institutionalization of the 3 committees at MRU to ensure they are functional beyond the life of the child projects.

Output 3.1.2: *Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management enhanced through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project.*

84. Technical and institutional capacity building is necessary to support decision-making processes for transboundary natural resource management. The Guinean Forests RCP will address this from a regional point of view by providing tailored technical assistance and capacity-building content and tools to meet the national needs of the three MRU countries participating in the GFIP. Collaboration between the NaturAfrica Program and the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination project will also be explored to action this output. The aim is to enhance their capacity for collaborative management of the shared transboundary Mano River watershed and associated forest landscape. During project implementation, training for applied research will focus on priority areas that require technical support as determined by the countries, but in general, these may include, among others, the protocols to ease movements through the corridor; enhanced transboundary patrols and enforcement; and technical guidance and tools for transboundary management, with associated capacity building. This Output is also relevant to the barrier relating to incomplete information on Liberia's natural capital. The RCP will build on the work of WABiLED and others with MRU, including the interventions identified in the SAP.

- a. Participate in capacity needs assessment for applied research needs to inform decision-making processes for watershed management.
- b. Sponsor/Facilitate stakeholder participation in capacity-building training events on applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management.
- c. Sponsor/Facilitate participation in regular exchanges of knowledge and lessons learned between member countries and with the MRU Secretariat with a focus on marginalised groups such as IPLCs, Women, Youth etc.
- d. Develop and implement sharing of country- and basin-level information for use and monitoring impacts of both the SAP and the RCP.
- e. Provide guidance related to gender and inclusion, such as strategies to target women as recipients of technical assistance and capacity-building.

Output 3.1.3.: *Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented.*

85. Nature-based Solutions are actions that enhance the protection, sustainable management and restoration of both natural and modified ecosystems, and address global challenges such as climate change, human health, food and water security, natural disasters and biodiversity loss. Although the concept of nature-based solutions may be new to some stakeholders, there are several important examples within the Northwest Liberia Landscape such as sustainable cocoa production, community forest maintenance to supply non-timber forest products, and artisanal-scale rubber and palm oil production in mixed forest-cropping systems, which through initiatives supported by the national government, SCNL, CI, IDH, FF and RSPB. These various solutions, grounded in participatory land use planning, include the maintenance of forest blocks for ecosystem services and connectivity while contributing to the livelihoods of local communities and the local economy. Additionally, forest restoration using specific local tree species and wildlife conservation provide multiple societal benefits.
86. Experience from the USAID-funded WABILED Project indicates that other priority commodity value chains in the landscape may include honey, cocoa, ecotourism, and other livelihood opportunities such as rice and groundnut cultivation. However, communities are not well-informed about the importance of these interventions and their link to improved natural resource management, increased climate resilience, and enhanced human well-being. Therefore, the output will focus on the following activities:
- a. **Sensitize communities on nature-based solutions** - The details of these will be developed during project implementation. There is a need to sensitize stakeholders about nature-based solutions.
 - b. **Selection of priority nature-based solutions for implementation** - The community-level Consultation platforms for users of water resources in basins will spearhead the identification and selection of priority nature-based solutions through a gender-inclusive process guided by the FPIC principles whilst considering factors such as feasibility, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and co-benefits. Examples of nature-based solutions that might be considered will include, but are not limited to honey, cocoa, ecotourism and other livelihood opportunities.
 - c. Support restoration of ecologically fragile areas (steep slopes, riparian sites, etc)
 - d. **Support implementation of selected nature-based solutions.**
 - e. **Monitoring and reporting on the performance of the nature-based solution(s) being implemented** – there will be biannual monitoring and reporting on the progress of implementing the nature-based solutions to establish performance, and any social, economic and environmental impacts and updates shared in the community-based committees to inform adaptive management. Approaches will be adjusted as needed based on feedback, changing conditions, and new insights
 - f. **The Project Management Unit to Document the process, outcomes, and lessons learned from implementing nature-based solutions.** This knowledge should be disseminated to relevant stakeholders at community, national and regional levels, including the committees, to promote learning and replication of best-case practices.

COMPONENT 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing.

OUTCOME 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning, and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape).

Target 4.1: Liberia project coordinating, learning, and sharing with at least 2 initiatives in the Northwest Liberia landscape and at least 1 initiative in the broader Guinean Forest Biome (through the GFIP Regional Coordination Project led by CI and Birdlife).

87. This component will focus on strengthening coordination and collaboration at local, national, and regional levels through learning and knowledge sharing, with contributions to addressing each of the identified barriers. This component will be led by EPA with the support of relevant government agencies. Specifically, the Project will undertake knowledge management, sharing of lessons learned, and best practices through south-south exchanges and participation in national, regional, and international platforms/forums. Activities pertaining to learning and collection, generation, and dissemination of knowledge will consider gender differences in knowledge, skills, roles, and access to information. The Project will pursue joint learning and sharing activities with the larger GFIP through the RCP, including making requests for technical support and assistance as needed. Finally, via a knowledge-sharing portal established by the GFIP RCP, the Project will coordinate and exchange knowledge with other GEF-supported programs such as the Congo Basin IP, GOLD/GOLD+ IP and the Ecosystem Restoration IP.
88. To ensure optimal exchange of lessons learned and strengthened collaboration with in-country initiatives (notably in the Northwest Landscape) and other Critical Forest Biome IP projects, the Project will coordinate closely with the GFIP's RCP, which will establish a Guinean Forests knowledge-sharing portal to serve as the basis of a peer-learning platform, and also as a digital channel for information-sharing and the use of social media to reach wider audiences. The GFIP's knowledge-sharing portal will be specifically designed to promote improved knowledge sharing and coordination with other GEF IPs such as the four Critical Forests IPs (especially the Congo IP), planetGOLD IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP including on social inclusion and gender topics. To ensure synergies in flows of knowledge and lessons learned to and from Liberia, the project will coordinate closely with FOLUR's knowledge management activities.

Output 4.1.1: *A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects).*

89. The Project will contribute to and benefit from a wide range of knowledge products and flows through the development of a Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy. The Strategy will ensure that Project-relevant information is captured, curated and made publicly available in a systematic way with wide-reaching access, including local, national, regional and international bodies. Given the Project's emphasis on issues related to gender, equality and inclusion, the Strategy will highlight how knowledge will be made widely accessible to traditionally marginalized groups. Moreover, the Strategy will identify how the Project will coordinate knowledge sharing with government and NGO partners, regional entities such as the MRU, ECOWAS, and AFR100 and GEF's Critical Forest IPs (notably for the Congo Forests), planetGOLD IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP. The Project's knowledge sharing activities will build on previous GEF investment (Project ID 9390) in the EPA's Environmental Knowledge Management System (EKMS) that serves as an integrated knowledge management system that focuses on collecting, storing and sharing information and data between institutions for better environmental management and the fulfillment of Liberia's obligations under the Rio Conventions. This platform supports coordination and collaboration among Government staff, research centers, think tanks, practitioners, and private firms in tackling global environmental challenges.

Output 4.1.2: *Participation in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife.*

90. As part of the GEF-8 Guinean Forests Integrated Program, the Liberia Child Project is expected to actively participate in both virtual and in-person events organized by CI through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project. To support this involvement, the Liberia Child Project will sponsor 10 Liberia officials (50% women) over 5 years (2 officials per year for 5 years), to participate in the three-day annual forum organized by CI. The EPA will provide guidance on the selection of GOL participants in these events.

Output 4.1.3: *Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project).*

91. The Liberia Child Project will sponsor 10 Liberia officials (50% women) over 5 years (2 Liberia officials attending each year for 5 years), to participate in Learning and exposure visits that could be organized by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project or the Regional Projects of the other Critical Forests Integrated Programs (IP) namely:

- Congo Basin Regional Coordination Project
- Amazon IP led by the World Bank
- Indo-Malay IP -led IP by IUCN and FAO
- Meso America IP led by IUCN.

As with Output 4.1.2, The EPA will provide guidance on the selection of GOL participants in these events.

92. The Liberia Child Project could also opt to sponsor officials to participate in learning and knowledge exchange visits to any of the child project countries under the above-mentioned 4 Critical Forests IPs. Selected beneficiaries from state and non-state actors, including representatives of local communities and chiefdoms, will participate in cross-learning events in other countries to learn their practices in sustainable forest and land management interventions.

93. Lastly, it is expected that CI, through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project, will sponsor a representative from Liberia's marginalized and vulnerable groups within the local community, such as women, youth, the elderly, and people with special needs, to participate in the Guinean Forests Regional Forum and/or other forums organized by the other Critical Forests Integrated Programs.

Output 4.1.4: *Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions).*

94. To ensure that the wealth of knowledge generated by the Project is captured, curated and made publicly available, the Project will develop a variety of knowledge management products (policy briefs, fact sheets, storytelling videos) to share with key audiences at the local, national and regional levels. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing knowledge products, including case studies and lessons learnt, that demonstrate how gender, equality and inclusion aspects as well as traditional knowledge can be successfully incorporated into landscape planning, sustainable resource use, and conservation within the context of the Guinean Forests. Given the importance of nature-based solutions for the Project's transboundary and landscape management components, knowledge products on these topics will also be developed and disseminated to key audiences.

COMPONENT 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

OUTCOME 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project.

Target 5.1: 5 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

95. As part of M&E, the project is required to conduct periodic monitoring and prepare technical and financial reports. This component will be led by SCNL under the close supervision of EPA. The generated reports will be submitted to CI-GEF and shared with other relevant stakeholders (Quarterly, PIR, MTR, and Terminal Evaluation report). A functional gender-sensitive M&E Framework will be established under this component, including the submission of Project Implementation Reports (PIRs). The M&E tools will inform adaptive management and will inform/improve the design of future projects. A core project responsibility will be to ensure timely preparation and submission of Project Implementation Reports (PIR). Included in the PIRs will be a GEF tracking sheet on GEF Core Indicators to be updated at the Project's mid-term and end and submitted to the GEF Secretariat. A Mid-term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) will validate the information submitted in the PIRs. The GEF Evaluation will make recommendations on which parameters to include in the MTR and TE and verify as necessary all information collected by GEF tracking tools. Both the MTR and TE will be undertaken through a participatory approach, with a stakeholder analysis identifying who has benefitted or affected by the Project.
96. Working closely with GFIP's RCP and following GEF M&E guidelines, the Project will develop an effective gender-sensitive, inclusive M&E system to track project progress, including incorporating components that allow for adaptive management corrections during implementation. Coordination with the RCP's M&E system will ensure accurate tracking of regional and transboundary outcomes, such as those detailed in the Project's Component 3 with the MRU. Annual PIRs will track Project progress and allow for adaptive management measures to be implemented where appropriate. This output will be achieved by the following activities:
- a) **Inception workshop and report:** An inception workshop will be held to launch the project after which, an inception workshop report will be prepared and submitted to CIGEF. At least 45% of the participants in the workshop will be women and youth.
 - b) **Review monitoring and evaluation Framework:** The Project Management Unit (PMU) will review and update the monitoring and evaluation framework (**Annex J**) at the start of the project implementation and periodically as needed to ensure that the proposed targets and indicators are gender inclusive and realistic or proposed where they need to be adjusted.
 - c) **Implement the monitoring and evaluation framework:** The agreed-upon monitoring and evaluation framework will be effectively and efficiently implemented.
 - d) Assessments of protected area effectiveness will be done through the Management Effectiveness **Tracking Tool (METT) methodology.**
 - e) **The Biodiversity Tracking Tool** will be updated at the start of the project and at the end when preparing to submit to the GEF.
 - f) **The Core Indicator sheet** will be updated and submitted to the GEF at the end of the project.
 - g) **Other activities:**
 - Annual Plan and Budget, Quarterly progress reports, and Annual progress and implementation reports (PIR) will be prepared by the PMU and submitted to CI-GEF for review and approval.
 - The Project Steering Committee Meetings will convene annually.
 - Financial audits will be conducted annually.
 - CI-GEF Project Agency will conduct Annual supervision missions.
97. The Committees below will be set up as part of M&E to guide the implementation of the project.

- a) **Annual National Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings.** The National Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be appointed by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to provide overall strategic oversight of project implementation. The Steering Committee will be composed of senior decision-makers from relevant Government, Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, and local communities/chiefdoms. At least 30% of the members will be women, in line with the Liberia Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Act (2022). The PSC will meet annually to review and approve budgets and work plans and provide strategic guidance.
- b) **Quarterly Project Technical Coordination Committee Meetings** – A Technical Coordination Team will be established, composed mainly of the Implementing Partners, to periodically review and provide technical guidance on the implementation of planned activities. At least 30% of the members of the team will be women.

98. Lastly, the project will collaborate with the GEF International Waters Program to ensure its case studies align with the IW-Learn system. Overall, this project will increase Sierra Leone's engagement with the IW: LEARN platform through the publication of gender-responsive knowledge management products emanating from the results of Component 3. The mode of coordination will be detailed in the project's Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.

Output 5.1.2: *Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies*

99. Conservation International General Counsel Office in close coordination with the CI-GEF Agency will recruit an independent Mid Term Reviewer (MTR) and Terminal Evaluator (TE) Consultant to assess project performance. This output will be achieved by the following activities:
- a) **CI's General Counsel Office, as an independent unit, will prepare the Terms of Reference and procure independent evaluators in coordination with the CI-GEF Agency.**
 - b) **The MTR and Terminal evaluation will be undertaken with support from CI-GEF, PMU, the Executing agency, and all key stakeholders.** The PMU, executing agency and all key stakeholders including the Liberia Operational Focal Point (OFP) will support the independent evaluation service provider by providing candid feedback about the project, participating in the virtual inception and validation workshop of the MTR and TE workshop, and providing input in the MTR Report and TE report.
 - c) **CI-GEF submits the MTR and TE report to the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)**

Global Environmental Benefits

100. This Project will deliver Global Environmental Benefits relating to a) biodiversity conservation, b) climate change mitigation, and c) increased food security of local communities. As Liberia hosts the bulk of remaining forests in the Upper Guinea Forest Biodiversity Hotspot, improved land and resource management through integrated landscape management offers enormous benefits. Direct benefits generated from the Project intervention are as follows:

A. Benefits to biodiversity

101. This Project will contribute to maintaining globally significant biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services by improving land use practices as below:

- Terrestrial protected areas newly created: 275,937 ha
- Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management: 97,975 ha

102. The Project will build on past and current investments in the NW Landscape, resulting in gazettelement packages for 275,937 ha of proposed protected areas, including the Foya and Kpo Mountains (248,337 ha) and Wonogizi Nature Reserve (27,600 ha). **An additional 97,975 ha of an existing protected area in the NW Landscape, Gola Forest National Park, and 89,174 ha of land adjacent to Gola and the proposed protected areas will be under improved co-management with local communities.** Co-management strengthening will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory land-use planning and to develop sustainable, climate-resilient economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems.
103. Given the proximity to protected areas in Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Park) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve) and the shared larger Mano River basin, transboundary linkages and coordination of management activities will be established and strengthened between the three countries, allowing for improved conservation of the Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation Corridor, which holds 21 internationally recognized KBAs (BirdLife 2023). Specific fauna species that will benefit from the Project include but are not limited to pygmy hippopotamus (*Hexaprotodon liberiensis*), forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), Liberian mongoose (*Liberiictis kuhni*) and western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*). Ninety-two per cent (92%) of the region's 30 primate species are endemic. Additional threatened and vulnerable species include Jentik's duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*), Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus Diana*), West African red colobus (*Procolobus badius*) and West African Linsang (*Poiana leightoni*).

B. Climate change mitigation

104. The forests of the NW Liberia Landscape offer significant opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Net emissions reductions will be achieved through the outcomes of the land-use planning processes to be conducted under the Project, including the creation of over 275,000 ha of new protected areas and improved management of 97,975 ha of existing protected areas located in HCVF. Based on anticipated land-use planning results, **the Project will absorb and sequester an estimated total of 33,683,289 million MtCO₂e** through improved landscape co-management and forest protection and, climate-smart agriculture, and restoration as calculated with the EX-ACT tool. Sustainably managing the Project's protected areas will offer a range of climate mitigation and adaptation benefits, including watershed protection and greater resilience to drought and other extreme climate events.

C. Socioeconomic Benefits

105. The beneficiary numbers reflect estimates of the sizes of communities around existing and proposed protected areas where the Project will implement activities relating to participatory planning, co-management and livelihoods, and enterprise development. The total population in the areas of interest is 149,305 (75,425 men and 73,880 women) as per the 2016 Liberia National Household Income and Expenditure Survey. **The Project will target approximately 20% of the total population in the area of interest, or about 30,020 inhabitants (40% women).**

Stakeholders

106. Stakeholder participation and consultation were given priority from project inception and PPG process as it provided an opportunity to create awareness about the project, solicit views from various actors as well as clarify the roles of key stakeholders in project formulation and implementation, promote ownership of the project, and ensure the project responds to the needs of the landscape

and stakeholders. The stakeholders were mapped, analyzed and categorized into Government institutions, local governments, civil society organizations and non-government organizations (CSO/NGOs), the private sector, the academia and local communities.

Table 5 below lists the relevant stakeholders at all levels, that will contribute to implementing the project, their respective contributions and roles in the project implementation, and how will these stakeholders benefit from the project to ensure that global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits, will be enduring (co-benefits).

Table 5: Roles of Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ministry of Finance and Development Planning Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Forestry Development Authority (FDA) Liberia Land Authority (LLA) Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) Liberia Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (LACRA) Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection Ministry of Internal Affairs Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services Cooperative Development Agency (CDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead in project execution and coordination (EPA) Provide strategic oversight (EPA) Provide policy guidance Monitor implementation of project activities Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complementary investment Improved coordination of conservation efforts Sustainable economic benefits for communities Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change Capacity building Access to learning and knowledge exchange Strengthened co-management conditions Enhanced transboundary management
Civil society organizations (CSOs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society for the Conservation of Nature (SCNL) Partners in Development The Nature Compact Fauna and Flora Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) Skills and Agricultural Development Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-execute project Lead field execution of Project activities Provide technical and operational support Reporting and monitoring of Project activities Participate in the development of land use plans Support implementation and monitoring of community-based project activities Help ensure that Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes are followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to learning and knowledge exchange Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change Sustainable economic benefits for communities Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change Improved coordination of conservation efforts Sustainable economic benefits for communities

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to technical assistance and capacity building - Access to learning and knowledge exchange
Local communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Communities in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Bomi, and Gbarpolu Counties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in processes related to development of land use plans and CLF - Support implementation and monitoring of community-based project activities - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to technical assistance and capacity building - Sustainable economic benefits - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Access to learning and knowledge exchange - Strengthened co-management conditions
Private sector C. New and existing SMEs, producer associations, producers D. Mano Palm Oil, Liberia Agriculture and Asset Development Company, Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of climate-resilient and conservation friendly enterprises - Participation in land use planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of ecosystem services that benefit operations - Enhanced linkages to financial service providers - Technical assistance and training
Transboundary bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government counterparts in Sierra Leone and Guinea • Mano River Union • Transboundary Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing multi-country dialogue and coordination in the management of shared transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementary investment - Improved coordination - Enhanced ecosystem services, reduced vulnerability to impacts of climate change - Capacity building - Access to learning and knowledge exchange
Academia /Research Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Training Institute (FTI) • University of Liberia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide expertise for land use planning processes and development of alternative livelihoods - Beneficiaries and contributors to learning and knowledge exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New data - Research opportunities - Platforms for knowledge exchange

Policy Coherence

107. The Project will contribute to policy coherence through concrete, integrated activities that respond to Liberian government policy commitments in several ways. Advancing the gazettement of proposed protected areas (**Output 1.1.3**) will realize a long-standing policy commitment with respect to the national protected area network, which converges with the country's commitments under multilateral environmental agreements including the GBF. Moreover, doing so by investing in the CLF process achieves coherence between protected area establishment and the government's policy commitments to community land rights (**Output 1.1.2**). Centering communities in co-management planning and execution further contributes to policy coherence by aligning conservation objectives with sustainable development and stimulating economic activity in rural areas (**Outputs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4**). Finally, improved management of PAs and the areas around them in the NW Liberia Landscape geography, as the central link between contiguous conservation areas in Sierra Leone and Guinea, aligns protected area management with regional commitments, through enhanced integration with transboundary agreements (**Outputs 3.1.1**). Given that project success on all these fronts will require targeted investment in capacity investment at local and national levels, training and capacity-building activities will offer valuable opportunities to make these contributions to policy coherence explicit (**Outputs 1.1.5, 3.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2**).

Innovation

108. The Project is innovative and transformational in several important ways, cumulatively creating greater ecosystem connectivity both within and beyond Liberia's borders in areas of critical global importance for biodiversity. By taking a rights-based approach and consolidating and expanding on recent and ongoing investments in the NW Landscape, the proposed Project will bring about transformational change by building the capacity of the government and local communities to co-manage protected areas and adjacent forests effectively and sustainably, with particular emphasis on Liberia's legally recognized Community Forests (**Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.5**). Landscape-level and national coordination mechanisms will be established and focus on PA co-management and providing support for sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient livelihoods in a PA-economy context (**Outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2**). To catalyze the identification and adoption of alternative livelihood options, the project will also pursue innovation in financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), producer associations and producers, with emphasis on access for women (**Output 2.1.5**); innovation in this respect will involve developing rural finance solutions for remote areas with little access to the formal banking system. These measures will enable an enormous, transformative advance on the ambition of the National Forestry Reform Law and help consolidate Community Forests, providing a model for replication elsewhere in the country as Liberia seeks to complete its national PA network and promote OECMs as an effective conservation and economic sustainability strategy. They will be reinforced by new and updated financing plans for the Gola, Foya, Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi protected areas, which will explore innovative area financing solutions for protected areas and surrounding community lands such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) (**Output 1.1.4**).

109. At the regional level, the Project will strengthen transboundary cooperation with neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone (**Outcome 3.1**), both of which have also proposed complementary efforts with Liberia. Given the region's recent history of conflict, Liberia and Sierra Leone's transboundary commitment to the Gola Peace Park (the Upper Guinean Forest's largest intact forest block) and 2019 bi-lateral agreement with Guinea to jointly manage the Zياما-Wonegizi-Wologizi complex provide an innovative means through which the region can conserve its globally important biodiversity, maintain vital ecosystem services and build a more secure, cooperative and peaceful future. Innovation in this

regard will be reflected in the operational functioning of transboundary management committees under the aegis of the MRU (**Output 3.1.1**), as well as the application of nature-based solutions (e.g., planting native species) to improve the management of shared watersheds and landscapes (**Output 3.1.3**). Successful outcomes at both the national and transboundary levels will also allow for replication throughout the Guinean Forest hotspot, creating additional connectivity, improved ecosystem services and strong cooperative links between countries.

110. *Liberia's participation in relevant Learning and Knowledge-Sharing Events/Forums at National, Regional and Global Levels:* Liberia will actively participate in learning and knowledge-sharing events organized by the GEF-Funded Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project. Furthermore, Conservation International (CI), through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project, will coordinate with Lead Agencies of selected GEF-Funded Integrated Programs (IP) such as the Critical Forests IPs, planetGOLD IP, and the Ecosystem Restoration IP. This coordination will ensure that the Guinean Forests Child Projects, including Liberia, engage in these platforms, hence learning and sharing with countries from other regions located in Critical Forest Biomes. These integrated programs offer a dynamic multi-stakeholder environment where countries can share lessons, learn from biodiversity experts, and understand the national commitments of other countries regarding financing, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation. This collaborative and innovative approach fosters continuous learning and improvement, enhancing the overall effectiveness and sustainability of forest management efforts at various levels.
111. *Representation of marginalized and vulnerable groups from Liberia in events organized by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP) and other Critical Forests IPs (sponsored by the Guinean Forests RCP):* The Guinean Forests Child Project Countries, including Liberia, will nominate representatives from their country's marginalized and vulnerable groups to participate in learning and knowledge-sharing events. Sponsored by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project, these representatives will benefit from inclusive decision-making processes that consider the perspectives and needs of all community segments, leading to more equitable policies and initiatives. This participation will empower local communities by giving them a voice in decisions affecting their lives, enhance social cohesion by bridging gaps between different groups, and build capacity through new skills, knowledge, and networks. It will also ensure that proposed project interventions are sustainable by incorporating the input of all key stakeholders.
112. *Promoting Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues at the National, Local, and Transboundary Levels through leveraging diverse platforms as follows:* Building on the precedent set by the GEF-funded Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953), which established interministerial, national, and community-level committees in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone for the management of the Mano River Basin. With support from the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP) and the EU-funded NaturAfrica Program (2021-2027), the **three Guinean Forests Child Projects (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) will reactivate these committees and institutionalize them at the Mano River Union (MRU) and where possible, within relevant Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).** The institutionalization process will engage the MRU, local communities, local governments, and national governments to ensure broad-based acceptance and adherence to agreed-upon structures and operational modalities, enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination, and collaboration. This approach will potentially unlock financing and ensure sustainable governance of the Mano watershed.

C. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects

a. Execution Arrangement and Partners

Implementing Agency (IA):

113. Conservation International (CI-GEF) is the GEF Implementing Agency of this project. The overall role of the CI-GEF Implementing Agency includes technical and financial project oversight and supervision, assuring compliance of the project with GEF policies and procedures as well as monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. Finally, CI-GEF will make recommendations to optimize project performance and will arbitrate and ensure the resolution of any execution conflicts. Specifically, CI-GEF will undertake the following tasks:

- Facilitate interactions with the GEF.
- Coordinate and manage the relationship between the Liberia Child Project and the Guinean Forests Integrated Program. This also entails ensuring that the Liberia Child project participates in events organized by CI through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP)
- Coordinate and manage the relationship between the Liberia Child Project and other key GEF-funded Integrated Programs (IPs) such as the Guinean Forests IP, Indo-Malay IP, Meso-America IP, Amazon IP, Ecosystem Restoration IP, planet GOLD IP among others. This also entails ensuring that the Liberia Child project participates in events organized by relevant IPs, especially the critical forests IPs.
- Provide technical and financial oversight to the Executing Agency (Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia) and Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL¹²), The Executing Agency support partner.
- Oversee and monitor implementation of the project including reviewing quarterly technical and financial project reports, undertaking annual project site visits, and monitoring the implementation of and compliance with safeguards.
- Ensure that project management practices (technical, financial, and administration) comply with GEF requirements.
- Monitor the project's implementation and achievement of the project outputs, and ensure proper use of GEF funds.
- Review and approve procurement plans, budgets, and work plans.
- Quality assurance including ensuring that audits are undertaken by external auditors –
- Oversee preparation of the annual project implementation report (PIR) for submission to GEFSEC.
- Commission Mid-term and Terminal project evaluations.

¹² Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL): <https://scnlliberia.org/>

Executing Agency (EA):

114. The **Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA-L)** will act as the Project's Executing Agency, taking the lead role in monitoring the Project to ensure oversight and maintain strategic focus. This effort will be supported by SCNL, the Project's Executing Partner, along with other relevant government agencies and ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Liberia Agricultural Commodity Regulatory Authority (LACRA), the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS).

115. Additionally, the EPA will coordinate and collaborate on an ad-hoc basis through established coordination mechanisms such as (a) quarterly Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings chaired by the EPA and co-chaired by the FDA, with attendance by the Heads (or their designees) of the aforementioned government agencies and ministries; (b) joint monitoring of Project activities involving relevant government agencies and ministries; and (c) sector coordination meetings designed to foster close collaboration between the Project and other relevant ongoing and planned government initiatives, ensuring that Project outputs and outcomes are integrated into government policies, laws, and regulations. The EPA will play the following specific roles:

- With guidance from CI-GEF, the EA will be accountable for the day-to-day project management and overall guidance of the project.
- The EA will guide overall project coordination and ensure that key executing partners and service providers deliver efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure Liberia is represented in events organized by CI under the Guinean Forests Integrated Program, as well as other important events including those organized by other GEF Integrated Programs
- The EA will chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
- Guide the preparation of procurement plans.
- Guide the preparation of the Terms of reference and procurement packages, obtaining approvals from CI-GEF and internally as required.
- Maintenance of records of all project-related documentation
- Guide the preparation and dissemination of knowledge management products.
- Amplify stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing, and support executing partners.
- Establish granting policies and processes to subsequently manage pass-through funds via partner agreements, work plans and financial reporting to ensure their compliance with the ESMF framework, GFMS, and other GEF requirements
- Ensure that all named and unnamed sub-grantees undergo capacity assessments and mitigation measures are added. Award to each grantee is conditional upon the assessment and negotiation of agreements with all the necessary GEF and CIGEF flow-down requirements.
- Provide financial documentation as requested by CI-GEF
- Provide financial and technical reports to CI-GEF
- Monitoring and evaluation of project interventions.
- Effective use of GEF resources.

Executing Agency Support Partner (SCNL):

116. As the **Executing Agency Support Partner**, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) will provide critical assistance to the EPA in project management and implementation. Their expertise lies in community engagement, alternative livelihoods, and the design, establishment, and management of protected areas. They also possess a wide network of collaborations with landscape and national stakeholders. Furthermore, being a local Birdlife partner, SCNL has closely collaborated with Birdlife International, the current EA for the GEF Guinean Forests Integrated Program. **SCNL will host the Project Management Unit (PMU) at their offices in Monrovia, Liberia, and manage field activities from their NW Liberia field office.** They will take the lead in implementing Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas) and Component 4 (Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing), and will share responsibility with the EPA for Component 5 (Monitoring and Evaluation Framework).
117. The EA Support partner (SCNL), through the Project Management Unit-PMU, will report technically and financially to CI-GEF by preparing and submitting the annual budget and work plan; quarterly financial and technical progress reports, the annual Project Implementation Report (PIR), an annual project progress. The summarized specific tasks of the SCNL include:
- a. Management of the GEF grant. CI-GEF will directly grant the Executing Agency Support Partner (SCNL) who will be responsible for managing sub-grants, contracts etc. based on the level of effort and tasks that have been agreed upon during the PPG Phase.
 - b. Recruit and host the Project staff at its facilities in Monrovia, Liberia, and manage field activities from their NW Liberia field office.
 - c. Responsible for the overall project coordination and ensuring that the key entities such as sub-grantees and service providers deliver efficiently and effectively.
 - d. Support the PMU in undertaking finance and operational tasks such as procurement, grants management, and financial audits.
 - e. Build the capacity of the Government staff, project staff, and partners on financial management and financial and technical reporting in order to ensure compliance with the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards.
 - f. Conduct due diligence (DD) of partners receiving grants. The DD should be in line with the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards on partner institutions.
 - g. Support the PMU to track and report on the materialisation of all co-financing.
 - h. Guide the PMU to prepare procurement plans and obtain approval from the EPA before submitting them to the GEF Agency (CI-GEF) for final review and approval.
 - i. Guide the PMU to prepare all Terms of Reference and procurement packages and obtain approval from the EPA before submitting them to the GEF Agency (CI-GEF) for final review and approval.
 - j. Support the PMU to convene the Project Steering Committee and be the Vice Chair
 - k. Ensure timely financial and technical progress reporting to CI-GEF by the PMU.
 - l. Ensure financial auditing of the project is undertaken.

118. SCNL will also be responsible for the following direct technical execution tasks:

- a. Provide technical input across all Components.
- b. Provide overall project support and technical assistance to the EPA to coordinate all the project partners and manage their output deliverables.
- c. Manage and report on grantee and consultant activities to the EPA:
- d. Undertake Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the project and obtain approval from the EPA before submitting the M&E reports to the GEF Agency (CI-GEF) for final review and approval. This task entails:
 - Prepare technical and financial periodic reports (e.g., annual work plans and budgets, technical and financial progress reports, and the annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) and obtain approval from the EPA before submitting them to CI-GEF.
 - Safeguards monitoring and reporting to the GEF Agency (CI-GEF).
 - Organization and coordination of the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
- e. With guidance from CI-GEF and the EPA, SCNL will be responsible for the day-to-day project management and overall coordination with CI through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project.
- f. Support the project staff to prepare and disseminate knowledge management products.
- g. Support the EPA to execute Component 3 through providing technical assistance and supporting the management, and coordination of partners, grantees, and consultancies.
- h. With support from the project executing entities, amplify stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing, and liaise with the EPA to ensure Liberia is represented in important events including those organized by other GEF Critical Forests Integrated Programs
- i. Maintain records of all project-related documentation

Project Management Unit (PMU):

119. A **Project Management Unit (PMU)** will be recruited by SCNL with guidance from CI and the EPA. The PMU will be hosted at SCNL's offices in Monrovia, Liberia, and manage field activities from their NW Liberia field office. The PMU will consist of two positions listed below:
- a. Technical Lead
 - b. Finance Lead
120. With guidance from the EPA, the Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) and the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the PMU will be responsible for the day-to-day coordination and execution of project activities that will ensure overall effective and efficient project management and delivery. The Project staff will support SCNL as needed to deliver the tasks of the Executing Agency Support Partner.
121. The PMU will coordinate directly as needed with the CI-GEF Agency and will report to the EPA. Additionally, the PMU will work closely with executing partners, external sub-grantees, and service providers. Overall, the PMU will supervise, monitor progress, and coordinate and support the executing partners and service providers as needed to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the project's target results.

122. As needed, consultants will be hired to provide technical assistance for specific tasks requiring expertise that cannot be undertaken by the Project staff and the executing partners identified at the PPG Phase. **International service providers will only be recruited where national capacities are insufficient.** The specific roles of the PMU include:

- a. Secretariat for the Project Steering Committee (PSC) – Vice Chair and Rapporteur
- b. Procurement of all services, goods, and equipment
- c. Handling and safeguarding of the equipment.
- d. Financial management, disbursements, reporting and record-keeping.
- e. Project technical guidance, monitoring and reporting.
- f. Preparation and submission of all technical and financial reports.
- g. Monitoring and reporting the materialization of co-financing to CI-GEF.
- h. Actively coordinate the flow of inputs, procurement, outputs, and work streams to ensure the project runs smoothly and delivers the specified outputs and overall objectives.
- i. Organizing and facilitating workshops and travel.
- j. Identification of potential risks to project activities and implementation of mitigation measures to overcome them.
- k. Knowledge Management.
- l. Setting up, monitoring, and reporting implementation progress of environmental and social safeguards.
- m. Ensuring the smooth running of the project through continuous monitoring, coordination, and communication among partners, consultants, stakeholders, etc.
- n. Assisting in organizing and reporting on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings.
- o. Maintenance of records of all project-related documentation
- p. Liaise with stakeholders to prepare and disseminate knowledge management products.
- q. Share project progress with the Liberia GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) e.g., via email, a copy of the bi-annual published reports and policy briefs detailing lessons learned, best case practices, challenges, and opportunities.
- r. Ensure Liberia is represented in events organized by CI under the Guinean Forests Integrated Program, as well as other important events including those organized by other GEF Integrated Programs

Technical Support Team

123. The team listed below will support the PMU:

- a. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer (part-time)
- b. Environmental, Social Safeguards and Gender Officer (full-time)
- c. Knowledge Management and Communications Officer (part-time)
- d. Government Liaison and Partner Relationship Officer (part-time)
- e. Community Engagement Officer (full-time)

124. Detailed Terms of Reference (ToRs) for staff positions charging to Components and Project Management Costs (PMCs) are provided in **Appendix I**.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC):

Role of the PSC: Strategic overall guidance to the project

Frequency of meetings: Annually/As needed.

125. The Project will build on the already established Project Steering Committee (PSC) at the EPA which comprises representatives from a range of ministries and government agencies. The PSC will provide overall project oversight and strategic guidance and ensure continued cohesion between the project and the mandate of the EPA. It will also provide additional linkages and interactions with high-level policy components within the Government of Liberia. The PSC will provide input and approve the annual work plans and budgets, review and approve any key project outputs, facilitate successful project execution, and intervene when conflicts within the project and/or between project partners arise.
126. The proposed PSC composition is provided below. At the start of the project, the PMU will work with EPA to update/finalize the list of PSC representatives; if needed, follow up with the respective institutions to appoint their representative to the PSC (and ensure at least 30% women representatives); work with the PSC members to prepare/update ToRs of the PSC and agree on the frequency of the PSC meetings.
- EPA – Chair
 - Vice Chair – FDA or Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
 - Rapporteur – SCNL (PMU)
127. The current official PSC membership consists of the heads of the various agencies as listed below. These are heavily male-dominated. In practice, the agency heads delegate PSC participation to senior staff members; the project will seek to ensure that such delegation results in at least 30% female participants in PSC sessions. Minutes of PSC meetings will be submitted to the CI-GEF Agency and other relevant stakeholders.

- Dr. Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo (Environmental Protection Agency)
- Hon. Rudolph Merab (Forestry Development Authority)
- Dr. Alexander Nuetah (Ministry of Agriculture)
- Hon. Gbeme Horace-Kollie (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection)
- Atty. J. Adams Manobah Name (Liberia Land Authority)
- Mr. Richard Ngafuan (Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services)
- Hon. Francis S. Nyumalin (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
- Hon. Boima S. Kamara (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning)
- Hon. Wilmot Paye (Ministry of Mines and Energy)
- Dr. Julius Nelson (University of Liberia)
- Michael F. Garbo (SCNL)
- Nobeh Jackson (Partners for Development)
- Borwen Sayon (The Nature Compact)
- Conservation International (CI-GEF) -Participates on a needs basis

The Project Technical Coordination Committee (TCC)

Role of the TCC: Day-to-day guidance and coordination of the PMU and project support staff

Frequency of meetings: Quarterly/As needed.

128. The Technical Coordination Committee will provide day-to-day overall guidance and coordination to the Project staff for the implementation of activities at the national and sub-national levels. **The Technical Coordination Committee will be chaired by the SCNL, the PMU will be the Rapporteur and the Vice Chair Position will be rotational amongst the executing partners.** CI will participate in the TCC sessions on a need basis.
129. The **Technical Coordination Committee (TCC)** will comprise the key stakeholders involved in the Liberia project execution drawing membership from the EPA, FDA, MoA, Liberia Land Authority (LLA), SCNL, PADEV and TNC.

GEF Operation Focal Point (OFP)

130. The GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) is the designated government official who serves as the principal contact for GEF-funded activities in their respective country. In this case, the OFP for Liberia also acts as the main liaison for the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and stakeholders. According to GEF guidelines, OFPs must be informed, involved, and consulted throughout the lifecycle of a GEF project, including receiving updates on project implementation, results, and impacts. The Liberia Child Project will coordinate and involve the Liberia OFP in the following ways:
- Invite the OFP to participate in Project Steering Committee Meetings.
 - Inform and consult the OFP about the planning, execution, and findings of the Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation of the Project.
 - Share Project Monitoring and Evaluation reports with the Liberia OFP, such as the Project Implementation Report (PIR), Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report, and Project Terminal Evaluation Report.
 - Provide selected knowledge management products to the Liberia OFP.

Project Executing Partners:

131. Project executing partners were earmarked during the PPG Phase in consultation with the EPA-L. All sub-grantees will undergo financial due diligence before the grant agreement is signed and funds channelled to them. **Table 6** summarizes the project's Executing partners (sub-grantees), their roles, and rationale for their Inclusion in the project.

Table 6: Roles and rationale for the inclusion of project Executing partners/sub-grantees.

Name of Organization/ Institution	Specify Role: (Grantee/Sub-grantee/Partner)	Specific Role	Rationale
EPA	Executing Agency	Ensure overall project delivery and coordinate stakeholders. Responsible for providing overall guidance to the project and decision-making. Lead Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing and supervise Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework	Government authority whose remit is to apply national environmental policy
SCNL	Executing Support Partner (grantee)	Technical and financial management and coordination of the project. Support Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas), and Component 4 (Capacity building and strengthening collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing), and lead Component 5 (Monitoring and Evaluation).	Strong presence and track record of leading a broad array of conservation and development activities in the NW Liberia Landscape, in collaboration with communities, other NGOs, and government agencies.
TNC	Executing Partner (sub-grantee)	Support Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management)	Track record of partnering with Mano River Union for technical support and capacity building.
PADEV	Executing Partner (sub-grantee)	Support Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises).	Leading local NGO on economic prosperity for forest fringe communities, including work with local farmers through social enterprise development and climate-smart agriculture to reduce deforestation.
FDA	Partner (in-kind support)	Lead Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas) and Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management)	Government authority with responsibility for protected areas, community forestry, and commercial forestry, including lead role in national forest-carbon policy and activities.

Name of Organization/ Institution	Specify Role: (Grantee/Sub-grantee/Partner)	Specific Role	Rationale
		Provide technical guidance to processes relating to protected area gazettement and management, and community forest management.	
MOA	Partner (in-kind support)	Lead Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises).	Government authority with responsibility for agricultural development.

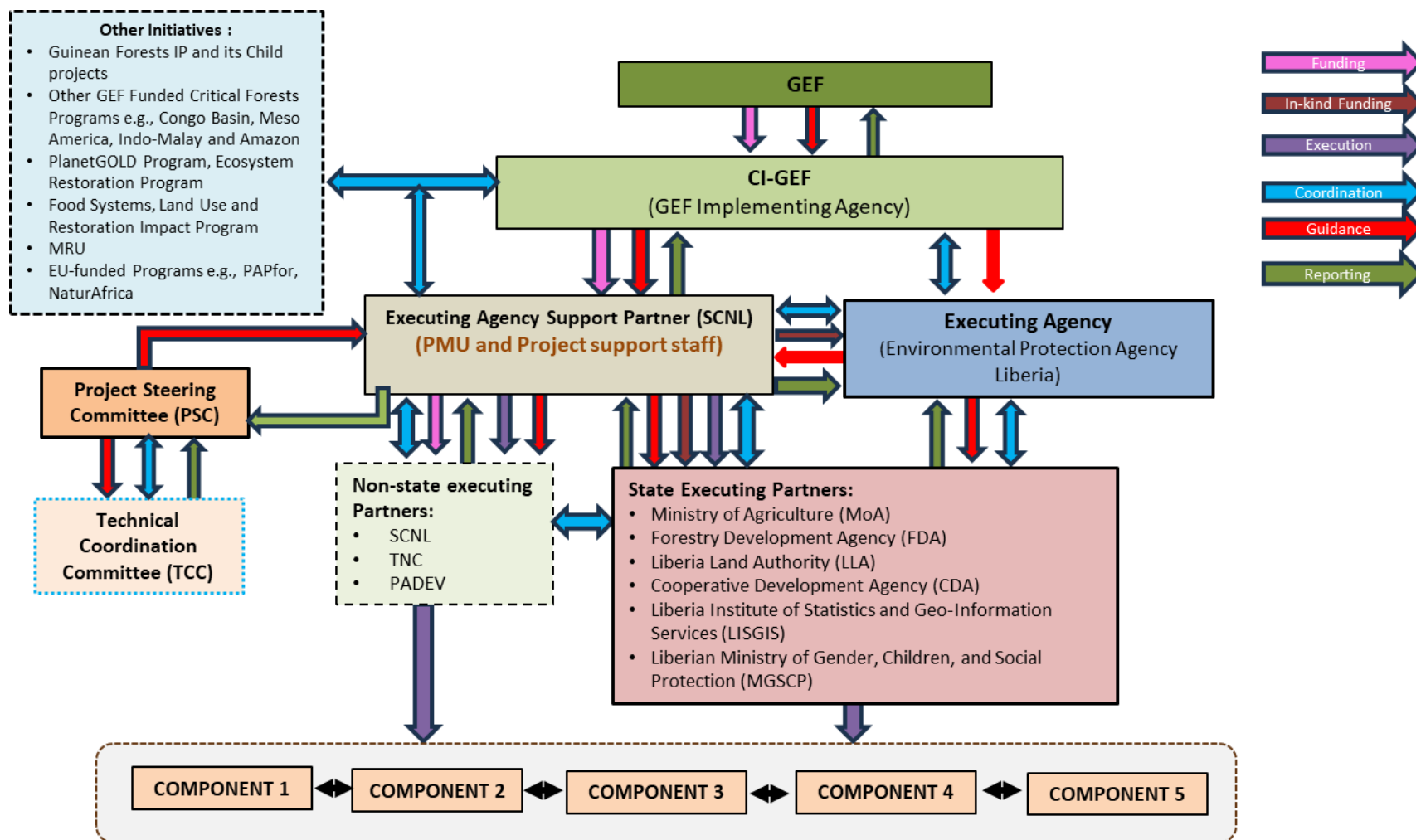


Figure 3: Project Execution Organizational Chart

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role in this project?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Cooperation and collaboration with ongoing initiatives and projects

132. This project builds on the experience and lessons from previous initiatives and is designed to benefit from cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects including the sharing of expertise and lessons. **Table 7** indicates some previous and ongoing GEF and non-GEF projects from which lessons can be drawn.

Table 7: Potential for lessons from completed projects and cooperation with ongoing initiatives.

S/No	Project/Initiative Name	Period of performance	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
GEF Funded Projects/Initiatives			
1.	Amazon, Congo and Critical Forests Integrated Program This project is anchored on the <u>GEF-8 Amazon, Congo and Critical Forests Integrated Program</u> whose goal is to “maintain the integrity of the globally important critical tropical forests in order to maximize multiple global environment benefits related to carbon and biodiversity”.	2025-2030 (estimate)	The Liberia Child Project's objective and interventions are designed to align with the Guinean Forests Integrated Program's interventions with the expectation that the successful delivery of the project will contribute to the Program's target outcomes/results. On this basis, per the Program's objective and targets, the interventions under the Liberia Project will promote the management of protected areas in the NW landscape which is part of the Guinean Forests of West Africa. Notably, the Guinean Forests RCP will support its child projects to coordinate and collaborate with the 4 other Critical Forests IPs under this Program, namely, Congo Basin IP, Amazon, IP, Indo-Malay IP, and Meso-America IP
2.	Liberia Food Systems Land Use Restoration Project. Titled: <i>Reducing Deforestation from Palm Oil and Cocoa Value Chains.</i> (GEF project ID: 10232) The Liberia FOLUR project is part of the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program and was added in the GEF-7 cycle.	2021-2027 (Ongoing)	The Liberia FOLUR project aims to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable food systems, enhancing livelihood opportunities in the NW Liberia Landscape through land use planning, restoration of degraded lands, and strengthening governance, policies, and market incentives. It focuses on creating nationally replicable models of deforestation-free cocoa and palm oil value chains. Key focal points include biodiversity loss reduction, restoration of natural habitats, and robust management, coordination, collaboration, and monitoring and evaluation. The project engages the private sector by encouraging improvements in land allocation and use, and the adoption and joint

S/No	Project/Initiative Name	Period of performance	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
GEF Funded Projects/Initiatives			
			implementation of land-use plans across sectors. It also fosters climate-smart partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders, attracting private-sector investment and innovative financing. In addition to the two projects being implemented in the NW landscape, the FOLUR project provides valuable lessons and mechanisms to engage communities. The land use plans, socio-economic assessments, and other materials developed by Liberia FOLUR will serve as a foundation for the development and implementation of plans under the Liberia Child project.
3.	Liberia Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) project GEF-6 (GEF Project ID: 9573)	2020-2025 (Ongoing)	The Liberia Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) project aims to quantify and track Liberia's natural resources, inform policy and decision-making, promote sustainable management, enhance local capacity, and support economic growth. This provides opportunities for the Guinean Forests Liberia project to integrate environmental values into national accounting, leverage data for better policy decisions, and align sustainable resource management with economic goals.
4.	Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM)Project (GEF Project ID: 4953)	On-going but nearing completion 2020-2024	Forest Landscape Restoration Opportunities Assessment and implementation in the Mano-River Gola landscape. The project provides some lessons about the forest situation/conditions of the four Mano River Union Countries and potential areas for national action. The project also provides lessons on how research data could be used to direct actions/policy direction.
B. Non-GEF initiatives			
1.	Title of Program: NaturAfrica Program NaturAfrica, funded by the EU, is a 6-year (2021-2027) €310 million initiative to support biodiversity conservation in Africa by structuring support around landscapes that are crucial for conservation and human development.	2021-2027	The Guinean Forests biome is identified as a priority “mega-landscape,” and the regional coordination unit is scheduled to commence in late 2023, with work in the 11 landscapes to begin in 2024. With support from the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP) and the EU-funded NaturAfrica Program, the three Guinean Forests Child Projects (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) will

S/No	Project/Initiative Name	Period of performance	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
GEF Funded Projects/Initiatives			
			reactivate the committees that were established under the IWRM Project (GEF ID: 4953).
2.	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WABICC) Transboundary projects. It was intended to improve conservation and climate-resilient, low-emissions growth across West Africa. Funded by the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID). The project program has significantly impacted Liberia by enhancing biodiversity conservation and promoting sustainable resource management in the Upper Guinea Forest ecosystem and coastal regions. It has strengthened local communities and institutions, contributing to climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods.	Completed: 2015-2021	The project provides lessons on regional approaches and national actions to conservation of biodiversity and strategies to reduce the threats in forest landscapes. It also provides lessons towards how to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation and increasing forest landscape restoration.
3.	Support programme for the preservation of forest ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor): aims to promote sustainable and inclusive development of West African forest areas, responding to the challenges of climate change and the maintenance of biodiversity. The specific objective is to protect biodiversity and priority forest ecosystems effectively and efficiently in West Africa, contributing to climate change resilience and food and water security. Funded by EU -In August 2020, the Project was rolled out in Sierra Leone and Liberia to conserve the Gola Forest. In Sierra Leone, the three-year programme is being implemented by the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), a BirdLife Partner	Still ongoing	From the project, it is learnt that rural populations within the landscape are growing significantly, placing more pressure on the Gola rainforest block. Mining and logging interests as well as illegal hunting have also increased in the area and present major challenges for the future of the landscape: This project could utilize the approaches that the PAPFor project proposes to encourage the rearing of breeding Cane rat and cattle in order to stop the hunting of the wild animal, because if the forest edge communities are capacitated in this economic livelihood, they could help the Forest Management authorities to control wildlife hunting.
4.	West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED) programs. WABILED is a four-year program funded by USAID with three core objectives: combat wildlife trafficking and enhance great ape conservation; reduce deforestation, forest degradation, and biodiversity loss in key transboundary forest landscapes; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration from forestry and land use	On-going: July 2021 – July 2025	The project provides lessons to build on particularly recent and ongoing regional approaches to forest conservation. TNC, with support from the EPA, will engage the USAID-funded West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED) program to explore opportunities for synergy and cooperation focused on the management of transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes. For activities relating to the Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area, SCNL

S/No	Project/Initiative Name	Period of performance	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
GEF Funded Projects/Initiatives			
			will pursue cooperation with Fauna & Flora to explore the potential for joint community engagement activities and mutually reinforcing efforts relating to protected area financing. SCNL is in a strong position to complement EPA's efforts to coordinate work with other initiatives through its extensive links to NGOs and CSOs. Moreover, given the EPA's and SCNL's close involvement with other work in the NW Liberia Landscape, key Project staff will be co-located with team members working on these other initiatives, offering ample opportunity for cross-fertilization, alignment and logistical coordination (e.g., joint field visits and coordinated organization of training events). As the Birdlife Partner in Liberia, SCNL is well-placed to work with Birdlife International as an Executing Agency for the GFIP Regional Coordination Project for smooth cooperation and exchange. Likewise, SCNL is also able to facilitate cooperation between the project and pending RSPB work focused on microfinance, which will generate opportunities to share tools and approaches, and jointly engage the financial sector in Liberia.
5.	West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development: Promote biodiversity conservation and climate resilient, low emissions development in West Africa. The project is intended to strengthen the capacity of national and regional networks and institutions to enforce and prosecute wildlife trafficking laws; enhance regional and transboundary forest cooperation and conservation strategies using best practices; and improve capacity for economically viable low emissions development strategies. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).	On-going and towards completion	Lessons include approaches to the conservation and restoration of forests. It was also learnt that forests are crucial to Maintain West Africa's biological heritage for future generations and to meet global carbon emissions reduction targets and ultimately, reduce the extent and effects of climate change. While measurable progress has been made to reverse past trends, efforts have been hampered by constraints including limited intra-regional coordination and inadequate information and awareness at the general public and policy-maker levels.

S/No	Project/Initiative Name	Period of performance	Lessons and Leveraging Opportunities
GEF Funded Projects/Initiatives			
6.	Building Capacity to Monitor Forest Vegetation and Carbon Change in the Upper Guinea Forests. (Funded by USAID through WABILED). It is a Research Project that focused on study work in four transboundary forest landscapes including protected areas across the four Mano River Union (MRU) Member States (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire) targeting key transboundary biodiversity hotspots, namely Gola National Parks between Liberia and Sierra Leone, Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, Ziamá Wonegizi-Wologizi between Liberia and Guinea, and Outamba-Kilimi-Madina-Oula between Sierra Leone and Guinea.	On-going: September 1, 2022 - November 30, 2024	This project provides an opportunity how to undertake demonstrative capacity building. The focus was to increase the capacity of institutions both at the national and local level across the remnant Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem to combine ground and remote sensing data to track forest degradation and plan as appropriate.

Risks to Project Implementation (Key Risks)

133. **Table 8** below summarizes risks that might affect the project implementation phase and the mitigation strategies the project will undertake to address them.

Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? **YES** (See table below.)

Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? **YES** (See table below.)

Is there any omission? **NO** (See table below.)

Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures? **YES** (See table below.)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with the requirements set out in SD/PL/03? **YES** (See table below.)

Table 8: Project's risks and mitigation measures

RISK DIMENSION AND CATEGORIES*	RATING	PLANNED MITIGATION MEASURES
CONTEXT		
Climate – SUBSTANTIAL		
- Impacts from climate change could alter priority areas for conservation, exacerbate floods and/or droughts (potentially leading to the Project or wider regional or country-level instability), and/or lead to	Substantial	The mitigation measures will be to ensure the project's interventions are resilient, and better planning with respect to the timing of introduction of alternative livelihoods, and field activities. Vulnerable areas will be identified, and project activities planned with climate resilience in mind.

<p>changes in country development priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate change-related risks include failure to adequately determine the extent to which and to what degree priority areas for conservation, protected area boundaries and sustainable livelihoods will be impacted by climate change over various timeframes, thereby undermining the ability to fully achieve environmental and socio-economic objectives over the long-term. 		
Environment and Social - SUBSTANTIAL		
<p>The Project could bring environmental and/or social risks, notably unintended outcomes from project activities. There are considerable risks involved in land-use planning processes, expanding and consolidating protected areas and OECMs, supporting customary land formalization processes and developing more sustainable livelihoods, as these all involve outreach, engagement and collaboration with IPLCs, many of which are dependent on natural resources and often rely on complex and/or unresolved land tenure arrangements. Failure to adequately address these risks could lead to conflicts with communities over a wide spectrum of land use issues, undermining both the environmental and sustainable economic alternative objectives of the program.</p> <p>Safeguard screening was conducted during the PPG Phase and the project was classified as a category A, which means that the proposed project activities have the potential to cause adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, and irreversible.. The project completed a GMP, AGM and SEP during the PPG phase, but it is required to update the GMP and SEP during the start of implementation. The project is also required to complete an ESIA within the first six months of implementation.</p>	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Safeguards specialist to be part of the project staff. b. Safeguards Specialist (supported by the project team) to update the safeguard plans, within 6 months of the start of the implementation phase. c. Safeguards specialist to oversee the implementation of the mitigation measures and monitor and report on the progress of the safeguard indicators throughout project implementation. d. A consultant (with support from the safeguards specialist) will be recruited to undertake an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

Shift to sustainable livelihoods and practices may clash with the communities' traditional practices and culture.	Low	Activities related to supporting the shift to sustainable livelihoods and practices will be developed based on an in-depth consultation process with the local communities and their traditional leadership.
The risk of positive impacts of the project triggering negative impacts such as maladaptation, deforestation leakage i.e., improved forest protection/conservation in one area leading to more deforestation in other or new areas .	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To mitigate these risks, the Liberia Child project has developed environmental and social safeguards which were informed by in-depth safeguards screening at the PPG Phase. The safeguards screening as well as the safeguard plans will be validated by the PMU during the implementation phase. With respect to unintended consequences such as displacing deforestation from project areas to other areas, the key mitigation measures are the promotion of landscape-level planning and management approaches; support for efforts to enhance wider policy coherence and tracking this dynamic within M&E frameworks to trigger/inform adaptive management.
Political and Governance - MODERATE		
<p>a. Project objectives could be undermined through detrimental policies and/or through non-compliance with existing laws and regulations, particularly those that prioritize export products such as palm oil, timber and cacao and govern protected area management. The larger Guinean Forest region has and continues to experience considerable conflict within and between countries, with Liberia in the midst of recovering from two civil wars, the Ebola epidemic and the COVID pandemic.</p> <p>b. The Project faces political and governance risks that could undermine fully achieving its objectives. Liberia has several natural resource policies that create perverse incentives to use them unsustainably, while enforcement of laws and regulations that support environmental goals and sustainable resource use is often lacking.</p>	Moderate	<p>a. To mitigate these risks, the Project will build upon the prior involvement with GEF, CEPF and other large investments that have allowed for strong regional and country-specific networks and alliances with key government officials from the local to the national level, as well as with the private sector, CSOs, and international multi-and bilateral stakeholders. The expertise and knowledge of Executing Support Partner SCNL will also be leveraged to avoid and mitigate political and governance-level risk.</p> <p>b. The Regional Coordination Project will utilize these networks and alliances to ensure Program and project-specific goals are aligned and supported, as well as identify where detrimental policies or non-compliance with complementary policies are undermining successful implementation.</p> <p>c. Particular attention will be given to identifying existing or new policies that create perverse incentives that undermine the larger environmental goals of the Program, and opportunities to incorporate policy reform into project design.</p>

<p>c. The recent history of conflicts internally and within the region could add additional layers of complexity to the successful implementation of in-country activities as well as those in transboundary areas. Despite recent successful elections, Liberia is still in a fragile political state as it emerges from these conflicts. Failure to minimize the impact of detrimental policies and maximize enforcement of existing enabling environmental and natural resource laws and regulations puts the full achievement of the Project objectives at risk.</p>		<p>d. Past and current collaboration on transboundary areas with Sierra Leone and Guinea will also be built upon to ensure continued progress forward and minimize the risk of inadequate project implementation. Where appropriate, regional bodies such as MRU and ECOWAS will be utilized to strengthen collaboration and resolve conflicts</p>
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy - MODERATE		
<p>a. Liberia is a diverse country emerging from decades of conflict and stability, with consolidating governance mechanisms, capacity gaps and high pressure to deliver economic development to its population, over half of whom live in poverty. This dynamic poses a challenge to the development and implementation of coherent strategies and policies needed for successful project outcomes. At the regional level, countries of the Guinean Forests have diverse economic interests and continue to grapple with a history of instability and conflict, leading to differences in strategies and policies.</p> <p>b. At the national level, Liberia has many policies that contradict its conservation goals, such as the significant overlap of concessions (palm oil, timber, mining) with areas designated as Community Forests or for conservation. At the regional level, working over such a large and diverse area with multiple languages, cultures, and</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>a. To mitigate institutional and policy risks, the Project will build on over two decades of prior investments by GEF, CEPF and other major donors which have created several coordination and collaboration mechanisms that the Program's Regional Coordination Project will adopt to ensure institutional and policy coherence among key stakeholders both nationally and regionally.</p> <p>b. Additional institutional and policy-level risk mitigation will be provided by Executing Support Partner SCNL. This will include regular country- and regional-level meetings, exchanges and capacity-building workshops, and regular information sharing and updates from the Project and GFIPs monitoring and evaluation component.</p> <p>c. Transboundary-level institutional and policy-level risks to the Project will further be mitigated via the engagement of regional bodies, notably the MRU</p>

governance systems and a history of conflict, provides several region-level risks. Failure to adequately manage these risks, notably in transboundary priority areas, could impede the Project's ability to achieve its goals, both at the country and transboundary levels.		
Technological – SUBSTANTIAL		
Inadequate adoption of any relevant technology as part of the introduction of alternative livelihoods and effective management of the protected areas	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comprehensive training and capacity-building programs to ensure communities understand and can effectively use the relevant technology. b. Involve local stakeholders in the planning, and selection of the technology and decision-making process that can enhance buy-in and adoption. c. Strengthening local institutions and ensuring consistent technical support can also help sustain the use of technology. Integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology and providing financial incentives or subsidies can encourage adoption. d. For effective management of protected areas, establishing clear regulations, fostering community-led conservation initiatives, and ensuring continuous monitoring and adaptive management practices are crucial.
Financial and Business Model - MODERATE		
Developing gender-sensitive, inclusive, climate-resilient and biodiversity-friendly livelihoods for local communities is a key strategy for achieving project objectives. However, Liberia's economy is heavily dependent on commodities such as cacao and palm oil, which can be subject to large price swings and natural disasters. While growing, markets for certified products, such as deforestation-free cacao and palm oil, are often difficult for producers to access, as capacity-building, capital, and marketing are required and often lacking. Commodity market volatility, coupled with high barriers to entry for many value-added products, runs the risk of	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. By placing local communities and a rights-based, gender-inclusive approach in the NW Liberian Landscape at the centre of its strategies, the Project builds off of two decades of investment and prior experiences of GEF-, CEPF- and other major donor-related initiatives in sustainable development and conservation-compatible economic activities. b. Using the lessons learned from previous and ongoing sustainable development and food security initiatives, such as the current GEF-supported FOLUR project, the Project will be able to optimally structure land use plans, marketing efforts and

undermining the central premise upon which the Project's financial model is based, threatening a return to unsustainable practices of natural resource use.		<p>financing options, thereby mitigating many of the risks to its financial model.</p> <p>c. In particular, the Project will benefit from prior land use planning expertise and livelihood project implementation experience of personnel within the Government of Liberia's EPA and Executing Support Partner, SCNL, whose involvement in similar projects, such as the Green Livelihood Project (GLA) developing sustainable livelihoods of communities around Sapo National Park, offers lessons learned on how to optimize outcomes.</p>
Failing to secure continued long-term financial support after project completion, can risk the sustainability of critical Project Outcomes.	High	The project includes Outputs aimed at establishing long-term financial sustainability.
EXECUTION		
Capacity for implementation – SUBSTANTIAL		
<p>Liberia has several institutional and technical capacity gaps, some substantial, which could undermine the successful implementation of the Project. Sierra Leone and Guinea have similar limits on institutional capacity, which could undermine the Project's transboundary objectives.</p> <p>Given the often substantial institutional and technical capacity gaps, the Project faces substantial risks with key partners, such as IPLCs and local communities and government agencies being unable to adequately fulfill the roles and responsibilities designated to them with the project's design. As a result, project outcomes run the risk of not being fully achieved.</p>	Substantial	<p>Both the Project and Program's designs explicitly recognize the need for capacity building at the local, national and regional levels, and incorporate strategies to address these gaps.</p> <p>The Project design will identify capacity-building gaps incorporate activities to address them and coordinate efforts with the Regional Coordination Project to direct resources and technical expertise where appropriate.</p> <p>Prior and current project implementation experience and expertise from the Project's executing partners, such as SCNL, will also be leveraged to avoid and mitigate implementation capacity risk.</p> <p>At the transboundary and regional levels, the Regional Coordination Project also addresses capacity gaps by promoting transboundary and region-wide cooperation and knowledge sharing, and through targeted technical and fundraising support.</p>
Inconsistent and uncoordinated project implementation due to the lack of standardized procedures and understanding of GEF guidelines and operational modalities by the project team, executing partners and other key stakeholders	Substantial	A Project Operations Manual will be developed within 8 months of the start of project implementation. This manual will ensure that all team members and executing partners are aligned in their approach, reducing conflicts and communication breakdown hence enhancing the overall

		efficiency and effectiveness of project activities.
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement - SUBSTANTIAL		
Due diligence of the Executing partners was not conducted by SCNL/CI during the PPG Phase.	Substantial	<p>This task will be completed within the first 6 months of the implementation phase.</p> <p>Financial Due Diligence will be conducted by the SCNL (with support from CI) before granting it to any selected partners. Granting will only be done when partners have met the requirements based on the financial risk assessment. The outputs of this assessment will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partners identified and their respective detailed ToRs defining their roles developed and approved by the EPA b. Financial Due Diligence (FDD) of partner institutions conducted, and applicable mitigation measures put in place/captured in their respective grant agreements c. Grant Agreements signed (to include the mitigation measures from the FDD.
Stakeholder - SUBSTANTIAL		
Stakeholder resistance or opposition can hinder project progress and create challenges for implementation. Additionally, per the baseline assessment, there has been limited engagement of local communities, and marginalized and vulnerable groups in past projects in this landscape.	Substantial	<p>The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed to guide the engagement of local communities as well as ensure the active involvement of all stakeholders in project implementation.</p> <p>The stakeholder coordination mechanism that will be established and operationalized by this project will be integral in ensuring that all stakeholders are consulted and engaged.</p>
Overlap with GEF-funded projects in the NW Liberian Landscape: There are currently two CI-GEF-supported projects operating in the NW Liberian Landscape. Failure to coordinate activities between the various GEF-funded initiatives runs the risk of project overlap and redundancy, possibly creating complications with co-financing and/or additionality considerations, as well as with local communities unsure of which activities are being supported by which project.	Low	<p>The GEF has a well-established record of successfully supporting multiple projects within the same geographic focal region. To mitigate risks associated with overlap and redundancy, the GEF, Regional Coordination Project and the Project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with each project's lead agencies and stakeholders at the country and regional level to ensure all GEF-supported activities are complementary; • Align each project's co-financing arrangements with its respective interventions, • Ensure effective communication between lead agencies for each project. For example, Liberia's EPA relies on one PSC

		to provide oversight for all GEF projects funded by CI, thereby allowing key project stakeholders involved in the decision-making process to be aware of how each GEF-funded project is progressing.
OVERALL RISK RATING	SUBSTANTIAL	JUSTIFICATION: Approximately 67% of the risks are rated Substantial, whereas 33% are Moderate risks. The Substantial risks range from climate change-related risks, which could impede the delivery of project interventions and undermine impact due to the high vulnerability of ecosystems and communities in the target landscape, to Environmental and Social Risks categorized as A, as the proposed project activities have the potential to cause adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, and irreversible. Additional risks include the need to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of partners to ensure the effective delivery of project interventions, and the need to meet fiduciary standards, including undertaking financial due diligence of sub-grantees during the implementation phase and putting in place appropriate mitigation measures. Furthermore, it is crucial to engage and consult stakeholders at all levels throughout the project lifecycle, as failure to do so could lead to resistance and boycotts. In summary, failure to implement mitigation measures for the aforementioned risk categories could potentially impede the achievement of project targets and/or result in adverse, irreversible environmental and social impacts.

Safeguards Rating (endorsement level)

A safeguard screening was undertaken during the PPG Phase and this project was ranked as **category A**.

C. Institutional Alignment

Alignment with GEF-8 Programming strategies and country/regional priorities.

134. This project is anchored on the GEF-8 Amazon, Congo and Critical Forests Integrated Program whose goal is to “*maintain the integrity of the globally important critical tropical forests in order to maximize multiple global environment benefits related to carbon and biodiversity*”. It is against this backdrop that the CI-led Guinean Forests Integrated Program, on which the Liberia Child Project is anchored, founded the following objective: *‘To enhance the delivery of ecosystem services and facilitate socioeconomic improvement in Northwest Liberia by promoting the integrated management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and fostering joint transboundary watershed*

management initiatives.’ On this basis, per the objective and targets of the Guinean Forests IP, the interventions under the Liberia Child Project will *‘enhance ecosystem services and improve socioeconomic conditions in Northwest Liberia by promoting integrated and inclusive management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and supporting collaborative transboundary watershed management’*. The alignment between the Guinean Forests Integrated Program and The Liberia Child Project is highlighted below and details are provided in the child project’s Results Framework.

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas and OECMs, including gender and inclusion considerations.

Liberia Project Outcome 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 3.2: Improved gender-responsive and inclusive access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises

Liberia Project Outcome 2.1: Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 3.3: Strengthened gender-responsive and inclusive community forest governance.

Liberia Project Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed.

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available;

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 1.2: Integrated, participatory land-use, and spatial plans developed;

Liberia Project Outcome 2.1: Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications and **Guinean Forests Program Outcome 5.2:** Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives.

Liberia Project Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)

Guinean Forests Program Outcome 6.1: A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework in place

Liberia Project Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project

135. The Project is aligned with the GEF-8 Programming Directions and Focal Areas and Aichi Targets as tabulated below. It directly relates to expected outcomes under the GFIP (effective management of protected areas; promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises; and enhanced transboundary watershed and forest landscape management).

Table 9: Mapping of Project Components to GEF 8 Focal Areas and Aichi Targets

Project Components	GEF 8 Focal Area Programs	Aichi Targets and Indicators
Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective	BD 1-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors	Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services,

Project Components	GEF 8 Focal Area Programs	Aichi Targets and Indicators
management of existing protected areas	BD 2-7: Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate	will be conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises	LD 1-1: Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods through Sustainable Land Management (SLM)	Target 3: By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions. Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, businesses and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of the use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits. Target 7: By 2020, areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
Component 3: Enhance Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management	LD 2-3: Maintain or improve flows of ecosystem services, including sustaining livelihoods of forest-dependent people through Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)	Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

136. The Project will also contribute to the advancement of regional priorities reflected in the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action Plan,¹³ Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa,¹⁴ African Convention on Nature and Natural

¹³https://ecowap.ecowas.int/media/ecowap/file_document/2020_ECOWAS_ECOWAS_ENVIRONMENTAL_ACTION_PLAN_Final_Version_-_ENG.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/196869/>

Resources,¹⁵ and AFR100,¹⁶ which contributes to the Bonn Challenge¹⁷ and the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative.¹⁸

137. The project aligns with and reinforces the commitments of the Government of Liberia to:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)
- Eight Core ILO Conventions
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Minamata Convention on Mercury (signed, ratification pending)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA)
- Bonn Challenge

138. The project also contributes to the Government of Liberia's progress on national policy commitments including:

- National Protected Area Strategy, 2006
- National Climate Change Policy and Strategy
- National Environmental Policy
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2017-2025 (NBSAP)
- Liberian National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification
- National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA)
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)

Alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

139. The Project will directly contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)¹⁹ by advancing Goals A and B (relating to conservation and sustainable use respectively), and particularly GBF Targets 1-5 (spatial planning, biodiversity conservation, and management, including the 30x30 target for PAs and OECMs), 8 (climate change), 9-11 (sustainable use and management of

¹⁵ <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-convention-conservation-nature-and-natural-resources-revised-version>

¹⁶ <https://afr100.org/>

¹⁷ <https://www.bonnchallenge.org/>

¹⁸ <https://www.nepad.org/news/arli-environmental-economic-and-social-initiative>

¹⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>

biodiversity and ecosystem services), 14 (policy and planning), 19 (financing), 20 (capacity building), 22 (IPLCs) and 23 (gender).

Consistency and Alignment with CI Institutional Priorities

140. The project is well aligned with CI's institutional priorities, in particular, the "Southern Cross" (2020)²⁰. The Core Indicator targets of the Liberia Child Project translate to the GEF's Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) under the Biodiversity Conservation, Land Degradation, and Climate Change thematic areas which correspond to CI's focus areas namely: a) Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes (SLS); b) Nature for Climate; c) Ocean Conservation at Scale, and c) Innovation in Science and Finance. The linkage between this project and CI's Southern Cross is provided below:

A. NATURE FOR CLIMATE:

CI is working towards supporting the world to *"avoid 5+ gigatonnes (Gt) CO₂ emissions per year by preventing the loss of high-carbon ecosystems, with zero loss of all irrecoverable carbon by 2030"*. The Guinean Forest Biome is a high-carbon ecosystem hence this CI-Led Liberia Project will enhance its effective conservation and governance and prevent its destruction resulting in zero loss of its irrecoverable carbon. Liberia's forests, in particular the large blocs in the NW Liberia Landscape, represent an important portion of the Biome's intact forest landscapes. CI also seeks *"to mitigate 5+ Gt CO₂ per year through restoration and sustainable management of natural ecosystems by 2030"*. The Liberia project will result in cumulative mitigation of **at least 33.68 million metric tons of CO₂e over 20 years and ensure at least 89,174 hectares of land (excluding protected areas) are under improved practices in Gola Forest National Park and Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi**. The project will benefit at least **30,020 direct beneficiaries with 40% being women**.

B. SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES:

Under this focus area, CI seeks to protect essential ecosystems and unlock sustainable financing. The large forest blocs in the Northwest Liberia Landscape are a vital part of the globally recognized critical ecosystem of the Guinean Forests of West Africa, hence CI's involvement in its conservation and governance is imperative and feeds into the objective of this focus area. Additionally, under this focus area, CI seeks to support countries to unlock financing to ensure integrated conservation is sustainable over time and can adapt to changing demands and pressures. The Liberia Child Project will include work on financial planning for existing and future protected areas, as well as alternative

²⁰ CI. 2020. Conservation International's Southern Cross

livelihoods at the local community level, to contribute to advancing landscape sustainability. Lastly, all the project's core indicators are directly aligned with this focus area.

C. INNOVATION IN SCIENCE AND FINANCE:

CI proactively deploys targeted innovative solutions to complex and ever-changing environmental problems to achieve sustainable impact through systemic transformative change. One of CI's innovative science solutions "irrecoverable" carbon - will be adopted by the Liberia Child Project to guide efforts to conserve forest carbon reserves. Additionally, through Component 3 of the regional project, CI will work with the Liberia Child Project to contribute to finding innovative tangible financial solutions to challenging environmental problems, including from various seed funds such as the CI-Led Positive Conservation Partnership Fund.

D. Policy requirements

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (**Section B**).

☒ Yes No (If –and only if– NO is selected, a pop-up field should open for the Agency to provide an explanation)

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

☒ Yes No

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

- ☒ closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;
- ☒ improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or
- ☒ generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-responsive indicators?

☒ Yes No TBD

The Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) is attached.

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes have been clearly articulated in the Project Description (**Section B**) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

☒ Yes ☐ No

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only; ☐ Yes ☒ No

Member of Advisory Body; ☒ Yes ☐ No

Contractor; ☒ Yes ☐ No

Co-financier; ☒ Yes ☐ No

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; ☒ Yes ☐ No

Executor or co-executor; ☒ Yes ☐ No

Other (Please explain) ☐ Yes ☒ No

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan is attached.

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

☒ Yes ☐ No

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B “project description”?

☒ Yes ☐ No

E. Other requirements

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

☒ Yes

141. Component 4 of this project focuses on knowledge sharing, learning and synthesis of lessons. This project will support the **coordination, learning and sharing of knowledge with other initiatives in close collaboration with the regional project**. It is expected that the regional coordination project will be a one-stop source of information for countries in the Guinean Forests Biome.

142. **Promoting knowledge Management, Learning and knowledge sharing at National, Local, and Transboundary Levels:** In partnership with Guinea and Sierra Leone Guinean Forests Child Projects, this project will revive and institutionalize the inactive committees from the GEF-funded IWRM Project, whilst engaging the Mano River Union (MRU), local communities, and governments to ensure sustainable governance and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

143. **Representation of Liberia’s Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups in Learning and Knowledge sharing events at various levels (sponsored by CI through the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project):** The Liberia Guinean Forests Child Project will ensure participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups in learning events, promoting inclusive decision-making, policy relevance, empowerment, social cohesion, and capacity building. This will lead to sustainable solutions by incorporating diverse perspectives.
144. The Project will place substantial emphasis on lesson learning, dissemination, and uptake. Knowledge-sharing is a priority for the implementing partners and government agencies. These processes will unfold at multiple levels, beginning at the landscape and working upwards through sub-national and national, regional platforms and, finally, to participation in the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Community of Practice (CoP). At the regional level, since Liberia participates in the MRU, ECOWAS, AFR100, and has bi-lateral agreements with Sierra Leone and Guinea to engage in transboundary conservation management of areas important areas for conservation, learning, exchange and co-operation will take place both within and outside countries via project-supported exchange fora, which will enable and guide much of the Project’s support to enhance south-south learning, cooperation, technology transfer, and networking among a broad array of practitioners.
145. In addition, there will be numerous opportunities for sharing lessons learned within the NW Liberia Landscape, at the national level and among GFIP Child Projects that face similar challenges, particularly at the regional and global levels. This will create significant opportunities for South-South cooperation, notably between MRU members Sierra Leone and Guinea. Success stories will figure prominently among the lessons being shared, with the goal of ensuring extensive within- and between-child Project uptake and replication. Regular documentation of success stories and lessons will facilitate sharing with the GFIP, for onward communication to other Child Projects and wider audiences. Together with the GFIP Regional Coordination Project, opportunities will also be identified and pursued for exchanges with other GEF IPs to maximize institutional learning and dissemination in key technical areas related to the management of critical forest biomes.

Knowledge sharing, learning and synthesis of lessons.

- a. **Website of the government institutions involved in the Project and CI’s Website:** The EPA and other relevant sector institutions already have platforms for outreach such as websites which are avenues for users to obtain information about the project. Other than the websites, increasing awareness about the project amongst relevant government institutions and departments as well as the civil society and private sector will continuously be done during the implementation phase of the project. Project updates and implementation progress will thus be communicated through various platforms such as the EPA Website, Conservation International’s website, and the FDA, Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) Websites.
- b. **Engagement with the Guinea Forest Regional Coordination and Learning Project (GFRCLP):** This project will collaborate closely with the **GFRCLP** as a source of information for cross-learning with other child projects in various meetings and forums organized by the **GFRCLP**. The project will then actively provide updates and participate in engagements with the **GFRCLP**. The appointed Project manager/coordinator or the PSC chairman will represent Liberia at the regional project meetings, sharing lessons via Webinars hosted by **GFRCLP** and uploading project information on the **GFRCLP website**.
- c. **Publication of project reports and policy briefs:** Throughout project implementation, this Project will publish at least 5 publications (handbooks, posters, fact sheets, community guides, etc.)

annually to share knowledge. These documents will capture lessons learnt, best case practices, challenges, and opportunities and will be circulated widely.

- d. **Training (workshops):** Training workshops, meetings, and conferences will be held to build the capacity of stakeholders both at landscape and national levels. Training organized by the regional coordination project will provide a great opportunity for lesson sharing. The project will also arrange technical training and awareness sessions with relevant government and non-state entities and departments at the national level. With the training, the project will get feedback from participants on how the project is performing, their expectations, and suggestions on how to make the project achieve greater success in the country. Notably, an annual stakeholder lesson-sharing meeting may be held between EPA and other sectors.
- e. **Peer exchange/ Exposure trips:** Selected beneficiaries from the project implementing partners and the executing entity will, in close collaboration with the regional coordination project, participate in Exposure trips/peer exchange visits to other child project countries and/or global forums such as the CBD CoP where Liberia can learn and share lessons.
- f. **Learning and sharing across the Conservation International Projects:** Through platforms such as Zoom, Teams, and the CI-GEF/ GFRCLP WhatsApp group, this project will interact and share lessons with other ongoing forest conservation projects that are implemented by Conservation International.

Table 10 below summarizes the project knowledge management outputs and their expected timeline and indicative budget.

Table 10: Knowledge management Outputs, expected timeline and indicative budget.

Knowledge management outputs	Expected Timeline	Indicative Budget (USD)
Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing		
<i>Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)</i>		
Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)	Y1	115,998
Output 4.1.2: Participation in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife (<i>2 people attending 5 fora for 3 days</i>)	Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5	43,800
Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project) (<i>2 people participating in 5 visits</i>)	Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5	34,400
Output 4.1.4: Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)	Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5	155,233
Total budget		348,678

146. How the knowledge management approach will contribute to the overall impact of the project:

The Project team, in close cooperation with the **adaptive management and learning team**, will engage regularly with external partners, and participate in key events to disseminate information through media coverage, publications and presentations, all of which will facilitate South-South learning. Working with the GFIP RCP, the Project will organize South-South exchanges in cooperation with other Child Projects to enable practitioners to learn from each other's experiences. The Project will leverage and strengthen the current multi-stakeholder forums and platforms at the landscape level, such as the MRU, ECOWAS and AFR100. There will also be significant stakeholder engagement with leaders from e.g. industry, civil society and government, to secure buy-in for the Project. The Project will work with industry initiatives, such as the High Carbon Stock Approach Group, and environmental and social organizations to ensure alignment and support. Working with the GFIP RCP, the Project will seek to position Liberia as a model of sustainability and protected areas co-management for heavily forested countries globally. We can leverage the growing experience of organizations across Liberia that are piloting innovative approaches, as well as build on private sector partnerships with companies interested in shaping their investments to promote sustainable development.

147. Plans for strategic communications in the knowledge management approach: A communications specialist will be employed, on a part-time basis, to implement the project's communications component and will aim to ensure critical knowledge is tailored to the target audience and disseminated on platforms accessible to the target audience. Strategic communication in knowledge management will be used as a tool to influence policy, improve the design and implementation of natural resources management projects and initiatives in the country, prompt innovation, and generate more impact on biodiversity conservation at landscape and national as well as at transboundary, regional, and global levels. The key target audience includes the following priority stakeholder groups:

- Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies working in land management as well as in Forestry and natural resources conservation sectors.
- Private sector
- CSOs
- Academia, and
- Donors e.g., the GEF.

148. Monitoring and evaluation of the knowledge management and communications component:

Bi-annually, the PMU will undertake M&E to establish the effectiveness of the implementation of the knowledge management and communications component. The following criteria will be used to evaluate and update the tabulated communications strategy below:

- a. Progress on the activity plan in the project document and associated work plans
- b. Assess the size and type of the audience through hit counts on websites, views, and comments on social media posts, and the number of publications shared on external platforms.
- c. Audience Engagement: number of shares and likes on social media handles, comments on blogs, and feedback on conference presentations.

149. The table below will be updated by the PMU with support from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and Conservation International. The information in this table will guide the project's strategic communications in knowledge management.

Table 11: Draft communication approach for the Liberia Guinean Forests project

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION	SPECIFY THE TARGET AUDIENCE	DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL/PLATFORM	RESPONSIBLE (LEAD)	SUPPORT	ACHIEVEMENTS
Presentations	Presentation of the project's achievements, lessons learnt, and recommendations	<i>Project partners, Community meetings, PSC and others as opportunity prevails</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webinar with the regional Coordination project unit Zoom Microsoft Teams 	PMU	CBD focal point from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and Conservation International	<i>This column will be updated bi-annually</i>
1-2 pager bi-annual progress updates (including lessons learnt)	1 -2 pager bi-annual progress updates (including lessons learnt)	<i>PSC, Regional project coordination unit, National level BD conservation and CC stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI Website and social media handles e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn The Environment Protection Agency Website, FDA, MoA, LISGIS, CDA, MGSCP and websites and social media handles e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn Other project partners' websites and social media handles 	PMU	Biodiversity focal point from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and Conservation International and project implementing partners	
Policy Briefs	Bi-annual or quarterly policy briefs on lessons learnt and recommendations	<i>Regional Project Coordination Unit, MRU, PSC, National level BD conservation and other stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI Website and social media handles e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Website and social media handles e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn FDA, MoA, CDA, LISGIS and other project partner's websites and social media handles 	PMU	Biodiversity focal point from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and Conservation International and project implementing partners	
Social media posts	Any key update on the project	<i>PSC, Project implementing partners and other National level stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI social media handles The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) social media handles Other project partner's social media handles 	PMU	EPA communications specialist, BD focal point, other relevant sector leads, and Conservation International.	
Blog posts	Any key update on the project	<i>PSC, Project implementing partners and other National level stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI social media handles The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) social media handles Other project partner's social media handles 	PMU	EPA communications specialist, BD focal point, other relevant sector leads, and Conservation International.	
Banner	A banner about the project	<i>For visibility towards key national and regional stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings CI social media handles The EPA's social media handles Other partner's social media handles 	PMU	EPA communications specialist, BD focal point, other relevant sector leads, and Conservation International.	
Flyers	In summary of the project	<i>Awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination during workshops/peer visits 	PMU	EPA communications specialist, BD focal	

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION	SPECIFY THE TARGET AUDIENCE	DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL/PLATFORM	RESPONSIBLE (LEAD)	SUPPORT	ACHIEVEMENTS
			with other child projects, and any exchange programs		point, other relevant sector leads, and Conservation International.	

150. The CI logo shall be displayed in project publications in accordance with the CI Logo Use Guidelines following written approval by CI. All other uses of the logo or the name of CI are subject to the execution of a separate licensing agreement. All uses of the GEF logo outside of the GEF Communication and Visibility Policy require prior written approval by CI.

151. Executing Agency and Partners shall share knowledge management materials with CI, to the extent legally permissible, non-sensitive results data and work products collected, procured or otherwise developed under this Project as well as lessons learned that might be beneficial to the design and implementation of similar projects shall be made publicly available. Executing Agencies, Partners, and/or CI-GEF Agency shall share such materials through the CI-GEF website or other appropriate online forums as well as with local beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the Project's design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the Project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TE).

☒ Yes

Socio-economic Context:

152. The total population in the areas of interest is 149,305 (75,425 men and 73,880 women) as per the Liberia National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016). Improved management of protected areas, adjacent forests (notably Community Forests) and lands under agriculture and agroforestry in Liberia will generate a range of socioeconomic benefits including contributions to enhanced food security, livelihoods, and water availability and quality. Forest conservation achieved through co-management of protected areas and adjacent forests will also contribute to maintenance of key environmental provisioning services for a range of NTFPs. With respect to climate security, the Project will help reduce GHG emissions and enhance carbon stocks through improved co-management between government and local communities of protected areas and adjacent forested areas.

153. At the national level, the 2022 Liberia Food Security, Nutrition, Livelihoods and Markets Assessment estimated that nearly half (47%) of all Liberians were food insecure, with 39% moderately insecure and 8% severely insecure (World Food Program 2024). Forest protection and landscape management for habitat connectivity will maintain critical reservoirs of bushmeat supply that represents 75% of protein consumption in Liberia; climate-smart agriculture will provide more dependable supplies of food crops; and improved agriculture and sustainable agroforestry will increase household incomes that further contribute to improved food security.

Socio-economic benefits:

154. Building on the investments and capacity of prior projects in the NW Landscape, the co-management and economic alternatives training and capacity-building program to be deployed under

the Project will reach approximately 30,000 beneficiaries (14,000 women and 16,000 men). Socioeconomic benefits will differ by gender based on different gender roles in food production and income-generating practices. In general, by intervening in ecosystem degradation trends through the application of integrated landscape management and land-use planning, the Project will preserve the ability to continue activities essential for household food security as well as livelihoods. This will be achieved through training and support for sustainable cultivation practices, with some socio-economic benefits differing by gender based on different gender roles in food production and income-generating practices. In general, by intervening in ecosystem degradation trends through the application of integrated and inclusive landscape management and land-use planning, the Project will preserve the ability to continue activities essential for household food security as well as livelihoods. This will be achieved through training and support for sustainable cultivation practices as well as co-management strategies for existing and new protected areas and adjacent forest areas, including those in transboundary areas shared with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

155. The Project will contribute to rural development and natural resource governance through inclusive, participatory land- and resource-use planning. By engaging with local communities and other relevant stakeholders in planning processes, the Project will ensure that they have a voice in the design of sustainable resource extraction frameworks and benefit-sharing arrangements. Doing so will generate dual benefits of enhanced capacity and ownership at the local level. Through this process, communities will be empowered to negotiate future land and resource uses and help reduce power asymmetries between local people and other stakeholders.

F. Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts

☒ Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PROJECT CATEGORY	Category A	Category B	Category C
	X		
<i>The proposed project activities have the potential to cause adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, and irreversible.</i>			

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Financing Tables

I. GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Program Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total a+b
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	875,139	78,762	953,901
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	437,569	39,381	476,950
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	437,569	39,381	476,950
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	291,713	26,254	317,967
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	145,856	13,127	158,983
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	145,856	13,127	158,983
CI	GEF TF	Regional (Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone)	International Waters IP Contributions	International Waters IP Contributions	770,121	69,311	839,432
Total GEF Resources					3,103,823	279,343	3,383,166

II. Project preparation grant (PPG)

Was Project Preparation Grant requested? Yes ☒ No ☐ If no, skip item E.1.

PPG Amount requested by agency(ies), Trust Fund, country(ies) and the Programming of funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total a+b
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	42,293	3,806	46,099
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	21,147	1,903	23,050
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	21,147	1,903	23,050
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	14,097	1,268	15,365
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	7,049	634	7,683

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total a+b
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	7,049	634	7,683
CI	GEF TF	Regional (Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone)	International Waters IP Contributions	International Waters IP Contributions	37,218	3,350	40,568
Total PPG Amount					150,000	13,498	163,498

DOES THE PROJECT INCLUDE A “NON-GRANT” INSTRUMENT?

III. Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation

GFEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Source of Funds	Total
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	1,000,000
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000
CI	GEF TF	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	500,000
Total GEF Resources					2,000,000

IV. Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
		GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
CFB-Guinean Forests IP	GEF TF	3,103,823	15,094,863
Total Project Cost	GEF TF	3,103,823	15,094,863

V. Confirmed Sources of Co-financing for the project by name and by type

Please include evidence for each co-financing for the project with this form.

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
GEF Agency	Conservation International (CI)	In-Kind	Recurrent Expenditure	462,159
Recipient Country Government	Environmental Protection Agency	In-Kind	Recurrent Expenditure	6,000,000
CSO	Partners for Development (PADEV)	In-Kind	Recurrent Expenditure	94,704
CSO	Society for the Conservation of Nature Liberia (SCNL)	In-Kind	Recurrent Expenditure	1,000,000
CSO	The Nature Compact (TNC)	In-Kind	Recurrent Expenditure	38,000
Recipient Country Government	Forest Development Authority (FDA)	In-kind	Recurrent Expenditure	7,500,000
Total Co-financing				15,094,863

Describe how any “Investment Mobilized” was identified.

Not Applicable

ANNEX B: Project Results Framework

Objective:	To enhance ecosystem services and improve socioeconomic conditions in Northwest Liberia by promoting integrated and inclusive management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and supporting collaborative transboundary watershed management.
Indicator(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Area of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (GEF Core Indicator 1). Target: 373,912 Ha b. Area of landscapes under improved practices (GEF Core Indicator 4.1). Target: 89,174 Ha c. Metric Tons of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (GEF Core Indicator 6). Target: 33,683,289 million MtCO₂e, estimated d. Number of direct beneficiaries from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (GEF Core Indicator 11). Target: 30,020 (of which 40% are women) e. Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products (GEF Core Indicator 7.4): Target: Level 2

Expected Outcomes and Indicators	Project Baseline for Outcome Indicators	End of Project Target for Outcome Indicators	Expected Outputs, with Indicators and targets
Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas			
Outcome 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi) Indicator 1.1a: Number of hectares in Protected Areas with improved METT scores Indicator 1.1b: Number of hectares in Proposed Protected Areas (with completed gazettelement packages ²¹) that have improved METT scores	Baseline 1.1a: Insufficient capacity to manage the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) effectively. At the PPG Phase, the METT Score of the GFNP is 38 and this is provided in the Biodiversity Tracking Tool. Baseline 1.1b: The total area of the Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) is 275,937 ha of which 83,709 Ha Kpo Mountains PPA, 27,600 Ha Wonegezi Nature Reserve and 164,628 Ha Foya PPA. At the PPG Phase, the METT score of all the PPAs is Zero (0).	Target 1.1a: 97,975 ha (Gola FNP) areas with at least 60% improvement in METT Score (hence the target is reaching at least 61 METT score) Target 1.1b: At least 275,937 ha of the PPAs with completed gazettelement packages register at least a 30% improvement in METT Score (hence the target is reaching at least 30 METT score for each PPA)	Output 1.1.1: Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) updated and implemented. Indicator 1.1.1: Number of updated and implemented co-management plans for GFNP Target 1.1.1: One GFNP co-management plan updated and implemented Output 1.1.2: Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs). Indicator 1.1.2: Number of CLF processes completed and approved by the Liberia Land Authority for at least 2 PPAs Target 1.1.2: Two (2) CLF processes completed and approved by the Liberia Land Authority for

²¹ The project will result in the completion of gazettelement packages for the Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA. Although the gazettelement packages will be submitted to the competent authority (FDA), it is not deemed realistic for the entirety of the gazettelement process to be completed by the end of this project. That said, the project will explore opportunities to advance the process as much as possible.

			<p><i>at least two (2) PPAs (one each for Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi PPAs)</i></p> <p>Output 1.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3: <i>Number of completed gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi PPAs</i></p> <p>Target 1.1.3: <i>Two completed gazettelement packages (1 each for Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi PPAs)</i></p> <p>Output 1.1.4: Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.4: <i>Number of financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA</i></p> <p>Target 1.1.4: <i>Three updated or completed financing plans (1 each for Gola, Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi)</i></p> <p>Output 1.1.5: Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettelement of PAs, and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.5: <i>Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops delivered to government PA staff and local community members and number of participants (disaggregated by gender)</i></p> <p>Target 1.1.5: <i>At least 9 capacity-building workshops (3 workshops per PA: GFNP; Foya and Kpo Mountains; Wonegizi), with the participation of at least 600 (50% women)</i></p>
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			government PA staff and local community members in total
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises			
<p>Outcome 2.1: Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved</p> <p>Indicator 2.1a: Area of land outside protected areas under improved management</p> <p>Indicator 2.1 b: Number of people benefiting from the project and undertaking improved land-use practices</p>	<p>Baseline 2.1a: 0 ha of land outside protected areas under improved management</p> <p>Baseline 2.1b: 0 project beneficiaries</p>	<p>Target 2.1a: 89,174 ha of land outside protected areas under improved management</p> <p>Target 2.1b: 30,010 people (17,945 male, 12,065 female) benefiting from the project and undertaking improved land-use practices Target 2.1b: 30,020 people (17,950 male, 12,070 female) benefiting from the project and undertaking improved land-use practices</p>	<p>Output 2.1.1: Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs. Indicator 2.1.1: Number of land use plans developed and implemented around protected areas and PPAs Target 2.1.1: At least 3 land use plans developed at the clan level and implemented around the GFNP and PPAs (interventions covering an area of approximately 89,174 hectares)</p> <p>Output 2.1.2: Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods. Indicator 2.1.2: Number of gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed Target 2.1.2: At least 3 gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed (1 for each set of communities adjacent to each of the 3 PAs)</p> <p>Output 2.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs. Indicator 2.1.3: Number of community members at the household level benefiting from gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical support for sustainable livelihoods, disaggregated by gender.</p>

			<p>Target 2.1.3: At least 29,360 community members at the household level (at least 40% women) around the three PAs benefiting from gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical support for sustainable livelihoods.</p> <p>Output 2.1.4: Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises)</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.4: Number of new or existing SMEs that receive project support for development (and number of women-led enterprises)</p> <p>Target 2.1.4: At least 9 SMEs receive project support (at least 5 of which are women-led)</p> <p>Output 2.1.5: Access to financial services provided to conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations, and producers (with emphasis on access for women)</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.5: Number of SMEs, producer associations and producers with access to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)</p> <p>Target 2.1.5: At least 10 beneficiaries with access to financial services, of which 50% are women</p>
Component 3: Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management			
Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed	Baseline 3.1a: Coordination and institutional structures for governance of the Mano watershed are weak. The committees established under the Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management Project (GEF	<p>Target 3.1a: At least 1 strengthened institutional structure in place to facilitate joint transboundary management of the Mano Watershed</p> <p>Target 3.1b: At least 5 gender-responsive knowledge management</p>	Output 3.1.1: The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU

<p>Indicator 3.1a: Number of strengthened institutional structures in place to facilitate joint transboundary management of the Mano watershed (<i>leveraging the regional committee that was established by the Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management Project</i>)</p> <p>Indicator 3.1b: Level of engagement in IW: LEARN²² through participation and delivery of key products</p>	<p>ID: 4953) have not been operationalized and need to be revitalized and institutionalized to function effectively. In addition, there are capacity-building gaps with respect to gathering and synthesizing scientific, local and people science and mainstreaming it into decision-making processes</p> <p>Baseline 3.1b: Limited participation and delivery of key products on the IW: LEARN platform by Liberia</p>	<p>products shared on the IW platform²³ (at least 1 per year)</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1.1: Number of committees supported to undertake actions for joint cross-border natural resource management. Target 3.1.1: At least three (3) committees supported to undertake actions for joint cross-border natural resource management.</p> <p>Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built.</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.2: Number of trainings undertaken by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project on applied research to inform decision-making in watershed management. Target 3.1.2: At least 20 people trained (30% women) in three 3 trainings undertaken by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project on applied research to inform decision-making in watershed management.</p> <p>Output 3.1.3: Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented</p> <p>Indicator 3.1.3: Number of nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration. Target 3.1.3: At least two nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration</p>
Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing			

²² IW:LEARN Platform: <https://iwleart.n.net/>

²³ LEARN <https://iwleart.n.net/>

<p>Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.1: Number of initiatives at various levels coordinating and sharing with the Liberia Project</i></p>	<p>Baseline 4.1: Weak coordination, learning and sharing between projects and programs at various levels in the Northwest Liberia landscape and the Guinean Forest Biome as a whole</p>	<p>Outcome Target 4.1: Liberia project coordinating, learning and sharing with at least 2 initiatives in the Northwest Liberia landscape and at least 1 initiative in the broader Guinean Forest Biome (through the GFIP Regional Coordination Project led by CI and Birdlife)</p>	<p>Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects). <i>Indicator 4.1.1: Number of Knowledge Management and Communications Strategies developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)</i> Target 4.1.1: At least one Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects) developed and implemented.</p> <p>Output 4.1.2: Participation in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project 3-day Annual Forums. <i>Indicator 4.1.2: Number of Liberian participants in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife.</i> Target 4.1.2: At least 2 Liberia participants in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project Annual Forum (1 rep from the government of Liberia and 1 rep from the PMU, both sponsored by the project), [Total 10 participants (2 per year for 5 years, 50% female)]</p> <p>Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project). <i>Indicator 4.1.3: Number of Learning and Exposure Visits attended.</i> Target 4.1.3: At least 5 learning and exposure trips (1 trip per year, 2 representatives from the Government of Liberia per year), [Total 10 participants (2 people per year for 5 years), 50% women]; This output will also support</p>
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			<p><i>Liberia government officials to participate in peer exchange visits within the Gola Landscape, with a focus on learning visits to Sierra Leone (2 people per year for 5 years), 50% women]</i></p> <p>Output 4.1.4: Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)</p> <p>Indicator 4.1.4: Number of policy briefs, fact sheets and storytelling videos (integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects) prepared and disseminated by the end of the project.</p> <p>Target 4.1.4: At least 5 policy briefs, 5 fact sheets and 5 storytelling videos integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects prepared and disseminated by the end of the project</p>
Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework			
<p>Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project</p> <p>Indicator 5.1: Number of gender-sensitive M&E systems established and implemented for the project</p>	<p>Baseline 5.1: No M&E framework for the Project</p>	<p>Target 5.1: 5 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF.</p>	<p>Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.</p> <p>Indicator 5.1.1: Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency</p> <p>Target 5.1.1: 20 quarterly technical and financial reports; 2 Biodiversity Tracking tool (METT)</p> <p>Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies</p> <p>Indicator 5.1.2: Number of Mid-Term</p>

			<i>Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Reports.</i> Target 5.1.2: <i>One Mid-Term Evaluation and One Terminal Evaluation Report approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF</i>
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ANNEX C: Status of utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GEFTF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent to Date	Amount Committed
Professional Services Consultant - Project design and preparation	55,096.00	51,758.00	3,338.00
Personnel Staff for Project Design and Coordination	54,392.00	7,689.40	46,702.60
Travel, meetings and Workshops	40,512.00	1,838.89	38,673.11
Total	150,000.00	61,286.29	88,713.71

ANNEX D: Project Map and Coordinates*

Geo Name ID <i>Required field if the location is not an exact site</i>	Location Name <i>Required field</i>	Latitude <i>Required field</i>	Longitude <i>Required field</i>	Location Description <i>Optional text field</i>	Activity Description <i>Optional text field</i>
9645106	Foya Mountains	8.37031	-10.21993	Foya District	
9180459	Gola National Park	7.5	-10.91667	Grand Cape Mount County	
2275601	Kpo Mountains	7.36139	-10.085	Gbarpolu County	
2273847	Wonegizi Nature Conservation Unit	8.3333	-9.5833		

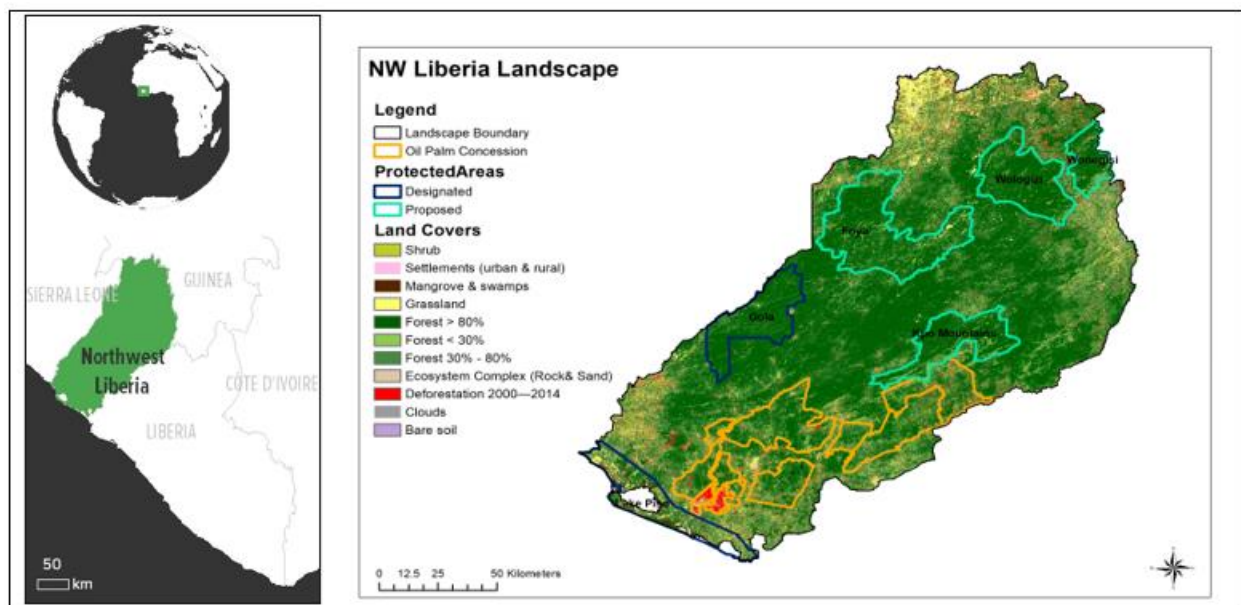


Figure 4: Map of the NorthWest Liberia Landscape (project area)

ANNEX E: Environmental and Social Safeguards Screening Report (including ESS Risk Categorization)

This section includes:

- a. **The Safeguards Screening Form**
- b. **The Safeguards Screening Analysis Report:** Outlines the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Categorization, safeguard triggered, and mitigation plans required.

Safeguards Screening Analysis Report

☐ Preliminary Screening (Conceptual Stage) ☒ **Second Screening** (Proposal Stage)

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Profile

Countries: Liberia	GEF Project ID:
Project Title: Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape	
Program: West Africa, Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biome (Integrated Program)	
Executing Agency (EA): Environmental Protection Agency, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)	
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Land Degradation, International Waters	
GEF Project Amount: USD\$3,546,664	
CI-GEF Project Manager: Charity Nalyanya	
ESS Analysis Performed by: Ian Kissoon, Senior Director of ESMF, CI-GCF/GEF Agencies	
Date of Analysis: June 24, 2024	

B. Summary of Project Risk Categorization, ESS Standards Triggered and Mitigation Plans Required

Summary of Project Category, ESS Standards Triggered and Mitigation Plans Required			
Project Category:	Category A	Category B	Category C
	X		
The proposed project activities have the potential to cause adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, and irreversible.			
ESS Standards Triggered:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental & Social Impact Assessment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Heritage	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protection of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> Labour and Working Conditions	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resett. & Physical/Economic Displacement		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Health, Safety and Security	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples		<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector Direct Investments and Financial Intermediaries	
<input type="checkbox"/> Resource Efficiency & Pollution Prevention		<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Risk and Related Disasters	
Mitigation Measures Required:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited or Full ESIA		<input type="checkbox"/> Resource Efficiency & Poll. Prevention Plan	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental & Social Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Heritage Management Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan for Natural Habitat Protection and Biodiversity Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour Management Procedures
<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Resettlement Action Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Health, Safety and Security Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Process Framework	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and Social Management Framework/System
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate and Disaster Risk Management Plan

C. Project Objective:

To enhance ecosystem services and improve socioeconomic conditions in Northwest Liberia by promoting integrated and inclusive management of intact forest landscapes, including protected areas, and supporting collaborative transboundary watershed management.

D. Project Description:

The proposed project will build on past and current investments in this critical forest landscape and contribute to gazettelement packages for proposed protected areas totaling 275,937 ha including the Foya and Kpo Mountains Protected Area and the Wonegizi Nature Reserve and update the management plan for the Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha), both within the context of wider landscape-level land use planning. An additional 89,174 ha of forest adjacent to Gola and the proposed protected areas will be under improved management by local communities, combining sustainable livelihood, maintenance of forest connectivity and generating socioeconomic benefits for about 30,020 people (at least 40% women). The management plans will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory, inclusive land-use planning and to develop effective economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems. These Outcomes will be reinforced through transboundary linkages in watershed management planning and activities, in close coordination with GFIP Country Child Projects in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

To achieve the above, the project is organized under the following components:

Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas

Outcome 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)

Output 1.1.1: Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park updated and implemented.

Output 1.1.2: Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs).

Output 1.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.

Output 1.1.4: Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA

Output 1.1.5: Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettelement of PAs, and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities.

Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises

Outcome 2.1: Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved

Output 2.1.1: Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs.

Output 2.1.2: Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods.

Output 2.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.

Output 2.1.4: Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises)

Output 2.1.5: SMEs, producer associations and producers with access to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)

Component 3: Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management

Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed

Output 3.1.1: The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU.

Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built.

Output 3.1.3: Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented.

Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing.

Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)

Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)

Output 4.1.2: Participation in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project 3-day Annual Forums.

Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project).

Output 4.1.4: Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)

Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the Project

Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies

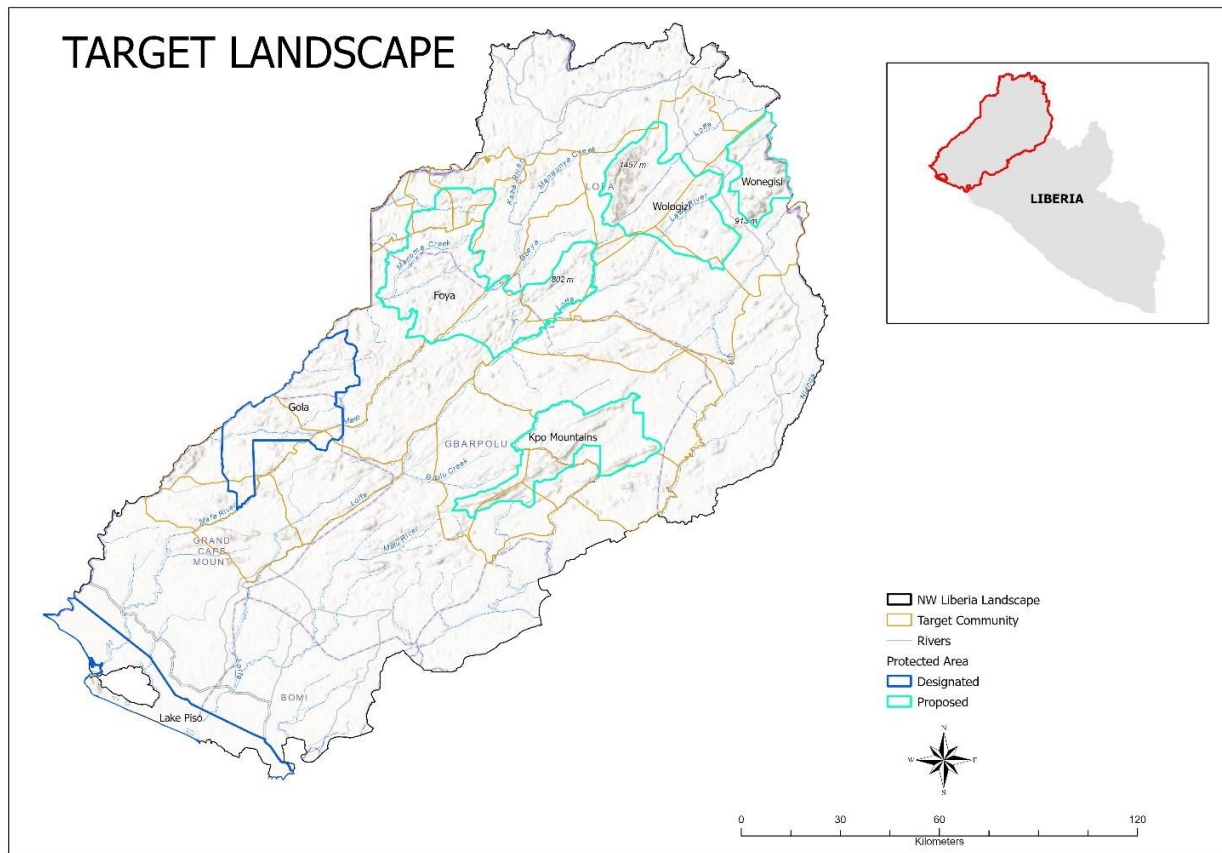
E. Project location, biophysical and socio-economic characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis:

The project will be implemented in NW Liberia, a roughly 2.7 million ha area, in Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Bong counties. The landscape that contains existing and proposed

protected areas. The existing protected areas are Gola Forest National Park and Lake Piso Multiple Use Protected Area, totaling 198,000 ha. The proposed protected areas are: Kpo Mountains; Bong Mountain; Wonegizi; Wologizi; and Foya, totaling 395,950 ha. Gola Forest National Park is part of a transboundary conservation complex extending westward into Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park, and Wonegizi is part of a transboundary forest complex with the Guinean Ziama Biosphere Reserve.

These proposed protected areas have been set aside since 1954 as conservation areas that could be turned into government protected areas (national forests). These areas are well-known nationally and by the people in surrounding areas. SCNL led national consultations for Foya and Kpo gazettement and obtained letters of consent from communities, and FF did similar in Wonegizi. So far there have not been any long-term conflicts in the areas. The Liberian Land Authority's Field Manual for Systematic Registration of Customary Land outlines procedures to follow if there are disputes that arise during the process. For example: "If there is disagreement regarding the entire boundary or a portion of the boundary, said disputed portion shall be documented as disputed boundary. If all efforts to resolve such dispute proves unsuccessful, the community leaders or CLDMC shall forward the matter to the LLA for either arbitration or mediation intervention." and "If disagreements arise on the boundary during boundary clearing or confirmatory survey, the cutting of the boundary line or the survey itself shall stop and the issue should be presented to the established dispute resolution entity, whether that is traditional authorities or a CLDMC sub-committee, for resolution. If the dispute cannot be resolved by the authorized dispute resolution entity, the LLA and local government may be brought in to help resolve the issue. If the community is receiving support through the LLA or a donor, a Grievance Redress Mechanism may be established at the community and county level."

The NW Landscape is one of the three largest in-tact forest blocs in the Upper Guinean Forest, holding two largely intact forest blocs that together account for nearly 40% of the remaining Upper Guinean Forests. The NW Landscape hosts a wide variety of habitats, from mangroves along the coastal areas, rainforests in the plains and inter-mountainous areas and deciduous forests found at higher elevations.



The Guinean Forests of West Africa is a global biodiversity hotspot, which features some of the highest biological diversity in all of Africa. It contains some of the last remnants of the Western Guinean Lowland forest ecoregion, recognized as one of the “Global 200” most outstanding and representative areas of biodiversity. The landscape is also an Endemic Bird Area (home to four of Liberia’s nine Important Bird Areas (IBAs)) and a Center of Plant Diversity and contains several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), which are sites contributing significantly to the persistence of global biodiversity. These include sites prioritized for their importance as habitat for endangered endemic genera and species.

The immediate threats to the Northwest Liberia landscape include land use change arising from deforestation in the form of expansion of commercial plantations (oil palm, cocoa) into intact forest and continued agricultural expansion by communities relying on shifting cultivation, as well as related extractive livelihoods, such as charcoal production, artisanal mining and bushmeat hunting. About 75% of animal protein consumed in Liberia consists of bushmeat, and over 95% of Liberia’s urban population uses charcoal. Industrial scale mining and logging are not yet prevalent in the area, but exploration is going on and companies that abandoned the area during the civil wars are starting to come back. Further, invasive elephant grass is expanding southwards, prohibiting forest regrowth and traditional agricultural practices. The primary driver behind these threats is a dire need for economic development at national and local levels, combined with limited governance capacity and an absence of land use planning, the desperate need for livelihoods and food security are driving unplanned and destructive development and land conversion, responding to short-term needs at the expense of long-term sustainability.

According to the 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey conducted by Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, the poverty levels in NW Liberia landscape is as follows:

- a) Average absolute poverty is 61.80%;
- b) Average food poverty is 44.60%; and
- c) Extreme poverty is 22.10%

Although average unemployment in the landscape is low (1.4%), 94.4% of the Landscape's workforce is considered 'working poor' as they live on less than \$USD 2.00 a day. Also, 84.4% of the average labour force is in the formal sector; and 85.25% on average are in vulnerable employment.

Socially, the people in NW Liberia landscape belong to secret societies such as the 'Poro' and 'Sande'. Poro is an all-male institution that imparts knowledge about the culture, traditions, and customs of the society. The Poro is both a political and religious organization as well as a no-appeal court system for the tribe. While the Sande is an all-female, institution giving instruction to young women in the customs and traditions of the community, the role of women in society and their rights, duties, and responsibilities.

Culturally, Local institutions in NW Liberia landscape are ruled by clan chiefs, paramount chiefs, and district commissioners. Each village belongs to a Chiefdom and to a District and has a Paramount Chief and a Commissioner appointed by the President. The Clan Chief is selected by Paramount Chief, while the General Town Chief is selected either by the Commissioner or the Paramount Chief. Town Chiefs are selected (or elected) by the community. In NW Liberia landscape, there are a total of 79 clans and 23 districts.

Local judges solve local problems, and the clan or town would protect their immediate surroundings, e.g., shrines, access roads, forests, and other sanctuaries. They also hold meetings to discuss issues of importance to the area. Over 60% of the population in NW Liberia landscape use the forest as a sacred place and sees it as a place for wildlife and biodiversity.

In NW Liberia landscape, there are taboos that are in three categories. Those observed by individuals within the tribe as a condition resulting from intermarriage; those sanctioned by the community; and those observed by members of extended families and clans. Some taboos prohibit particular clans from eating certain fauna and flora. A clan taboo is observed by all its members. Other taboos prohibit hunting in places regarded as abodes of ancestors and or evil spirits. Another kind of taboo prohibits fishing in certain bodies of water in which the fish are considered humans in fish form waiting to be conceived by barren women. Taboos are enforced by institutions such as the Poro and Sande societies, as well as by heads of extended families or clans.

In Liberia, men and women have clear gender divisions that determine how natural resources are utilized at the household and community levels. Women in rural settings in NW Liberia landscape are often highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and are therefore particularly susceptible to changes in the availability and quality of these resources. Despite their reliance on natural resources, women have less access to and control over natural resources than men. Due to structural injustice, social norms and traditions, women have limited access to land even though the farmers often are women. Usually, it is men who put land, water, plants, and animals to commercial use, which is often more valued than women's domestic uses.

According to HRW 2016, domestic violence, rape, and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, including practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage remained widespread in NW Liberia landscape. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is not only prevalent in NW Liberia landscape; it is accepted as an integral part of gender relations (UN/GoL 2014 Report). This perception was exacerbated during the conflict period, as rape was used as a weapon of war driven by unequal gender relations. Reports between 2014-2016 from the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) indicate a general acceptance of the most common types of sexual and gender-based violence. To address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the Government of Liberia has ratified international and regional instruments such as the Convention of Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls (1979) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its protocol on the rights of women in Africa, and the development of the 2006 National Action Plan to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. To this end, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection developed a referral pathway system for reporting and addressing SGBV issues. However, the effectiveness of the system is limited, particularly in rural areas due to: inadequate personnel and other resources for local ministries, police, health centers and courts; deeply-entrenched traditional practices and social barriers; the weakness of the justice system; and lack of knowledge on protection and services available to victims. Furthermore, there has been a lack of coordination among the ministries concerned in developing policy and planning frameworks and in their implementation.

There were some political tensions visible during the recent election period. Pre-election violence resulted in 2 official deaths, one in Montserrado and the other in Lofa. Those cases were investigated by the government and the perpetrators were arrested and sentenced. The 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections in Liberia took place mostly in urban, densely populated areas, including counties like Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado. The tightly contested national election and run-off presidential election were otherwise largely peaceful and resulted in a peaceful transition of power.

F. Executing Agency (EA)'s Institutional Capacity to Implement ESMF:

SCNL has safeguarding measures such as gender and safeguarding policies, a safeguarding commitment statement and reminder posters displayed at its various offices (including the field offices). They also have in place refresher training for staff and new employees on safeguarding. SCNL conducts screening on environmental and social safeguards as well as stakeholder engagement to identify and mitigate potential risks from projects on local communities and biodiversity, and develops mitigation measures to address identified risks and ensure compliance with relevant laws and standards. For example, the law calls for ESIA to be done before any Protected Area can be established.

Under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), all of SCNL's project implementation activities followed the World Bank Safeguarding Standards, following rigorous training from the World Bank. During the Liberia Forest Sector Project, SCNL and partners also developed the national Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) strategy. SCNL has been working in the project areas for years and uses FPIC for consultations with local communities from the project design phase to implementation. SCNL led national consultations for Foya and Kpo gazettement and obtained letters of consent from communities, prior to development of the new requirements for Customary Land Formalization. SCNL is very familiar with the communities in the Gola Forest Landscape, and used the Community Rights Law of 2009 as a guide to ensure that all nine steps required for establishing community forests are followed. SCNL's experience with safeguards is also evidenced through its work on the GEF-funded FOLUR project.

SCNL mainstreams gender in all of its projects. The SCNL data system for beneficiaries is disaggregated by gender, and there is a standalone gender program (Village Savings Loan Association) that targets only women beneficiaries.

SCNL has one (1) full-time Gender and Safeguard Officer based in the Monrovia office. The Gender and Safeguard Officer was recruited under the CI-GEF FOLUR project, and has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and an extensive experience in Gender and Safeguarding issues. She is an expert with over five years of professional experience in gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. She has been trained in Gender mainstreaming and safeguarding, and recently completed a certificate course from the Perk Group in Nairobi, Kenya. There are 17 community mobilization officers spread across three counties in the Greater Gola Landscape (Lofa, Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties) under various projects, who are involved in stakeholder engagement with communities.

The Executive Director and Program Manager are seasoned experts trained in stakeholder engagement and World Bank Safeguarding standards, with over 20 years of professional experience with local communities. All project coordinators are also involved in stakeholder engagement activities. SCNL staff and management received training from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

II. ESS STANDARDS TRIGGERED BY THE PROJECT

Based on the information provided in the ESS Screening Form, the following ESS Standards have been triggered:

ESS Standard	Yes	No	TBD	Justification
1. Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)	X			<i>The project will support Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes for the proposed protected areas (PPAs) and gazettment packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA (Component 1). The EA has experience in CLF processes from previous projects. Nevertheless, there are recently adopted comprehensive legal requirements and processes established by the Liberia Land Authority on customary land rights formalization that will need to be followed by the project.</i>
2. Protection of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation	X			<i>The project will take place in Natural/Critical Habitats, and the promotion of innovative livelihoods and enterprises could impact these habitats (Component 2).</i>
3. Resettlement and Physical and Economic Displacement	X			<i>While the project will not involve resettlement, the updated co-management plan and the community land use plans could lead to limitations on access to natural resources.</i>
4. Indigenous Peoples	X			<i>The project intends to work in lands or territories traditionally owned, customarily used, or occupied by traditional peoples and/or local communities.</i>
5. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention		X		<i>There are no proposed activities related to the use of banned, restricted or prohibited substances, chemicals or hazardous materials.</i>

6. Cultural Heritage	X			<i>Activities related to protected area creation and land use planning may be in areas with cultural heritage resources.</i>
7. Labour and Working Conditions		X		<i>SCNL indicated that it has policies, procedures, systems, and capabilities to ensure compliance with ESS7.</i>
8. Community Health, Safety and Security		X		<i>CHSS risks have been identified and assessed to be Low and these risks include accidental and natural hazards, conflicts, disease outbreaks and GBV/SEAH. However, International SOS has assessed Liberia to be Medium for security risks. These risks include political violence, social unrest and petty crimes.</i>
9. Private Sector Direct Investments and FIs		X		<i>The project is not expected to make any direct investments in private sector firms or endowment funds, or channel funds through financial intermediaries.</i>
10. Climate Risk and Related Disasters		X		<i>The project will be implemented in the NW Liberian Landscape, a region comprised of five counties: Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu Grand Cape Mount and Lofa. All five counties rank high with regards to river flood and wildfire hazards occurring over the next ten years, with Bong and Lofa also ranking high for urban floods. Extreme heat is also a medium level hazard shared by all five counties. Flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat could disrupt some project activities in the field, for example by preventing travel to sites by project staff or obstructing community meetings or training sessions. In such instances, the project will shift planned activities to other project locations until the issue is resolved. Severe flooding or wildfire could impact sustainable livelihood investments, such as agriculture or NTFPs. These types of natural calamities also could affect land use options, such that land use planning outputs would need to be revisited.</i>

Note: Other ESS Standards may be triggered at any time during the project cycle.

III. PROJECT CATEGORIZATION

Based on the ESS Standards triggered, the project is categorized as follows:

PROJECT CATEGORY	Category A	Category B	Category C
	X		
<i>The proposed project activities have the potential to cause adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, and irreversible.</i>			

IV. MANAGEMENT OF ESS STANDARDS TRIGGERED

ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4 and ESS6

Since projects in Category A are likely to have significant adverse impacts, the project is required to carry out a full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to address them, particularly the ESS Standards triggered by this project. The ESIA for a Category A project examines the project's potential negative and positive environmental and social impacts, compares them with those of feasible alternatives (including the business as usual scenario), and recommends any measures needed to prevent, minimize, mitigate, or offset for adverse impacts and improve environmental and social performance via an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). For a Category A project, the EA is responsible for making arrangements to carry out the ESIA and prepare the ESMP, including holding consultations with stakeholders to garner their inputs on the process and deliverables.

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum indicators:

- 1. Percentage of the ESMP/mitigation activities implemented to avoid/mitigate unintentional negative impacts.*
- 2. Number of hectares of natural and/or critical natural habitats negatively impacted by the project.*
- 3. Percentage of indigenous/traditional communities where FPIC has been sought and documented.*
- 4. Number of Indigenous/traditional communities present in the project sites that participated in the project. Number of persons economically displaced in a voluntary way.*
- 5. Number of persons compensated for voluntary economical displacement.*
- 6. Number of cultural resources, both tangible and intangible, identified and preserved in the project area.*

Other Plans

Apart from the ESS Policy, the project will be required to comply with the CI-GEF/GCF's Accountability and Grievance Policy, Gender Policy, and Stakeholder Engagement Policy by preparing and submitting for review and approval to the CI-GEF/GCF during the project development stage, the following plans:

I. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

To ensure that the project meets CI-GEF Project Agency's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism Policy, the EA is required to develop an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (template provided) that will ensure people affected by the project are able to bring their grievances to the EA for consideration and redress. The mechanism must be gender-sensitive, in place before the start of project activities, and disclosed to all stakeholders in a language, manner and means that best suits the local context.

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum accountability and grievance indicators:

- 1. Number of times/events the AGM is disclosed to project stakeholders; and*
- 2. Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been addressed.*

II. Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP)

The GMP (template provided) should include a gender analysis including the role of men and women in decision-making, and appropriate interventions with gender-related outcomes to ensure that men and women have equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the project.

Further, the project should examine the extent of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (SEAH), the likelihood of project activities contributing/exacerbating GBV and SEAH, and proposed mitigation measures as needed.

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum gender indicators:

- 1. Number of men and women that participated in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations);*
- 2. Number of men and women that received benefits (e.g. employment, income generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project; and if relevant*
- 3. Number of strategies, plans (e.g. management plans and land use plans) and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations.*

III. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

To ensure that the project complies with the CI-GEF/GCF's Stakeholders' Engagement Policy, the EA is required to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (template provided).

In addition, the EA is required to monitor and report on the following minimum stakeholder engagement indicators:

- a. Number of government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector, indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups engaged in the project implementation phase;*
- b. Number persons (sex disaggregated) engaged in project implementation phase; and*
- c. Number of engagement (e.g. meeting, workshops, consultations) with stakeholders during the project implementation phase*

V. DISCLOSURE

Following approval of the plans, the EA must disclose the plans to stakeholders no later than 30 days from date of approval.

The Safeguards Screening Form

- ☐ **Preliminary Screening** (check if performed at GEF Project Identification Form (PIF) Stage or GCF Concept Note (CN) Stage) ☒ **Secondary Screening** (check if performed at GEF Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Stage or GCF Funding Proposal Development Stage)

Guidance Notes

1. This Safeguard Screening Form is guided by the CI-GEF/GCF Project Agency's Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards, which forms part of the CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).
2. The CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency undertakes environmental and social safeguard screening for every project to determine the risk categorization for the project, the safeguard standards triggered by the project, and the mitigation measures to be implemented by the project.
3. Safeguard screenings are performed at (i) PIF/CN stage (Preliminary Screening) using the finalized versions of the PIF/CN; and (ii) PPG/PPF stage (Secondary Screening) using the project document when details of activities, project intervention areas and executing arrangements, among others, have been finalized. Additional screenings may be performed at any time when significant changes have emerged including but not limited to new proposed activities, changes in local/national context of project intervention areas, and where environmental and social risks have increased.
4. The CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency classifies the project into one of three categories, depending on the type, location, sensitivity and scale of the project and the nature and magnitude of its potential environmental and social impacts. The descriptions of the categories and lists of types of projects identified in Appendix II of the CI-GCF/GEF ESMF. These descriptions are meant to serve as guidance and are not exhaustive.
5. The CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency does not fund projects that involve the construction or rehabilitation of large or complex dams, and resettlement of people. The CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency cannot support projects that contradict CI's mission and policies.
6. The Executing Agency/Entity is responsible for fully completing and providing accurate responses to each question in this Screening Form, and to submit the completed Form to CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency in a timely manner.
7. The CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency is responsible ensuring that the project complies with the CI-GCF/GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguard, and will use the completed Screening Form to determine the mitigation measures for the Executing Agency/Entity to implement.
8. In addition to preparing and implementing mitigation measures for the environmental and social standards triggered, the Executing Agency/Entity will also need to comply with CI-GEF/GCF's policies on gender, stakeholder engagement and accountability and grievance mechanism. As such the Executing Agency/Entity will be required to prepare a Gender Mainstreaming Plan, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (see to ESMF for details).
9. The Executing Agency/Entity is responsible for informing the CI-GCF/GEF Project Agency in a timely manner, if at any time during the preparation and implementation of the project, the information provided in this Screening Form changes in a way that results in the risks of the project being increased.
10. For additional information/clarification, please contact Ian Kissoon, Director of ESMF, CI-GEF/GCF Project Agency at ikissoon@conservation.org or your GEF/GCF Project Manager.

I. PROJECT INFORMATION		
GCF/GEF Project ID:	Country: Liberia	
Project Title: Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia’s Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
Name of the Executing Agency/Entity: Liberia Environmental Protection Agency, Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia		
Length of Project: 62 months	Anticipated Start date: January 2025	Anticipated End date: February 2030
GCF Results Area(s) / GEF Focal Area(s): Biodiversity, Climate Change, Land Degradation, International Waters		
GCF/GEF Project Amount: USD	Co-Financing Amount: USD	
Project Objectives: Forest Landscapes in Northwest Liberia deliver ecosystem services and support socioeconomic improvement through enhanced co-management of protected areas and joint transboundary watershed management		
Project Components and Main Activities Proposed for the Liberian Child Project:		
Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas		
<u>Outcome 1.1:</u> Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)		
<u>Output 1.1.1:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park updated and implemented.		
<u>Output 1.1.2:</u> Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs).		
<u>Output 1.1.3:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.		
<u>Output 1.1.4:</u> Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA		
<u>Output 1.1.5:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettelement of PAs, and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities.		
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises		
<u>Outcome 2.1:</u> Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved.		
<u>Output 2.1.1:</u> Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs.		
<u>Output 2.1.2:</u> Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods.		
<u>Output 2.1.3:</u> Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.		
<u>Output 2.1.4:</u> Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises)		
<u>Output 2.1.5:</u> Number of SMEs, producer associations and producers with access to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)		
Component 3: Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management		

Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano Watershed

Output 3.1.1: The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU.

Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built.

Output 3.1.3: Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented.

Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing.

Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)

Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)

Output 4.1.2: Participation in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project 3-day Annual Forums.

Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project).

Output 4.1.4: Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)

Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the Project

Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.

Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies

Safeguard Screening Form Completed by: Heidi Gjertsen, EcoAdvisors

Date of Submission/Resubmission of Completed Form to CI-GEF/GEF: May 8, 2024

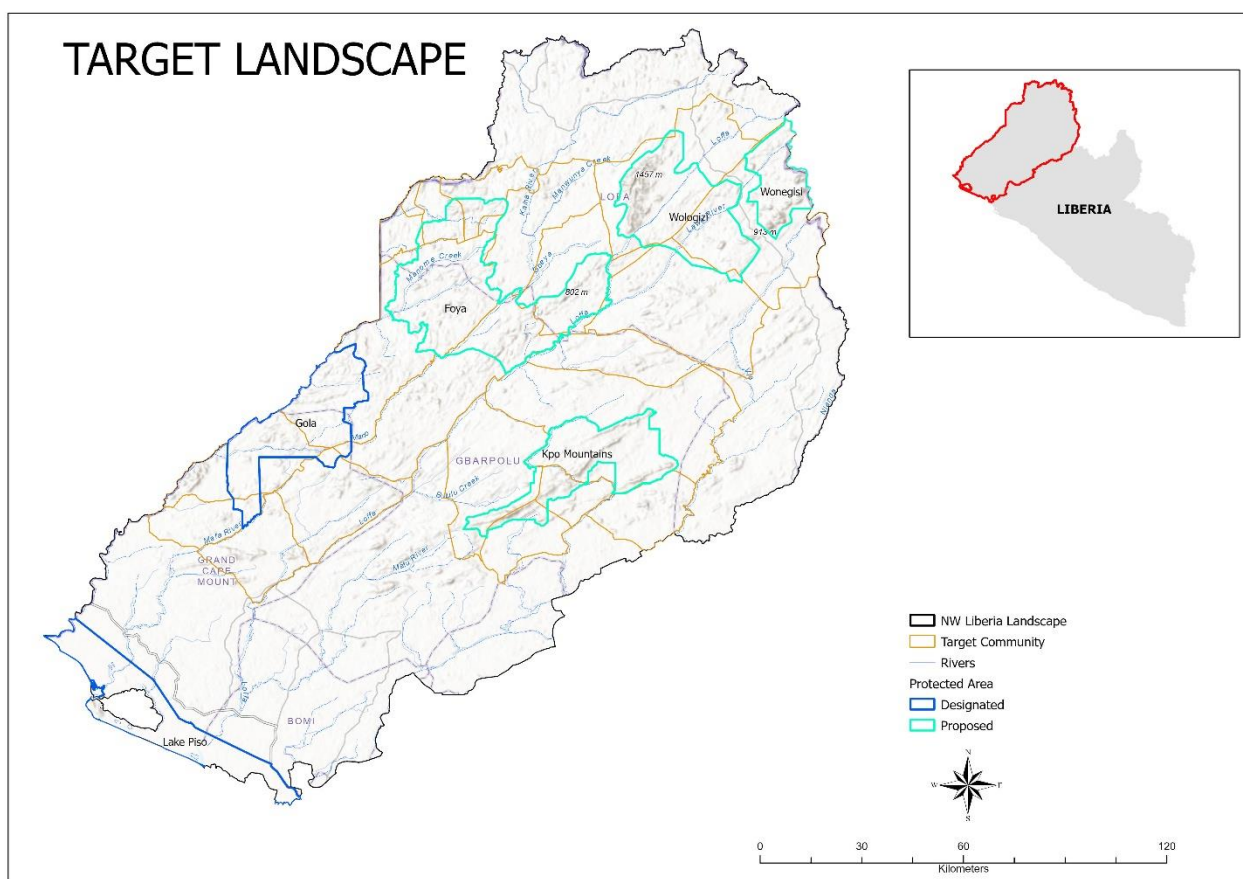
CI-GEF/GCF Comments:

II. PROJECT CONTEXT

Project Location

The proposed project will focus on the Northwest (NW) Liberia Landscape (located between 11.5° 0' 0''W 9.8° 0' 0''W and 9° 0' 0''N 6° 0' 0''N.), a roughly 2.7 million ha area, in Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Bong counties. The NW Landscape is one of the three largest in-tact forest blocs in the Upper Guinean Forest, holding two largely intact forest blocs that together account for nearly 40% of the remaining Upper Guinean Forests (FAO 2014). The NW Landscape hosts a wide variety of habitats, from mangroves along the coastal areas, rainforests in the plains and inter-mountainous areas and deciduous forests found at higher elevations. The climate is tropical, with temperatures averaging 27 °C and annual rainfall averaging between 3,500-4,600 mm (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Northwest Liberia Landscape



Biological Context of Project Area

The NW Liberia Landscape consistently ranks as one of the region's and world's most important areas for biodiversity. It has been designated as one of World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) "Global 200" areas of outstanding and representative biodiversity, an Endemic Bird Area and a Center of Plant Diversity (Olson et al. 2001). It houses four of the country's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) found within its borders, including Lake Piso, the Lofa-Mano-Gola Complex, Kpelle Forest, and the Wologizi and Wonegizi Mountains (BirdLife 2023). The landscape's intactness and high levels of biomass also makes it a potentially important carbon sink, with some estimates showing its forests may have some of the world's highest per-hectare densities of biomass carbon (Polinni et al. 2018). NW

Liberia landscape contains existing and proposed protected areas. The existing protected areas are Gola Forest National Park and Lake Piso Multiple Use Protected Area, totaling 198,000 ha. The proposed protected areas are: Kpo Mountains; Bong Mountain; Wonegizi; Wologizi; and Foya, totaling 395,950 ha. Gola Forest National Park is part of a transboundary conservation complex extending westward into Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park, and Wonegizi is part of a transboundary forest complex with the Guinean Ziama Biosphere Reserve.

A relatively large number of Red List Endangered endemic species are found in the landscape, including western chimpanzee, (*Pan troglodytes verus*), pygmy hippopotamus (*Hexaprotodon liberiensis*), and forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*). Threatened and Vulnerable Red List species found in the Landscape include Diana monkey (*Cercopithecus Diana*), West African red colobus (*Procolobus badius*), Jentik's duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*), the Nimba flycatcher (*Melaenornis annamarulae*) and the white-necked rock fowl (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) (IUCN 2023). The NW Landscape is a particularly important area for primates, with over 90% of the 30 primate species found there being endemic, and its flora is also diverse and shows high levels endemism, with 1,800 of approximately 9,000 species of vascular plants being endemic (Mittermeier et al 2004; Oates 2011).

IUCN REDLISTED SPECIES IN NW LIBERIA LANDSCAPE		
Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Threat Category
Mammals		
Western Chimpanzee	<i>Pan troglodytes</i>	CR
Western Red Colobus	<i>Piliocolobus badius</i>	EN
Pygmy Hippopotamus	<i>Choeropsis liberiensis</i>	EN
Jentink's duiker	<i>Cephalophus jentinki</i>	EN
Ziama Horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus ziama</i>	EN
Western Pied Colobus	<i>Colobus polykomos</i>	VU
Diana Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus diana</i>	VU
Golden Cat	<i>Caracal (Profelis) aurata</i>	VU
Bourlon's Genet	<i>Genetta bourloni</i>	VU
West African Oyan	<i>Poiana leightoni</i>	VU
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	VU
Long-tailed (Black-bellied) Pangolin	<i>Uromanis tetradactyla</i>	VU
White-bellied Pangolin	<i>Phataginus tricuspis</i>	VU
Giant Ground Pangolin	<i>Smutsia gigantea</i>	VU
African Forest Elephant	<i>Loxodonta cyclotis</i>	VU
Zebra duiker	<i>Cephalophus zebra</i>	VU
Brooke's duiker (Ogilby's duiker)	<i>Cephalophus ogilbyi brookei</i>	VU
Liberian mongoose	<i>Liberiictus kuhni</i>	VU
Aellen's Roundleaf Bat	<i>Hipposideros marisae</i>	VU
Guinean horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus guineensis</i>	VU
Olive Colobus	<i>Procolobus verus</i>	NT

Sooty Mangabey	<i>Cercocebus atys</i>	NT
Yellow-backed duiker	<i>Cephalophus silvicultor</i>	NT
Bongo	<i>Tragelaphus eurycerus</i>	NT
Bay Duiker	<i>Cephalophus dorsalis</i>	NT
Buettikofer's Shrew	<i>Crocidura buettikoferi</i>	NT
Large-headed Forest Shrew	<i>Crocidura grandiceps</i>	NT
African Straw-coloured Fruit-bat	<i>Eidolon helvum</i>	NT
Johnston's Genet	<i>Genetta johnstoni</i>	NT
Jones' Roundleaf Bat	<i>Hipposideros jonesi</i>	NT
Spotted-necked Otter	<i>Hydrictis maculicollis</i>	NT
Schreiber's Bent-winged Bat	<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	NT
Birds		
Gola Malimbe	<i>Malimbus ballmanni</i>	EN
Timneh Grey Parrot	<i>Psittacus timneh</i>	EN
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes cylindricus</i>	VU
Yellow-casqued Hornbill	<i>Ceratogymna elata</i>	VU
Rufous Fishing Owl	<i>Scotopelia ussheri</i>	VU
Western Wattled Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Lobotos lobatus</i>	VU
White-breasted Guineafowl	<i>Agelastes meleagrides</i>	VU
White-necked Picathartes	<i>Picathartes gymnocephalus</i>	VU
Yellow-bearded Greenbul	<i>Criniger olivaceus</i>	VU
Nimba Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis annamarulae</i>	VU
Sierra Leone Prinia	<i>Schistolais leontica</i>	VU
Green-tailed Bristlebill	<i>Bleda eximius</i>	NT
Shelley's Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo shelleyi</i>	NT
Copper-tailed Starling	<i>Hylopsar cupreocauda</i>	NT
Rufous-winged Illadopsis	<i>Illadopsis rufescens</i>	NT
Lagden's Bush-shrike	<i>Malaconotus lagdeni</i>	NT
Blue-moustached Bee-eater	<i>Merops mentalis</i>	NT
Reptiles		
Slender-snouted crocodile	<i>Mecistops (Crocodylus) cataphractus</i>	CR
Home's Hinge-Back Tortoise	<i>Kinixys homeana</i>	VU
African Dwarf Crocodile	<i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i>	VU
Amphibians		

Ringed river frog	<i>Phrynobatrachus annulatus</i>	EN
Yapo River frog	<i>Phrynobatrachus villiersi</i>	VU
Allen's slippery frog	<i>Conraua alleni</i>	VU
African giant toad	<i>Amietophrynus superciliars chevalieri</i>	
Sierra Leone reed frog	<i>Hyperolius chlorosteus</i>	NT
Wermuth's reed frog	<i>Hyperolius wermuthi</i>	NT
Chochran's running frog	<i>Kassina cochranæ</i>	NT
Big-eyed forest treefrog	<i>Leptopelis macrotis</i>	NT
Tai Forest treefrog	<i>Leptopelis occidentalis</i>	NT

The forests of Northwest Liberia are characterized by deciduous forests in the more mountainous areas and rainforest in the inland hills and plains, extending down to evergreen coastal regions with areas of mangrove. These forests contain high carbon stock and high conservation value sites, as well as extensive habitat and natural resources that provide vital ecosystem services including provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural that are essential for many species and livelihoods for local communities.

The immediate threats to the Northwest Liberia landscape include land use change arising from deforestation in the form of expansion of commercial plantations (oil palm, cocoa) into intact forest and continued agricultural expansion by communities relying on shifting cultivation, as well as related extractive livelihoods, such as charcoal production, artisanal mining and bushmeat hunting. About 75% of animal protein consumed in Liberia consists of bushmeat, and over 95% of Liberia's urban population uses charcoal (Hoyt, 2004; USAID, 2009). Industrial scale mining and logging are not yet prevalent in the area, but exploration is going on and companies that abandoned the area during the civil wars are starting to come back. Further, invasive elephant grass is expanding southwards, prohibiting forest regrowth and traditional agricultural practices.

Mangrove ecosystems in NW Liberia landscape are threatened by: (i) overexploitation of demersal fish species and other species (e.g. sea turtles), (ii) beach sand mining, (iii) beach erosion, (iv) population growth, (v) poor waste disposal and management, (vi) infrastructure development, (vii) unsustainable mangrove harvesting for fuel-wood for cooking and smoking fish, and (viii) beach and sand mining.

The primary driver behind these threats is a dire need for economic development at national and local levels, combined with limited governance capacity and an absence of land use planning, the desperate need for livelihoods and food security are driving unplanned and destructive development and land conversion, responding to short-term needs at the expense of long-term sustainability

Socio-economic Context of Project Area

Currently, an estimated 149,305 (75,425 men and 73,880 women,) as per the Liberia National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2016) live around the project area of interest, of which the project will target approximately 20% of the total area. Like many rural communities in Liberia, these inhabitants rely heavily on locally available natural resources, notably bushmeat as a source of protein and charcoal for fuel, and engage in shifting cultivation; however, they also rely on forest conservation and management for their livelihoods. Many are co-managers of adjacent PAs and Community Forests and have played a key role in past and current land-use planning efforts. Moreover, as guaranteed by the 2018 Land Rights Act, which recognizes customary land tenure, these communities now have legal recognition of their lands (Liberia EPA 2023). Additional measures to safeguard and empower communities include the EPA and FDA's guidance on Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) for economic activities, such as logging, taking place on

community land, and the development of environmental and social information systems to support critical activities, such as land-use planning.

On average, the literacy rate in NW Liberia landscape is 48.93%. According to the 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey conducted by Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), average absolute poverty is 61.80% and extreme poverty is 22.10%. Although average unemployment in the landscape is low (1.4%), 94.4% of the Landscape's workforce is considered 'working poor' as they live on less than \$USD 2.00 a day. Also, 84.4% of the average labor force is in the formal sector; and 85.25% on average are in vulnerable employment.

Local institutions in NW Liberia landscape are ruled by Clan Chiefs, Paramount Chiefs, and District Commissioners. Each village belongs to a Chiefdom and to a District, and has a Paramount Chief and a Commissioner appointed by the President. The Clan Chief is selected by Paramount Chief, while the General Town Chief is selected either by the Commissioner or the Paramount Chief. Town Chiefs are selected (or elected) by the community. In NW Liberia landscape, there are a total of 79 Clans and 23 Districts. Local judges solve local problems, and the Clan or town would protect their immediate surroundings, e.g., shrines, access roads, forests, and other sanctuaries. They also hold meetings to discuss issues of importance to the area. People in NW Liberia landscape also belong to secret societies such as the 'Poro' and 'Sande'. Poro is an all-male institution that imparts knowledge about the culture, traditions, and customs of the society. The Poro is both a political and religious organization as well as a no-appeal court system for the tribe. The Sande is an all-female institution giving instruction to young women in the customs and traditions of the community, the role of women in society, and their rights, duties, and responsibilities.

In NW Liberia landscape, there are three categories of taboos: those observed by individuals within the tribe as a condition resulting from intermarriage; those sanctioned by the community; and those observed by members of extended families and clans. Some taboos prohibit particular clans from eating certain fauna and flora. A clan taboo is observed by all its members. Other taboos prohibit hunting in places regarded as abodes of ancestors and or evil spirits. Another kind of taboo prohibits fishing in certain bodies of water in which the fish are considered humans in fish form waiting to be conceived by barren women. Taboos are enforced by institutions such as the Poro and Sande societies, as well as by heads of extended families or clans. Over 60% of the population in NW Liberia landscape use the forest as a sacred place and sees it as a place for wildlife and biodiversity.

In Liberia, men and women have clear gender divisions that determine how natural resources are utilized at the household and community levels. Women in rural settings in NW Liberia landscape are often highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and are therefore particularly susceptible to changes in the availability and quality of these resources. Despite their reliance on natural resources, women have less access to and control over natural resources than men. Due to structural injustice, social norms and traditions, women have limited access to land even though the farmers often are women. Usually, it is men who put land, water, plants, and animals to commercial use, which is often more valued than women's domestic uses.

According to HRW 2016, domestic violence, rape, and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, including practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage remained widespread in NW Liberia landscape. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is not only prevalent in NW Liberia landscape; it is accepted as an integral part of gender relations (UN/GoL 2014 Report). This perception was exacerbated during the conflict period, as rape was used as a weapon of war driven by unequal gender relations. Reports between 2014-2016 from the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) indicate a general acceptance of the most common types of sexual and gender-based violence. To address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the Government of Liberia has ratified international and regional instruments such as the Convention of Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls (1979) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its protocol on the rights of women in Africa, and the development of the 2006 National Action Plan to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. To this end, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection developed a referral pathway system for reporting and addressing SGBV issues. However, the effectiveness of the system is limited, particularly in rural areas due to: inadequate personnel and other resources for local ministries, police, health centers and courts; deeply-entrenched traditional practices and social barriers; the weakness of the justice system; and lack of knowledge on

protection and services available to victims. Furthermore, there has been a lack of coordination among the ministries concerned in developing policy and planning frameworks and in their implementation.

Institutional Capacity

SCNL has safeguarding measures such as gender and safeguarding policies, a safeguarding commitment statement and reminder posters displayed at its various offices (including the field offices). They also have in place refresher training for staff and new employees on safeguarding. SCNL conducts screening on environmental and social safeguards as well as stakeholder engagement to identify and mitigate potential risks from projects on local communities and biodiversity, and develops mitigation measures to address identified risks and ensure compliance with relevant laws and standards. For example, the law calls for ESIA to be done before any Protected Area can be established.

Under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), all of SCNL's project implementation activities followed the World Bank Safeguarding Standards, following rigorous training from the World Bank. During the Liberia Forest Sector Project, SCNL and partners also developed the national Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) strategy. SCNL has been working in the project areas for years and uses FPIC for consultations with local communities from the project design phase to implementation. SCNL led national consultations for Foya and Kpo gazettelement and obtained letters of consent from communities, prior to development of the new requirements for Customary Land Formalization. SCNL is very familiar with the communities in the Gola Forest Landscape, and used the Community Rights Law of 2009 as a guide to ensure that all nine steps required for establishing community forests are followed. SCNL's experience with safeguards is also evidenced through its work on the GEF-funded FOLUR project.

SCNL mainstreams gender in all of its projects. The SCNL data system for beneficiaries is disaggregated by gender, and there is a standalone gender program (Village Savings Loan Association) that targets only women beneficiaries.

SCNL has one (1) full-time Gender and Safeguard Officer based in the Monrovia office. The Gender and Safeguard Officer was recruited under the CI-GEF FOLUR project, and has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and an extensive experience in Gender and Safeguarding issues. She is an expert with over five years of professional experience in gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. She has been trained in Gender mainstreaming and safeguarding, and recently completed a certificate course from the Perk Group in Nairobi, Kenya. There are 17 community mobilization officers spread across three counties in the Greater Gola Landscape (Lofa, Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties) under various projects, who are involved in stakeholder engagement with communities.

The Executive Director and Program Manager are seasoned experts trained in stakeholder engagement and World Bank Safeguarding standards, with over 20 years of professional experience with local communities. All project coordinators are also involved in stakeholder engagement activities. SCNL staff and management received training from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Additional Information

- Describe any risks or factors that may affect or contribute to the project implementing safeguard measures/plans. Some cultural and religious norms may affect the participation and engagement of women in project activities. During PPG phase, strategies to mitigate against these risks will be identified.

These proposed protected areas have been set aside since 1954 as conservation areas that could be turned into government protected areas (national forests). These areas are well-known nationally and by the people in surrounding areas. SCNL led national consultations for Foya and Kpo gazettelement and obtained letters of consent from communities, and FF did similar in Wonegizi. So far there have not been any long-term conflicts in the areas. The Liberian Land Authority's Field Manual for Systematic Registration of Customary Land outlines procedures to follow if there are disputes that arise during the process. For example: "If there is disagreement regarding the entire boundary or a portion of the boundary, said disputed portion shall be documented as disputed boundary. If all efforts to resolve such dispute proves unsuccessful, the community leaders or CLDMC shall forward the matter

to the LLA for either arbitration or mediation intervention.” and “ If disagreements arise on the boundary during boundary clearing or confirmatory survey, the cutting of the boundary line or the survey itself shall stop and the issue should be presented to the established dispute resolution entity, whether that is traditional authorities or a CLDMC sub-committee, for resolution. If the dispute cannot be resolved by the authorized dispute resolution entity, the LLA and local government may be brought in to help resolve the issue. If the community is receiving support through the LLA or a donor, a Grievance Redress Mechanism may be established at the community and county level.”

There were some political tensions visible during the recent election period. Pre-election violence resulted in 2 official deaths, one in Montserrado and the other in Lofa. Those cases were investigated by the government and the perpetrators were arrested and sentenced. The 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections in Liberia took place mostly in urban, densely populated areas, including counties like Lofa, Nimba, and Montserrado. The tightly contested national election and run-off presidential election were otherwise largely peaceful and resulted in a peaceful transition of power.

III. ESMF EXCLUSIONS

This section will help the CI-GEF/GCF Project Agency to determine whether they can support a project. Please provide accurate answers and details including supporting documents, where requested. If you answered “Yes” to any of the questions (i-xiii) then the CI-GEF/GCF Project Agency cannot support the project.

Will the project:	Yes	No
I. Contravene major international and regional conventions on environmental issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
II. Propose to create or facilitate significant degradation and/or conversion of natural habitats of any type (forests, wetlands, grasslands, coastal/marine ecosystems, etc.) including those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, identified by authoritative sources for their high conservation value, recognized as protected by traditional local communities, or have significant negative socioeconomic and cultural impacts that cannot be cost-effectively avoided, minimized, mitigated and/or offset?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
III. Involve adverse impacts on critical natural habitats, including forests that are critical natural habitats, including from the procurement of natural resource commodities, except for adverse impacts on a limited scale that result from conservation actions that achieve a net gain of the biodiversity values associated with the critical natural habitat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IV. Propose to carry out <i>unsustainable</i> harvesting of natural resources -animals, plants, timber and/or non-timber forest products (NTFPs)- or the establishment of forest plantations in <i>critical natural habitats</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
V. Propose the introduction of alien species that can potentially become invasive and harmful to the environment, unless there is a mitigation plan to avoid this from happening?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VI. Involve <i>involuntary resettlement, land acquisition, and/or the taking of shelter and other assets</i> belonging to local communities, individuals or Indigenous Peoples?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VII. Contravene major international and regional conventions on human rights, including rights specific to indigenous peoples?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VIII. Propose activities that result in the exploitation of and access to outsiders to the lands and territories of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IX. Propose the use and/or procurement of materials deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international phase-outs or bans, such as:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a. ozone depleting substances, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other specific, hazardous pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides, or chemicals; and b. wildlife or products regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species or Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)?		
X. Propose the use and/or procurement of pesticides and hazardous materials that are unlawful under national or international laws, the generation of wastes and effluents, and emissions of short- and long-lived climate pollutants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XI. Involves the removal, alteration, or disturbance of any non-replicable or critical cultural heritage, or the use of any intangible cultural heritage without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the communities who it belongs to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IV. SIMPLIFIED APPROVAL PROCESS (GCF Projects ONLY)

Questions XIV through XXII are **ONLY for GCF Projects** pursuing the Simplified Approval Process (SAP). If you answer "Yes" to any of the questions below, your project will undergo further review to determine eligibility for the Simplified Approval Process.

Will the project:		Yes	No
XII.	Involve associated facilities ²⁴ and require further due diligence of such associated facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XIII.	Involve trans-boundary impacts including those that would require further due diligence and notification to downstream riparian states?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XIV.	Adversely affect working conditions and health and safety of workers or potentially employ vulnerable categories of workers including women or child labor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XV.	Generate hazardous waste and pollutants including pesticides and contaminate lands that would require further studies on management, minimization and control and compliance to the country and applicable international quality standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XVI.	Involve the construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure (i.e. dams, water impoundments, coastal and river bank infrastructure) that would require further technical assessment and safety studies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XVII.	Involve the resettlement and dispossession, land acquisition, and economic displacement of persons and communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XVIII.	Be located in protected areas and areas of ecological significance including critical habitats, key biodiversity areas and internationally recognized conservation sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XIX.	Affect Indigenous Peoples that would require further due diligence, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and documentation of development plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XX.	Be located in areas that considered to have archeological (prehistoric), paleontological, historical, cultural, artistic, and religious values or contains features considered as critical cultural heritage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

V. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS (ESS) SCREENING

This section will help the CI-GEF/GCF Project Agency to determine the category of the project and the ESS Standards triggered by the project. Please provide accurate answers and details including supporting documents, where requested.

²⁴ Associated facilities are those that are not funded as part of the project, and that would not have been constructed or expanded if the project did not exist and without which the project would not be viable.

ESS1: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

Will the project potentially:

- (a) cause significant adverse environmental and social impacts (which may affect an area broader than the project area) that are sensitive, diverse, or unprecedented?
 - (b) cause adverse environmental and social impacts (which are site-specific and few if any of them are irreversible) on human populations or environmentally or socially important areas?
- ☒ NO (to all of the above)
☐ TO BE DETERMINED
☐ YES (to any of the above)

No significant adverse environmental and social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, or unprecedented are anticipated.

Project activities to improve co-management of one existing and two proposed protected areas include updating management plans (Gola Forest National Park), Customary Land Formalization (CLF) Processes and completion of gazettelement packages (Foya and Kpo Mountains Proposed Protected Area and Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area), drafting/updating financing plans, and conducting capacity-building workshops (Component 1).

It is possible that the updated co-management plan or the community land use plans lead to voluntary limitations on access to natural resources, though only with the consent of affected communities.

The proposed protected areas have been set aside since 1954 as conservation areas that could be turned into government protected areas (national forests). SCNL led national consultations for Foya and Kpo gazettelement on June 21, 2023 in Monrovia, following the district and county consultations from June 6-7, 2023 in Bopolu City, Gbarpolu County and on June 19, 2023 in Voinjama City, Lofa County and obtained letters of consent from communities, and Fauna and Flora conducted similar activities in Wonegizi. As a result, draft gazettelement packages have already been prepared for these areas. However, following the passage of the Land Rights Act in 2018, a specific CLF process became required before gazettelement can proceed. The CLF process will thus reaffirm boundaries that were previously agreed upon.

The Liberia Land Authority leads the Customary Land Formalization process, which is a formal process that is documented in the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 and the Gbehzohn Declaration of 2023. The government requires this process before gazettelement, to ensure that community lands obtain deeds and do not get included as government protected lands. The process may not displace people or involve any physical removal.

The Liberian Land Authority's Field Manual for Systematic Registration of Customary Land (2023) outlines the general steps, which include 1) socialization of CLF; 2) community self-identification; 3) development of community by-laws and establishment of Community Land Development and Management Committee (CLDMC); 4) identification and harmonization of boundary and other claims through community land identification and mapping; 5) community land use and management plan and 6) registration of statutory land deeds. Representatives of LLA are involved in the CLF activities to make sure the process is followed and LLA determines when the process is complete. Since ownership and title are at the clan level, the CLF process will work at the clan level.

CLF results in recognition and approval of a community's customary land rights by the Liberian Land Authority and ensures Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with communities prior to gazettement. Both the project's management and CLF process require inclusive community participation to ensure that marginalized groups are represented and gender considerations are also incorporated. Activities towards this output will draw on lessons and knowledge generated from SCNL's previous work with communities near Foya.

Investment in enterprises or livelihood development (Component 2) is expected to create positive environmental and social impacts, as the project will support development of SMEs that are climate-resilient and conservation-friendly. The Project will work closely with clans and communities adjacent to the focal PAs to map how natural resources are currently being used and assess where areas for climate-resilient, conservation-friendly activities can be developed. Potential activities will be assessed to avoid and mitigate negative impacts such as unsustainable harvesting practices beyond the project lifetime. During this process, emphasis will be given to identifying opportunities for women and marginalized groups to improve incomes. Socio-economic assessments will inform the Project's design of training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods.

Collaboration on transboundary watershed and forest landscape management (Component 3) will involve supporting committees for joint cross-border natural resource management, capacity-building and training, and implementing nature-based solutions.

Component 4 focuses on strengthening coordination and collaboration and local, national, and regional levels through learning and knowledge sharing.

(c) Has a full or limited ESIA that covers the proposed project already been completed?

☒ NO

☐ YES (If Yes, answer the following)

(d) Is the assessment a: <input type="checkbox"/> A FULL ESIA <input type="checkbox"/> A LIMITED ESIA	Yes	No
(e) Does the assessment meet its terms of reference, both procedurally and substantively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) 3. Does the assessment provide a satisfactory assessment of the proposed project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) 5. Does the assessment describe specific environmental and social management measures (e.g., avoidance, minimization, mitigation, compensation, monitoring, and capacity development measures)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) 6. Does the assessment identify capacity needs of the institutions responsible for implementing environmental and social management issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) 7. Was the assessment developed through a consultative process with key stakeholder & rightsholder engagement, including issues related to gender mainstreaming and Indigenous Peoples?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(j) 8. Does the assessment assess the adequacy of the cost of and financing arrangements for environmental and social management issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For any "no" answers, describe below how the issue has been or will be resolved or addressed.		

ESS 2: Protection of Natural Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation

Will the project:

- (a) involve adverse impacts on Critical Habitats²⁵, including forests that are Critical Habitats, including from the procurement of natural resource commodities, except for adverse impacts on a limited scale that result from conservation actions that achieve a Net Gain of the Biodiversity values associated with the Critical Habitat?
- (b) contravene applicable international environmental treaties or agreements?
- (c) involved the utilization of genetic resources?
- (d) introduce or use potentially invasive alien species?
- (e) affect species identified as threatened at the local and/or global levels?
- (f) implement habitat restoration activities?

- ☐ NO (to all of the above)
- ☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)
- ☒ YES (to any of the above)

The project is proposing to improve co-management of areas of high global biodiversity importance, including protected areas with threatened species. This will occur through updating of the co-management and financing plan for Gola, preparation of gazettelement packages and financing plans for Foya and Kpo and Wonegizi, and capacity building workshops. The project will also enhance income generation in local communities adjacent to PAs by supporting climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises, and facilitating land use planning. Potential activities to support include sustainable forestry and firewood production, climate-resistant agricultural products, non-timber forest product production, and deforestation-free palm oil and cacao, all implemented through land use plans. Project activities will include habitat restoration; the project will ensure that restoration activities do not include invasive alien species.

²⁵ Critical Habitat means a Habitat with high Biodiversity value, including (i) Habitats of significant importance to Critically Endangered or Endangered species, as listed on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of threatened species or equivalent national approaches, (ii) Habitats of significant importance to endemic or restricted-range species, (iii) Habitats supporting globally or nationally significant concentrations of migratory or congregatory species, (iv) highly threatened or unique ecosystems, and (v) ecological functions or characteristics that are needed to maintain the viability of the Biodiversity values described in (i) to (iv).

ESS 3: Resettlement, Physical and Economic Displacement

Will the project

(a) involve the voluntary or involuntary resettlement of people?

(b) restrict land use and access?

(c) cause economic displacement of people?

☐ NO (to all of the above)

☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)

☒ YES (to any of the above)

The program will not involve resettlement, or cause economic displacement of people. It is possible that the updated co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park or the community land use plans could lead to voluntary restriction of access to natural resources. These activities will involve participatory multi-stakeholder processes and FPIC as required. Community participation in this process will include attention to ensuring that marginalized groups are represented, and gender considerations are incorporated.

ESS 4 : Indigenous Peoples ²⁶

Will the project:

- (a) work in lands or territories traditionally owned, customarily used, or occupied by indigenous peoples?
- (b) cause impacts on land and natural resources, including restrictions on land use or loss of access to natural resources, subject to traditional ownership or under customary use or occupation, or the location of a project or program on such land or the commercial development of such natural resources?
- (c) cause relocation of Indigenous Peoples from land and natural resources subject to traditional ownership, or under customary use or occupation?
- (d) cause significant impacts on an Indigenous People's cultural heritage that is material to the identity and/or cultural, ceremonial, or spiritual aspects of the affected Indigenous People's lives, or the use of such cultural heritage for commercial purposes?
- (e) include the commercial development of lands and natural resources central to Indigenous Peoples' identity and livelihood, or commercial use of Indigenous Peoples' Cultural Heritage?
- (f) restrict the access of Indigenous Peoples to parks and protected areas?
- (g) affect Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation or result in undesired contact with IPs?

☐ NO (to all of the above)

☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)

☒ YES (to any of the above)

The program intends to work in lands or territories traditionally owned, customarily used, or occupied by local communities. People in the project areas do not self-identify as Indigenous Peoples, therefore, people residing in project areas will be referred to as "Local Communities.". The Project Management Unit will ensure that activities in all project areas embody the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

²⁶ According to CI Policy on Indigenous Peoples, "CI identifies indigenous peoples in specific geographic areas by the presence, in varying degrees, of: a) Close attachment to ancestral and traditional or customary territories and the natural resources in them; b) Customary social and political institutions; c) Economic systems oriented to subsistence production; d) An indigenous language, often different from the predominant language; and f) Self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group".

ESS 5: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention

Will the project:

- (a) promote the trade in or use of any substances listed under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, or other chemicals or hazardous materials subject to international bans, restrictions or phaseouts due to high toxicity to living organisms, environmental persistence, potential for bioaccumulation, or potential depletion of the ozone layer, consistent with relevant international treaties and agreements?
- (b) generate wastes and effluents, and emissions of short- and long-lived climate pollutants?
- (c) involve pest management measures, Integrated Pest Management or Integrated Management of Vectors and Intermediate Hosts?
- (d) procure pesticides?
- (e) use energy, water and other resources and material inputs, where significant water consumption is involved and would cause adverse impacts on communities, other water users, and the environment?

- ☒ NO (to all of the above)
☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)
☐ YES (to any of the above)

ESS 6: Cultural Heritage²⁷

Will the project implement activities that affect cultural heritage (both tangible and/or intangible), including archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, and sacred sites including graveyards, burial sites, and sites with unique natural values?

- ☐ NO
☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)
☒ YES

Activities related to land use planning and alternative livelihoods may be in areas with cultural heritage resources. Sacred sites are found in the NW Liberia landscape in the form of shrines and sacred groves, etc. The sacred groves are of ritual and religious importance as these sites are both ritually and symbolically associated with ancestors through graves and certain trees. These areas were identified in parts of the landscape through the FOLUR Liberia project. The Project will implement measures to ensure that any additional cultural heritage resources are identified and adverse effects avoided.

²⁷ Cultural Heritage means both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, or other cultural significance, located in urban or rural settings, above ground, underground or under water; as well as practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, or skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, recognize as part of their heritage, as transmitted from generation to generation and constantly recreated by them in response to nature and a shared history

ESS 7: Labor and Working Conditions

Does the EA/EE have in place the necessary policies, procedures, systems and capabilities to ensure that:

- (a) the fundamental rights of workers, consistent with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work are respected and protected?
- (b) written labor management procedures are established in accordance with applicable national laws?
- (c) workers are provided with clear and understandable documentation of employment terms and conditions, including their rights under national law to hours of work, wages, overtime, compensation and benefits?
- (d) workers are provided regular and timely payment of wages; adequate periods of rest, holiday, sick, maternity, paternity, and family leave; and written notice of termination and severance payments, as required under national laws and the labor management procedures?
- (e) decisions relating to any aspect of the employment relationship, including recruitment, hiring and treatment of workers, are made based on the principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunity and fair treatment, and not on the basis of personal characteristics unrelated to inherent job requirements?
- (f) appropriate measures are in place to prevent harassment, intimidation, and exploitation, and to protect vulnerable workers, including but not limited to women, children of working age, migrants and persons with disabilities?
- (g) workers who participate, or seek to participate, in workers' organizations and collective bargaining, do so without interference, are not discriminated or retaliated against, and are provided with information needed for meaningful negotiation in a timely manner?
- (h) forced labor and child labor are not used in connection with the project or program?
- (i) occupational health and safety (OHS) measures are applied to establish and maintain a safe and healthy working environment, including supply chain workers?
- (j) workers are informed of applicable grievance and conflict resolution systems provided at the workplace level?
- (k) workers may use these mechanisms without retribution, and the grievance and conflict resolution systems does not impede access to other judicial or administrative remedies available under the law or through existing arbitration procedures, or substitute for grievance systems provided through collective agreements?

☐ NO (to any of the above)

☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)

☒ YES (to all of the above)

SCNL has policies, procedures, systems, and capabilities to ensure compliance with all the terms above, reflected in its January 2023 Human Resource Policy and March 2024 Revised Safeguarding Policy.

ESS 8: Community Health, Safety and Security

Please complete the following Risk Assessment Tool to determine community health, safety and security risks and their mitigation measures. Guidance on how to complete the Tool can be found in Appendix IX of the ESMF (Version 7).

Community Health, Safety and Security Threat	Likelihood	Impact	Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measures
1. Potential exposure of communities to both accidental and natural hazards	Unlikely (2)	Major (4)	8	Low	Development and training on safety protocols, including planning for evacuation contingencies.
2. Particular risks that may be present in a conflict or post-conflict context	Likely (4)	Moderate (3)	12	Medium	Monitoring of risk at regional, national, and local level. Coordinate with the authorities in the relevant project areas, keeping in mind the pre-existing conflicts and being sensitive in future activities and consultations. Development and training on safety protocols, including planning for evacuation contingencies. Adapt the activities of field staff to situations involving risk, e.g., cancellation of field visits in areas experiencing increased conflict
3. Threats to human security through the risk of escalation of personal or communal conflict and violence that could be caused or exacerbated by the project.	Unlikely (2)	Major (3)	6	Low	Stakeholder consultation to develop programming that is sensitive to community dynamics. Coordination with appropriate authorities in the project areas.

					Ongoing monitoring of risk and adaptation of project activities as necessary.
4. Covid-19 infections or related global pandemic	Likely (4)	Moderate (3)	12	Medium	Regular monitoring of guidance from national and local public health authorities, World Health Organization (WHO), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Use of online engagement platforms, use of COVID prevention protocols developed in each country, including COVID testing for personnel traveling to communities, monitoring of COVID status
5. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	9	Low	Provide basic training to project teams on how to respond if incidents are reported/disclosed. Ensure that the project's GRM is designed to respond to project related incidents.
Total				47	
Average				9	
Overall risk rating to project-affected communities				Low	

ESS 9: Private Sector Direct Investments and Financial Intermediaries

Will the project make either direct investments in private sector firms or Endowment Funds, or channels funds through Financial Intermediaries (FIs)?

- ☒ NO
- ☐ TO BE DETERMINED (TBD)
- ☐ YES (to any of the above)

The project will provide technical support to new and existing SMEs and facilitate their links to financial services. However, the project is not expected to make any direct investments in private sector firms or endowment funds, or channel funds through financial intermediaries.

ESS 10: Climate Risk and Related Disasters

Please refer to guiding questions in Appendix A to help answer the questions below:

Describe the climate projections for the country or region, or if possible, for the specific location of the project for the next 30 years from the start date of the project.

The West African Region is at high risk to projected climate trends of increased temperatures, high variability of precipitation with potential for increased heavy rainfall events, and reduction in dry season rainfall in southern regions.²⁸

Liberia is at a relatively high risk of extreme temperature and heat stress when compared to global scores. The number of days with extreme heat is expected to increase by 64 days per decade. In addition, temperatures are expected to increase by 1.42°C by 2050 compared to the historical average (1970-2000) under an extreme climate change scenario (RCP 8.5).²⁹ Please note that this is the mean over the entire country, and there is likely spatial variation within. More detail about the NW Liberian Landscape is discussed below.

Describe the relevant potential hazards (e.g. heavy rainfall leading to flood, low rainfall leading to drought, temperature changes which could lead to heat waves, sea-level rise, or changes in other extreme events such as hurricanes and cyclone) that could prevent the project from achieving its objectives and/or outputs.

Climate change is expected to increase risks and severity of natural disasters, through more intense temperatures as well as rainfall patterns, increased temperatures and prolonged heat waves.³⁰ Projected changes to rainfall are likely to increase flooding and drought events, with the project areas being most affected by flooding. Coastal areas would be affected by frequent waterlogging, increased coastal erosion, and sea-level rise, which is likely to result in significant economic losses, damage to agricultural lands and infrastructure, as well as human casualties.³¹ The region is projected to become a hotspot of food insecurity.³²

The Liberia Child Project will be implemented in the NW Liberian Landscape, a region comprised of five counties: Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu Grand Cape Mount and Lofa. County-specific climate change-related hazards and level of likelihood over the next ten years are detailed in the table below. All five counties rank high with regards to river flood and wildfire hazards occurring over the next ten years, with Bong and Lofa also ranking high for urban floods. Extreme heat is also a medium level hazard shared by all five counties.³³ Flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat could disrupt some project activities in the field, for example by preventing travel to sites by project staff or obstructing community meetings or training sessions. Severe flooding or wildfire could impact sustainable livelihood investments, such as agriculture or NTFPs. These types of natural calamities also could affect land use options, such that land use planning outputs would need to be revisited.

Climate change-related hazards over the next ten years for counties in the Northwest Liberia Landscape³⁴

County	Climate hazards							
	River Flood	Urban Flood	Coastal Flood	Landslide	Extreme heat	Wildfire	Water scarcity	Tsunami
Bomi	High	Medium	Medium	Very low	Medium	High	Very low	Low
Bong	High	High	NA	Low	Medium	High	Very low	NA
Gbarpolu	High	Very low	NA	Low	Medium	High	Very low	NA
Grand Cape Mount	High	Very low	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Very low	Low

Lofa	High	High	NA	Low	Medium	High	Very low	NA
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Describe the current and projected exposures, vulnerabilities, and adaptive capacities (e.g. technical, institutional, financial) and how these could prevent the project from achieving its objectives and/or outputs.

Liberia is at high risk to natural hazards. Vulnerability is exacerbated due to the country's high level of poverty and high dependence on climate change sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, mining and forestry.³⁵ Additional contributing factors to the country's vulnerability include maladapted agricultural activities, unsustainable logging practices, unregulated coastal sand mining, overdependence on biomass leading to high levels of deforestation, inadequate infrastructure, low level of socio-economic development, low institutional capacity and inadequate meteorological and hydrological data and data gathering capabilities.³⁶ Liberia ranks 173 on the ND-GAIN Index noting the country has a high vulnerability to climate change and a low readiness.³⁷ Liberians are considered at a relatively high risk from climate change because of their sensitivity to changes in nature's conditions potentially caused by climate change impacts or unsustainable uses, among others. It is estimated that in Liberia around 78% of the population (or 3,288,000 people) are highly dependent on nature to meet most of their basic needs (i.e., at least two of these basic needs: housing materials, clean water, fuel for cooking, and occupation). People who are highly nature dependent are expected to be disproportionately impacted by changes in nature because they potentially lack alternatives to nature to meet their basic needs.³⁸ Liberians are considered at a relatively high risk because of their capacities to response or adapt to shocks, such as climate change impacts. It is estimated that around 42% of the population (or 1,766,000 people) have low level of human development that influence their vulnerability to climate change. People who have a low human development are expected to be highly vulnerable to climate change impacts because they have limited capacities to response and adapt to these changes.³⁹

The project outputs most likely to be affected by climate risks (particularly floods and fires) are investments in sustainable livelihoods, such as crops or NTFPs. These types of weather events could degrade newly planted areas and undermine investment in sustainable agriculture, or destroy sourcing areas of natural products and undermine investment in new value chains. Extreme weather events also could affect land use options, making land use planning outputs obsolete, for instance, if particular land uses become impossible in their designated areas. As noted, some project activities in the field could be disrupted, for example by floods that prevent travel to sites by project staff, or cancelling community meetings or training sessions when local people need to respond to disasters.

²⁸ World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Liberia.

²⁹ Gassert, F., E. Cornejo, and E. Nilson. 2021. "Making Climate Data Accessible: Methods for Producing NEX-GDDP and LOCA Downscaled Climate Indicators" Technical Note. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online at <https://doi.org/10.46830/writn.19.00117>. www.resourcewatch.org.

³⁰ World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Liberia.

³¹ World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Liberia.

³² World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Nigeria.

³³ ThinkHazard! 2024. Liberia Country Profile. Available online at: <https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/144-liberia/>.

³⁴ ThinkHazard! 2024. Liberia Country Profile. Available online at: <https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/144-liberia/>.

³⁵ World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Liberia.

³⁶ World Bank Group. 2021. Climate Risk Profile: Liberia.

³⁷ <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>

³⁸ Fedele, G., Donatti, C. I., Bornacelly, I., & Hole, D. G. (2021). Nature-dependent people: Mapping human direct use of nature for basic needs across the tropics. *Global Environmental Change*, 71, 102368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102368>

³⁹ Smits, J., & Permanyer, I. (2019). The Subnational Human Development Database. *Scientific Data*, 6(1), 190038. <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2019.38>

What mitigation measures have been identified and incorporated into the design of the project/planned for the implementation phase to reduce the likelihood and/or consequences of risks or to respond to consequences so as to ensure that the project achieves its objectives and/or outputs?

To mitigate these risks, the Project is closely aligned with country-level commitments on climate change and support related strategies and action plans. Prior and future analysis will continue to identify and refine areas that will be most impacted by climate change (such as, protected areas, KBAs, priority watersheds and Conservation Corridors), with project design and implementation incorporating appropriate strategies for climate resilience and mitigation. Anticipated climate change impacts will be a key factor in land use planning and spatial planning to inform decision-making.

In terms of food security, without interventions the most severe effects of climate change on agricultural production in Liberia are anticipated in Bong and Lofa counties, which comprise a significant portion of the NW Landscape (USAID 2020). The project will promote enhanced income generation in local communities adjacent to the focal PAs through several climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises most appropriate for the baseline conditions in the communities. Assessments of these activities and locations will include climate data and predictions in order to minimize the possibility that weather events undermine these investments. Diversification of activities/locations will also be an important mitigation strategy. Potential activities to support include sustainable forestry and firewood production, climate-resistant agricultural products, non-timber forest product production, and deforestation-free palm oil and cacao, all implemented through land use plans. For the suitable climate-smart, sustainable production activities identified in the land use planning process, the project will provide gender-responsive, inclusive technical training and technical support. Training and support will be focused on those products that deliver enhanced incomes, climate-resiliency and help conserve biodiversity. The management plans will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory land-use planning and to develop sustainable, climate resilient economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and less pressure on adjacent ecosystems. Sustainably managing the project's protected areas will offer a range of climate mitigation and adaptation benefits, including watershed protection and greater resilience to drought and other extreme climate events. Land use planning will incorporate climate data and predictions in order to develop plans that consider how land-use options could be constrained by climate change and include adaptation and mitigation.

In the case that Project activities in the field are disrupted, for example by floods that prevent travel to sites by project staff, or cancelling community meetings or training sessions when local people need to respond to disasters, the Project will shift planned activities to other Project locations until the issue is resolved.

If one or more risks are accepted, please provide a justification.

Existing Hazards Guiding Questions:	Yes	No	TBD
Observed climate and weather hazards in the project area:			
Extreme temperature (heat/cold)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extreme precipitation and flooding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural Droughts and/or dry spells	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storms (Tropical storms, snowstorms, hailstorms, dust storms, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Winds (Typhoons, Cyclones, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Harmattan)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sea level rise (from global warming and storm surges)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other natural hazards observed in the project area:			
Earthquakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tsunamis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volcanic eruptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landslides or avalanches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildfires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salinization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ocean acidification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projected Hazards Guiding Questions	Yes	No	N/A
Do future climate scenarios foresee an incremental increase of potential hazards and climate change compared to the baseline that may affect the project over its lifetime?			
Extreme temperature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extreme precipitation and flooding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural Droughts and/or dry spells	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change in temperature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change in rainfall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exposure Guiding Questions	Yes	No	N/A
Is the project located in high exposure areas?			
Low-lying areas (valleys or coastal zones)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arid and semi-arid zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mountains zones and permafrost areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the agricultural systems (crops, livestock, fisheries, forests) targeted by the project affected by climate related hazards?			
Is crop productivity affected by rainfall variability, changes in temperature or pests and diseases?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is livestock productivity affected by rainfall variability, changes in temperature or parasites and diseases?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is fisheries productivity affected by ocean acidification, changes in sea temperature or variation of water salinity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is forest productivity affected by wildfires, diseases, rainfall variability or changes in temperature?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is any stage of the agricultural value chain (production, storage, processing and marketing) affected by climate related hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerability Guiding Questions	Yes	No	TBD
Is the target population in the project area living below poverty line?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the livelihoods of the target population sensitive to climate change?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the target population income exclusively from agriculture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the population migrating due to food insecurity as a consequence of climate change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the project targeting sensitive groups (indigenous people or other marginalized groups) that are likely to be affected by climate change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is climate change affecting certain groups more than others in the project area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adaptive Capacity Guiding Questions:	Yes	No	TBD
Does the target population have access to climate information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any early warning systems in the project area to anticipate and respond to climate-related events and disasters or climate-driven pest and diseases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the government or other institutions support the target population/communities with the			

necessary social and economic resources to prepare for or respond to climate-related events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the target population carrying out self-adaptation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Do policies exist that make financial credit, loans and agricultural insurance available?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Modulation of Risks Guiding Questions:	Yes	No	TBD
1. Policies and planning			
Does the project support the integration of climate into national policies and planning?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the project support the increased use of climate data and information in national long term and strategic planning?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Capacity building, training and outreach			
Would the project invest in institutional development and capacity-building for national institutions involved in climate related activities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would the project invest in increased information and dissemination of climate-related information to target groups?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the project have opportunities to strengthen rural and indigenous climate risk management capabilities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the project support capacity of target groups to utilize and apply climate services at the farm level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Data gathering, monitoring and information management			
Will the project support the infrastructure and technology necessary to monitor climate variables and collect data required from climate impact assessment and modelling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project support the national institutions to develop the skills required to monitoring and collect climate related information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project support development of databases and repositories of climate information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Mitigation			
Will the project invest in measures that will reduce or mitigate emissions of GHGs from the energy sector?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project invest in measures to reduce or mitigate emissions of GHGs from livestock or agricultural production (e.g. rice production)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project invest in measures to reduce or mitigation emissions of GHGs through reforestation or land use change?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project invest in renewable energy and green technologies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project invest in other measures to reduce or mitigate GHG emissions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Adaptation			
Will the project invest in climate smart agriculture activities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project promote climate resilient practices for crops, livestock and fisheries?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project promote sustainable natural resources management?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the project support Nature-based Solutions for climate change and disaster risk reduction?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project invest in agricultural insurance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANNEX F: Budget Table

	Project budget by component (in USD)						
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	M&E	PMC	Total budget
Personnel and Professional Services	124,637	62,637	73,221	107,745	132,168	84,931	585,339
Travel, meetings, and workshops	574,770	164,180	90,380	113,850	23,023	20,000	986,203
Grants & Agreements	40,000	485,730	780,500	125,600	0	0	1,431,830
Equipment	22,957	10,375	10,375	6,375	0	6,200	56,282
Other Direct Costs				7,500	0	36,669	44,169
TOTAL GEF FUNDED PROJECT	762,364	722,922	954,476	361,070	155,191	147,800	3,103,823

ANNEX G: Safeguards Compliance Plans

This section covers the Safeguards Plans to manage the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) triggered as well as the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM), Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

Gender Mainstreaming

To ensure that the project complies with the GEF's Gender Policy, a **Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP)** was prepared during the PPG process. Sex disaggregated data and gender information will be collected and analyzed to inform gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. The following minimum gender indicators will be monitored and reported on:

- (i) Number of men and women that participated in project activities (e.g., meetings, workshops, consultations).
- (ii) Number of men and women that received benefits (e.g., employment, income-generating activities, training, equipment, leadership roles) from the project; as relevant.
- (iii) Number of strategies, plans (e.g., management plans and land use plans), and policies derived from the project that are gender inclusive.

Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure that the project complies with the GEF's Stakeholders' Engagement Policy, the EA (EPA) and the lead executing support partner, SCNL supported by the PPG consultant developed a **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)**. The EA through effectively supervising the PMU will monitor and report on the following minimum stakeholder engagement indicators:

- (i) Number of government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector actors, academia and other stakeholder groups that have been involved in the project implementation phase on an annual basis.
- (ii) Number of persons (sex-disaggregated) that have been involved in the project implementation phase (quarterly basis); and
- (iii) Number of engagement activities (e.g., meetings, workshops, consultations) with stakeholders during the project implementation phase (quarterly basis).

Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

To ensure that the project complies with CI-GEF's AGM Standard, an **AGM plan** was developed to ensure that the people directly or indirectly affected by the project can bring their grievances for consideration and redress. The main centres for handling the complaints include at the country level where the Project Focal Person (the Technical Lead based at SCNL) and the National Project Steering Committee will provide the first level of redress. At the regional level, Conservation International will be the centre of grievance redress. The mechanism will be in place before the start of project activities and disclosed to all stakeholders at inception and throughout project implementation in a language, manner, and means that best suit the local context. The EA will monitor and report on the following minimum accountability and grievance indicators:

- (i) Number of times/events the grievance mechanism is disseminated to stakeholders.
- (ii) Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been addressed.

Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

The CI-GEF/GCF Project Agencies require all projects to have an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism in place so that project-affected communities and other stakeholders may raise a grievance at all times to the Executing Agency/Entity, CI, the GEF or GCF on non-compliance with the ESMF. Affected communities should be informed about this possibility and contact information of the respective organizations at relevant levels should be made available publicly. Affected communities should also be assured that their grievances will be addressed in a timely manner, they will not face retaliation for submitting a grievance, and they have the option to request confidentiality.

SECTION I: Project Information

PROJECT TITLE:	Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
GEF/GCF PROJECT ID:		PROJECT DURATION:	62 months
EXECUTING AGENCY/ENTITY:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA - Government) Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL- NGO)		
PROJECT START DATE:	January 2025	PROJECT END DATE:	February 2030
AGM PREPARED BY:	Heidi Gjertsen, EcoAdvisors		
DATE OF (RE)SUBMISSION TO CI-GEF/GCF:	April 9, 2024; May 25, 2024; June 14, 2024		
AGM APPROVED BY:	Ian Kissoon, Senior Director, ESMS, CI-GEF Project Agency		
DATE OF CI-GEF/GCF APPROVAL:	June 24, 2024		

Government, business, and civil society in Liberia are striving to balance the urgent need for employment, food security and economic development with conservation and sustainable use of the country's natural resources. This is particularly evident in the Northwest (NW) Liberia Landscape, an area identified as a conservation priority for carbon and biodiversity as well as key ecosystem services such as freshwater provision, that is also seeing expansion of commercial agroforestry. The NW Liberia Landscape is a 2.7 million ha area with over 1.2 million inhabitants and one of the largest intact forest blocs in the Guinean Forest hotspot. It is exceptionally important for biodiversity, containing many of the country's 25 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Its importance to the Guinean Forest Biome is further amplified by its transboundary linkages to forest landscapes and protected areas in Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Park) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve) through the GEF Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP).

The proposed Project (hereafter referred to as GFIP Liberia Project) will build on past and current investments in this critical forest landscape and contribute to gazettelement packages for proposed protected areas totaling 275,937 ha, including the Foya and Kpo Mountains Protected Area and the Wonegizi Nature Reserve, and update the management plan for the Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha), both within the context of wider landscape-level land use planning. An additional 89,174 ha of forest adjacent to Gola and the proposed protected areas will be under improved management by local communities, combining sustainable livelihoods with restoration and maintenance of forest connectivity and generating socioeconomic benefits for about 30,000 people (at least 47% women). These actions will also contribute to mitigation of at least 1 million MtCO₂e of GHG emissions. The management plans will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory, inclusive land-use planning and to develop effective economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems. These Outcomes will be reinforced through transboundary linkages in watershed management planning and activities, in close coordination with GFIP Country Child Projects in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

SECTION II: Scope

Project-affected communities and other stakeholders may raise a grievance at all times to SCNL, CI, or the GEF on non-compliance with the ESMF. Affected communities and stakeholders will be assured that their grievances will be addressed in a timely manner, they will not face retaliation for submitting a grievance, and they have the option to request confidentiality. Potential grievances that may be raised during the course of the project include:

- Insufficient engagement
- Insufficient opportunities for participation
- Conflicts over access to resources
- Conflicts over land claims
- Inappropriate behavior on the part of project staff, consultants or other partners
- Corruption or inappropriate use of project resources

The Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) is intended to supplement the proactive stakeholder engagement that is required of SCNL and the implementing partners throughout the life of the project. Communities and individuals may request an AGM process when they have used standard channels for project management and quality assurance and are not satisfied with the response.

The AGM shall maintain a flexible approach with respect to receiving grievances considering known local constraints with respect to communications and access to resources for some stakeholders. The project will use various methods to receive complaints and grievances including complaint forms, email, SMS, telephone calls, postal or office report and documenting them.

All grievances that are submitted via this Mechanism will be screened for eligibility by the Gender and Safeguard Officer, based on two questions:

1. Does the grievance relate to the GFIP Liberia Project, and its ESMF.
2. Are there other organization or government bodies who would be more appropriate to address this concern.

In addition to the eligibility questions above, non-eligible complaints include instances where:

- Two or more years have passed since the grant closing date of the project;
- It is frivolous, malicious, trivial, or generated to gain competitive advantage;
- Relate to the laws, policies, and regulations of the country, unless this directly relates to Project compliance with its operational policies and procedures;
- It is an issue that has already being handled. Repetitive complaints on the same subject and by the same complainant, which have already been addressed, will not be considered unless new facts or circumstances are presented.

For ineligible complaints, the complainant will be informed of the reasons within three (03) days of the determination of ineligibility by the Gender and Safeguard Officer. The complainant will then be advised to seek alternative redress mechanisms under national or international law, or the rules and regulations of other institutions, agencies or commissions related to the complaint including anti-corruption bodies and courts of law. Complainants will also be provided with information on alternative channels such as the CI EthicsPoint Hotline (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com>).

In order to submit a grievance, the aggrieved party should submit the following information at a minimum:

- Names, designations, addresses and contact information of the aggrieved party and/or their representative. If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous to SCNL, they may choose to submit their complaint through a representative and withhold their name. If there is no one they trust with their identity, then they may instead choose to submit their complaint through two non-project mechanisms described on page 4.
- If the complaint is made through a representative, the name(s) of the person(s) on whose behalf the complaint is made
- A brief description of the impacts and the location(s) of occurrence

Submissions with incorrect or incomplete information will be logged, and the complainant or representative will be contacted for further clarifying information.

The aggrieved party may submit additional information, including:

- How the GFIP Liberia Project caused or may cause that impact
- Any actions taken or what has been done by grievant so far to resolve the matter
- Any proposed solutions
- Specific help requested from the AGM

The name of the person who will receive and address the grievances (the Gender and Safeguard Officer) will be publicly shared as a means of ensuring transparency. All communications related to the mechanism will have this person's name, as well as the alternate methods of submitting a grievance.

If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous to SCNL, they may choose to submit their complaint through a representative and withhold their name. If there is no one they trust with their identity, then they may instead choose to submit their complaint through two non-project mechanisms:

- CI's EthicsPoint Hotline at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com>. Through EthicsPoint, CI will respond within 15 calendar days of receipt, and claims will be filed and included in project monitoring processes.
- Alternatively, the grievant may file a claim with the Conservation International Director of Compliance (DOC) who is responsible for the CI Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached by mail at:

Director of Compliance
Conservation International
2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202, USA.

All complaints submitted to the AGM will be confidential. In order to maintain a high level of confidentiality, the grievance will be viewed initially by only the Gender and Safeguards Specialist if submitted in written, SMS or electronic form, and if verbally, only by the staff member that hears the complaint and the designated Gender and Safeguards Specialist. For grievances that cannot be handled by the Gender and Safeguards Specialist alone, that person will only discuss the case by a letter or number designation, never sharing the name of the complainant with others, nor the location unless it is imperative for resolution of the complaint.

SECTION III: Awareness and Accessibility

This section intends to understand how the project plans to ensure that their different methods to socialize and access the AGM is appropriate to the project's stakeholders. The project should place a special effort in securing accessibility to their AGM, especially for women and those from disadvantaged groups (elderly, young people, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ, indigenous/traditional peoples, those with lowest literacy levels, among others). These groups usually are in disadvantage within their own communities and may have additional or different barriers to access given channels of communication. In the next table, the project must ensure that they identify these differentiated barriers and include methods and accessibility adaptations intended to address them, closing gaps in accessibility to project AGM.

Method of Socialization	Intended Audience	Accessibility adaptations	Frequency of the action/channel	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA and SCNL websites and social media • Inception meetings • Information sessions • Workshops • Webinars • Field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Society Organizations • Private sector • Governmental agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored materials by geographical location (infographic and social media posts) 	From the beginning of the project and during the whole project lifetime	50% salary and benefits of SCNL's Knowledge Management and Communication Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA and SCNL websites and social media • Local radio • Community meetings • WhatsApp • Inception meetings • Information sessions • Workshops • Field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and traditional communities, including vulnerable groups (women, elderly, youth, people with disabilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored materials by geographical location. For example, visual large-font printed materials with simple language and culturally relevant imagery, such as brochures, infographics, and posters distributed in community centers and places where women or other vulnerable groups gather; local radio broadcasts; social media posts and online articles for those with internet access; community meetings in accessible locations for direct interaction and privilege oral communication. • Translated versions for local languages. • Use a mix of traditional (radio, posters) and digital channels (WhatsApp, social media) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the beginning of the project and during the whole project lifetime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% salary and benefits of SCNL's Knowledge Management and Communication Officer • <i>Printed materials</i> • <i>Radio ads</i>

Please reply to the questions below, which intend to address the adaptations and capacity of the AGM to be gender-responsive and has adaptations in place to address differentiated needs from disadvantaged groups:

- *Are the persons responsible of the GRM aware and knowledgeable of the commitment of the mechanism to be gender responsive and inclusive of those in disadvantaged groups? Explain your answer.*

SCNL recruited a Gender and Safeguards Officer under the CI-GEF FOLUR project in 2022. The Executive Director and Program Manager are seasoned experts trained in stakeholder engagement and World Bank Safeguarding standards, with over 20 years of professional experience with local communities. SCNL staff and management received training from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and SCNL provides refresher training for staff and new employees on safeguarding. Project staff will be trained on the AGM and the importance of gender responsiveness and inclusiveness. SCNL will work with BirdLife International to ensure additional training as needed.

- *Are the formats in place and channels available gender-sensitive and inclusive of those in disadvantaged groups? For example, the different formats ask the grievant to specify if they prefer mediators of a certain gender or with context-specific gender expertise so that they feel more comfortable, particularly if there are instances of SEAH involved. Explain your answer.*

To ensure that both women and men know about and feel comfortable accessing the mechanism, communications and outreach will focus on places where men and women congregate jointly and independently. The AGM will have measures in place to receive SEAH related grievances, including adequate training of staff regarding what constitutes SEAH and how to adequately prevent and report it. In addition, SCNL will escalate SEAH related grievances to the GFIP complaints process through BirdLife International.

The AGM seeks to be accessible, efficient, safe, and fair to women and other vulnerable groups (e.g., traditional peoples, youth), taking the barriers they are more likely to face into account concerning language, literacy levels, access to information and digital technology, mobility, and lack of time due to unpaid care responsibilities. It involves, among other things:

- Ensuring grievance mechanism staff develops gender sensitivity and prevents unconscious bias via continuous training. Grievance mechanism staff should also know about the Gender Policy, the Policy to protect against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, and other related policies.
- Ensuring dissemination of the grievance mechanisms to all individuals, particularly women, different gender identities, and vulnerable groups, mainly during outreach events and in-person or virtual workshops, considering potential lower literacy levels (e.g., verbal communication and relevant materials).
- Establishing multiple channels to maximize access and relevance (in-person, toll-free hotline, e-mail, postal address).
- Providing for independent, culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive investigations of violations and committing to addressing power imbalances during dispute resolution processes. It includes giving the complainant the option to select a mediator of a particular gender so that they feel more comfortable, particularly in instances of SEAH.
- Protecting all people who register complaints from retaliations by maintaining confidentiality of complainants unless they have agreed otherwise.
- Monitoring the grievance mechanism to ensure access and remediation outcomes are provided on an equal basis and incorporating lessons learned for improving its effectiveness to be inclusive and gender-responsive.

SECTION IV: Channels for Receiving/Reporting/Registering Grievances

Please list all the channels that will be part of the AGM of the project, this can include boxes or reporting points, virtual channels, or other any other applicable channels.

Channels for reporting grievances shall be free of charge for grievants. The following channels will be available to report grievances concerning the GFIP Liberia Project:

Physical address(es) of project office or location(s) of grievance reporting point:	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Henry Compound, Opposite Germany Embassy Oldest Congo Town Monrovia
Mailing address(es):	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Henry Compound, Opposite Germany Embassy Oldest Congo Town Monrovia
Telephone/Fax Number(s):	TBD
Email address(es):	safeguard.scnl@gmail.com info@scnlliberia.org
Website(s)/software application(s):	https://scnlliberia.org/contact/
Radio Frequency, if applicable:	N/A
Other:	

SECTION V: Processing and Documentation

Processing

The Gender and Safeguard Officer receives all grievances submitted whether electronically (email, social media or website), via phone/SMS/WhatsApp or written. All received grievances/complaints will be logged and assigned a tracking number and entered in a secure password-protected electronic document ("the grievance log"). Each received complaint will be assessed for eligibility based on criteria stipulated in Section III above. If the complaint/grievance is eligible, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will assess the level of severity in order to determine how the grievance is approached as shown below.

In cases of verbal complaints to SCNL staff, the verbal complaints will first be addressed in community-level meetings with project implementing staff, or in person at the field office. The field staff will provide the Gender and Safeguard Officer with a written description, which will then be entered in the grievance log. If unresolved, the Gender and Safeguards Officer will notify the grievant that his/her complaint is being considered and meetings/discussions will be held with the aggrieved person(s) to resolve the issue.

Within 3 days of receipt of any complaint, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will contact the complainant to let them know that their grievance was received, their reference number, next steps and point of contact. The Gender and Safeguards Officer will also (if necessary) verify the contact information of the grievance holder and ensure that basic information required to process a complaint is provided. All attempts to contact the complainant, whether successful or not, will be documented in the grievance log. Should efforts to contact the complainant, using all possible channels and methods, fail after 5 consecutive attempts, the grievance will be flagged in the grievance log as 'non-responsive'.

If eligible for the AGM and already assessed based on risk and category, two responses can be considered:

1. Direct action based on available information. For those eligible grievances that require simple explanations, responses will be provided instantly by the Gender and Safeguards Officer and if the person raising the grievance is satisfied, the grievance is documented and closed.
2. Further assessment and information gathering to determine the most appropriate action. This may include:
 - o engagement/negotiation with the complainant
 - o engagement with other stakeholders.
 - o field visits and fact-finding missions

If the grievance cannot be resolved by the Gender and Safeguards Officer due to its complexity, or the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will then be taken up by the PSC.

If there is still not agreement, the complainant will be made aware of other recourse that may be available including:

- a) The BirdLife International AGM process for the GFIP, by mail at: BirdLife International, La Maison de la Conservation, Zone B. Rue 111. Capucine Bldg. Second Floor, Apt. B2. Dakar, Senegal; or through the BirdLife International website [Complaints procedure - BirdLife International](#); or contact can be made via email birdlife@birdlife.org, [via the online form here](#) or via telephone: +44 (0)1223 277 318.
- b) If these processes do not result in resolution of the grievance, the grievant may choose to file a claim through CI's Ethics Point Hotline at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com>. Alternatively, the grievant may file a claim with the Director of Compliance (DoC) who is responsible for the CI Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at: Director of Compliance, Conservation International 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 500 Arlington, VA 22202, USA.
- c) the judicial and non-judicial system or other administrative channels

This is meant to ensure that there is no risk of retaliation and AGM functions in a completely open and non-coercive manner so that the complainant may wish to consider other redress mechanisms, with or without a direct referral from the AGM. SCNL has a Whistle-blower Protection Policy to provide comprehensive protection against retaliation or discrimination against those who express grievances.

Throughout the entire process, the AGM staff will document the outcome of the discussions with the complainant in a way that makes clear what options were offered and why the complainant chose not to pursue them, and also make it clear to the complainant that even if they reject the proposed response, the AGM remains available to the complainant if he/she wishes to revisit the response, or to raise a different concern in the future.

The final step is to close out the grievance. If the grievant is satisfied with the resolution, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will document the satisfactory resolution, in consultation with the complainant. In cases where there have been major risks, impacts and/or negative publicity, it may be appropriate to include written documentation from the complainant indicating satisfaction with the response. In others, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will note the action taken, confirm that the response was satisfactory to the complainant and the organization, and document those facts.

If the grievance cannot be resolved, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will document steps taken, communication with the complainant and the decisions made by the organization and the complainant about referral or recourse to other alternatives, including legal alternatives. In general, AGM documentation on particular cases will maintain confidentiality about details, while making public aggregate statistics on the number and type of complaints received, actions taken, and outcomes reached. It may be appropriate in some cases to make basic information about the identity of complainants publicly available, with the consent of the complainant.

An outcome/resolution for each received the complaint(s) must be provided in written form within 60 days of receiving the complaint.

To create awareness and ensure the effectiveness of the accountability and grievance mechanism, these options for reporting grievances and the relevant contact information (names, addresses, phone numbers) will be provided to communities at the outset of community engagement activities, in readily accessible document form accompanied by verbal explanation.

As part of the FPIC process, engagement activities will include reminders of the grievance option and mechanisms, as well as contact information. The PMU will also ensure that community leadership (chiefs, teachers, religious leaders, women's group leaders) have the relevant contact information.

The CI-GEF Project Agency will be promptly informed about any complaints submitted and their resolution. Grievances not addressed at the project/country level can be escalated with CI's General Council Office (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com>).

Documentation

All received grievances/complaints MUST be logged and assigned a tracking number and entered in a secure password-protected electronic document ("the grievance log"). Where SCNL staff may have received a grievance face-to-face or completed a written grievance submission form on behalf of a complainant, that staff is responsible for submitting it to the Gender and Safeguards Officer within 24 hours. Only the Gender and Safeguards Officer will have access to the grievance log, which will be password protected on a secure system. For paper complaints, they must be stored in a locked location.

Within 3 days of receipt of any complaint, the Gender and Safeguard Officer will contact the complainant to let them know that their grievance was received, their reference number, next steps and point of contact. Periodic updates will be sent to the complainant.

The grievance log will include a record of persons responsible for a complaint and record dates for the following events, when the; (i) Complaint was reported, ii) grievance was entered in the grievance log; (iii) information on proposed corrective action was sent to the complainant (if applicable); (iv) complaint was closed out; and (v) response was sent to the complainant and if the grievant was satisfied with the resolution proposed. The AGM information will be stored in the grievance log throughout the five years of project implementation and for only two years after the end date of the project. Thereafter, the files will be deleted.

SECTION VI: Monitoring and Reporting

Describe how will you track and ensure that the mechanism is working. It is important to recognize that lack of grievances does not mean that there are none, it may indicate that the mechanism is not working properly. Describe how you will account for this possibility.

The project is expected to report on a quarterly basis (using the CI-GEF Quarterly Reporting template), progress made towards the implementation of the grievance mechanism, including the number of grievances received and the outcome of the grievance process.

On an annual basis and using the CI-GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR) template, the following CI-GEF's minimum indicators are to be reported. The project can include other appropriate accountability and grievance indicators in addition to the CI-GEF/GCF's indicators.

Indicator	Baseline	Target
1. Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated/disseminated to stakeholders	0	50
2. Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved	100%	100%

Person responsible for implementing and monitoring the AGM:	Gender and Safeguard Officer SCNL
Budget Summary	Provide the total budget required and allocated for effective implementation of the AGM. Already included in the project's overall budget.

The Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP)

The **Gender Mainstreaming Plan** provides information, analysis, and specific actions to ensure that gender dimensions are fully integrated into the project. It consists of two parts: (1) a Gender Analysis/Assessment, and (2) a Gender Action Plan. The **Gender Analysis/Assessment** identifies and describes relevant gender differences, gender differentiated impacts and risks, and opportunities to address gender gaps and promote the empowerment of men and women within the project context. The **Gender Action Plan** details any corresponding gender-responsive measures to address those differences, impacts and risks, and opportunities. Completion of a Gender Analysis/Assessment and Gender Action Plan is a requirement for all GEF and GCF funded projects as described under the CI-GEF/GCF Project Agencies' Policy on Gender Mainstreaming.

The CI-GEF/GCF Agencies recognize the wide range of projects and this GMP is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the project size, scope, and context. For additional guidance on gender requirements within GEF + GCF projects, please also refer to:

Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects + Programs:

<https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF%20Guidance%20on%20Gender.pdf>

Mainstreaming Gender in GCF Projects:

https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/guidelines-gcf-toolkit-mainstreaming-gender_0.pdf

SECTION I: Project Information

PROJECT TITLE:	Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
GEF/GCF PROJECT ID:		PROJECT DURATION:	62 months
EXECUTING AGENCY/ENTITY:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)		
PROJECT ANTICIPATED START DATE:	January 2025	PROJECT END DATE:	February 2030
GMP PREPARED BY:	Heidi Gjertsen, EcoAdvisors		
DATE OF (RE)SUBMISSION TO CI-GEF/GCF:	May 26, 2024; June 14, 2024		
GMP APPROVED BY:	Ian Kissoon, Senior Director, ESMF, CI-GEF Project Agency		
DATE OF CI-GEF/GCF APPROVAL:	June 24, 2024		
PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE GMP:	Gender and Safeguard Officer, SCNL		
HOW/WHERE WILL THE APPROVED GMP BE DISCLOSED⁴⁰:	The GMP will be disclosed via the project's website and at the inception meeting with stakeholders.		
WHEN WILL THE APPROVED GMP BE DISCLOSED:	The GMP will be disclosed in the first quarter of the implementation phase.		

⁴⁰ Approved Safeguard plans are to be disclosed to stakeholders in a manner and form that they will understand and that is culturally appropriate. This may require translation of the document.

The general state of gender

Despite considerable progress on the legal status of women in West Africa, the region can be particularly challenging for women and girls. Liberia has one of the lowest rankings in the world on the Gender Inequality Index. Out of 170 countries ranked in 2021, Liberia was 164th.⁴¹ The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) analyzes the gaps that legislation, attitudes, and practices create between women and men in terms of rights and opportunities. It covers four dimensions spanning major socio-economic areas that affect the entire lifetimes of women and girls⁴²:

1. Discrimination in the family captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalues their status in the household and the family.
2. Restricted physical integrity captures social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to a range of forms of violence and limit women's control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy.
3. Restricted access to productive and financial resources captures women's restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets.
4. Restricted civil liberties capture discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access, participation and voice in the public and social spheres.

Discriminatory social institutions largely explain the persistence of unequal outcomes in areas such as employment, entrepreneurship, health and political representation.⁴³ In Liberia, the highest level of discrimination in social institutions is found in the dimension "Discrimination in the family", which covers child marriage, household responsibilities, inheritance and divorce. Girls and women are expected to assume responsibilities for household activities (as caretakers, cooks, water and fuel collectors, etc.), which limits time for education and training. Social norms place significant pressure on men as family providers and may contribute to underinvestment in girls' education. Violence against women is the most acute form of discrimination in the "Restricted physical integrity" dimension. According to data from 2023, the estimated prevalence of domestic violence in Liberia is 43%.⁴⁴ It is estimated that 31.8% of females have undergone the practice of FGM.⁴⁵ Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is prevalent, and the effectiveness of systems to address GBV is limited, especially in rural areas due to inadequate personnel and other resources for local ministries, police, health centers and courts; deeply entrenched traditional practices and social barriers; the weakness of the justice system; and lack of knowledge on protection and services available to victims. Liberia does not have a comprehensive legal framework in place that protects women from all forms of violence – including rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment – and from high levels of discriminatory attitudes towards domestic violence and practices.⁴⁶

Major inequalities persist between women and men in Liberia, in terms of access to educational and employment opportunities. Access to women's opportunities is limited by early marriage and pregnancy, a heavy domestic workload, limited access to education and early school leaving. Although female labor force participation and employment rates are high, women are much less likely than men to have access to wage jobs (less than one-third as likely), which tend to be better paid and offer more secure working conditions.⁴⁷ Almost all women (94 percent) are informally employed, mostly concentrated in agriculture and in the nonfarm informal services

⁴¹ UNDP 2021. Human Development Report Gender Inequality Index Dataset. Available at <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

⁴² OECD. 2021. SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa. <https://doi.org/10.1787/a6d95d90-en>

⁴³ OECD. 2021. SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa. <https://doi.org/10.1787/a6d95d90-en>

⁴⁴ OECD. 2023. GID

⁴⁵ OECD. 2023. GID

⁴⁶ OECD. 2023.

⁴⁷ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

sector.⁴⁸ In agriculture, women are less likely than men to work with cash crops and participate in markets, and female-headed farming households are less diversified (more dependent on agriculture) but work on smaller plots.⁴⁹

In Liberia, female smallholder producers and women in agricultural force produce 60 percent of agricultural products, but they have more limited access to productive inputs than their male counterparts, including land.⁵⁰ Approximately 86% of women do not own land, compared to 69% of men, and only 19% of women have an account with a financial institution, compared to 38% of men.⁵¹ A report by the Alliance of Biodiversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture finds that women farmers' capacity to adopt climate-smart agriculture is constrained by their limited access to cooperatives, extension services, and credit.⁵²

Approximately 31 percent of women ages 15 to 49 have no education at all, compared to 13 percent of men. Similarly, only 46 percent of women, as compared to 64 percent of men, ages 15 to 49 in Liberia have had at least some high school education.⁵³ With lower educational levels than men (particularly secondary school and beyond), women are ill-equipped with technical and managerial skills and therefore continue to be underrepresented within decision-making bodies of economic cooperatives, mixed farmer organizations and rural finance. Women are largely absent from decision-making positions regarding forest management, and traditional socio-cultural norms discourage women's participation in governing bodies.⁵⁴ In Liberia's Community Rights Law, women's participation is only mentioned once (section 4.2) stating that "a five-member Community Forestry Management Body shall manage day-to-day activities of community forest resources [...] at least one member of the body shall be a woman."⁵⁵ Women are less likely to attend community meetings, due to lack of information, gender roles and expectation, and household responsibilities. If they do attend meetings, they are less likely to speak up due to cultural norms.

When women lack access to resources and are not represented in decision-making regarding natural resource management, an opportunity is lost to strengthen natural resource management through women's unique contributions (e.g., knowledge, values, and strengths). For example, research on forest user groups found that groups with a quota in place for gender-balanced membership conserved more trees in a Payment for Ecosystem Services intervention and shared the payments more equally compared to groups without a quota.⁵⁶

On the African continent, there have been some positive developments with respect to protection of the rights of LGBT and other gender-non-conforming persons.⁵⁷ For example, In May 2014, the African Commission adopted Resolution 275, explicitly condemning violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. On the other hand, there remain significant gaps in protection. Liberia still criminalizes consensual same-

⁴⁸ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁴⁹ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁵⁰ Rights and Resources Initiative (2012). "Women and forests in Liberia: Gender policy and women's participation in the forest sector of Liberia". Washington, DC. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/exported-pdf/rriafribriefsencombined.pdf>

⁵¹ World Bank. 2024. Liberia Gender Landscape (English). Country Gender Landscape Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099159307012232320/IDU1fb3041fe1c3bc14f6a1b17c1b1dd35687ae6>

⁵² Elias, M.; Ihalainen, M.; Monterroso, I.; Gallant, B.; Paez Valencia, A.M. (2021) Enhancing synergies between gender equality and biodiversity, climate, and land degradation neutrality goals: Lessons from gender-responsive nature-based approaches. Rome (Italy): Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 36 p.

⁵³ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁵⁴ FAO, SIDA, ECOWAS (2021). "Gender Equality and Forestry in West Africa: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for West African Countries". Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/CB4280EN/CB4280EN.pdf>

⁵⁵ FAO, SIDA, ECOWAS (2021). "Gender Equality and Forestry in West Africa: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for West African Countries". Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/CB4280EN/CB4280EN.pdf>

⁵⁶ IUCN. 2020. Gender and Natural Resource Governance: Addressing inequalities and empowering women for sustainable ecosystem management. IUCN: Gland, Switzerland

⁵⁷ UNDP, OHCHR (2020). Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Rights in Africa: Liberia Country Report.

sex relations and has chosen to crack down on advocacy by LGBT and ally organizations.⁵⁸ Due to the risks of being identified as LGBTQIA+ in this context, it is unlikely that this disadvantaged group will identify itself and engage with the project. Should members of the group identify themselves, their status as part of a disadvantaged group will be protected through project safeguards.

Project-level gender considerations

1. *How do women and men currently utilize the natural resources that this project impacts? How might that change during and after the project?*

The main economic activities in NW Liberia Landscape center around natural resources. These include farming of cash and food crops like cassava, potatoes, rice, plantain, cocoa, oil palm and vegetables, with charcoal production and petty trade (usually for locally-produced products) also contributing. In NW Liberia Landscape, men and women have clearly distinct gender roles with respect to natural resource use at the household and community levels based on traditional, customary, and religious practices. Traditionally, gender roles are assigned to men and women according to the physical strength that is required to carry out the task and the tools to be used to complete the task well. In households where there are no males, females perform some male roles, yet for others, they rely on hired labor, which is difficult to come by easily. Household roles such as childcare, cooking, washing, sweeping, fetching water and firewood are regarded as female roles, with some help from the children (both male and female), while clearing land for cultivation (locally known as brushing) is predominantly the role for men.

Women and men have different uses, practices and knowledge related to natural resources, and specifically forests. Due to men's greater access to land, decision-making structures, information, inputs, credit, markets, they tend to dominate the trade of products that gain commercial value. Women rely heavily on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for their livelihoods, as they use them for both household subsistence and as a source of income⁵⁹. Meanwhile, men are more engaged with timber extraction and bushmeat hunting⁶⁰. Both women and men rely on charcoal and fuelwood as sources of energy. As women in these settings are likely to be highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, they are particularly susceptible to changes in the availability and quality of these resources. The high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) can impact access to natural resources, as women and youth face higher risks of GBV during collection activities.

By attending to these gender issues, for example, by increasing participation of women in land-use planning and targeting women as beneficiaries and developers of livelihood and enterprise benefits, the Project may impact how women and men utilize natural resources. The Project must consider the impacts, both positive and negative, of increasing women's access to traditionally male-dominated natural resources. Similarly, project activities that increase the value of what are traditionally women's resources could lead to attempts by men to capture those value chains. The Project will assess and monitor these impacts. It will be particularly important to engage women in discussions about co-management of protected areas and land-use planning, as well as customary land formalization (CLF) so that plans maintain or improve women's access to land and natural resources. Conducting awareness campaigns and providing education on women's land rights can empower women to assert their ownership claims. This can involve workshops, training sessions and community outreach programs. Ensuring that women are actively involved in decision-making processes related to land governance can help safeguard their ownership rights. The CLF field manual includes measures to ensure that women are represented throughout the process, e.g. awareness-raising of women's land rights, women working groups at meetings, female focus groups, equal representation of women on the Interim Coordinating Committee, Community Land Development and Management Committee, and Tribal Certificate vetting and validating committee.

⁵⁸ UNDP, OHCHR (2020). Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Rights in Africa: Liberia Country Report.

⁵⁹FAO, SIDA, ECOWAS (2021). "Gender Equality and Forestry in West Africa: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for West African Countries". Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/CB4280EN/CB4280EN.pdf>

⁶⁰ FAO, SIDA, ECOWAS (2021). "Gender Equality and Forestry in West Africa: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for West African Countries". Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/CB4280EN/CB4280EN.pdf>

2. *How will women and men be impacted (positively or negatively) by project activities including on their livelihoods, workload, control over resources, etc.?*

The Project will contribute directly to women and men's enhanced income opportunities through the promotion of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises. This will be supported by land use planning, capacity-building and creating links between local enterprises and sources of financing. Emphasis will be given to identifying opportunities for women and marginalized groups to improve incomes. These activities will be structured with input from women, regarding their needs and time constraints. The Project will ensure that participation in project activities does not burden women with additional responsibilities without gaining commensurate benefits and will obtain input from women to identify appropriate locations and times for meetings, adapt activities around women's schedules, and bring training to the community when women cannot easily leave their village. It is expected that women's control over resources may improve through the Project's provision of training and capacity building for women (including leadership), and measures to increase women's active participation in land-use planning, development of co-management plans, and customary land formalization processes.

3. *To what extent do women and men participate in decision-making processes about those natural resources and is that likely to carry over into project decision-making? What are the constraints (social, cultural, economic, political) that restrict women's active participation in household, community and project-level decision-making processes?*

Although some progress has been made in incorporating women in community-based decision-making structures in the landscape, the great majority of key decision-making positions in the landscape remain dominated by men. These positions included heads of local government in the locality and community leadership including the Elder Councils. Barriers to women's meaningful participation in public decision making include lack of confidence to assert themselves in the public owing to cultural and religious practices and beliefs which limit public space for women, low educational levels and difficulties in balancing the demands of public office with their multiple gender roles. The implication of male-dominated leadership is that women's voices and aspirations are often not heard. For instance, during engagement of communities during the GEF- supported FOLUR project, women complained that although they have been incorporated into decision-making structures, in most instances, it has been cosmetic, as it is difficult to influence decisions during meetings. This was particularly the case with structures that were chaired by traditional leaders such as village heads and chiefs. The FOLUR project addressed these issues by engaging men and traditional leaders in participatory assessments to understand the role of gender dynamics and to raise awareness about the frequency and impact of gender-based violence within the community. Sensitization workshops specifically targeting men and traditional leaders have focused on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting gender equality, and emphasizing the role that men can play in preventing violence against women and girls.

Similar power dynamics exist at the household level. Prior stakeholder consultations in the landscape found that men generally agreed that since they are the heads of households, they should have a final say on major decisions that affect the household. There is increasing acceptance in the younger generation of joint decision making within the household, however, in cases where there is differing opinion between the husband and wife, the husband's decision generally takes precedence. To participate in Project activities, it is likely that most women would need to seek permission from their husbands. Women would also likely have to consult with their husbands before accepting to participate in committees. In female-only households, household heads can participate without seeking the consent of anyone.

The Project will engage women directly in activities and promote women's leadership, and put measures in place that could contribute to decreasing these barriers. For example, training in soft skills for women leaders who are just recently accessing decision-making spaces; working with men and traditional leaders in the communities to sensitize them about the Project's commitment to gender equality, etc.). While the Project

will work to decrease these barriers, they must be acknowledged to set ambitious yet realistic gender-disaggregated targets.

4. *Do women and men have equal access to information and opportunities necessary to participate and benefit fully from the activities of the project? How do gender-related barriers/challenges potentially limit women's ability to fully participate, make decisions and benefit from the project? How will the project overcome them?*

In NW Liberia landscape, traditional and religious practices limit female ownership and access to resources. For the inheritance of family properties, the male child is given preference. Thus, women's access to land, (one of the most important productive assets for women considering that an estimated 65% of women derive their livelihood from agriculture), is limited. Although the majority of laborers in the agricultural sector are women, only 20% are practicing farming as land-owners. Women realize less income compared to men because they market low value crops and have limited access to high value markets because of the distances involved and the cost of accessing the markets. Other constraints faced by women in this sector include limited access to credit due to the lack of collateral security, lack of sustainable markets and limited security of tenure resulting from discriminatory customary laws.

In many cases, women are not aware of their rights, including their rights to land, forests and trees; to benefit equitably from forest products and services; and to participate in decision making related to natural resources management. Women's literacy rates tend to be lower than men, and their access to technology is more limited, thereby reducing access to information and opportunities.⁶¹ Many women lack access to critical information on rules and regulations that apply to their businesses or work, on their rights with respect to land or assets.⁶² Fewer women than men access mass media as an independent source of information, especially radio, which is the most widely used media in Liberia.⁶³ The Project's communications, outreach, and knowledge management systems will be designed around an understanding of these constraints. Decision-making bodies and fora will similarly be designed to address barriers, for example by adopting practices such as encouraging women's nomination and participation in meeting and sharing workshop topics before meetings to ensure equal capacity to participate. Different communication channels will be used to reach women including outreach in markets and community centers, girls and women's clubs and meetings, and via mobile technologies.

The Project will draw from lessons learned from past engagement and successful project implementation efforts in the Landscape to address and overcome gender barriers. For example, Project implementors will strategically employ holding separate meetings and focus groups for men and women (with same sex facilitators), thereby allowing for both men and women to feel more comfortable and able to fully participate. The Project may also support mixed-gender dialogues that address gender issues (e.g. identify the factors constraining women's meaningful participation in forest management decisions) and encourage men to champion women's empowerment. Activities specifically designed to benefit women will also explicitly be structured to be women-led, thereby allowing for improved flows of information and greater opportunities for full participation. Gender inequalities often limit women's access to benefits, thereby reducing their incentives to participate in such initiatives, therefore, the Project will assign priority to activities and value chains in which poor households and women are most present or could easily join and support economic value addition within such value chains where women are prevalent.

5. *What are the different interests, needs and priorities of men and women within the project context? How will the project be able to address their respective needs and priorities?*

⁶¹ FAO, SIDA, ECOWAS (2021). "Gender Equality and Forestry in West Africa: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for West African Countries". Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/CB4280EN/CB4280EN.pdf>

⁶² Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁶³ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women's Empowerment Lens. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

The roles of women in the landscape are primarily around childcare, household responsibilities, fetching water and firewood, and farming and NTFP collection. Women in the landscape tend to have more decision-making over what are perceived to be “women crops” such as groundnuts, cassava, and vegetables, and on how income from the sale of those crops can be used (usually for kitchen utensils such as pots, plates and their essentials including clothing). Clearing land for cultivation and cash crops such as rice, cocoa, rubber, coffee, and oil palm are considered “men’s crops.” While decisions regarding these crops are usually arrived at through consultations between the husband and wife, it is usually men that make the final decisions and engage in their marketing (as well as keeping income), no matter how much time the woman contributes to the farming process. In cases where there are disagreements on how to use the income, the man in the household usually has the final say. Women and men may possess different traditional knowledge and skills related to landscape ecosystems and resources. Incorporating both sets of knowledge can enhance the effectiveness of conservation initiatives. Providing training and capacity-building programs that are accessible to both genders can help bridge knowledge gaps and foster collaboration.

To address the gender differentiated interests, needs, and priorities, the Project will draw upon the lessons learned noted in Question #4, holding separate engagement meetings and activities between men and women to allow for fuller participation from both genders. Moreover, the Project will recognize the production activities that have been differentiated by gender and work accordingly with men and women to improve production practices and access new opportunities for generating more sustainable livelihoods. It will also align project Priorities, such as ecosystem restoration, with activities that traditionally have been undertaken by women, for example, restoring degraded areas that can be used for more readily available sources of fuelwood and charcoal and to restore watersheds that feed into local water sources.

6. *How might project activities create new opportunities (economic, leadership, etc.) for women?*

With local community land use plans as a base, the Project will provide new economic opportunities through supporting new or existing SMEs, producer associations and producers. Women-led SMEs, either existing or new, will receive particular emphasis, with over half of the target for SMEs receiving support being women-led. The Project will also develop strategies to create linkages between women-led SMEs and producer groups with financial services.

Women-led SMEs are not a rarity in Liberia, as about 80% of women own small enterprises, compared to 57% of men.⁶⁴ Approximately 55% of nonfarm enterprises in Liberia are owned by women. However, compared to male-headed nonfarm enterprises (NFEs), female-headed NFEs are less diversified, smaller in size, and less profitable.⁶⁵ Women-led SMEs are less visible and underrepresented in formal business networks. It has been found that investment in basic business and financial management training and coaching on selecting appropriate business sectors in which to start their small businesses, as well as new approaches focusing on personal motivation and aspirations, self-efficacy, networking, and other soft skills can have significant and strong effects on productivity and earnings, especially for very small enterprises.⁶⁶

The Project will also provide women with new opportunities through learning and knowledge exchange events; training and capacity building on topics identified by women, including leadership training; participation in learning and exposure visits; and participation on transboundary committees.

7. *Is there a possibility that project activities may perpetuate/increase inequalities, including gender-based violence? (why or why not)*

⁶⁴ Karra, M., M. Del Bono, J. Wilde, W. Cunningham, and S. Gupta. 2023. *Liberian Women Count*. Policy Research Working Paper 10425, Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁶⁵ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. *An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women’s Empowerment Lens*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁶⁶ Cunningham, W., S. Gupta, and S. J de Silva. 2023. *An Assessment of Gender Gaps in Liberia through a Women’s Empowerment Lens*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

If the project does not explicitly consider gender issues, it is conceivable that gender inequality could be perpetuated. Therefore, the project has been designed to increase women's participation and active engagement in consultations and capacity building, increase female representation in decision-making roles, and ensure a higher proportion of female project beneficiaries.

Regarding preventing/responding to gender-based violence, the Project will participate in training provided by the RCP on GBV and how to respond if incidents are reported/disclosed, including some of the following topics:

- Assessing the implications (for everyone involved) of talking to a survivor or reporter, recognizing that the project's involvement may make the situation worse. Guidance will be given to follow the lead of the survivor/reporter in determining what is best.
- Establishing a referral list of groups that are trained to support this in case it is needed.
- Designing an AGM to respond to project-related GBV incidents.
- National laws and regulations related to GBV including victim's rights

In addition to training staff and the local communities on gender and safeguarding policies and grievance mechanisms, and how to recognize and address gender-based violence, the Project will specifically engage men and traditional leaders in participatory assessments to understand the role of gender dynamics and to raise awareness about the frequency and impact of gender-based violence within the community. Sensitization workshops specifically targeting men and traditional leaders will focus on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting gender equality, and emphasizing the role that men can play in preventing violence against women and girls.

Finally, the FOLUR work in Liberia found that an effective activity was to train volunteer "GBV change agents" to actively work towards preventing and addressing gender-based violence in society. The GBV change agent educates individuals and communities about the different forms of violence that can occur based on gender, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. By increasing knowledge and understanding, they aim to challenge misconceptions and break the silence surrounding them. They also play a crucial role in raising awareness and ensuring that the communities have been monitored in terms of promoting gender equality and other gender-related issues. The Project will consider implementing a similar approach.

8. *What is the level of gender awareness and capacity to address gender issues amongst local authorities, project partners and project staff?*

SCNL has safeguarding measures such as gender and safeguarding policies, a safeguarding commitment statement and reminder posters displayed at its various offices (including the field offices). They also have in place refresher training for staff and new employees on safeguarding. SCNL mainstreams gender in all of its projects, and its data system for beneficiaries is disaggregated by gender. SCNL has one (1) full-time Gender and Safeguard Officer based in the Monrovia office. The Gender and Safeguard Officer was recruited under the CI-GEF FOLUR project, and has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and an extensive experience in Gender and Safeguarding issues. She is an expert with over five years of professional experience in gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. She has been trained in Gender mainstreaming and safeguarding, and recently completed a certificate course from the Perk Group in Nairobi, Kenya. The CI-GEF Agency will continue to have a supervision role as Implementing Agency.

SCNL is a partner of BirdLife, which has a strong focus (through the BirdLife International Secretariat) to build capacity within national Partners and other collaborators to effectively implement social safeguards, including with respect to gender, as relevant to their specific national and local contexts.

9. *Describe the methods (interviews, desktop research, focus groups, surveys, etc.) were used to collect information for the Gender Analysis/Assessment.*

The information for the Gender Analysis/Assessment was obtained through desktop research, SCNL's deep experience in the landscape, and inputs during the GFIP Regional Design and Validation Workshop (representatives from WABiLED, ProForest, Mano River Union, African Wildlife Foundation, CIFOR-ICRAF, and Gola Rainforest Company provided input about gender issues in the GFIP landscapes). SCNL's FOLUR team provided information for this gender assessment. The team has been in numerous consultations and other engagements with the MOGSCP throughout the project launch and implementation process. They are also working closely with the gender coordinators in the project landscapes to ensure that the Government is working closely to ensure that the FOLUR project is actively working with partners. This Project will build on the FOLUR engagements.

10. Describe lessons learnt during the development of the GMP during the PPG/PPF Phase. E.g. Did you have to hold meetings separately for women? Did the location/time of meetings affect women's participation?

During the PPG, stakeholder consultations included specific questions and discussions regarding gender mainstreaming. These recommendations were incorporated into the design of the Gender Action Plan (GAP), as well as the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). Some of the key recommendations from these conversations are as follows:

- Stakeholders noted that gender, youth, and social inclusion should feature prominently in the program's interventions, including in capacity-building activities. The capacity-building activities of the Project have been designed to promote the inclusion of women and have ambitious targets.
- Identify which economic activities are preferred by women and build on those; removing barriers to women and youth accessing forest enterprises is important. This is focused on by Component 2 of the Project.
- At higher levels of decision-making, women have low representation, therefore achieving 50% participation in meetings, capacity building, etc. will be more difficult than at field/village level. The Project has been ambitious in its gender mainstreaming aspirations, yet realistic about what can be achieved in this context.

SECTION III: Gender Action Plan

Using the results of the Gender Analysis, and considering the project context, scope and components, the Gender Action Plan details how the project will ensure the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, equal access to opportunities, resources and benefits from the project, and avoid perpetuating social inequalities.

Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas				
Outputs	Activities to Mainstream Gender into Output	Target	Resources Required	Budget
<i>Output 1.1.1: Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) updated and implemented</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inclusive multistakeholder processes to obtain input from men and women. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify appropriate locations and times for meetings, adapt activities around women's schedules ○ Share topics before meetings to ensure equal 	<p>Target 1.1.1: <i>One GFNP co-management plan updated and implemented.</i></p> <p><i>At least 40% of meeting participants are women</i></p> <p><i>1 co-management plan includes gender targets</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer • Presentation materials • Communication materials (including AGM) 	USD 66,740

	<p>capacity to participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide information about grievance mechanism and gender policies ○ Ensure women's roles and responsibilities are outlined in co-management plan ○ Engage men and traditional leaders in participatory assessments to understand the role of gender dynamics and to raise awareness about the frequency and impact of gender-based violence within the community. ○ Sensitization workshops specifically targeting men and traditional leaders focused on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting gender equality, and emphasizing the role that men can play in preventing violence against women and girls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the updated co-management plan is inclusive, gender-responsive and generates tangible, sustainable benefits for men and women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that men and women's differential knowledge and practices in the landscapes are recognized and 			
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	valued equally			
<i>Output 1.1.2: Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inclusive multistakeholder processes to obtain input about customary land areas and boundaries from men and women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify appropriate locations and times for meetings, adapt activities around women's schedules ○ Share topics before meetings to ensure equal capacity to participate ○ Hold separate meetings/working groups for women ○ Provide information about grievance mechanism and gender policies • Empower women to assert their ownership claims by Ensure the protection of land ownership for conducting awareness campaigns and providing education on women's land rights • Sensitization workshops specifically targeting men and traditional leaders have focused on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting gender equality, and emphasizing the role that men can play in preventing violence against women and girls. 	<p>Target 1.1.2: <i>Two (2) CLF processes completed and approved by the Liberia Land Authority for at least two (2) PPAs (one each for Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi PPAs).</i></p> <p><i>At least 40% of meeting participants are women</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer • Presentation materials • Communication materials (including AGM) 	<p>USD</p> <p>354,568</p>
<i>Output 1.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettelement packages for Foya and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gender disaggregated data • Indicate opportunities 	<p>Target 1.1.3: <i>Two completed gazettelement packages (1 each for</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	<p>USD 54,780</p>

<i>Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for women's participation, representation, and decision making in the management of the proposed protected areas Indicate social and economic benefits for women in gazettelement package 	<i>Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi PPAs)</i> <i>2 gazettelement packages include gender targets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation materials 	
<i>Output 1.1.4: Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include specific budget in financing plans for gender and inclusion activities 	Target 1.1.4: Three updated or completed financing plans (1 each for Gola, Foya and Kpo Mountain and Wonegizi) <i>3 financing plans include budget for gender activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 16,638
<i>Output 1.1.5: Gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettelement of PAs, and PA co-management delivered to government PA staff and local communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain input from women and men to identify capacity-building needs Identify appropriate locations and times for workshops, adapt activities around women's schedules Promote child-care activities to facilitate participation by women Conduct women-only training sessions with translators of local vernacular. 	Target 1.1.5: At least 9 capacity-building workshops (3 workshops per PA: GFNP; Foya and Kpo Mountains; Wonegizi), with participation of at least 600 (50% women) government PA staff and local community members in total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer Childcare Presentation materials (in simple English or local vernacular) Training materials in simple English or local vernacular 	USD 20,210
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises				
<i>Output 2.1.1: Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map how natural resources are currently being used (by men and women) and where areas for climate-resilient, conservation-friendly activities can be developed. Promote women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share topics before meetings to ensure equal capacity to 	Target 2.1.1: <i>At least 3 land use plans developed at the clan level and implemented around the GFNP and PPAs (interventions covering an area of approximately 89,174 hectares)</i> <i>At least 40% of meeting participants are women</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer Presentation materials Child care DSA for participants 	USD 14,100

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote child-care activities to facilitate participation by women ○ Conduct women-only planning sessions •....Provide information about grievance mechanism and gender policies •....Sensitization workshops specifically targeting men and traditional leaders have focused on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting gender equality, and emphasizing the role that men can play in preventing violence against women and girls. 			
<i>Output 2.1.2: Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from women and men to identify training and technical support needs for women and men • Include assessment of barriers women face in livelihoods and accessing financing and markets for their products, gender roles at the family level and impacts on women as decision makers in livelihood activities, and participation of women in decision making spaces. 	Target 2.1.2: At least 3 gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed (1 for each set of communities adjacent to each of the 3 PAs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 10,000
<i>Output 2.1.3: Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate locations and times for training, adapt activities around women's schedules • Promote child-care activities to facilitate participation by women • Conduct women-only training sessions. 	Target 2.1.3: <i>At least 29,360 community members at the household level (at least 40% women) around the three PAs benefiting from gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical support for sustainable livelihoods.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer • Training materials in simple English or local vernacular • Childcare 	USD 17,582

<i>Output 2.1.4: Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support women-led SMEs, either existing or new • Obtain input from women to identify the needs of women-led SMEs. • Assess and address barriers women face in livelihoods and accessing financing and markets for their products. • Obtain input from women to identify appropriate locations and times for activities. • Promote child-care activities to facilitate participation by women. 	Target 2.1.4: At least 9 SMEs receive project support (at least 5 of which are women-led).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer • Childcare 	USD 87, 611
<i>Output 2.1.5: Number of SMEs, producer associations and producers with access to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current and prior financial links with similar projects (e.g. FOLUR, CEPF, Gola Cocoa), particularly where women's access was good. • Review learnings from World Bank Liberia Women Empowerment Project 	Target 2.1.5: <i>At least 10 beneficiaries with access to financial services, of which 50% are women.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 28,437
Component 3: Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management				
<i>Output 3.1.1: The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for representation, leadership and decision-making of women in Transboundary Watershed management Committees and technical subcommittees • Provide technical and soft skills capacity building to support women's leadership • Stakeholder meetings designed to include input from women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage women's nomination, participation and 	<p>Target 3.1.1: At least three (3) committees supported to undertake actions for joint cross-border natural resource management.</p> <p><i>At least 40% of participants are women</i></p> <p><i>At least 40% of committee positions filled by women</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 46,530

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decision making in meetings, share topics before meetings to ensure equal capacity to participate. 			
<i>Output 3.1.2: Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify knowledge gaps and needs relevant to women and gender issues, design and implement capacity building actions to address those needs. Target women as recipients of technical assistance and capacity building, including leadership training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide equitable and accessible (language, location, timing, methods appropriate for women) technical training opportunities aimed at meeting diverse needs and constraints. Ensure that monitoring includes gender disaggregated data 	<p>Target 3.1.2: At least three 3 trainings undertaken by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project on applied research to inform decision-making in watershed and forest management.</p> <p><i>At least 40% of participants are women</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer Training materials Child care 	USD 23,265
<i>Output 3.1.3: Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and selection of priority nature-based solutions through a gender inclusive process Monitoring of gender-disaggregated impacts 	Target 3.1.3: At least two nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 35,485
Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing				
<i>Output 4.1.1: A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination mechanisms and communication strategies consider production and consumption of knowledge products and communications material by diverse 	Target 4.1.1: One Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects) developed and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 2,820

	<p>groups (i.e. women, youth, elderly, and Indigenous and other vulnerable and/or marginalized groups).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include different communication channels to reach women including outreach in markets and community centers, girls and women's clubs and meetings, and via mobile technologies. • Ensure strategy outlines gender-sensitive communication & publication principles such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of both male and female authors, reviewers, and presenters for the diversity of perspectives ○ Use of gender-sensitive language and gender-balanced images (with positive depictions of women as agents of change) ○ Prepare knowledge products and events in formats and languages accessible to different audiences. ○ Capture different gender perspectives and lessons learned regarding gender ○ Feature knowledge and experience from 			
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	communities, women-led organizations and those led by other disadvantaged groups.			
<i>Output 4.1.2: Participation in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate budget to ensure funding available for women to attend 	<p>Target 4.1.2: 2 Liberia participants in the GFIP Forum (1 rep from the government of Liberia and 1 rep from the PMU, both sponsored by the project).</p> <p><i>At least 50% of the participants are female</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 7,000
<i>Output 4.1.3: Learning and Exposure Visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate budget to ensure funding available for women to participate 	<p>Target 4.1.3: At least 5 learning and exposure trips (1 trip per year, 2 representatives from the Government of Liberia per year).</p> <p><i>At least 50% of the participants over the course of the project are female</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 7,100
<i>Output 4.1.4: Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include topics related to gender and social inclusion issues in knowledge products and communication materials. Use gender-sensitive communication & publication principles such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of both male and female authors, reviewers, and presenters for the diversity of perspectives Use of gender-sensitive language and gender-balanced images (with positive depictions of women as 	<p>Target 4.1.4: At least 5 policy briefs, 5 fact sheets and 5 storytelling videos integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects prepared and disseminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender and Safeguards Officer Presentation materials Communication materials 	USD 11,750

	<p>agents of change)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare knowledge products and events in formats and languages accessible to different audiences. ○ Capture different gender perspectives and lessons learned regarding gender ○ Feature knowledge and experience from communities, women-led organizations and those led by other disadvantaged groups. 			
<i>Output 4.2.1: Gender-responsive and inclusive participatory needs assessment conducted to identify capacity building/technical assistance priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from women and men to identify capacity-building and technical assistance needs • Include key recommendations for ensuring the Project's capacity building and technical assistance priorities are fully aligned with the Project's gender and inclusion goals. 	Target 4.2.1: One gender-responsive and inclusive participatory needs assessment report prepared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 3,290
<i>Output 4.2.2: Delivery of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity building/technical assistance from the RCP facilitated by the Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target women as recipients of technical assistance and capacity building, including leadership training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide equitable and accessible (language, location, timing, methods appropriate for women) technical training opportunities aimed at meeting diverse needs and 	<p>Target 4.2.2: At least 5 gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building/technical assistance events delivered.</p> <p><i>At least 40% of participants are women.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer • Training materials 	USD 3,290

	constraints. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote child-care activities to facilitate participation by women. ○ Conduct women-only training sessions. 			
Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework				
<i>Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gender-specific indicators and gender-disaggregated targets 	Target 5.1.1: 20 quarterly technical and financial reports; 2 Biodiversity Tracking tool (METT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 25,850
<i>Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTR and TE will review/evaluate gender mainstreaming in the program. • Views of both men and women will be represented in the reports 	Target 5.1.2: One Mid-Term Evaluation and One Terminal Evaluation Report approved by CI-GEF and submitted to the GEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Safeguards Officer 	USD 47,000

SECTION IV: Monitoring and Reporting

The GEF/GCF Gender Mainstreaming Policy requires the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender information to inform gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. The project is expected to report on a quarterly basis (using the CI-GEF/GCF Quarterly Reporting template), progress made towards the achievement of gender mainstreaming activities identified in the Gender Action Plan above. The project is also expected to report on an annual basis and using the CI-GEF/GCF Project Implementation Report (PIR) or Annual Performance Report (APR) template, the following CI-GEF/GCF minimum indicators:

Indicator	Baseline		Target	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1. Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who received benefits in the project implementation phase.	0	0	16,000	14,000
2. Number of documents (disaggregated by type) derived from the project that included gender considerations or address gender gaps. ⁶⁷	0		24 (1 knowledge management, and communications strategy; 1 co-management plan; 3 land use plans; 3 socioeconomic assessments; 1 needs assessment; 15 knowledge products)	
3. Number of project events/trainings dedicated to gender	0		17 9 workshops; 3 trainings; 5 technical assistance events	

⁶⁷ Disaggregation by type: Strategy, Framework, Plan (e.g. management plans, and land use plans), Policy paper Knowledge product, Other.

SECTION V: Considerations for the Implementation of the GMP

1. Alignment + integration

The activities, budget and staffing outlined in this action plan must be integrated into the project's overall Project Document + Results Framework. Please confirm that:

- The activities identified in this Action Plan have been integrated into the project's proposal document including the results framework. (Y/N)
- The necessary budget for activities identified in this Action Plan have been integrated into the project's overall budget. (Y/N)

2. Staffing capacities

Describe the project's capacities to implement of this Gender Mainstreaming Plan. Who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the actions? Will that person need to be hired or is s/he already on staff? Does that person have the technical background and skills appropriate for the level of complexity of this GMP? If not, how will this be addressed? What percentage of that person's time will be focused on implementation of this GMP?

SCNL has safeguarding measures such as gender and safeguarding policies, a safeguarding commitment statement and reminder posters displayed at its various offices (including the field offices). They also have in place refresher training for staff and new employees on safeguarding. SCNL mainstreams gender in all of its projects, and its data system for beneficiaries is disaggregated by gender. SCNL has one (1) full-time Gender and Safeguard Officer based in the Monrovia office. The Gender and Safeguard Officer was recruited under the CI-GEF FOLUR project and has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and an extensive experience in Gender and Safeguarding issues. She is an expert with over five years of professional experience in gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. She has been trained in Gender mainstreaming and safeguarding, and recently completed a certificate course from the Perk Group in Nairobi, Kenya. The Project will hire a Gender and Safeguard Officer for this project. The CI-GEF Agency will continue to have a supervision role as Implementing Agency.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) outlines the differentiated measures that the Executing Agency/Entity will implement to ensure the effective participation of key project stakeholders, including both men and women and those identified as disadvantaged or vulnerable stakeholders. The level of detail in the SEP will vary; it must be scaled to the scope of the project, numbers of stakeholders involved, and potential risks and impacts present.

The SEP includes a **Stakeholder Analysis** (Section III) to identify all actors who directly or indirectly may affect or be affected by a project and their varying interests. The SEP also outlines stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle, including: **Stakeholder Engagement in PPG/PPF Phase** (Section IV), **Stakeholder Engagement in Implementation Phase** (Section V), and **Monitoring and Reporting** (Section VI). These sections outline the appropriate methods for engagement, including through neutral/third party facilitators, when necessary. They also detail required public disclosure of information on project scope and impacts, a grievance redress mechanism, the budget to complete stakeholder engagement, indicators, and learning throughout the project cycle.

Each revision of the plan requires further disclosure to stakeholders.

SECTION I: Project Information

PROJECT TITLE:	Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
GEF/GCF PROJECT ID:		PROJECT DURATION:	62 months
EXECUTING AGENCY/ENTITY:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA - Government) Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL- NGO)		

PROJECT START DATE:	January 2025	PROJECT END DATE:	February 2030
SEP PREPARED BY:	Heidi Gjertsen, EcoAdvisors		
DATE OF (RE)SUBMISSION TO CI-GEF/GCF:	May 27, 2024; June 14, 2024		
SEP APPROVED BY:	Ian Kissoon, Senior Director, ESMF, CI-GEF Project Agency		
CONDITION:	This SEP is to be updated during the first 6 months of project implementation, following the validation workshop and further local level consultations, which were delayed due to political unrest following elections.		
DATE OF CI-GEF/GCF APPROVAL:	June 24, 2024		

SECTION II: Introduction

Government, business, and civil society in Liberia are striving to balance the urgent need for employment, food security and economic development with conservation and sustainable use of the country's natural resources. This is particularly evident in the Northwest (NW) Liberia Landscape, an area identified as a conservation priority for carbon and biodiversity as well as key ecosystem services such as freshwater provision, that is also seeing expansion of commercial agroforestry. The NW Liberia Landscape is a 2.7 million ha area with over 1.2 million inhabitants and one of the largest intact forest blocs in the Guinean Forest hotspot. It is exceptionally important for biodiversity, containing many of the country's 25 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Its importance to the Guinean Forest Biome is further amplified by its transboundary linkages to forest landscapes and protected areas in Sierra Leone (Gola Rainforest National Park) and Guinea (Ziama Biosphere Reserve) through the GEF Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP).

The proposed Project (hereafter referred to as GFIP Liberia Project) will build on past and current investments in this critical forest landscape and contribute to gazettelement packages for proposed protected areas totaling 275,937 ha, including the Foya and Kpo Mountains Protected Area and the Wonegizi Nature Reserve, and update the management plan for the Gola Forest National Park (97,975 ha), both within the context of wider landscape-level land use planning. An additional 89,174 ha of forest adjacent to Gola and the proposed protected areas will be under improved management by local communities, combining sustainable livelihoods with restoration and maintenance of forest connectivity and generating socioeconomic benefits for about 30,000 people (at least 47% women). These actions will also contribute to mitigation of at least 1 million MtCO₂e of GHG emissions. The management plans will focus on building the capacity of government officials and local communities to engage in participatory, inclusive land-use planning and to develop effective economic alternatives to current practices, allowing for greater food security and reduced pressure on adjacent ecosystems. These Outcomes will be reinforced through transboundary linkages in watershed management planning and activities, in close coordination with GFIP Country Child Projects in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

The Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) as the Project's Executing Agency will play the lead role in monitoring the Project to provide oversight and maintain its strategic focus. The EPA will collaborate and work closely with other relevant government agencies and ministries including Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Liberia Agricultural Commodity Regulatory Authority (LACRA), the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). Transboundary bodies, including government counterparts in Sierra Leone and Guinea, the Cross-border Committee and the Mano River Union (MRU), will have a central role in enhancing multi-country dialogue and coordination in management of shared transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes.

SCNL will be the Project's Executing Partner and will lead field execution of Project activities. SCNL has experience conservation in NW Liberia landscape using a landscape approach as well as community-based conservation and development activities; convening, facilitating and engaging in multi-stakeholder processes; and engagement with commodity platforms, industry bodies and private sector partners. Several NGOs will assist in execution of activities. Partners in Development (PADEV) and The Nature Compact (TNC) will lead the execution of field activities for Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises) and Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management), respectively. RSPB have presence and on-going community engagement and conservation planning initiatives around Gola Forest National Park, while Fauna and Flora (FF) are present and have on-going conservation management initiatives in both the Wonegizi and Wologizi Proposed Protected Areas. The private sector will be engaged in development of climate-resilient and conservation friendly enterprises and linkages to financial service providers.

Local communities adjacent to the current and proposed protected areas will support implementation and monitoring of project activities. They will be central to processes relating to CLF, land use planning, and management planning. As people in the project areas do not self-identify as Indigenous, they will be referred to as Local Communities. Community members will be the beneficiaries of project activities relating to sustainable livelihoods and nature-based enterprise, through access to training and capacity-building activities as well as activities to enhance access to financing.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was prepared to build, strengthen, and sustain effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement at all levels and across sectors. The goal is to provide a structured participation roadmap for building trust and collaboration with local communities, governmental institutions, and other stakeholders by fostering open communication, addressing concerns, and demonstrating a commitment to shared benefits through the Project design and implementation. This collaborative approach increases the likelihood of the Project meeting its objectives and creating positive outcomes for both the environment and the communities involved.

SECTION III: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Name and Function <i>Name of the key stakeholder, and their main purpose/function</i>	Stakeholder's Interest <i>What are the stakeholder's main interests in and concerns about the project?</i>	Impact of Project on Stakeholder <i>How will the stakeholder be affected (both positively and negatively) by the project?</i>	Influence of Stakeholder <i>How can the stakeholder affect the project? Can they hinder or contribute to the success of the project?</i>	Risk Management <i>(Is this a low, medium or high-risk stakeholder? And how would you manage medium/high risk stakeholders)</i>
Government and Local Authorities				
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	EPA is the executing agency of this project. The EPA has a strong interest in the development and success of this project. EPA is also the GEF Operational Focal Point, therefore EPA has an interest in ensuring coordination with other GEF projects and activities in Liberia.	The successful implementation of this program demonstrates the priority that national government has on the long-term protection and conservation of the Guinean Biome. And will support commitments to ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action Plan, Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, African Convention on Nature and Natural Resources, and AFR100, The EPA is mandated to coordinate these various conventions and agreements.	The EPA has a strong influence on the direction of this Project through its strategic oversight and coordination role, and as the chair of the Project Steering Committee.	High influence therefore it will be important to keep constant engagement and alignment.

Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	As the project will work with communities near existing and proposed protected areas, as custodian of the protected areas network in Liberia the FDA has a particularly strong interest in Component 1.	The project will create the enabling conditions for inclusion of community co- management strategies in future protected area creation.	The FDA has a strong influence in all forest related projects across the country. FDA will co-chair the Project Steering Committee.	Medium Regular engagement regarding activities in Component 1
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	The MOA is responsible for the agriculture sector and has a direct interest in project activities relating to climate smart agriculture, sustainable agroforestry, and restoration of degraded agricultural land.	The Project contributes to MOA's mission of sustainable agriculture and food security	The central role of agriculture in land-use planning makes MOA a key participant; MOA policies and priorities will have a significant impact on land-use planning outputs. MOA will be an alternate PSC chair.	Medium Regular engagement on Project activities
Liberia Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (LACRA)	The Project may build on previous work on commodity value chains such as cocoa. LACRA's regulatory role is directly implicated in decisions on sustainability requirements for these commodities.	The Project's successful implementation of activities related to deforestation-free commodities would be of value to LACRA	LACRA is a key voice with respect to development of policies and regulations relating to sustainable production methods.	Low
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP)	Communities across Liberia are highly dependent on natural resource use for subsistence and local commerce. The mainstreaming of gender into all natural resource and climate change projects is a high priority for the MoGCSP.	The execution of this project will provide valuable information for the Ministry about the practicalities of mainstreaming gender into future natural resource management projects.	The MoGCSP is currently implementing the Liberia Women Empowerment Project. MoGCSP will participate in the PSC.	Low
Cooperative Development Agency (CDA)	The CDA's mandate is to develop producer associations based on cooperative models; this aligns closely with planned project activities focused on enterprise development	By advancing cooperatives and related associations in NW Liberia, the project can expand the constituency base of the CDA.	CDA represents a significant source of expertise on cooperative models; they can help shape these project activities based on that	Low

	and livelihoods. Given CDA resource constraints, they have a strong interest in outside support to advance their mandate.		expertise.	
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is responsible for local governance and rural development. The MIA has an interest in all projects that seek to address issues related to rural development and governance of natural resources.	MIA will have an important role ensuring that the different representatives within local governments are aligned in their understanding and expectations of the Project.	MIA has an important role coordinating and implementing government services through the various units of local government	Low
Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)	The MME administers activities related to the use of land and has a direct interest in the Project's land use planning activities.	Participatory land use planning in this project may provide valuable information for the MME as it devises new strategies for future land use planning processes across the country.	MME can provide a crucial perspective in multi-stakeholder land use planning processes, including those relating to preparation of PA gazettement processes	Low
Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP)	The MFDP holds the mandate to formulate, institutionalize and administer economic development, fiscal and tax policies for the promotion of sound and efficient management of financial resources of the government. This is directly linked to landscape planning and financing strategies.	The project can contribute to MFDP's approach to development planning and tracking of economic performance.	MFDP are the ultimate authority with respect to planning processes. They are also integral to linking sustainable landscape finance to the national conservation financing mechanism.	Low
Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)	LISGIS is responsible for collecting data and maintaining databases pertinent to national planning processes. Thus, the Project's landscape planning activities relate directly to core goals of LISGIS.	The project will work with LISGIS to support land-use planning processes at community and landscape levels.	LISGIS has the relevant technical mandate and capacity for developing and maintaining landscape planning data layers.	Low

Liberia Land Authority (LLA)	The mandate of the LLA extends to all land and land based natural resources, and LLA is responsible for approving Customary Land Formalization processes	The Project's activities related to CLF and land-use planning contribute to LLA's mission of ensuring equitable access to land, security of tenure, proper land use and protection of the environment.	The LLA has a strong interest in the Project's land-use planning activities and LLA will be responsible for approving the Project's CLF processes.	High influence therefore it will be important to keep constant engagement and alignment.
Local County Administration	Local County Administration is the sum-total of personnel who run the various political sub-divisions of Liberia as Local Government. The project will be active in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Bomi, Bong, and Gbarpolu Counties. Local County Administrators have a direct interest in all projects being implemented in their County. Landscape plans and County Development Plans must be aligned.	The Project's contributions to local development, land-use planning, and customary land formalization supports the constituents of Local County Administrators.	Local County Administrators have a strong influence on the direction and success of projects within their counties. Engagement of local communities can be facilitated by Local County Administrators.	Medium Regular engagement on activities within the counties
Government counterparts in Sierra Leone and Guinea	Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone share important watershed and forest landscapes, therefore the activities in one country affect the others. All three countries have Child Projects in the Guinean Forest Integrated Program.	Component 3 of the Project focuses on collaboration, coordination, and joint conduct of management activities to strengthen transboundary watershed and forest landscape management. Liberia's commitment to this Project contributes to the success of Sierra Leone and Guinea.	The commitment of Sierra Leone and Guinea to collaboration, coordination, and joint conduct of management activities contributes to the success of Liberia.	Medium Regular engagement on activities in Component 3
Mano River Union	Collaborative management of the Mano River watershed	The project will build additional capacity within MRU and support the operationalization and institutionalization of MRU Committees	These stakeholders will have a central role in enhancing multi-country dialogue and coordination in management of shared transboundary	Medium Regular engagement on activities in Component 3

			watersheds and forest landscapes, contributing to successful achievement of Component 3 outcomes.	
CSOs/NGOs				
The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)	SCNL has been the leading agency working in the Northwest landscape, supporting the establishment of proposed protected areas, like Foya, Kpo mountains, and Wologizi. They have also led in the management of existing protected areas, Gola National Park. SCNL will co-execute the project with EPA.	The project offers SCNL a significant opportunity to consolidate and expand their work in the region, including building on progress made through FOLUR and other existing projects.	SCNL will lead field execution of Project activities and the PMU will be based in SCNL.	Low
Farmers Associated to Conserve the Environment (FACE)	FACE implemented a UNDP-sponsored awareness raising project in the Lake Piso wetlands in 1999 and an NC-IUCN small-grant sponsored project in 2004. They remain committed to work in this area.	The project may induce FACE to expand work relating to climate-smart agriculture and sustainable commodities.	FACE will provide guidance on the direction of this GEF investment based on their past experience in the Lake Piso part of the project area.	Low
National Charcoal Union of Liberia (NACUL)	The production and distribution of charcoal is a significant driver of forest degradation in the NW Liberia landscape. Community-level land-use planning will include attention to charcoal production.	The project will potentially engage with NACUL to shape strategy for addressing the forest threat posed by charcoal production.	The NACUL may influence how the project engages with project beneficiaries on forest access for charcoal production.	Low
Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue Program (LCRP)	The project geography includes large areas that have been identified as critical chimpanzee habitat.	Integrated landscape management will include consideration of biodiversity value and critical habitats, offering direct contributions to WCF and LCRP mission.	WCF and LCRP offer experience in chimpanzee conservation, conservation planning, protected area design, and financing strategy.	Low

Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)	SDI is committed to protecting and strengthening community land rights and supporting rural communities in customary land formalization and the establishment of land governance committees.	Multi-stakeholder governance structures that include community representation will provide an important avenue for continued SDI advocacy on behalf of rural communities.	SDI can provide guidance regarding customary land formalization processes and ensuring involvement of local communities in land-use planning,	Low
Skills and Agricultural Development Services	Leading local institution in Wonegizi landscape	Successful implementation of Project activities in Wonegizi can contribute to and build on SADS' work in the area	Collaboration and coordination with SADS can result in synergies and improved Project outcomes	Low
World Resources Institute (WRI)	WRI has an interest in improved collection and use of forest data in Liberia.	Community-level activities offers an opportunity to ground truth data.	WRI's forest monitoring platform offers valuable contributions to land- use planning and M&E efforts.	Low
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	The RSPB has made considerable investments in Gola Forest National Park and community-based conservation and development with communities impacted by the Park. These investments and ongoing efforts are nested within landscape level processes in NW Liberia.	Updating the Gola National Park co-management plan and supporting livelihoods in communities around Gola will help reinforce the integrity of Gola Forest National Park.	RSPB can bring scientific and technical expertise to the project, including valuable inputs and participation in land- use planning processes, and links to global markets for sustainable commodities.	Low
IDH	IDH is committed to advancing equitable, sustainable agriculture and agroforestry, including work in both palm oil and cocoa sectors. They also have been active in NW Liberia.	Planned project work with producers (training, planning, incentives, market links) offers substantial synergies with IDH efforts	IDH offers global and in- country experience with production models and producer organization. They also are conduits to potential financing	Low

			sources.	
Fauna and Flora (FF)	FF currently leads REDD+ work in the Wonegizi area in the proposed project geography.	The Project's work on CLF processes and gazettment package will contribute to and build on FF's efforts in Wonegizi.	FF's work on REDD+ provides a foundation for the Project's work in Wonegizi. Collaboration with FF will build on their expertise, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure that the Project is able to accomplish the desired outcomes	Medium Regular engagement on activities in and around Wonegizi
Partners in Development	PADEV has worked over the years with forest fringe communities, to provide long term sustainability benefits for communities. This includes working with local farmers through social enterprise development and climate smart agriculture techniques to reduce deforestation in and around key protected areas.	The Project will contribute to PADEV's work on sustainable benefits for communities.	PADEV will lead the execution of activities related to promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises, contributing to successful outcomes under Component 2 of the Project.	Low
The Nature Compact	TNC is one the leading agencies in supporting community forest governance and management and conservation planning and training. They have developed action plans for transboundary waters in the MRU Region	The Project will build on and implement aspects of TNC's work on transboundary action plans in the region.	TNC will lead the execution of activities related to strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management, contributing to successful outcomes under Component 3 of the Project	Low
Local communities				

Local communities in Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Bomi, and Gbarpolu Counties.	Local communities have a strong interest in ensuring that this project addresses the economic pressures and limited employment opportunities that drive unsustainable land use. Local communities also have an interest in protecting sacred sites such as groves and ensuring access to important cultural areas and resources	Local communities will be directly impacted by project activities on their lands and will be direct beneficiaries of this Project.	Local communities living in the landscape are key to the Project's success as adopters of climate smart agriculture, sustainable agroforestry, and restoration. Local communities are the direct beneficiaries in this Project and will ultimately determine whether integrated landscape management and protected area co-management succeed.	Medium Frequent engagement on Project activities and impacts
Private Sector				
Mano Palm Oil Industries/Mano Palm Oil Plantation (MPOI/MPOP)	MPOI/MPOP has a strong interest in smallholder palm oil production.	The Project's successful implementation of activities related to deforestation-free palm oil would be of value to MPOI/MPOP	MPOI/MPOP can be a valuable source of support for work with communities in and around its concession on sustainable palm oil production.	Low
Liberia Agriculture and Asset Development Company (LAADCO)	LAADCO is a cocoa buyer with an interest in reliable supply of quality cocoa	The Project can link LAADCO to producers with enhanced capacity for sustainable cocoa	LAADCO can contribute important supply chain relationships	Low
Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy (VADEMCO)	VADEMCO has an interest in advancing rural development through agriculture, including an emphasis on cocoa.	The project can create opportunities for VADEMCO to provide its technical services.	VADEMCO can contribute experience on community-based cocoa development	Low

Cooperatives, SMEs, producer associations, producers	Rural cooperatives have an interest in securing training, resources, new livelihood opportunities, and market links for their members	The project can provide training and resources and facilitate linkages to other parts of the value chain.	Cooperatives and associations can provide important convening forums for member farmers, facilitating efficient outreach and participant recruitment for the project.	Low
Academia <i>(Add rows as necessary)</i>				
Forestry Training Institute (FTI), University of Liberia (UL)	FTI and UL offer certificate and degree programs in fields of direct relevance to the project's themes.	The Project may provide research or training opportunities.	FTI and UL can provide expertise in land use planning processes and development of alternative livelihoods. UL will be a member of the PSC.	Low
Disadvantaged/Vulnerable Groups <i>(Add rows as necessary)</i>				
The Elderly	The Elderly share interests with the rest of the community in improvements in standards of living, with a particular emphasis on access to health care.	The project will strengthen household income opportunities, with direct benefits for elderly household members.	The Elderly are important voices in household and community decision-making, and as repositories of knowledge; these are valuable contributions to participatory planning processes.	Low
Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)	Persons with disabilities have an interest in livelihood interventions and capacity development opportunities of the Project	The project will create a range of opportunities for PWD participation in planning and implementation of livelihood programs.	PWDs will be engaged to ensure their specific needs and requirements are considered in implementation of field activities.	Low

Youth	The youth have a strong interest in ensuring that the Project will provide capacity development and employment opportunities	The Project can provide benefits to youth in terms of training and capacity building and sustainable livelihoods.	The youth living in the landscape are key to the project's success as adopters of climate smart agriculture, sustainable agroforestry, and restoration.	Low
Women	Women share interests with the rest of the community in ensuring that this project addresses the economic pressures and limited employment opportunities that drive unsustainable land use.	The Project can provide benefits to women in terms of training and capacity building and sustainable livelihoods.	Women's input into participatory planning processes will be important for Project outcomes.	Low
Others <i>(Add rows as necessary)</i>				
USAID	USAID invests heavily in strengthening local communities' management of forests and natural resources in Liberia, as well as rural development and sustainable agriculture.	The Project will build on prior USAID initiatives (WA-BiCC, WABiLED) by linking community-level management to integrated landscape management across the NW Landscape, and replicating successful components of the intervention with other communities.	The expertise of USAID in the region provides a foundation and lessons learned to the Project	Low
EU	EU has committed significant resources to enhancing transparency and sustainability in Liberia's forest sector (among other areas). Recently launched the NaturAfrica program	The successful implementation of the Project will complement the EU's work in the landscape	Coordination and collaboration will build synergies, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure that the Project is able to accomplish the desired outcomes	Low
	UNDP has invested heavily in projects in Liberia focused on	This project may shape	Lessons learned and knowledge from UNDP	

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	building community resilience, forest management, and agriculture. The GGP initiative is a significant UNDP commitment.	future UNDP investment in sustainable rural development and conservation in the area.	investments in the area can contribute to the success of the Project	Low
CI-GEF Project Agency	CI-GEF Project Agency is the Implementing Agency for the Project, therefore there is a strong interest in ensuring that the Project is a success.	The success of this project may have an impact on the appetite of the CI-GEF Project Agency to support future work in Liberia.	The CI-GEF Project Agency has a significant role in Project oversight and Monitoring and Evaluation. This will have a significant impact on the execution of this project over time.	Low
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Program (WFP)	FAO, IFAD and WFP are the three international agencies most directly focused on agriculture, agroforestry, food production and food security. Their programming includes support for policy, sustainable production models, and climate resilience.	This project will provide a landscape management framework for the types of interventions that FAO, IFAD and WFP support. This offers synergies and efficiencies that may motivate further investment in the future.	The three agriculture/food institutions are critical sources of support and guidance for Liberian government institutions. They also offer intervention experience that can inform design and implementation of project activities.	Low
World Bank (WB)	The WB has and continues to support many significant natural resource management projects in Liberia. WB is the Implementing Agency for the FOLUR IP	This project may influence future WB investments in forestry, Liberia's Protected Area Network, and land-use planning.	Lessons learned and knowledge from WB investments in the area can contribute to the success of the Project	Low

SECTION IV: Stakeholder Engagement During PPG/PPF Phase

a.

Stakeholder Names	Dates, Locations and Methods of Engagement	Outcomes
<i>Name the key stakeholder contacted during PPG in this column. Add rows as necessary.</i>	<i>When and where did you meet? Was it a meeting, consultation, workshop, etc? What steps were taken to seek consent, if needed? How was the engagement documented?</i>	<i>What was the aim/rationale? What was discussed? What decisions were made, if any? How did this contribute to or was captured in the design of the project? How were the contributions of men and women captured, consistent with Gender Action Plan? If/how do they want to be engaged during the implementation phase?</i>
<i>Environmental Protection Agency, EPA</i>	<i>January 18, 2024 Monrovia In-person meeting</i>	<i>Discussion was held with the GEF focal person and key partners in the North west landscape. The essence of the meeting was to brief them on the project and how this project builds on existing ongoing projects. Mr. Jefferson Nyandibo also spoke on how this project links to the Regional GEF Guinean Biome Program. The meeting resulted in awareness and interest of the stakeholders on the project.</i>
<i>Liberia Land Authority, LLA</i>	<i>February 27, 2024 Monrovia In-person meeting</i>	<i>The local consultant held a meeting with the LLA director on land policy and planning. The goal of the meeting was to introduce the project and explain the need for LLA to lead the customary land formalization process as it relates to the gazettelement. The discussion was also on the benefit that conservation and land formalization will provide to local communities in term of livelihood benefits.</i>
<i>Forestry Development Authority, FDA</i>	<i>March 21, 2024 Monrovia In-person meeting</i>	<i>The local consultant held a meeting with the technical manager for Conservation Department. The key issues discussed were an overall briefing on the project, the national steps for gazettelement, and the benefit sharing mechanisms for local communities. There was also a discussion on the current status of the three proposed protected areas. The TM was excited about the project and agreed to providing all the support needed for successful implementation.</i>
<i>European Union/USAID partners Meeting on Conservation Programs in Liberia</i>	<i>March 26, 2024 Monrovia In-person meeting</i>	<i>This meeting was led by the EU ambassador, along with the USAID head, the Managing Director of the FDA and all conservation partners. During the meeting, the EU discussed the commitment to the Government of Liberia as it relates to fulfilling their 30% conservation quota. During the meeting, partners presented on their projects and activities. The national consultant used the opportunity to provide a brief overview on the upcoming GEF project and asked that existing projects coordinate and collaborate to strengthen efforts in the sector. Partners present requested that once the project kick-starts, a meeting is held to brief them on project targets, outcomes and outputs to avoid duplication.</i>

<i>District Commissioner (Kongba District), Hon. Lawrence Sherbo</i>	<i>April 5, 2024</i>	<i>The meeting was held with the District Commissioner of Kongba District in Monrovia following his announcement as District Commissioner earlier this year. Following his pronouncement, Mr. Sherbo worked as the field administrator for SCNL's sub-office in Kumgbor, Kongba District. The commissioner was briefed about the project's objectives and the benefits accrued for community members. He gave his buy-in to the project and committed to supporting the project and the institution from his position as a District Commissioner.</i>
<i>Paramount Chief (Porkpa District), Hon. Jamiltu Watson</i>	<i>April 23, 2024</i>	<i>A meeting was held with the Paramount Chief from Porkpa District in Grand Cape Mount County. Like the other paramount chief, Hon. Watson has been supportive of conservation work in the landscape. When briefed about the project and its role in the gazettement of the two proposed PAs in the landscape, she committed her support and asked that more women groups be prioritized in the benefit-sharing of whatever livelihood support the project will bring.</i>
<i>Paramount Chief (Normon Chiefdom), Hon. McGill Wuleh</i>	<i>May 28, 2024</i>	<i>The technical lead from SCNL held an in-person meeting with the Paramount Chief of Normon Chiefdom in Normon, Gbarpolu County. SCNL has worked with the Paramount chief for many years in the landscape. He was briefed about the project and its role in supporting the customary Land Formalization Process that will lead to the gazettement of Foya and Kpo PPAs. Papay Wuleh committed his support to the project, thanked SCNL for the work that has been done in the District and asked for more livelihood support for his people.</i>
<i>Head of the Community Forest Management Body (CFMB), Karimu Fofana</i>	<i>May 29, 2024</i>	<i>The technical lead from SCNL had an in-person meeting with the Head of the Community Forest Management Body in Tonglay Clan, Gbarpolu County. Karimu was briefed about the project and the CLF process that will take place. As head of the Community Forest Management body, he was told of his role in supporting the boundary harmonization process, which will ensure extensive consultation with community members to know which forest land goes into PAs.</i>
<i>Guma-Mende Cooperative & Sebehill Agriculture Cooperative, Lofa County</i>	<i>May 30, 2024</i>	<i>SCNL's livelihood officer held a meeting with the Guma-mende and Sebehill Agriculture cooperatives in Vahun, Lofa County. The Cooperatives were briefed about the project and its interventions in the landscape. They were also told that the project is divided into components and another organization will lead the livelihood activities, but with the support of SCNL.</i>
<i>Validation workshop to be added</i>		

b. Project Disclosure

Disclosing project information is essential for meaningful consultation on project design and for stakeholders to understand the potential opportunities of the project, and the risks and impacts of the project.

Confirm that the following information was shared with stakeholders in a timely manner and in an appropriate form and language during the PPG/PPF Phase:

Information	When, How and Where this was shared?
The purpose, nature and scale of the project	Consultations during Project Preparation Information was shared in stakeholder meetings described in table in Section IVa. Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.
The duration of proposed project activities	Consultations during Project Preparation Information was shared in stakeholder meetings described in table in Section IVa. Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.
Information from the environmental and social safeguard screening process, regarding potential risks and impacts of the project on stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposals for mitigating risks and impactsPotential risks and impacts that might disproportionately affect vulnerable and disadvantaged groupsDescription of differentiated measures to be taken to avoid and minimize disproportionate risks and impacts	Consultations during Project Preparation Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.
The proposed stakeholder engagement process, highlighting ways in which stakeholders can participate and contribute during project design and/or implementation	Consultations during Project Preparation Information was shared in stakeholder meetings described in table in Section IVa. Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.
The time and venue of proposed public consultation meetings, and the process by which meetings will be notified, summarized and reported	Consultations during Project Preparation Information was shared in stakeholder meetings described in table in Section IVa. Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.
The process and means by which grievances can be raised and addressed	Consultations during Project Preparation Information will be shared with all stakeholders during validation workshops in August 2024.

c. Reporting of Indicators During PPG/PPF

Number of stakeholder entities (disaggregated by type) involved in the project PPG phase	15 3 Government (national) 4 Government (county and district) 4 NGOs/CSOs 2 Private sector/ Community organizations 2 bilateral *more to be added after validation workshop
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Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who participated in the project PPG phase	117 men 63 women
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d. Lessons Learned during PPG/PPF:

1. Elections during the PPG phase restricted the ability to conduct stakeholder workshops. This delayed the development of the Project design. Additional stakeholder consultation will take place after the first submission of the Project Document to GEF. For the project's implementation, adequate time and resources have been allocated for stakeholder engagement in various forums at global, regional, national and local levels.
2. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of coordinating with and learning from existing and past initiatives. The Project will continue to align with other investments in the area, particularly NaturAfrica, Folur, and the work of Project partners in the field.
3. While in-person engagements are costly, they efficiently generate a great deal of information and input in a short period of time. While some technical/logistical challenges must be overcome, including the option to participate virtually is beneficial for increasing participation.

SECTION V: Stakeholder Engagement in the Implementation Phase

Stakeholder Name	Method of Engagement	Location and Frequency	Resources Required	Budget
Local communities in project sites, including governance bodies (e.g. CFMB, CLDMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face community meetings • One-on-one interviews/meetings • Workshops • Public meetings • Focus group meetings. • WhatsApp • Radio announcements • Information boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community meetings in project sites throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants 	Staff time; travel to project sites; meeting venue and catering for community meetings	Already included in the project budget
National Government Ministries and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails, • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Management Unit meetings • Project Steering Committee meetings • Project Inception workshop • Training and capacity building events • Participation in landscape land-use planning processes • Consultation to propose policies/regulations • Share mid-term and final project evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMU meetings will be held monthly in Monrovia. • PSC meetings will be held quarterly in Monrovia. • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • Consultations, training and capacity building activities will be held throughout the year in Monrovia and in the communities 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget

Academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Inception workshop • Project Steering Committee meetings • Participation in landscape land-use planning processes • Share midterm and final project evaluation • Distribution of printed public materials: newsletters/ updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails will be sent throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • PSC meetings will be held quarterly in Monrovia. • Mid-term and final evaluations will be held half-way of the project and at the end of the project respectively 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget
NGOs and civil society organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Inception workshop • Project Steering Committee meetings • Implementation planning and execution • Participation in landscape land-use planning processes • Share midterm and final project evaluation • Distribution of printed public materials: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails will be sent throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • PSC meetings will be held quarterly in Monrovia. • Mid-term and final evaluations will be held half-way of 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget

	newsletters/ updates	the project and at the end of the project respectively		
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Inception workshop • Cultivation of market relationships with producers • Share midterm and final project evaluation • Distribution of printed public materials: newsletters/ updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community meetings/trainings in project sites throughout the project implementation • Emails will be sent throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • Mid-term and final evaluations will be held half-way of the project and at the end of the project respectively 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget

Bilateral/Multilateral Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Inception workshop • Cultivation of market relationships with producers • Share midterm and final project evaluation • Distribution of printed public materials: newsletters/ updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails will be sent throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • Mid-term and final evaluations will be held half-way of the project and at the end of the project respectively 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget
Local Government (County Authorities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Face-to-face meetings • Workshops • Project Inception workshop • Cultivation of market relationships with producers • Share midterm and final project evaluation • Distribution of printed public materials: newsletters/ updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails will be sent throughout the project implementation and the frequency will be as and when the situation warrants • Project inception workshop will be held in Monrovia during the first three months of project implementation • Mid-term and final evaluations will be held half-way of the project and at the end of the project respectively 	Staff time; travel support; meeting venue and catering for meetings	Already included in the project budget

Vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face community meetings • One-on-one interviews/meetings • Workshops • Public meetings • Focus group meetings. • WhatsApp • Radio announcements • Information boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community meetings in locations accessible to vulnerable groups throughout the project implementation • 	<p>Staff time; travel to project sites; meeting venue and catering for community meetings Child care Special services to accommodate differing needs</p>	<p>Already included in the project budget</p>
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SECTION VI: Monitoring and Reporting

The project will report on a quarterly basis (using the CI-GEF Quarterly Reporting template), progress made towards the implementation of the SEP.

On an annual basis and using the CI-GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR) template, the following CI-GEF's minimum indicators are to be reported. The project can include other appropriate stakeholder engagement indicators in addition to the CI-GEF's indicators.

Indicator	Baseline (PPG phase)	Target
1. Number of stakeholder entities (disaggregated by type) involved in the project implementation phase	15 3 Government (national) 4 Government (county and district) 4 NGOs/CSOs 2 Private sector/ Community organizations 2 bilateral *more to be added after validation workshop	33 10 Government (national) 5 Government (county and district) 8 NGOs/CSOs 4 Private sector 3 Community organizations 2 Technical/ Research institutions 1 Transboundary bodies
2. Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who participated in the project implementation phase	117 men 63 women	600 men 600 women
3. Number of engagements (disaggregated by type of engagement) with stakeholders in the project implementation phase.	11 9 in-person meetings; 1 technical working session; 1 validation workshop	34 10 workshops; 6 trainings; 18 community meetings

Person responsible for implementing and monitoring the SEP:	Gender and Safeguards Officer
How/Where will the approved SEP be disclosed:	The approved SEP will be disclosed via the project's website and at the inception meeting with stakeholders.
When will the approved SEP be disclosed:	The approved SEP will be disclosed in the first quarter of the implementation phase.

Stakeholders consulted at the PPG Phase

Attached separately

ANNEX H: Terms of Reference for Partners

This Annex elaborates on the terms of reference (TORs) for each partner involved in the implementation of the project. The role of each partner has been defined based on the capacity, expertise and operations comparative advantage that they bring for effective delivery of the project.

1. Environment Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA)

The EPA as the Project's Executing Agency will play the lead role in monitoring the Project to provide oversight and maintain its strategic focus, with SCNL as the Project's Executing Agency Support Partner. The EPA will collaborate and work closely with other relevant government agencies and ministries including Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Liberia Agricultural Commodity Regulatory Authority (LACRA), the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). The EPA will coordinate and collaborate on ad-hoc basis and through the established coordination mechanisms such as (a) quarterly Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings chaired by EPA, co-chaired by FDA and attended by the Heads of the above-mentioned government agencies and ministries (or their designees); (b) involving the relevant government agencies and ministries in joint monitoring of Project activities; and (c) sector coordination meetings held to promote close collaboration between the Project and other relevant ongoing and planned government initiatives and ensure Project outputs and outcomes are mainstreamed into government policies, laws, and regulations.

1. Overall Coordination and Support

- Guide overall project execution and delivery of outputs and outcomes.
- Ensure that project outcomes (both those directly implemented by the EPA and those implemented by executing partners) are achieved.
- Serve as the Chair for the Project Steering Committee.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.
- Effective coordination of and between potential executing partners.
- Ensure alignment and coordination between the Liberia Child Project and the Guinean Forest Integrated Program and participate in events organized by CI under the Guinean Forests Integrated Program, as well as other important events including those organized by GEF Integrated Programs.

2. Technical Contributions

- Ensure that project activities are implemented in alignment with the Government of Liberia's National Environmental Policy (NEP) and The Environmental Management and Protection Law of Liberia.
- Ensure that environmental and social safeguards are adhered to and that the Environmental and Social Management Framework is implemented.
- Provide implementation support to SCNL for Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas), to PADEV for Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises), to TNC for Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management), and to SCNL for Component 4 (Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning and knowledge sharing).
- Amplify stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing, and support SCNL to convene meetings/workshops and other outreach activities.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

- Ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation of project interventions (Component 5), including effective use of GEF resources, and support reporting to CI GEF Agency.
- Help SCNL implement a robust M&E system to track the project's progress against set objectives and indicators.
- Through its oversight role, ensure that the M&E system is adaptive and facilitates the timely identification and mitigation of issues and risks.
- Maintain records of all project-related documentation.

2. Forestry Development Agency (FDA)

The FDA will provide technical, strategic and policy input to all Components of the project, ensuring alignment with the National Forest Policy, National Forest Management Strategy, and regulatory processes relating to establishment of protected areas and community forests. Below is an overview of FDA's responsibilities in the project:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings, serving as co-Chair.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.
- Participate in coordination meetings with counterparts in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building

- Support SCNL in implementation of activities under Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas), including updating and development of co-management plans, supporting Customary Land Formalization processes, guiding development of gazettelement packages for proposed protected areas, and participating in capacity-building workshops.
- Support PADEV in implementation of activities under Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises), including development of land use plans, input into socioeconomic assessments, delivering training and technical assistance on sustainable livelihoods, support for forest-based enterprise development, and facilitating links to financial services.
- Support TNC in implementation of activities under Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management), including participation in and support for committees to improve transboundary management and sustainable use of river basins, participating in capacity building for applied research to inform resource management, and work with communities and partners to implement nature-based initiatives to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration.
- Support SCNL in implementation of activities under Component 4 (Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning and knowledge sharing), including participation in annual GFIP forums, supporting production and dissemination of materials to enhance capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management, input into participatory needs assessments to prioritize capacity building and technical assistance, and delivery of capacity building and technical assistance.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Provide inputs into project monitoring and evaluation processes.

- Provide inputs into Midterm evaluation and Terminal evaluation of the project.

3. Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), Government of Liberia

The CDA will support implementation of project activities relating to sustainable livelihoods and enterprise with rural communities, with an emphasis on establishing and/or strengthening cooperatives. Below is an overview of the CDA's responsibilities in the project:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building

- Support PADEV in implementation of activities under Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises), including delivering training and technical assistance on sustainable livelihoods, support for development of Small and Medium enterprises and cooperatives, and facilitating links to financial services.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Provide inputs into project monitoring and evaluation processes.

4. Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Government of Liberia

The MoA will support implementation of project activities relating to rural livelihoods and landscape management. Below is an overview of MoA's responsibilities in the project:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building

- Support SCNL in the implementation of activities under Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas), by providing input into the development of co-management plans and PA gazettelement packages within wider multi-stakeholder processes.
- Support PADEV in the implementation of activities under Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises), including input into socioeconomic assessments, delivering training and technical assistance on sustainable livelihoods, and support for rural enterprise and cooperative development.
- Support TNC in the implementation of activities under Component 3 (Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management), through support for committees to improve transboundary management and sustainable use of river basins.

5. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)

LISGIS will support implementation of project activities relating to data and mapping. Below is an overview of LISGIS's responsibilities in the project:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building

- Support SCNL in implementation of activities under Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas), by providing data and mapping support relating to development of co-management plans and PA gazettelement packages.
- Support PADEV in implementation of activities under Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises), by providing data and mapping support relating land use planning and socioeconomic assessments.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Provide inputs into project monitoring and evaluation processes.

6. Society For Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)

As Executing Agency Support Partner, SCNL will provide critical support to the EPA for project management and implementation. SCNL will house the Project Management Unit (PMU), lead recruitment of PMU members to be hired, and manage field activities out of their NW Liberia field office. They also will lead implementation for Component 1 (Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas) and Component 4 (Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing), and share responsibility with the EPA for Component 5 (Monitoring and Evaluation Framework).

The PMU plays a key role in ensuring the seamless operation, coordination, and successful implementation of the Liberia Child Project and its alignment with the Guinean Forest Integrated Program (GFIP) and the Guinea and Sierra Leone Child Projects. The PMU is entrusted with a myriad of responsibilities, encompassing various domains from overall coordination to specialized tasks like gender-sensitive planning and coordination of transboundary collaboration. Below is a draft overview of the PMU's roles and responsibilities:

Overall Coordination and Support

- Support overall project execution and delivery of outputs and outcomes.
- Serve as the secretariat for the Project Steering Committee.
- Organize and lead Technical Coordination Committee meetings.
- Facilitate and ensure the smooth implementation of the project by coordinating activities, resources, equipment, and information.
- Provide support and enhance the capacity of both state and non-state stakeholders.

- Ensure alignment and coordination between the Liberia Child Project and the Guinean Forest Integrated Program, and participate in events organized by CI under the Guinean Forests Integrated Program, as well as other important events including those organized by GEF Integrated Programs.

Communication and Outreach

- Develop and implement a robust communication and outreach strategy to promote the project's objectives and outcomes.
- Lead the development of the project's website and communication interfaces, including social media platforms, to facilitate effective information dissemination and stakeholder engagement.
- Capitalize on the capacity development of state and non-state stakeholders and ensure the documentation and sharing of knowledge and experiences generated over the course of project implementation.

Gender-Sensitive Planning and Management

- Lead in incorporating gender-sensitive planning across all project activities and ensure that gender topics are adequately addressed and integrated.
- Develop and implement a gender-sensitive knowledge management strategy to ensure that gender considerations are embedded in all aspects of the project.

Landscape-level Coherency and Management

- Build and ensure NW Liberia Landscape coherency and manage interdependencies with other programs, projects, and initiatives, including but not limited to USAID, EU, AFD and CEPF investments in the landscape and its connected transboundary areas.
- Enhance coordination between the Liberia Child Project, the GFIP, and the Guinea and Sierra Leone Child Projects, ensuring that gender topics are cohesively integrated.
- Monitor and raise additional co-financing for the project.

Grants, Contracts Management, and Reporting

- Manage grants and contracts, ensuring that all activities are executed as per the agreed terms and conditions.
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting, and maintain meticulous records of meetings and decisions, including notetaking.

Support to the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) and CI-GEF Agency

- Support the EPA in its role as Executing Agency and in maintaining a healthy relationship with CI-GEF Agency and ensure that all communications and dealings are conducted smoothly.
- Support the CI-GEF Agency in maintaining a healthy relationship with the GEF STAP and ensure that all communications and dealings are conducted smoothly.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

- Ensure that all project activities adhere to relevant environmental and social safeguards.
- Provide support to other Executing Partners in managing their project components and ensuring compliance with safeguard norms.

Data Collection and Management

- Oversee the collection of various data, ranging from GIS/geo-referenced data to reports and baseline documents, ensuring accuracy and reliability.
- Manage and safeguard all collected data, ensuring its availability for monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making (beyond project timeline).

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

- Support the EPA in monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, and lead reporting to CI GEF Agency.
- Implement a robust M&E system to track the project's progress against set objectives and indicators.
- Ensure that the M&E system is adaptive and facilitates the timely identification and mitigation of issues and risks.

Capacity Development

- Facilitate the utilization of tracking tools for protected areas and Other Effective Conservation Measures, such as community-managed areas.
- Facilitate delivery of training in the use of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) and the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET).
- Ensure that capacity development initiatives are intricately linked with and inform the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.

Deliverables from PMU (non-exhaustive):

- Effective coordination and support to all stakeholders.
- Enhanced capacities of state and non-state stakeholders.
- A comprehensive communication and outreach strategy, including a functional website and active social media platforms.
- Gender-sensitive planning and knowledge management across all project activities.
- Efficient management of grants, contracts, and reporting.
- Adherence to environmental and social safeguards in all project activities.
- Reliable data management for informed decision-making.
- A robust and adaptive M&E system.

The PMU, through its multifaceted roles and responsibilities, aims to ensure that the project not only achieves its objectives but also contributes significantly to biodiversity conservation, sustainable financing, policy mainstreaming, and gender-sensitive planning and implementation. The PMU will work diligently towards fostering coherence within the NW Liberia Landscape and among Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, ensuring effective communication, and building synergies among various programs and initiatives to amplify the impact and sustainability of the project.

- SCNL will also lead implementation of Component 1 of the project. This will entail:
- Lead process to update the co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park
- Facilitate Customary Land Formalization processes with communities around Foya and Kpo Mountains proposed protected areas
- Complete gazettelement packages for Foya, Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi proposed protected areas
- Update/draft financing plans for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA

- Conduct gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops on CLF, gazettement of PAs, and PA co-management with government PA staff and local communities

7. Partners In Development (PADEV):

PADEV will lead implementation of Component 2 (Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises) of the project. It will apply its expertise in community mobilization and training and value chains to promote and build capacity in alternative livelihoods, including enhanced access to financing for rural enterprise development. Below is an overview of PADEV's responsibilities:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.

2. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:

- Lead participatory land use planning processes with clans adjacent to protected areas.
- Lead socioeconomic assessments to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods
- Provide expert advice and training in agroforestry, other deforestation-free livelihood options, and sustainable land use practices to participating communities in the NW Liberia Landscape.
- Support development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises with an emphasis on women-led enterprises.
- Develop access to innovative rural development finance and financial services for SMEs, producer associations and producers.
- Apply best practices to reinforce technical, financial and legal support for smallholder farmers within deforestation-risk commodity chains in order to help them adopt innovative, low-cost biodiversity-friendly practices and secure their legal rights

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Provide inputs into project monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Contribute to preparation of knowledge products.
- Participate in meetings/workshops for stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing.

8. The Nature Compact (TNC)

TNC will lead the implementation of Component 3 (Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management) of the project. It will apply its expertise in conservation management, conservation financing, and institutional capacity building to work with the Mano River Union (MRU) to enhance coordination and collaboration on the management of transboundary landscapes with Guinea and Sierra Leone. Below is an overview of TNC's responsibilities:

1. Coordination and alignment

- Participate in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- Participate in Technical Coordination Committee meetings.
- Participate in coordination meetings with counterparts in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building

- Support the functioning, operationalization and institutionalization of committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of Mano River Basin resources
- Facilitate capacity-building among MRU and partners for applied research to improve watershed management
- Work with communities and partners to implement nature-based initiatives to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Provide inputs into project monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Contribute to preparation of knowledge products.
- Participate in meetings/workshops for stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing.

ANNEX I: Terms of Reference (ToRs) for Personnel charging to both PMC and Components

Technical Lead | FULL-TIME

Project objective: To enhance the co-management of protected areas and joint transboundary watershed management to ensure that intact forest landscapes in Northwest Liberia deliver ecosystem services and support socioeconomic improvement.

The technical lead will oversee the project's technical direction, including the day-to-day implementation of activities, preparation of work plans, budgets, and required reports, essentially fulfilling technical functions within it, but also collaborating with the project's 'Finance Lead' on operational aspects of project management. They will monitor and report on project performance, making necessary adjustments to ensure efficient and timely delivery of project goals. Providing overall leadership and general technical direction, the technical lead will integrate various components and coordinate with local, national, and regional stakeholders in the Northwest (NW) Liberian Landscape to achieve the results defined in the donor agreement. Collaborating with support staff, they will identify, and address issues and risks related to project implementation. Serving as the main point of contact for government, donor, and private sector relations, the technical lead will manage the preparation and presentation of implementation plans and reports, and fulfill other duties as they arise.

As the secretary for the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the technical lead will represent the project to the Government of Liberia, the regional coordination unit, Conservation International, and other partners as needed. They will ensure smooth project operations through effective monitoring and communication with the PSC, counties, communities, contractors, consultants, community-level stakeholders, and other engaged entities. Additionally, the technical lead will provide technical inputs, direction, oversight, and reporting for components 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as component 5 (M&E) and the Project Management Committee (PMC). Specific activities for each project component, M&E, and PMC are outlined below.

COMPONENT 1:	Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas
<p>Outcome 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)</p>	<p>Output 1.1.1: <i>Gender-responsive and inclusive co-management plan for Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) updated and implemented.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive planning across all output activities and ensure that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the output. • Oversee comprehensive technical support to output activities implementers, conducting training sessions in agroforestry, sustainable land use, and PA co-management, while promoting gender integration and social inclusion, implementing best practices for inclusive land and resource use in protected area co-management plans. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings.
	<p>Output 1.1.2: <i>Customary Land Formalization (CLF) processes completed for Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive planning across the CLF process, ensuring that that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the output. • Support sharing information, best practices, and expertise related to forest governance and sustainable PA co-management among forest stakeholders, government officials and the GFIP. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings. <p><u>Output 1.1.3:</u> <i>Gender-responsive and inclusive gazettement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA completed and submitted to FDA.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive planning across all aspects of gazettement package development activities and ensure that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the output. • Support the research on local knowledge for ecosystem protection and engagement of local communities, ensuring results of both are included in the final gazettement packages. • Ensure that all gazettement packages adhere to relevant guidelines, regulations and environmental and social safeguards and are submitted to the proper authorities according to established procedures. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings.
	<p><u>Output 1.1.4:</u> <i>Financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the strategic organization and hosting of local and national meetings to assess current and projected needed funding for all three PAs under various funding scenarios. • Support in the exploration of sustainable financing opportunities and capacity-building support in collaboration with technical and financial partners, including with GFIP RCU.
COMPONENT 2:	Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises
<p><u>Outcome 2.1:</u> Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved</p>	<p><u>Output 2.1.1</u> <i>Inclusive, gender-responsive land use plans developed and implemented with clans adjacent to PAs and PPAs:</i> The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive planning across all land use plan development activities and ensure that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the output. • Oversee comprehensive technical support to output activities implementers, conducting training sessions in agroforestry, sustainable land use, and integrated land use management, while promoting gender integration and social inclusion, implementing best practices for inclusive land and resource use in land use plans. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings.

	<p><u>Output 2.1.2:</u> <i>Gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments conducted to identify community priorities for training and technical support relating to sustainable livelihoods.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive socioeconomic assessments across all assessment activities and ensure that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the output. • Facilitate and ensure the smooth implementation of the output by coordinating activities, resources, equipment, and information, including dissemination of assessment results to local, national and regional partners. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings.
	<p><u>Output 2.1.3:</u> <i>Gender-responsive and inclusive training and technical assistance for sustainable livelihoods delivered to communities residing around the target PAs and PPAs.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and ensure the smooth implementation of the training and technical assistance by coordinating activities, resources, equipment, and information. • Oversee comprehensive technical support to output activities implementers, conducting and/or facilitating training sessions in agroforestry, sustainable land use, and integrated land management, while promoting gender integration and social inclusion, implementing best practices for inclusive land and natural resource use in land use plans. • Lead representation at local and national-level meetings.
	<p><u>Output 2.1.4:</u> <i>Development of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supported (with emphasis on inclusion of women-led enterprises).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee comprehensive logistical and technical support to output activities implementers, conducting training sessions in climate-resilient and conservation-friendly SMEs, while promoting gender integration and social inclusion.
	<p><u>Output 2.1.5:</u> <i>Access to financial services provided to conservation-friendly SMEs, producer associations, and producers (with emphasis on access for women).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee comprehensive logistical and technical support to output activities implementers, conducting outreach to and engagement of private and public financial service providers willing to support climate-resilient and conservation-friendly SMEs, while promoting gender integration and social inclusion.
COMPONENT 3:	Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management

<p>Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano watershed</p>	<p>Output 3.1.1: <i>The functioning of the committees established under MRU to support improved management and sustainable use of river basin resources operationalized and institutionalized within MRU.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the strategic organization and hosting of local, national and regional and national roundtables to enhance coordination among participating MRU countries. • Facilitate training programs organized by the technical partners on knowledge transfer sessions, and skill-building activities to allow for functional of the committees established under the MRU. • In collaboration with other participating country leads, ensure alignment and coordination between the MRU, GFIP, RCP and the 4 Critical Forests Integrated Programs, with a particular focus on the Congo IP.
	<p>Output 3.1.2: <i>Capacity for applied research to inform decision-making processes for watershed management built.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the provision, and where appropriate, directly provide technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives to enhance both technical and institutional capabilities in decision-making processes for management of transboundary watersheds.
	<p>Output 3.1.3: <i>Nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and riverbank deterioration implemented.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the exploration of nature-based solutions to improve freshwater ecosystem health and mitigate climate change impacts and river deterioration opportunities and capacity-building support in collaboration with technical and partners. • Support and, where appropriate, facilitate training programs organized by the technical partners on developing and implementing nature-based solutions for the transboundary MRU area.
<p>COMPONENT 4:</p>	<p>Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing</p>
<p>Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)</p>	<p>Output 4.1.1: <i>A project Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the review of existing knowledge management platforms and lead outreach and coordination with other local, national and regional conservation initiatives to define and implement the best tools and channels for knowledge-sharing. • Facilitate efficient integration of complementary data through the development of a knowledge-sharing platform/portal and/or integration and expansion of existing platforms. • Ensure that relevant information, updates, and achievements of the project are communicated effectively to relevant stakeholders, including state, non-state actors and donors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in gender-sensitive and inclusive planning across all project activities and ensure that gender and inclusivity topics are adequately addressed and integrated into all aspects of the project. • Coordinate with GFIP's RCP the development and implementation of a gender-sensitive knowledge management strategy to ensure that knowledge is integrated with other forest initiatives in the GF region and other Forest Biome IPs. • Coordinate knowledge-sharing and dissemination efforts and the co-definition of learning tools within Liberia (particularly in the NW Landscape) and GFIP Country Child Projects. • Supporting the shared information, best practices, and expertise related to forest governance and sustainable management among forest stakeholders, notably those in the NW Landscape. • Lead representation at local, national and regional events/webinars linked to the project. 	
	<p><u>Output 4.1.2:</u> <i>Participation in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the preparation of agendas and schedules for each annual forum. • Oversee periodic updating of agendas and schedules. • Coordinate RCP facilitation of inter-governmental dialogue sessions. 	
	<p><u>Output 4.1.3:</u> <i>Learning and exposure visits facilitated with the GFIP Child Projects (and where applicable coordinated by the GFIP Regional Coordination Project).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate dates and agendas for visits with the GFIP and associated Child Country Projects. • Oversee periodic updating of agenda and schedule for Liberia participants. 	
	<p><u>Output 4.1.4:</u> <i>Knowledge management products integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects generated, and disseminated at local, national and regional levels (integrating lessons learnt and best practices on traditional knowledge for natural resource management, and information on the project as a model for Nature-Based-Solutions).</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the co-creation and facilitate the joint dissemination of gender-sensitive communication materials with Country Child Projects to relevant audiences based on the communications and branding strategy. 	
Component 5:	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	
<u>Outcome 5.1:</u> An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project	<p><u>Output 5.1.1:</u> <i>Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the development and implementation of a robust M&E system to track the program's progress against set objectives and indicators. • Delivery of monthly progress reports, including the status of project activities and challenges encountered during implementation. • Ensure that the M&E system is adaptive and facilitates the timely identification and mitigation of issues and risks. • Oversee monitoring and verifying of GEF Core Indicator Tracker and collection of relevant information from CCPs and coordination with the GEF Implementation Agency. <p><u>Output 5.1.2:</u> <i>Output 5.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and CI-GEF Evaluation Policies</i></p> <p>The technical lead will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the conduct of a Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program through comprehensive assessments, stakeholder consultations, and performance evaluations to ensure effective program implementation and achievement of objectives. • Oversee monitoring and verifying of GEF Core Indicator Tracker, contributing to the program's evaluation and knowledge dissemination.
PMC	<p>To a minor extent, the Project lead will also be responsible for operational aspects of project coordination and management, by collaborating with the with the Project's Finance Lead on a several executive decisions that involve the project's finances, administration, operations and procurement process, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile monthly, quarterly and annual administrative reports. • Review monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports. • Give support to external auditors. • Conduct site visits to ensure compliance and provide financial assistance support to project partners in Liberia.

The project manager will work closely with the Finance lead, support staff and CI-GEF to ensure the availability of information on progress and performance regarding the implementation of the project. S/he will deliver progress reports on a monthly basis. These reports will include: i) status of activities; and ii) challenges encountered on the ground during project execution.

FINANCE LEAD | FULL-TIME

Project objective: To enhance the co-management of protected areas and joint transboundary watershed management to ensure that intact forest landscapes in Northwest Liberia deliver ecosystem services and support socioeconomic improvement.

The Finance Lead will handle administrative tasks and oversee the project's financial management. This role involves supporting the achievement of project outputs through procurements, logistical support, and administrative work, including human resource management at the PMU and with partners. The Finance Lead will ensure budgetary control, efficient resource management, and timely delivery of resources in accordance with the financial management and fiduciary policies of the Government of Liberia, EPA, SCNL, CI, and GEF. Responsibilities include conducting due diligence, building the capacity of GEF funding recipients to adhere to GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards, and preparing financial reports, such as annual budget execution reports and quarterly financial statements, while monitoring expenditures within the approved budget. The Finance Lead will support the delivery and compliance of components 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as component 5 (M&E), and will play a crucial role in the PMC by managing overall finances. Specific activities for each project component and PMC are outlined below.

COMPONENT 1:	Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas
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<p>Outcome 1.1: Enabling conditions strengthened for co-management of Gola Forest National Park and establish Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs) (Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi)</p>	<p>The Finance Lead will be responsible for efficient financial management, compliance with donor requirements, and effective budget oversight, while fostering a culture of financial transparency and accountability within the organization and includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with best practices including all the donors' financial requirements and guidelines. • Review and interpret donor agreements and regulations. • Implement internal controls to safeguard donor funds. • Communicate financial policies and procedures effectively to staff and partners. • Review agreements, amendments, and payments for all projects and initiatives before approval. • Conduct on-site compliance assessments to verify financial accuracy and adherence to regulations. • Review and approve financial reports and supporting documentation from partners. • Oversee and ensure compliance with the project procurement process. • Maintain accurate and up-to-date financial records in accordance with organizational policies. • Lead the annual budget review process, including consolidation and analysis. • Prepare and present quarterly budget vs. actual reports to stakeholders. • Prepare and submit timely financial reports. • Develop and implement strategies for budget optimization and resource allocation. • Monitor and track project expenditures against approved budgets. • Identify and assess potential financial risks associated with projects and initiatives. • Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of risk management strategies. • Conduct needs assessments to identify staff training requirements in financial management. • Provide ongoing support and mentorship to staff on financial matters. • Deliver comprehensive financial orientation sessions to new contractors and sub-grantees. • Offer ongoing guidance and support on financial management practices and compliance requirements. • Foster collaborative relationships with contractors and sub-grantees for efficient project execution.
<p>COMPONENT 2:</p>	<p>Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises</p>
<p>Outcome 2.1: Management of landscapes outside protected areas improved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above.

Component 3: Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management	
Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia for improved management of the Mano watershed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above.
Component 4:	Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing
Outcome 4.1: Strengthened coordination, learning and sharing between the GEF-8 Liberia Project and initiatives at the Local, National and Regional levels (the Guinean Forest Biome with emphasis on the Northwest Liberia Landscape)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above.
Component 5:	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
Outcome 5.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project	<p>The Finance Lead will ensure that financial reporting incorporates gender-sensitive perspectives and aligns with gender standards and requirements at the programme level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure alignment of financial components with the gender-sensitive M&E framework. • Collaborate with the monitoring and evaluation team to develop gender-sensitive financial indicators and metrics.
PMC	<p>The Finance Lead will ensure effective financial management and governance for all projects and initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that partners and staff are aware of donor restrictions, financial policies, and cross-cutting issues. • Support the identification and implementation of financial risk mitigation measures related to governance issues and compliance with policies. • Ensure financial practices are aligned with cross-cutting issues such as gender and inclusion. • Review, approve and manage amendments, payments, and financial reporting for assigned portfolios, ensuring compliance with all relevant policies and regulations. • Conduct on-site field assessments to verify financial and contractual compliance of projects, including reviewing invoices and contracts, and inspecting project deliverables. • Manage partner quarterly financial reporting, emphasizing cross-cutting issues cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. • Review and approve financial reports to ensure alignment with gender and inclusion goals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the consolidation and review of annual budgets, considering cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. • Provide quarterly budget vs. actual reports to the Regional Technical Lead with a focus on gender and inclusion. • Implement communication strategies to disseminate financial knowledge among stakeholders. • Maintain meticulous records of financial transactions related to knowledge management. • Prepare comprehensive quarterly reports, highlighting achievements in capacity building. • Ensure financial practices, decision-making, and strategies promote and achieve gender and inclusion goals. • Develop and manage project logistics for materials, equipment, and field activities. • Ensure timely delivery of goods and services within budget and risk mitigation. • Supervise team members, provide guidance, and monitor performance. • Identify and address team needs, including training and development. • Ensure smooth recruitment, evaluations, and compliance processes. • Develop and implement procurement plans. • Manage supplier relationships and performance and address issues. • Ensure procurement transparency and accountability. • Support the annual audit process, in coordination with CI-GEF.
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ANNEX J: Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Desertification
Climate Change Mitigation 2		Biodiversity 2	
(multiple selection)	(multiple selection)	(multiple selection)	(multiple selection)

<< Rio Markers may be expanded in GEF 8 beyond markers for CCM and CCA>>

JUSTIFICATION:

The project interventions have been designed to enhance climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. On this basis, the Rio Marker is rated Principal 2 for both Mitigation and Biodiversity conservation. The justification is provided below:

These are intentionally designed to contribute to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. By creating or improving the management of 373,912 hectares of terrestrial protected areas (GEF Core Indicator 1), the project will safeguard critical habitats, ensuring the survival of various species and maintaining ecosystem services. Improved management practices across 89,174 hectares of landscapes (GEF Core Indicator 4.1) will enhance soil health, water retention, and carbon sequestration, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable land use. The estimated mitigation of 33,683,289 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (GEF Core Indicator 6) directly addresses climate change by reducing the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, contributing to global efforts to limit temperature rise. Additionally, the project aims to benefit 30,020 individuals, with a focus on gender inclusivity by ensuring that 40% of the beneficiaries are women (GEF Core Indicator 11). This inclusive approach not only supports social equity but also empowers communities to participate in and benefit from conservation efforts. The engagement in IW: LEARN (GEF Core Indicator 7.4) at Level 2 will facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building among stakeholders, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions. Collectively, these measures will foster biodiversity conservation, and resilient ecosystems and communities, driving long-term environmental and socio-economic benefits.

ANNEX K: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Project monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with established Conservation International and GEF procedures by the project team and the CI-GEF Project Agency. The project's M&E plan will be presented and finalized at the project inception workshop, including a review of indicators, means of verification, and the full definition of project staff M&E responsibilities.

Section A. Monitoring and Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities

The Project Management Unit on the ground will be responsible for initiating and organizing key monitoring and evaluation tasks. This includes the project inception workshop and report, quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting, documentation of lessons learned, and support for and cooperation with the independent external evaluation exercises.

The project Executing Agency is responsible for ensuring the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as the independent evaluation exercises.

Key project executing partners are responsible for providing any and all required information and data necessary for timely and comprehensive project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary and appropriate.

Executing Agency and Partners shall keep all pertinent records, both financial and technical, relating to the grant for a period of three (3) years following the expiration/termination of the project.

The Project Steering Committee plays a key oversight role for the project, with regular meetings to receive updates on project implementation progress and approve annual workplans. The Project Steering Committee also provides continuous ad-hoc oversight and feedback on project activities, responding to inquiries or requests for approval from the Project Management Unit or Executing Agency.

The CI-GEF Project Agency plays an overall assurance, backstopping, and oversight role with respect to monitoring and evaluation activities.

The CI Internal Audit function is responsible for contracting and oversight of the planned independent external evaluation exercises at the mid-point and end of the project.

Section B. Monitoring and Evaluation Components and Activities

The Project M&E Plan should include the following components (see M&E table below):

- a. **Inception** **workshop**
The project inception workshop will be held within the first three months of the project start with the project stakeholders. An overarching objective of the inception workshop is to assist the project team in understanding and taking ownership of the project's objectives and outcomes. The inception workshop will be used to detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of the CI-GEF Project Agency and the Executing Agency.
- b. **Inception Workshop Report - The Executing Agency should produce** an inception report documenting all changes and decisions made during the inception workshop to the project's planned activities, budget, results framework, and any other key aspects of the project. The inception report should be produced within one month of the inception workshop, as it will serve as a key input to the timely planning and execution of project start-up and activities.
Project Results Monitoring Plan (Objective, Outcomes, and Outputs)
A Project Results Monitoring Plan will be developed by the Project Agency, which will include objective, outcome and output indicators, metrics to be collected for each indicator, methodology

for data collection and analysis, baseline information, location of data gathering, frequency of data collection, responsible parties, and indicative resources needed to complete the plan. Appendix IV provides the Project Results Monitoring Plan table that will help complete this M&E component.

In addition to the objective, outcome, and output indicators, the Project Results Monitoring Plan table will also include all indicators identified in the Safeguard Plans prepared for the project, thus they will be consistent and timely monitored. The monitoring of these indicators throughout the life of the project will be necessary to assess if the project has successfully achieved its expected results.

Baseline Establishment: in the case that all necessary baseline data has not been collected during the PPG phase, it will be collected and documented by the relevant project partners ***within the first year*** of project implementation.

- c. **GEF Core Indicator Worksheet:** The relevant section of the GEF Core Indicator Worksheet was updated for the CEO endorsement submission. This worksheet will also be updated i) prior to mid-term review, and ii) prior to the terminal evaluation.
- d. **Project Steering Committee Meetings:** Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings will be held annually, semi-annually, or quarterly, as appropriate. Meetings shall be held to review and approve the project's annual budget and work plans, discuss implementation issues and identify solutions, and increase coordination and communication between key project partners. The meetings held by the PSC will be monitored and results adequately reported.
- e. **CI-GEF Project Agency Field Supervision Missions:** The CI-GEF PA will conduct annual visits to the project country and potentially to project field sites based on the agreed schedule in the project's Inception Report/Annual Work Plan to assess firsthand project progress. Oversight visits will most likely be conducted to coincide with the timing of PSC meetings. Other members of the PSC may also join field visits. A Field Visit Report will be prepared by the CI-GEF PA staff participating in the oversight mission and will be circulated to the project team and PSC members within one month of the visit.
- f. **Quarterly Progress Reporting:** The Executing Agency will submit quarterly progress reports to the CI-GEF Project Agency, including a budget follow-up and requests for disbursement to cover expected quarterly expenditures.
- g. **Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR):** The Executing Agency will prepare an annual PIR to monitor progress made since the project start and in particular for the reporting period (July 1st to June 30th). The PIR will summarize the annual project results and progress. A summary of the report will be shared with the Project Steering Committee.
- h. **Final Project Report:** The Executing Agency will draft a final report at the end of the project.
- i. **Independent External Mid-term Review:** The project will undergo an independent Mid-term Review within 30 days of the mid-point of the grant term. The Mid-term Review will determine progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes and will identify course corrections if needed. The Mid-term Review will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation, and management. Findings and recommendations of the Mid-term Review will be incorporated to secure maximum project results and sustainability during the second half of project implementation.
- j. **Independent Terminal Evaluation:** An independent Terminal Evaluation will take place within six months after project completion and will be undertaken in accordance with CI and GEF guidance. The terminal evaluation will focus on the delivery of the project's results as initially planned (and as corrected after the mid-term evaluation if any such correction took place). The Executing Agency

in collaboration with the PSC will provide a formal management answer to the findings and recommendations of the terminal evaluation.

- k. **Financial Statements Audit:** Annual Financial reports submitted by the executing Agency will be audited annually by external auditors appointed by the Executing Agency and approved by CIGEF.

The Terms of References for the evaluations will be drafted by the CI-GEF PA in accordance with GEF requirements. The procurement and contracting for the independent evaluations will be handled by CI's General Counsel's Office. The funding for the evaluations will come from the project budget, as indicated at project approval.

M&E Plan Summary

Type of M&E	Reporting Frequency	Responsible Parties	Indicative Budget from GEF (USD)
<i>a. Inception workshop and Report</i>	Within three months of signing of CI Grant Agreement for GEF Projects	· Project Team	17,623
		· Executing Agency	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>b. Inception workshop Report</i>	Within one month of inception workshop	· Project Team	* Included in Inception workshop
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>c. Project Results Monitoring Plan (Objective, Outcomes and Outputs)</i>	Annually (data on indicators will be gathered according to monitoring plan schedule shown on Appendix IV)	· Project Team	16,892
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>d. GEF Indicator Tracker</i>	i) Project development phase; ii) prior to project mid-term evaluation; and iii) project completion	· Project Team	16,892
		· Executing Agency	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>e. CI-GEF Project Agency Field Supervision Missions</i>	Approximately annual visits	· CI-GEF PA	*Paid by Agency Fees
<i>f. Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR)</i>	Annually for year ending June 30	· Project Team	16,892
		· Executing Agency	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>g. Project Completion Report</i>	Upon project operational closure	· Project Team	16,892
		· Executing Agency	

<i>h. Independent External Mid-term Review</i>	Approximate mid-point of project implementation period	· CI Evaluation Office	35,000
		· Project Team	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>i. Independent Terminal Evaluation</i>	Evaluation field mission within three months prior to project completion.	· CI Evaluation Office	35,000
		· Project Team	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>j. IW Activities if applicable 1% of budget</i>			
Summary M&E total			151,191

Project Management Costs (PMC) Summary

<i>Type of PMC</i>	<i>Reporting Frequency</i>	<i>Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Indicative Budget from GEF (USD)</i>
<i>a. Project Steering Committee Meetings</i>	Annually	· Project Team	22,721
		· Executing Agency	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>b. Quarterly Progress Reporting</i>	Quarterly	· Project Team	97,959
		· Executing Agency	
		· Executing Agency	
		· CI-GEF PA	
<i>c. Financial Statements Audit</i>	Annually	· Executing Agency	27,120
		· CI-GEF PA	
Summary PMC total			147,800

ANNEX L: Project Results Monitoring Plan

Indicators	Metrics	Methodology	Baseline	Location	Frequency	Responsible Parties	Indicative Resources
Objective: Intact Forest Landscapes in Northwest Liberia deliver ecosystem services and support socioeconomic improvement through enhanced co-management of protected areas and joint transboundary watershed management							
Indicator a: Area of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (GEF Core Indicator 1) <i>Target: 373,912 Ha</i>	Area of Terrestrial Protected Areas (PAs) created or under improved management (Hectares)	Review of progress reports.	Area of PA under SFM and improved management at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, SCNL, PADEV,TNC	Staff time
Indicator b: Area of landscapes under improved practices (GEF Core Indicator 4.1) <i>Target: 89,174 Ha</i>	Area of landscapes under improved practices (Hectares)	Review of progress reports.	Area of landscapes under improved practices at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, SCNL, PADEV,TNC	Staff time
Indicator c: Tons of Greenhouse Gas Emissions mitigated (GEF Core Indicator 6) <i>Target: 33,683,289 million MtCO₂e, estimated</i>	Metric tons of CO ₂ e of GHG emissions mitigated	Review of progress reports.	Metric tons of CO ₂ e of GHG emissions mitigated at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Twice over the project period (mid-term and at end of the project)	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, SCNL, PADEV,TNC	Staff time
Indicator d: Number of direct beneficiaries from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (GEF Core Indicator 11) <i>Target: 30,000 (of which 40% are women)</i>	No. of people (disaggregated by gender)	Review of progress reports.	Number of people at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, SCNL, PADEV,TNC	Staff time
Indicator f: Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products (Target: 2)	Level of engagement	Review of progress reports.	Level of engagement at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, SCNL, PADEV,TNC	Staff time
Component 1: Establishment of proposed protected areas and promote the effective management of existing protected areas							
<i>Indicator 1.1a:</i> Number of hectares in Protected Areas with improved METT scores	Number of hectares in Protected Areas with improved METT scores	Review of progress reports.	Number of hectares in Protected Areas with improved	Monrovia	Annually	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time

			METT scores at project start				
<i>Indicator 1.1.1:</i> Number of updated GFNP co-management plans	Number of updated GFNP co-management plans	Review of progress reports.	Number of updated GFNP co-management plans at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Twice – mid-term and end of project	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 1.1.2:</i> Number of CLF processes completed and approved by Liberia Land Authority	Number of CLF processes completed and approved by Liberia Land Authority	Review of progress reports.	Number of completed gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi PPAs at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Twice – mid-term and end of project	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 1.1.3:</i> Number of completed gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi PPAs	Number of completed gazettelement packages for Foya and Kpo Mountains and Wonegizi PPAs	Review of progress reports.	Number of financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Twice – mid-term and end of project	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 1.1.4:</i> Number of financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA	Number of financing plans updated or drafted for Gola PA, Foya and Kpo Mountains PPA and Wonegizi PPA	Review of progress reports.	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops delivered to government PA staff and local community members and number of participants (disaggregated by gender) at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Twice – mid-term and end of project	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 1.1.5:</i> Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops delivered to government PA staff and local community members and number of	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building workshops delivered to government PA staff and local community	Review of progress reports.	Number of updated GFNP co-management plans at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, SCNL	Staff time

participants (disaggregated by gender)	members and number of participants (disaggregated by gender)						
Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises							
<i>Indicator 2.1a:</i> Area of land outside protected areas under improved management	Area of land outside protected areas under improved management	Review of progress reports.	Area of land outside protected areas under improved management at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 2.1b:</i> Number of people with increased income generation potential as a result of project activities. (Measured as the total number of people trained, SME members, and other community members with improved access to knowledge, technical support, and financing)	Number of people with increased income generation potential as a result of project activities. (Measured as the total number of people trained, SME members, and other community members with improved access to knowledge, technical support, and financing)	Review of progress reports.	Number of people with increased income generation potential as a result of project activities. (Measured as the total number of people trained, SME members, and other community members with improved access to knowledge, technical support, and financing) at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 2.1.1:</i> Number of land use plans developed	Number of land use plans developed	Review of progress reports.	Number of land use plans developed at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 2.1.2:</i> Number of gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed	Number of gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed	Review of progress reports.	Number of gender-responsive socioeconomic assessments completed at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 2.1.3:</i> Number of community members who receive training and technical support for	Number of community members who receive training and technical support	Review of progress reports.	Number of community members who receive training and technical support	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time

sustainable livelihoods (disaggregated by gender)	for sustainable livelihoods (disaggregated by gender)		for sustainable livelihoods (disaggregated by gender) at project start				
<i>Indicator 2.1.4:</i> Number of new or existing SMEs that receive project support for development (and number of women-led enterprises)	Number of new or existing SMEs that receive project support for development (and number of women-led enterprises)	Review of progress reports.	Number of new or existing SMEs that receive project support for development (and number of women-led enterprises) at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 2.1.4:</i> Number of SMEs, producer associations and producers with new links to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)	Number of SMEs, producer associations and producers with new links to financial services (and number of women benefiting from improved access)	Review of progress reports.	Area of land outside protected areas under improved management at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, FDA, MoA, CDA, PADEV SCNL	Staff time
Component 3: Strengthening Transboundary Watershed and Forest Landscape Management							
<i>Indicator 3.1a:</i> Number of strengthened institutional structures in place to facilitate joint transboundary management of the Mano watershed.	Number of institutional structures in place to facilitate transboundary management of the Mano watershed	Review of progress reports.	Number of institutional structures in place to facilitate transboundary management of the Mano watershed at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 3.1b:</i> Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products (GEF Core sub-Indicator 7.4).	Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products	Review of progress reports.	Level of engagement in IW: LEARN through participation and delivery of key products at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 3.1.1:</i> Number of committees supported to undertake actions for	Number of committees supported to undertake actions	Review of progress reports.	Number of committees supported to undertake actions	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, TNC, SCNL	Staff time

joint cross-border natural resource management	for joint cross-border natural resource management		for joint cross-border natural resource management at project start				
<i>Indicator 3.1.2:</i> Number of trainings undertaken by the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project on applied research to inform decision-making in watershed management	Number of trainings undertaken towards applied research to guide decision-making in transboundary natural resources management	Review of progress reports.	Number of applied research initiatives undertaken to guide decision-making in transboundary natural resources management at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 3.1.3:</i> Number of nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration	Number of nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration	Review of progress reports.	Number of nature-based initiatives implemented in the watershed to improve ecosystem health and reduce riverbank deterioration at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing							
<i>Indicator 4.1:</i> Number of initiatives at various levels coordinating and sharing with the Liberia Project	Number of initiatives at various levels coordinating and sharing with the Liberia Guinean Forests Child Project	Review of progress reports.	Number of initiatives at various levels coordinating and sharing with the Liberia Guinean Forests Child Project at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.1.1:</i> Number of Knowledge Management and Communications Strategies developed (including gender, equality and inclusion aspects)	Number of Knowledge Management and Communications Strategies developed (including Gender, equality and inclusion aspects)	Review of progress reports.	Number of Knowledge Management and Communications Strategies developed (including Gender, equality and inclusion aspects) at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time

<i>Indicator 4.1.2:</i> Number of Liberian participants in the GFIP 3-day Annual Forums organised by CI and Birdlife	Number of Liberian participants in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project 3-day Annual Forums	Review of progress reports.	Number of Liberian participants in the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project 3-day Annual Forums at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.1.3:</i> Number of Learning and Exposure Visits attended	Number of Learning and Exposure Visits	Review of progress reports.	Number of Learning and Exposure Visits at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.1.4:</i> Number of policy briefs, fact sheets and storytelling videos (integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects) prepared and disseminated	Number of policy briefs, fact sheets and storytelling videos (integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects) prepared and disseminated	Review of progress reports.	Number of policy briefs, fact sheets and storytelling videos (integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects) prepared and disseminated at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.2:</i> Improvement in capacity scores on the part of training participants, based on pre- and post-training scorecards	% in capacity scores on the part of training participants, based on pre- and post-training scorecards	Review of progress reports.	% in capacity scores on the part of training participants, based on pre- and post-training scorecards	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.2.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive and inclusive participatory needs assessment reports prepared	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive participatory needs assessment reports prepared	Review of progress reports.	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive participatory needs assessment reports prepared at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 4.2.2:</i> Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building/technical assistance events delivered	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building/technical assistance events delivered	Review of progress reports.	Number of gender-responsive and inclusive capacity-building/technical assistance events delivered at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL	Staff time
Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework							

<i>Indicator 5.1:</i> Number of gender-sensitive M&E systems established and implemented for the project.	Number of gender-responsive M&E systems established and implemented for the project.	Review of progress reports.	Number of gender-responsive M&E systems established and implemented for the project.at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, PADEV, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 5.1.1:</i> Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.	Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency.	Review of progress reports.	Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency at project start.	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, PADEV, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
<i>Indicator 5.1.2:</i> Number of Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Reports	Number of Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Reports	Review of progress reports.	Number of Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Reports at project start	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	At MTE	EPA, PADEV, TNC, SCNL	Staff time
Safeguard Plans							
Indicator AGM.1: Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated/disseminated to stakeholders	Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated/diss eminated to stakeholders	Review of minutes of project Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	n/a	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	CI, EPA, SCNL	Staff time
Indicator AGM.2: Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved	% of conflict and complaint cases reported and resolved	Review of minutes of project Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	n/a	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU and project partners	Staff time
Indicator GMP.1: Number of men and women who participated in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations)	Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who received benefits in the project implementation phase.	Review of progress reports	Base on existing establishment staffing	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU and project partners	Staff time
Indicator GMP.2: Number of men and women who received benefits (e.g.	Number of documents (disaggregated by	Review Reports	Zero	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU and project partners	Staff time

employment, income generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles)	type) derived from the project that included gender considerations or address gender gaps.						
Indicator GMP.3: Number of documents (disaggregated by type) derived from the project that include gender considerations or address gender gaps.	Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who received benefits in the project implementation phase.	Review Reports	Base on existing establishment staffing	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI	Staff time
Indicator GMP.4: Number of project events/trainings dedicated to gender	Number of documents (disaggregated by type) derived from the project that included gender considerations or address gender gaps.	Review Reports	N/A	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI	Staff time
Indicator SEP.1: Number of stakeholder entities (disaggregated by type) involved in the project implementation phase	Number of stakeholder entities (disaggregated by type) involved in the project implementation phase	Review Reports	N/A	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI	Staff time
Indicator SEP.2: Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who participated in the project implementation	Number of persons (disaggregated by gender) who participated in the project implementation phase	Review Reports	n/a	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI	Staff time
Indicator SEP.3: Number of engagements (disaggregated by type of engagement) with stakeholders in the	Number of engagements (disaggregated by type of engagement) with	Review Reports	n/a	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, CI, SCNL, PMU and project partners	Staff time

project implementation phase.	stakeholders in the project implementation phase.						
IPP.1: Percentage of Indigenous/traditional communities where FPIC has been sought and documented	% of Indigenous/traditional communities where (FPIC) has been sought and documented.	Review Reports	Base on existing establishment staffing	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI	Staff time
IPP.2: Number of Indigenous/traditional communities present in the project sites that participated in the project	Number of Indigenous/traditional communities present in the project sites that participated in the project	Review Reports	Zero	EPA, FDA, CDA, MoA Agencies	Annual	EPA, SCNL, PMU, CI and project partners	Staff time

ANNEX M: Project Taxonomy

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Influencing models			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transform policy and regulatory environments		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate innovative approaches		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deploy innovative financial instruments		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Sector		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Capital providers	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large corporations	
		<input type="checkbox"/> SMEs	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Grant Pilot	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Project Reflow	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficiaries		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Communities		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil Society		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Based Organization	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Governmental Organization	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academia	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Type of Engagement		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Dissemination	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness Raising	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Campaigns	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Change	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enabling Activities		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity Development		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Generation and Exchange		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Research		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theory of Change	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Management	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Indicators to Measure Change	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and Learning		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Management	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity Development	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement Plan		

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Equality			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Mainstreaming		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficiaries	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women groups	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender-sensitive indicators	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender results areas		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access and control over natural resources	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation and leadership	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access to benefits and services	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity development	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge generation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focal Areas/Theme			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrated Programs		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Commodity Supply Chains (⁶⁸ Good Growth Partnership)	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Commodities Production
			<input type="checkbox"/> Deforestation-free Sourcing
			<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Screening Tools
			<input type="checkbox"/> High Conservation Value Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> High Carbon Stocks Forests
			<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean Supply Chain
			<input type="checkbox"/> Oil Palm Supply Chain
			<input type="checkbox"/> Beef Supply Chain
			<input type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farmers
			<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Management
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Resilience (climate and shocks)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Production Systems
			<input type="checkbox"/> Agroecosystems
			<input type="checkbox"/> Land and Soil Health
			<input type="checkbox"/> Diversified Farming
			<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Land and Water Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farming
			<input type="checkbox"/> Small and Medium Enterprises
			<input type="checkbox"/> Crop Genetic Diversity
			<input type="checkbox"/> Food Value Chains
			<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Dimensions
			<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-stakeholder Platforms
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Food Systems
			<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Restoration
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Commodity Production
			<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Land Use Planning
			<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Landscapes
			<input type="checkbox"/> Food Value Chains
			<input type="checkbox"/> Deforestation-free Sourcing
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smallholder Farmers
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Cities	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated urban planning
			<input type="checkbox"/> Urban sustainability framework
			<input type="checkbox"/> Transport and Mobility

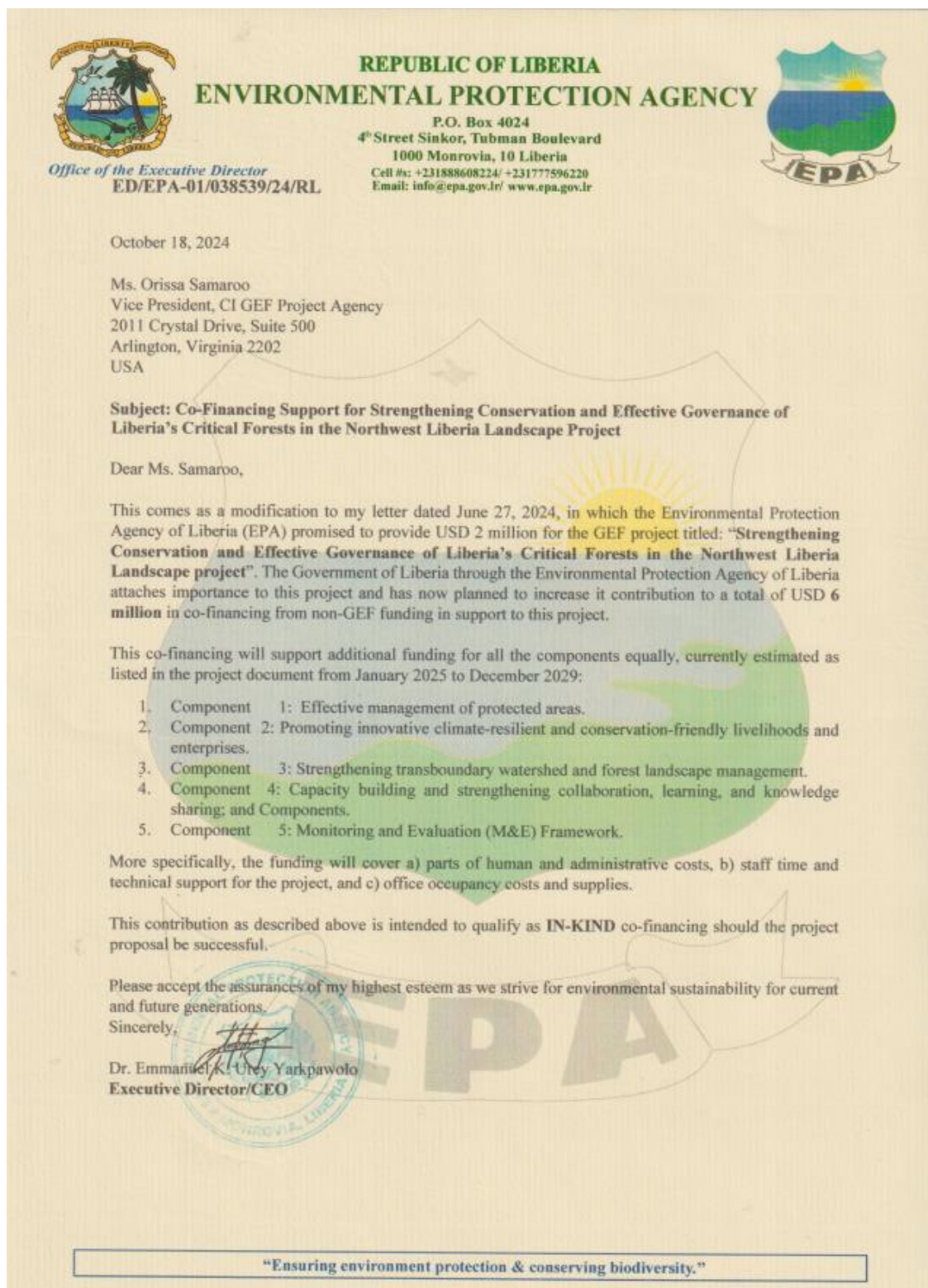
		<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings
		<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal waste management
		<input type="checkbox"/> Green space
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Biodiversity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Food Systems
		<input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency
		<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Financing
		<input type="checkbox"/> Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Resilience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protected Areas and Landscapes
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terrestrial Protected Areas
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Productive Landscapes
		<input type="checkbox"/> Productive Seascapes
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Based Natural Resource Management
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mainstreaming
		<input type="checkbox"/> Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries
		<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure
		<input type="checkbox"/> Certification (National Standards)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Certification (International Standards)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Species
		<input type="checkbox"/> Illegal Wildlife Trade
		<input type="checkbox"/> Threatened Species
		<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife for Sustainable Development
		<input type="checkbox"/> Crop Wild Relatives
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Genetic Resources
		<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Genetic Resources
		<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock Wild Relatives
		<input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biomes
		<input type="checkbox"/> Mangroves
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reefs
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Grasses
		<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands
		<input type="checkbox"/> Rivers
		<input type="checkbox"/> Lakes
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tropical Rain Forests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Tropical Dry Forests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Temperate Forests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Grasslands
		<input type="checkbox"/> Paramo
		<input type="checkbox"/> Desert
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial and Accounting
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment for Ecosystem Services
		<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
		<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Trust Funds
		<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Finance
		<input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Protocol to the CBD
		<input type="checkbox"/> Biosafety

			<input type="checkbox"/> Access to Genetic Resources Benefit Sharing
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forests		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest and Landscape Restoration	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Forest	<input type="checkbox"/> REDD/REDD+
			<input type="checkbox"/> Amazon
			<input type="checkbox"/> Congo
			<input type="checkbox"/> Drylands
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Degradation		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Land Management	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem Approach
			<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community-Based NRM
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Livelihoods
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income Generating Activities
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Agriculture
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Pasture Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Forest/Woodland Management
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Fire Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Drought Mitigation/Early Warning
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Degradation Neutrality	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Productivity
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Cover and Land cover change
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carbon stocks above or below ground
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International Waters		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ship	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Freshwater	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Aquifer
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> River Basin
			<input type="checkbox"/> Lake Basin
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent toxic substances	
		<input type="checkbox"/> SIDS : Small Island Dev States	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Research	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Pollution	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent toxic substances
			<input type="checkbox"/> Plastics
			<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient pollution from all sectors except wastewater
			<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient pollution from Wastewater
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan preparation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Action Plan Implementation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Large Marine Ecosystems	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture	

		<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Protected Area	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Biomes	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Mangrove
			<input type="checkbox"/> Coral Reefs
			<input type="checkbox"/> Seagrasses
			<input type="checkbox"/> Polar Ecosystems
			<input type="checkbox"/> Constructed Wetlands
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals and Waste		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Mercury	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coal Fired Power Plants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Coal Fired Industrial Boilers	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Cement	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Ferrous Metals Production	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ozone	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sound Management of chemicals and Waste	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Waste Management	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Waste Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Waste
			<input type="checkbox"/> e-Waste
		<input type="checkbox"/> Emissions	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Disposal	
		<input type="checkbox"/> New Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Polychlorinated Biphenyls	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Plastics	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Eco-Efficiency	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides	
		<input type="checkbox"/> DDT - Vector Management	
		<input type="checkbox"/> DDT - Other	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Emissions	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Open Burning	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Green Chemistry	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Finance
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Least Developed Countries
			<input type="checkbox"/> Small Island Developing States
			<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Risk Management
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sea-level rise
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Resilience
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate information
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation Tech Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> National Adaptation Programme of Action
			<input type="checkbox"/> National Adaptation Plan
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mainstreaming Adaptation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector
			<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Complementarity
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community-based Adaptation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Livelihoods
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
			<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Efficiency

			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Urban Systems and Transport
			<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> Renewable Energy
			<input type="checkbox"/> Financing
			<input type="checkbox"/> Enabling Activities
		<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Transfer	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Poznan Strategic Programme on Technology Transfer
			<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Endogenous technology
			<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Needs Assessment
			<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation Tech Transfer
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> United Nations Framework on Climate Change	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nationally Determined Contribution
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Finance (Rio Markers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paris Agreement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Development Goals <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Mitigation 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Adaptation 2

ANNEX N: Co-financing Letters





REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FDA)

RUDOLPH J. MERAB, SR.
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Whein Town, Paynesville
P. O. Box 3010
Montserrado County
1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia

+231-776345703
rmerab14@gmail.com
+231-888007440
Rmerab@fda.gov.lr

MD/074/2024/-15

October 23, 2024

Ms. Orissa Samaroo,
Vice President, GEF Agency Conservation International (CI-GEF)
2011 Crystal Drive
Suited 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202
USA

Subject: Co-financing support for Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape.

Dear Ms. Samaroo,

On behalf of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), I am pleased to report that the FDA has contributed Seven million five hundred thousand United States dollars (**USD 7, 500,000**) in In-Kind support to the Project titled: **"Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape.**

This co-financing will support additional funding for all the Components currently estimated as listed in the project document below from January 2025 to December 2029:

Specifically, this Co-financing will cover FDA's recurrent cost of operation and support **Components 1-5.**

Component 1: Effective management of protected areas.

Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises.

Component 3: Strengthening transboundary watershed and forest landscape management.

Component 4: Capacity building and strengthened collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing.

Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework.

The **In-Kind** covers **staff time, administrative, and equipment costs** to support the implementation of the project activities.

Please accept the assurance of my high esteem and consideration as we strive for environmental sustainability for now and successive generations.

Sincerely,

Rudolph J. Merab, Sr.
Managing Director-FDA



LAKPAZEE ZOO JUNCTION, AIRFIELD
OLD MATADI ESTATE, SINKOR
MONROVIA-LIBERIA

Email: info@naturecompact.org

thenaturecompact@gmail.com

Cell: 0770 620 712 / 0886925735

June 5, 2024

Ms. Orissa Samaroo
Vice President, GEF Agency Conservation International (CI-GEF)
2011 Crystal Drive
Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202
USA

Subject: Co-financing support for: Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape

Dear Ms. Samaroo,

On behalf of **The Nature Compact**, I am pleased to inform you that **The Nature Compact** plans to contribute **USD 38,000** in co-financing from non-GEF funding in support of the GEF project titled '**Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape**'.

This co-financing will support additional funding for **Component 3, M&E, and PMC** during the period of performance, currently estimated from **January 2025 to March 2029**. Specifically, the co-financing will cover **IN-KIND COSTS** to support the implementation of the project activities. This co-financing is contingent upon full execution of a grant from the non-GEF funding source.

This contribution as described above is intended to qualify as **IN-KIND combination** co-financing should the project proposal be successful.

We look forward to continued partnership for the implementation of this project.

Sincerely,

Borwen L. Sayon
Team Leader
The Nature Compact



Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)



Henry's Compound, Opp. German Embassy, Tubman Boulevard, Congo Town,

P. O. Box 2628 Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa

☎: (+231) 886-573-612/0555831170/0777822456

E-mail: info@scnlliberia.org

Website: www.scnlliberia.org

BirdLife Partner

Ms. Orissa Samaroo
Vice President, GEF Agency Conservation International (CI-GEF)
2011 Crystal Drive
Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202
USA

June 5, 2024

Dear Ms. Samaroo,

Subject: Co-financing support for Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape project.

On behalf of **The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)**, I am pleased to inform you that SCNL plans to contribute **USD 1,000,000** in co-financing from non-GEF funding in support of the GEF project titled '**Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape**'.

This co-financing will support additional funding for Components 1: Effective Management of Protected Areas; Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and the PMC during the period of performance, currently estimated from January 2025 to March 2029. Specifically, the co-financing will cover field activities, logistics and staff time to support the project activities. This co-financing is contingent upon full execution of a grant from the non-GEF funding source.

This contribution, as described above, is intended to qualify as an **in-kind** contribution of USD 1,000,000 if the project proposal is successful.

We look forward to continued partnership for the implementation of this project.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Garbo
Executive Director
Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL)

Helping to Conserve Nature

2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22202, USA
Tel: +1 703 341.2400
Fax: +1 703 553.4817
www.conservation.org



May 20th, 2024

Orissa Samaroo,
Vice President, CI-GEF Project Agency
2011 Crystal Drive
Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202
USA

Subject: Co-Financing support for "Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape – GEF PROJECT ID 1144"

Dear Ms. Samaroo,

On behalf of Conservation International Foundation (CI), I am pleased to inform you that CI plans to contribute **USD \$462,159** in co-financing from non-GEF funding in support of the GEF project titled **"Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape – GEF PROJECT ID 1144"**.

The co-financing will support the project implementation and cover organizational costs such as CI's global finance, communications, human resources, legal, and IT to support the overall effective implementation of project activities during the period of performance, currently estimated from **January 2025 to December 2029**.

This contribution as described above is intended to qualify as **IN-KIND** co-financing should the project proposal be successful.

We look forward to continued partnership for the implementation of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara DiPietro".

Barbara DiPietro
Chief Financial Officer
Conservation International Foundation



Partners In Development (PADEV)
Sophie Community
Congo Town,
Montserrado, Liberia
+231 886518396 / +231 776871561
Padev.liberia@yahoo.com
Nobehjay@padev.org/nobejsjac_k@yahoo.com

6-Jun-24

Ms. Orissa Samaroo
Vice President, GEF Agency Conservation International
(CI-GEF) 2011 Crystal Drive
Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202
USA

Subject: Co-financing support for Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape Project.

Dear Ms. Samaroo,

On behalf of **Partners in Development (PADEV)**, I am pleased to inform you that PADEV plans to contribute **USD94,704** in co-financing from non-GEF funding in support of the GEF project titled: **"Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape"**.

This co-financing will support additional funding for **Component 2: Promotion of innovative climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises during the period of performance**, currently estimated from January 2025 to March 2029.

Specifically, the co-financing will cover one (1) M&E staff, one (1) vehicle (4x4 land cruiser truck), assorted office furniture, three (3) pieces of motorcycles, five (5) laptops, one (1) scanner, four (4) cameras, four (4) units of satellite phones and one (1) projector with accessories to support the implementation of the project activities.

This contribution as described above and in the table below is intended to qualify as **in-kind** co-financing should the project proposal be successful.



Partners In Development (PADEV)
 Sophie Community
 Congo Town,
 Montserrado, Liberia
 +231 886518396 / +231 776871561
Padev.liberia@yahoo.com
Nobehjay@padev.org/nobehsiac_k@yahoo.com

No.	Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total cost
1.	Computer (Laptops)	Pcs	5	US\$1200	US\$,6000
2.	Document scanner	pc	1	US\$300	US\$300
3.	Satellite Phones	pcs	4	US\$1000	US\$4000
4.	Digital Cameras (Nikon D5600 DSLR)	pcs	6	US\$599	US\$3594
5.	Projector w/accessories	pc	1	US\$416	US\$416
6.	One 4x4 Land Cruiser pick-up tuck	pc	1	US\$31844	US\$31,844
7.	Three (3) pcs of motorbikes	pcs	3	US\$2,370	US\$7110
8.	One project M&E Officer	Months	48	US\$750	US\$36,000
9.	Assorted furniture (desk, chairs, tables, etc.)		1	US\$5440	US\$5440
	Total				US\$94,704

We look forward to continued partnership for the implementation of this project.

Yours very truly,



Partners In Development
 PADEV

Nobeh, Jackson S.
 Team Leader

ANNEX O: Vehicle Justification Form

Project Title:	Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Liberia's Critical Forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape		
GEF Agency:	CI-GEF	GEF Agency Project ID:	1144
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi-focal Areas	Geographic Scope:	Northwest Liberia

No of Beneficiaries	30,020	Primary intervention sites	Grand Cape Mount, Lofa and Gbarpolu Counties
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PROCUREMENT REQUEST:

Procurement of 2 Motorcycles

PURPOSE:

To purchase 2 Motorcycles to support sub-grantees team transportation/mobilization in project delivery/implementation.

BUDGET ALLOCATION:

4,000 USD per Motorcycle

8,000 USD in total for the purchase of 2

CUSTODIAN: The Nature Compact (TNC) and Partners in Development (PADEV)

USERS: Project Staff

RELATION TO PROJECT OUTPUTS (Low, Medium, High):

High relation to project outputs

JUSTIFICATION

We are requesting the purchase of two motorcycles for the Partners (PADEV & TNC) under the CI-GEF project to support project activities. Each of the partners—SCNL, PADEV, and TNC—faces significant transportation challenges that necessitate this purchase. SCNL's motorbikes are currently allocated to other projects and cannot be shared. PADEV operates with secondhand, heavily used motorbikes that require frequent repairs due to the rough terrain they have endured, while TNC's fleet in the Northwest is experiencing major mechanical problems. These issues make it difficult for staff to access key project sites efficiently.

The project's geographical landscape is situated in remote forest areas where vehicles are often unsuitable for navigation. In many cases, motorcycles are the only reliable means of transport, especially where roads are impassable by car. The procurement of motorbikes will provide the partner's project team with greater mobility, flexibility, and independence, eliminating reliance on commercial motorbikes, which are not always available and can be costly.

Furthermore, having dedicated motorbikes will ensure the team travels safely, with proper equipment, reducing risks associated with unreliable commercial options. As some remote communities are crucial to the project's success, the purchase of motorbikes will enable staff to reach these areas in a timely and efficient manner.

Given the rugged landscape, transportation challenges, and the strategic importance of remote communities to the project outcomes, the investment in motorbikes is essential to ensure the effective and timely execution of activities in the Gola landscape.

Vehicle fleet from partners:

<i>Partner</i>	Current Vehicle Fleet	Vehicle Assignment	Vehicle Status
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SCNL*	3 motorbikes	Used by other projects, cannot be shared	Motorbikes have a life cycle of 2 years, need repairs
PADEV	2 Yamaha off-road motorbikes	Project landscapes in the Northwest	Functional but secondhand, used in rough terrain for years
TNC	4 motorbikes (2 Yamaha, 2 TVS Star)	Assigned to different projects (PROBIO, CFMB)	2 motorbikes in the Northwest need major repairs

* SCNL will provide the FOLUR Project vehicle as needed for PMU activities.

LANDSCAPE ACCESS

SECURITY

To follow standard motorcycle management policies (insurance coverage, driving authorization, safety and security equipment in-place, etc.)

EFFICIENCY

Cost-effective for transportation to remote places in the field.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Cost of Purchasing Good Quality Motorcycles The cost of a good quality motorcycle in Liberia is approximately \$4,000. Therefore, the cost of purchasing two motorcycles would be \$8,000.

Cost of Renting Motorcycles The average daily rental cost for a motorcycle in Liberia is around \$20. If we consider a project duration of one year, the total rental cost for two motorcycles would be \$16,600. Since the duration of the project is 5 years, is better to buy the motorcycles.

Tax Exemption: Now, the fiscal laws in Liberia allow for tax exemption in the purchase of vehicles in this type of projects. The EA will do its best to seek tax exception and reinvest in the project.

ANNEX P: Guinean Forests PFD - Responses to comments from STAP

Section	STAP Comments	Responses
1. Summary of STAP's views of the project		
<p>a) Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points to be addressed in project design</p> <p>b) Major - STAP has identified significant concerns to be addressed in project design</p>	<p>This proposal presented noticeable weaknesses in a number of areas, which in some cases were quite significant. Whilst it is STAP's assessment that the cumulative impact of these weaknesses would not be enough to affect the delivery of program activities and actual results, which would otherwise warrant assigning a "major" scoring, there are still a number of areas that need attention and will need clarifying and strengthening in the next phase of program development. The issues identified include: the descriptions of the project objective and some of the components, a lack of coherence between the description of some of the outcomes and the activities related to them, and some weaknesses affecting different elements of the theory of change ToC. Further details about the issues that were identified and suggested recommendations to address these are noted below.</p>	<p>The preparation of the ProDoc for the Liberia Child Project has been guided by this input, along with the ProDoc for the Regional Coordination Project, which incorporates efforts to address the feedback received. Additional input will be done Program level.</p>
2. Project rationale, and project description – are they sound?		
	<p>The project description was quite broad and in some places used rather generic language and phrases taken from the GEF programming document, but without providing a clear explanation of how the proposed targets, objectives and goals will be achieved in practice (<i>e.g. country projects will apply multiple levers of transformation, including an enhanced enabling environment for sustainable forest management through supportive government policy and sustainable financing solutions</i>).</p> <p>The program objective was clear but it did not appear to match the proposed activities and environmental benefits described in the same section. The description and analysis of <u>barriers</u> were clear and convincing with a good understanding of the interlinkages between the barriers and how a <u>systems approach</u> is required to address them. One of the two stated program priorities was</p>	<p>To be addressed at the Program Level</p>

	<p>quite vague and did not provide sufficient details on how it will be achieved (<i>e.g. facilitate work by the countries of the region towards a permanent body for ongoing alignment and harmonization of forest management policies</i>). The proposal provided a reasonable <u>baseline</u> of activities and projects that the current program plans to build upon in order to deliver its outcomes and goal. This included a good mix of international donor funded interventions, regional initiatives and GEF-funded projects.</p> <p>The proposal also included a short section on <u>key lessons</u> learned from current and past investments. This provided an acceptable description of some of the key issues, needs and things that have worked well, but could have arguably included a more detailed analysis of why issues arise and why different types of measures and 2 interventions worked or did not work. This would provide a better understanding of the context and how the program is designed to overcome obstacles experienced in previous initiatives.</p> <p>The Theory of Change (ToC) section presented a number of weaknesses in areas such as the <u>assumptions</u>, which in a number of cases are given facts and do not cover underlying assumptions that affect the intended outcomes. The <u>ToC diagram</u> is very dense and difficult to read and presents some inconsistencies and gaps in the logical flow between stages (i.e. lack of outputs and a stage named “desired situation”, which was unclear and did not fit the overall logical flow). The <u>narrative description</u> of the ToC is somewhat disjointed and appears to describe different types of interventions without drawing the logical connections or boundaries between them, or attempting to explain how these will be implemented as part of a coherent framework.</p> <p>The description of the program components varies in strength and clarity. <u>Components 4, 5 and 6</u> are quite clear and describe in enough detail the activities that will be implemented, as well as how these will be implemented and what outputs, results and outcomes they will generate. On the other</p>	<p>The Liberia Child Project design reflects the wealth of experience and lessons learned by the Executing Agency (EPA) and Executing Support Partner (SCNL) in delivering related projects in the Northwest Liberia Landscape.</p> <p>The ToC section lists assumptions relevant to the intended outcomes. The diagram has been prepared following the precedent of numerous other approved ProDocs in terms of structure and content.</p> <p>The description of the project components, outcomes and outputs has been prepared bearing in mind this input, striving to provide adequate clarity throughout.</p>
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	<p>hand, the descriptions for <u>components 1, 2 and 3</u> are weak, as they lack clarity and specificity on most of the aforementioned aspects. For example, component 1 does not provide enough detail about the activities that will be implemented; component 2 -and especially outcome 2.1- is overall quite weak and should be revised and clarified. More specifically we found that the labelling for outcome 2.1 (i.e. Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs) was somewhat misleading and did not match the description provided, it also did not provide any details on how the proposed targets will be achieved, i.e. how PAs and OECMs will be established. It is also not clear whether OECMs are envisaged only for areas outside PAs but where there are no production activities, or whether some of the SLM initiatives could also serve as OECMs, particularly where there is intact forest. The description for component 3 is quite broad and somewhat vague and does not provide enough details on what the program or projects will actually do and how. The description provided focuses entirely on describing what is needed and why, rather than what should happen and which partners would be relevant/important to achieve specific results. Along similar lines, the description for outcome 3.3 (i.e. Strengthened inclusive community forest governance) is quite broad and the activities proposed seem to be somewhat removed from front-line delivery (i.e. inform the development of mechanisms that will empower communities to deliver NMR processes and governance...), which is not ideal, as it does not match the proposed scope of the outcome.</p>	
3. Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions		
	<p>1) The ToC should be revised and improved. The areas that need attention include: the assumptions, which need to be revised and rewritten to exclude given facts; the outputs which are currently missing; the “desired situation”, which should be better explained and contextualized, as it is not currently clear how this fitted into the wider context of the ToC; and the ToC</p>	<p>To be addressed at the Program Level</p>

	<p>diagram, which should be revised to include outputs and address the aforementioned issues.</p> <p>2) The description of the components should be revised and improved to address the issues highlighted above in section 2 of this document.</p> <p>3) The description provided for cross-cutting programmatic areas such as multi-stakeholder engagement, knowledge management and learning and innovation should be revised to provide further clarity about the activities that will be implemented to deliver the intended outputs (i.e. provide additional details about the 'what' and the 'how').</p> <p>4) The overall style and language of further program/project documents should be considered carefully and should be focused on providing more detailed and convincing descriptions of the activities and results 3 that the these will deliver and how. The language and style used in this proposal for the description of the country child projects was much clearer and should be used as a template for future documents.</p> <p>5) In the development of the regional and country-level child projects, it would be helpful to provide greater clarity on the proposed scope for OECMs versus integrated land management. As noted in the proposal, OECMs are an evolving concept and the program could play an important role in exploring additional conceptualizations and operational models for OECMs in different land management contexts.</p>	<p>5) In Liberia, discussion of OECMs is still in its infancy. Although Community Forests could in principle be used as a mechanism for OECMs, to date they have served primarily as an arrangement for extractive activities. Therefore, the proposed project for now focuses on participatory land use planning to rationalize land and resource use, rather than OECMs as such.</p>
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ANNEX Q: Guinean Forests PFD -Responses to comments from the GEF Council

Section	GEF Council Comments	Responses (Indicate how and where the comment has been addressed)
a) Germany		
	<p>Germany approves the following PIF in the work program but asks that the following comments are taken into account.</p> <p>Germany welcomes this proposal, as it focuses on an important forest area, which does not always get the attention it deserves. At the same time, Germany has the following comments that it suggests being addressed in the next phase of finalizing the program proposal.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvements to be made during the drafting of the final program proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Germany appreciates that the program is working on forest governance, having different approaches for forests inside and outside of protected areas while working on improved livelihoods for the local population. 2) Germany suggests reconsidering if there are parts of the program that can be downsized without compromising the targeted positive effects on forests and livelihoods in order to match ambition and the potential impact. 3) Furthermore, the success of the program relies on underfunded governmental forest and protected area management agencies. Therefore, more emphasis should be put on capacity building and investments to enhance the infrastructure and equipment of those agencies. 4) The European Union's PAPF and Germany's TGS program seem to have similar objectives. Germany suggests coordinating intensively with those programs. 	<p>1) Noted – the Liberia Child Project design is well aligned with this comment.</p> <p>2) N/A</p> <p>3) The project includes attention to financing strategy and capacity building to address this challenge.</p> <p>4) The Liberia Child Project will work with the Regional Coordination Project to identify opportunities for such coordination.</p>
b) Canada		

	<p>Deforestation/Small-Scale Farming/Soil (MSF):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recommend including a new indicator that shows the net impact of the Programs in halting and reversing ecosystem loss, in particular deforestation, in particular for the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program and the Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator Program. 2) The current core indicators can show only the positive impacts of the Programs (e.g. CI3, CI4, CI5 ad CI6) but fail to consider any negative change such as deforestation leakage (I.e. improved protection/conservation in one area leading to more deforestation in other or new areas), which may be directly or indirectly related to policy reforms, a whole-of-government strategy, integrated approaches or others that the GEF Programs try to achieve. 3) GEF should consider including a new core indicator for the two Programs, or at least a project level-indicator for the projects that aim to halt and reverse deforestation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a net change in forest area (considering both forest gain and loss) in the target landscapes, or • a change in area affected by deforestation in the target landscapes. 4) Supporting smallholder farmers through the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program (CFB IP): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We want to underscore that supporting smallholder farmers is critical for halting deforestation and inclusive transition toward deforestation-free supply chains. And, this Program must ensure that smallholder farmers in deforestation-risk commodity chains receive as much attention as other local community groups receive through this IP. In particular for the private sector engagement, we recommend the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When it develops its M&E framework, the Liberia Child Project will work with the Regional Coordination Project to ensure incorporation of all appropriate indicators. 2) See above; this issue is recognized as especially pertinent in Liberia. 3) To be addressed by the GEF 1) Work with smallholder farmers is a principal component of the Liberia Child Project, including capacity building with respect to deforestation-free supply chains and enhanced access to financing and financial services.
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	projects under this IP reinforce technical, financial and legal support for smallholder farmers within deforestation-risk commodity chains in order to help them adopt innovative, low-cost biodiversity-friendly practices and secure their legal rights (ToC 3).	
c) Switzerland		
	<p>The IP remains relevant, has a high potential to generate GEB, to be scaled up and replicated, contribute to sustainable development, the theory of change is comprehensible and plausible, The levels co-financing seems adequate. It is coherent and in compliance with GEF safeguards.</p> <p>However, regarding the institutional set up we suggest to make the link to the Forest Steward Council (FSC).</p>	<p>We note that there is a Technical Working Group currently working on the FSC Interim Forest Stewardship Standard for Liberia. The Liberia Child Project will work with the Regional Coordination Project to explore linkages with this process, with a particular interest in documenting quality of protected area management.</p>
d) United States		
	<p>We appreciate the draft Work Programmes' focus on our planet's most critical forest ecosystems which must be conserved to meet global climate and biodiversity goals. Given that the largest driver of tropical deforestation is land clearance for commodity production we would expect GEF projects to clearly define that problem and orient their work programs towards addressing it. We would appreciate greater emphasis on sustainable forest management that recognizes the need for alternative livelihoods to conserve global forest ecosystems. We would strongly advocate for GEF projects to clearly orient their projects around helping countries decouple commodity production from deforestation.</p>	<p>The Liberia Guinean Forests Child Project has been designed with these critical considerations in mind and aims to address the key drivers of deforestation through comprehensive and inclusive interventions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling Conditions for Co-management (Component 1): The project aims to strengthen the enabling conditions for the co-management of the Gola Forest National Park and the proposed protected areas in Foya, Kpo Mountains, and Wonegizi. By involving local communities and providing alternative livelihoods, we address the root causes of deforestation linked to commodity production. This aligns with the recommendation to focus on sustainable forest management and alternative livelihoods. 2. Improving Management of Landscapes Outside Protected Areas

		<p>(Component 2): We recognize the need to manage landscapes beyond protected areas to mitigate deforestation pressures from agricultural expansion. This component focuses on sustainable land-use practices, promoting agroforestry, and enhancing the productivity of existing agricultural lands to reduce the need for further land clearance.</p> <p>3. Transboundary Collaboration (Component 3): Strengthening institutional structures for transboundary collaboration between Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia is crucial for holistic watershed management. This approach will ensure that efforts to decouple commodity production from deforestation are coordinated across borders, addressing the issue at a regional level.</p> <p>4. Coordination, Learning, and Sharing (Component 4): By enhancing coordination, learning, and sharing between local, national, and regional initiatives, particularly within the Guinean Forest Biome and the Northwest Liberia Landscape, we aim to disseminate best practices in sustainable forest management. This includes sharing knowledge on alternative livelihoods and sustainable commodity production, thus supporting your advocacy for clear project</p>
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		<p>orientation towards decoupling commodity production from deforestation.</p> <p>5. Capacity Building: Enhancing the capacity for multi-stakeholder forest landscape management among government and civil society is a priority. This component ensures that all stakeholders have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement and sustain activities that reduce deforestation linked to commodity production.</p>
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