



Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953)

FINAL REPORT OF TERMINAL EVALUATION

Submitted to

MANO RIVER UNION SECRETARIAT

Att: Secretary General

MRU Secretariat, Regional Executing Agency of the Project

Spur Loop 32 S Fudia Terrace, PM Bag 133

Freetown, SIERRA LEONE

E-mail: mgharrison@mru.int

Tel: +232-72-120-455/+231-888-921-493

By

Syaka SADIO, PhD

Agricultural, Integrated Soil, Land and Water Management, and Environmental Expert

President of AFEN-CONSULT INC.

2000#Regus-629, McGill Avenue,

Montreal, QC, H3A 3H3

Tel: +1-514-965-3116; +44-7452281778; E-mail: ssadio@afenconsult.com; Skype : Afen.ss

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It is our pleasure to have conducted this Terminal Evaluation of the GEF-MRU Project, **“Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953)”**, and to contribute to its implementation.

We seize this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to **Mr. S. Mory Bah**, the Executive General Secretary of the Mano River Union (Executing Agency) for having selected me to conduct this Terminal Evaluation consultancy of the GEF project and to the MRU/SG staff for providing me with all facilities required to undertake the evaluation.

Special thanks to the Project IUCN (implementing Agency), particularly to Dominique ENDAMANA (Task manager for IUCN), JIAGHO Remi (Task manager for IUCN-PACO), and to the MRU-Regional Management Unit Team (Mr Abdoulaye Doumbia (Regional project coordinator), Patrick MASUBA (Regional Project Monitoring & Evaluation) and Leonardo Wilson (Financial and Accountant Officer)).

This Terminal Evaluation could not have happened without the contribution of the National Execution Agency's teams (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), and special thanks for their valuable support and availability to assist us and address our queries.

We also would like to thank the many people we interviewed in Freetown and during our field missions. I learned more from each of them, particularly the NGOs and CSOs, and local communities.

The evaluation has taken a lot of time due to several unforeseen issues that delayed this final evaluation.

We wish a successful continuation of the project new phase implementation to fulfill the sustainable conservation of the transboundary basin resources of the Mano River for the benefit of local community livelihood under the leadership of the General Secretariat of the Mano River Union

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Profile	Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project.
1.1 Project title	
1.2 Project Number (GEF ID / IUCN ID)	GEF ID: 4953; IUCN ID: P01885
1.3 Project type (FSP or MSP)	Full-sized Project (FSP)
1.4 Trust Fund	GEF Trust Fund
1.5 GEF strategic objectives and focal areas	GEF Strategic Objective 1 - Conserve, sustainably use, and manage biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources globally, taking into account the anticipated impacts of climate change. Multi-focal Areas (Biodiversity, Land Degradation and International Waters).
1.6 IUCN programme priority	(1) Valuing and conserving nature and (2) Effective and equitable governance of nature's use
1.7 Geographical scope	Regional/Multi-country: Mano River Union area (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone)
1.8 Project executing agencies	Implementing Agency: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Executing Agency at regional level: Mano River Union (MRU) Executing Agencies at national level: Côte d'Ivoire: Direction de la gestion et de la protection des ressources en eau, ministère des Eaux et Forêts; Guinea: Centre Forestier de N'Zerekore, ministère de l'Environnement, des Eaux et des Forêts; Liberia: Forestry Development Authority, Sierra Leone: National Protected Area Authority, Ministry of Agricultural Forestry and Food Security
1.9 Duration of project (including expected start and end dates)	48 months; extended to 56 months (June 2023) last extension to April 30, 2024 Commencement: January 2017; Completion: December 2020.
1.10 Project cost (Summary)	
Item	USD
A. GEF financing	6,970,000
B. Co-financing:	
- WA-BiCC / USAID project (<i>in kind</i>)	10,000,000 {confirmed}
- ROAM-CI/IUCN-UNEP-DFID (<i>in kind</i>)	307,772 {confirmed}
- Co-funding pledge, Liberia and Guinea(<i>in kind</i>)	45,686,290 {confirmed}
- BRIDGE / IUCN (<i>in kind</i>)	290,000 {confirmed}
- MRU / Secretariat (<i>in kind</i>)	106,580 {confirmed}
C. Sub-total co-financing	56,390,642
D. Total (A+C)	63,360,642

Project Contacts	
Task Manager (Implementing Agency)	ENDAMANA Dominique (dominique.endamana@iucn.org)
Task Manager (PACO GEF Unit)	JIAGHO Remi (Remi.JIAGHO@iucn.org)
Global Thematic Lead (Implementing Agency)	DALTON James (James.DALTON@iucn.org)
Project Manager (Executing Agency)	ABDOULAYE Doumbia (doumbia1959@gmail.com)
GEF Operational Focal Point	Cote d'Ivoire: Mrs. Alimata Kone-Bakayoko (alimat53@yahoo.fr) Guinea Conakry: Mr. Ahmadou Sebory Toure (fseguinee@yahoo.fr) Liberia: Dr. Nathaniel T. Blama, Sr. (natpolo2000@yahoo.com) Sierra Leone: Mohamed S Juanah (msejuanah@hotmail.com)

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank;
ANADER	Agence Nationale d'Appui au Development Rural (<i>National Agency for Rural Development Support</i>);
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.
BRIDGE	Building River Dialogue and Governance;
BRLi	Consultant Company BRLi;
CEO	Chef Executive Officer;
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund;
C.I	Cote-d'Ivoire (Côte d'Ivoire);
CSO	Civil Society Organization;
CSSL	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone;
DFID	UK governmental Department for International Development;
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States;
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment;
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan;
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System;
EU	European Union;
FACE	Farmers Associated to Conserve the Environment;
FDA	Forest Department Agency;
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade mechanism;
FPCF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility;
FPIC	Free prior informed consent;
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration;
GEF	Global Environment Facility;
GGO	IUCN's Global Gender Office;
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit;
GN	Guinea;
HYCOS	Hydrological Cycle Observation System;
I.C.	International consultant
IFC	International Finance Corporation;
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions;
ISLA	Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes;
ISP	Institutional Strengthening Plans;
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature;
IWMP	Integrated Water Management Program;
IWRM	International Water Resources Management;
KfW	German government-owned development bank;
LB	Liberia;
MARFOP	Mano River Forest Ecosystem Management Program;
MINEF	Ministry of Water and Forest (CI);
MRU	Mano River Union;
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action;
NBA	Niger Basin Authority;
NFP	National Forest Policy;
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization;
NPAA	National Protected Areas Authority;
NPCU	National Project Coordination Unit;
OIPR	Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves

OI-REN	Ivorian Observatory for Natural Resources Sustainable Development;
OMVS	Office de Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal;
PAAS	Project Appraisal and Approval System;
PACO	West and Central Africa Program;
PCMS	Project Complaints Management System;
PGS	Project Guidelines and Standards;
PIF	Project Identification Form;
PNECI	National Water Partnership in Côte d'Ivoire;
PPG	Project Preparation Grant;
PRE	Ecosystems Restoration Project;
PTF	Funding and Technical Partners;
RA	Rainforest Alliance;
RBA	Rights-based approach;
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation;
RICCE	Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment;
RPMU	Regional Project Management Unit;
SAP	Strategic Action Programme;
SL	Sierra Leone;
SLBCP	Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservation Project;
SODECI	Water Supply Company of Côte d'Ivoire;
SODEFOR	Forest Development Company (CI);
STEWARD	Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development;
TDA	Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis;
T.E	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of references;
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program;
USAID	United States Agency for International Development;
WA-BICC	West Africa – Biodiversity and Climate Change;
WB	World Bank;
WCF	Wildlife Conservation Fund;
WRCU	Water Resources Coordination Unit;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

1. Introduction

This report is about the Terminal Evaluation of the GEF-funded project "Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953" to support Mano River Union Countries (implemented by IUCN as the international implementing agency and executed by the MRU/SG as the regional executing agency and having in each country (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire) a national executing agency as detailed above. The project was approved for 48 months and declared operational in January 2017 with a closing date as of the end date initially on December 31st, 2020, then extended at no additional cost for two more years, until June 2023. Another extension was approved at the last regional steering committee in Abidjan on December 20 up to April 2024 at no additional cost to achieve the remaining activities

As a full-size project with a budget of more than USD 2 million and under the rules and procedures of GEF project financing and implementation mechanisms, the project was subject to go for a Mid-term evaluation after the first half of the implementation period (June -November 2022, instead of January 2022) and a Final Evaluation (April 2024, instead of November 2023).

This Terminal Evaluation is conducted through a participatory and inclusive approach that complies with GEF Agency project financing and implementation procedures and guidelines, under the overall supervision of the IUCN (Regional Implementing Agency-RIA) and the Secretariat General of the MRU (as Regional Project Executing Agency-REA).

The International Consultant assessed the project achievements and results in line with GEF project evaluation criteria: assessment of the project implementation findings (i) objectives and result framework, (ii) outputs, (iii) stakeholders and beneficiary community's engagements, as per GEF project evaluation criteria: (i) relevance, (ii) efficiency, (iii) Effectiveness, (iv) Sustainability, and (v) Impacts. He also drew relevant conclusions, lessons learned and relevant recommendations to guide the completion of the remaining period (iv) lessons learned and (v) exit strategies for the four countries (Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

B. Project relevance

1. Project baseline

The I.C. assessed the project baseline as consistent with the GEF project recommended implementation strategy in line with the "standard social and environmental responsibility approach in addressing transboundary river basins and in the four countries. The I.C. assessed the project baseline situation as relevant (R: 2/2).

2. Project intervention sites

The project site selection criteria are consistent with the vision of the government of the 4 countries and GEF strategic objective 1 and Multi-focal Areas, as well as the international donors and NGOs involved in the Mano River Transboundary forest landscapes restoration and Transboundary Basin water resource management.

The I.C assessed the selected project intervention sites as relevant (R: 2/2)

3. GEF and IUCN focal areas

Our assessment highlights that the project is relevant and in line with:

- i. GEF 5 core Focal areas for biodiversity (BD), land degradation (TD) and International waters (IS), as well as its implementation strategy which is likely to address threats and challenges about (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge.
- ii. The project is also consistent with IUCN programme priority areas (i) Valuing and conserving nature, and (ii) Effective and equitable governance of nature's use.
- iii. Focus to overcome existing barriers to the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins.

The I.C. assessed the project as relevant (R: 2/2) to GEF core focal areas and IUCN programme priority areas.

4. Project rationale and objectives

- i. Project objectives and expected outputs are consistent with the overall Mano River Union shared vision and objectives to strengthen the management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits and improved livelihoods of adjacent communities:
- ii. Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management: targeting sustainable forest management and targeting forest landscape restoration in addressing the various threats and impacts pertaining to climatic change, environment and forest degradation in Upper Guinea mountains across the four Transboundary landscapes involving Guinea, Coted-D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- iii. Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters: focused on the integrated management of international waters shared by the four members state of the Mano River Union.

Therefore, the I.C assessed as relevant (R:2/2) to the regional and national Determined commitment and engagement toward the three conventions of the United Nations policies, and highly relevant.

5. Project result indicator framework

The assessment of the project outputs highlighted the result indicators are not fully consistent with principles of SMART1 criteria, as its outputs² (1.1.a & 1.1.b) are overambitious, not time bound and unachievable within the project timeframe (48/56 months), considering the stakeholders and beneficiaries limited capacities and particular harshness of the ecosystem areas prone to climate change and environmental degradation threats. Indeed, the communities of the project areas have been experiencing since 1974 an unfolding drought and vulnerability of the transboundary forest landscapes and shared river basin waters. Furthermore, the 5 years timeframe of the project implementation is not in line with the project objectives and targeted outputs, considering stakeholder's and community's limited technical knowledge and practices (agroforestry, enrichment of natural forest, water basin management, etc.) to sustainably manage and restore the degraded transboundary forest landscape and basin waters.

¹ SMART: Strategic, measurable, achievable, and timebound.

²: Output 1.1.a - 88,400 ha of forests and other land cover in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests, and Output 1.1.b - 93,400 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests

It is not about achievement, but about alignment with the SMART criteria, as most indicators are overambitious and not achievable within the project timeframe.

Therefore, because of all these inconsistencies, ambitious objectives and limited stakeholder's silviculture and transboundary waters management capacities to build resilience and efficient technical strategies to overcome degradation of shared transboundary ecosystem resources, including forest, waters and subsequent biodiversity loss, the overall design of the project result indicators is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

C. Project effectiveness

1. Project implementation strategy

As highlighted in the Prodoc, the project implementation strategy pursued a regional and national shared vision to (i) mainstream climate change resilience and adaptation, (ii) ensure sustainable environmental protection, (iii) undertake integrated international transboundary water and forest landscape restoration (IWRM), including sustainable community livelihood. The technical support provided at both regional and national levels highlighted to some extent the effectiveness of the project technical consistency applied to achieve the activities and expected results. Therefore, the implementation strategy is assessed as *Satisfactory (S:5/6)*.

2. Implementation and Management

The instruction given to the NEAs to develop the first project implementation Work Plan and Budget for 2017, were not fulfilled, due to many gaps at the NEAs levels, thus the execution started by January-February 2018.

However, the inclusive participatory and holistic approach adopted by the teams enabled effective involvement of the stakeholders and communities in the integrated ecosystem management and sustainable land use management, including forest landscape restoration along the basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

The project implementation and technical execution support and monitoring-evaluation support provided by IUCN, MRU/SG/PMU and NEA teams, as well as the community engagement are assessed as satisfactory (S:5/6).

3. Partner performance

The partners and community's engagement and performances pertaining to forest landscape restoration were under required capacities to address the threats and challenges of the transboundary area sustainable management. *Their contribution to the project execution is assessed by the I.C. as Satisfactory (S:5/6).*

4. Project achievements

After a low performance, observed during the MTE, , the NEAs doubled their efforts with a 100% delivery of the outputs under Component 1 and Component 2 TDA & SAP fully achieved and validated).

However, the results achieved are not fully effective as no activities was conducted on the field for TDA & SAP, apart from the study and validation Furthermore under component 1, the landscape restoration was not effective as activities were manly focused on agroforestry targeting fruit trees and little actions toward

sylviculture practices to improve the forest growth and shape land cover, and degradation patterns within and along the river basin and tributaries, etc.).

However, the project execution is highly gender sensitive, as the NEAs in their respective countries focused on gender difference mainstreaming and ensured relevant participation of the vulnerable groups in the project areas.

The overall project achievements are assessed as Satisfactory (MS:5/6).

5. Effectiveness of the project output achieved and deliveries.

The project deliveries demonstrated high input through capacity-building training that contributed to raising valuable awareness towards the populations and partners on the relevance of forest resource management and degraded forest landscapes and ecosystems and mainstreaming the project outcomes and potentially helping the sustainability of the outcomes.

Despite the overall capacity strengthening at community and farmer's levels and the ambitious multisectoral linkages beyond their capacities to run such a complex project that requires proven experience and skills to streamline the activities, (component 1), the outputs expected were not adequately and full-fledged achieved in such a way as to enable change in the overall basin environment and the specifically targeted intervention sites. *Therefore, the I.C. assessed the overall project achievements as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).*

We acknowledge the important work carried out by the project teams, technical and financial partners who contributed their know-how, financial or human resources to this result. We are also aware that the work is still colossal and will have to be continued for several more years to establish a stable situation. The GEF/Mano River Union project embodies an ambitious undertaking aimed at integrating the principles of participatory management, conservation and sustainable development at the heart of its activities.

The project offers feasible but challenging prospects to develop new strategic framework for the restoration of forest landscape ecosystems and river basins protection with support from the member countries of the Mano River Union and their unwavering support of regional and international partners.

As stated below, the project is relevant to the country's needs and policies to meet their engagement towards the "United Nations Determined Conditions" to ensure sustainable environment/land management, climate change and biodiversity conservation. The result is assessed as:

- i. Various stakeholders from the Secretariat General of the Mano River Union, the Government and their specialized institutions of the four members states, the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National and International organisations and local communities have supported financially and politically the project implementation.
- ii. The assessment of the output findings in many sites revealed well-managed nurseries by dedicated communities, particularly women, rained by the NEAs and national/international partners and thriving to loverhood improves in taking care of their nurseries (< 2 acres) to produce various seedlings for the establishment of small orchards for the household food and cash generation, as well as forest landscape restoration plantations and land degradation control purpose.
- iii. However, the achievements seem to be dominated by agroforestry activities, very much appreciated by women and considered as a key practice driving substantial benefits to improve their livelihood while protecting the forest and the river basin against heavy socio/economic pressure and

environmental impacts. Indeed, promoting the project outputs throughout the basin could have been an inspiring way to build sustainability.

- iv. Although they are very much appreciated by the populations, these activities cover small areas, thus with limited impacts on socioeconomic and income generation. Furthermore, most of the sites we visited during the mid-term-evaluation and at this Terminal Evaluation are still young although some of them started fruiting as the plantations are of 3-4 years. Therefore, their effectiveness is still insignificant and needs the plantations need to be better and further nurtured by the communities or owners with support by Environment or Forestry Directorates.
- v. It's sad to note that after five years of interventions and agroforestry plantations and forest landscape restoration achievements and outputs did not enable to overcome the major environmental threats inherent from climate change and correlated to socioeconomic pressure from the people living in the forest edge and depending on fragile natural ecosystem and degradation land resources. Despite important sensitization and training activities carried out to raise awareness of the importance of protecting and conserving the forest landscape resources, neither the situation has significantly improved their livelihoods.
- vi. Indeed, what could have been considered as the project achievement flag sheet- landscape restoration and sustainable farming practices in the buffer zones, was not strategically tackled enough by the country NEA team works to illustrate the effectiveness of the forest landscape restoration and integrated water resource conservation feasibility. The demonstrate of salvatory way enabling the communities to reach sustainable on-farm income generation and self-sufficiency food security was not fully achieved.
- vii. In most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional-specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration practices have not been adequately applied to address the complexity of the forest vegetation patterns as most of the activities were focused on introduction of various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers instead of introducing forest species and applying silviculture practices to restore the degraded areas, despite instructions provided by the Knowledgeable Monitoring-evaluation Expert at MRU/Coordination Unit.
- viii. All the above considerations call for questions about the appropriateness of the techniques applied, as basic silviculture knowledge and techniques seem to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities and NEAs. Indeed, there are many gaps in the forest landscape restoration based on silvicultural management practices opening the forest cover in thinning the branches or reducing the tree density to allow seedling germination and rehabilitate degradation areas and ensuring viable tree planting inside the forest and sustainable management of the restored forest lands within the degraded areas.
- ix. Discussions and interviews with the stakeholders during out field visits at the MTE and at the current T.E provided relevant achievements highlighting relevant results and commitment from the population to pursue the project activities and improve their capacities and skills to pursue the activities beyond the project closure.
- x. Considering the harshness of the region's weather and climate change conditions, the socioeconomic vulnerability of the landscapes and basin areas, and the political instability which

may put at risk most of the achievements related to environment and natural resource management, the project teams achieved tremendous work, even though the outputs did not result to substantial change on the forest landscape improvement and community vulnerability and poverty reduction.

- xi. It happens that many activities of partners and communities involved are compromised at the site level, particularly those related to component 1, which are very fragile and unable to take any decision to restore and preserve forest resources, either upstream or downstream to allow for engagement. However, the contracts signed between the project NEA and the national consultants in November 2018 to support the field activities demonstrated the interest of the population to reengage themselves in the project activities.

D. Project efficiency

As highlighted in the section on financial resources management, the achievements indicated 93.1% (USD 4,000,000.00 USD) for component 1, 95.6% (USD 2,034,633.00) for Component 2 and 96.0% for Component 3 (USD 301,731.00) of the project budget was spent. The low delivery at the MTE was due, to various circumstances, such as COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020 which did allow the team to reach out some farmers and communities. At the Co-financing levels, the fund mobilization was low considering the US\$56,390,642 amount approved in the project design. Improved reporting of co-finance from all executing partners is required: (i) WABICC /USAID Project supported \$10,000,000 of the project expenses; (ii) BRIDGE supported during phases 1 to 4 a total amount of \$399,972; (iii) ECOWAS supported the total amount of \$500,000. The SG/MRU and benefiting member countries contributed in-kind the following: (i) MRU = \$1,469,209; (ii) Guinea: \$11,161,357; (iii) Liberia: \$517,315; (iv) Sierra Leone: \$ 21,280; and (v) Côte d'Ivoire: \$ 49,824 (To be updated).

The assessment highlighted inconsistencies in the interventions and a high financial resource balance, and low output deliveries, therefore, the project efficiency is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

D. Project sustainability

The project overall sustainability (Institutional Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Social Sustainability and Sustainability/Financial and Economic Viability) is rated as Moderately Unlikely (MU:2/3)

E. Project impacts

The project team developed several trainings that sharpened the community awareness and capacities allowing them to achieve the project activities and deliver substantial outputs about forest landscapes, biodiversity conservation, improved land management practices, improving community livelihood, etc.

Therefore, the project impacts are assessed as satisfactory (H: 5/6).

F. Constraints faced

The project implementation faced several constraints, such as:

1. **Delay of the implementation start-up:** Despite the project implementation inception workshop was launched on 11-12 July 2021 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, its execution at the level of the 4

countries only started In January-March 2018, thus creating a delay of 7 to 9 months. According to the country, this delay was due to the long delay in the assignment of the technical staff and lack of rolling facilities, and particularly the slowness of the first disbursement of financial resources by the IUCN.

2. **Limited operational capacities:** At the start of the project, most of the NEA faced a lack of qualified technical staff due to the slowness of recruitment, in particular in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, and necessary qualified partners having proven knowledge in matters of restoration and management of forest resources and conservation of biodiversity to cover an area of 700,000 ha of protected area. In reality the total amount of forest landscape restored is overestimated, far beyond the reality, less than 20% (140,000.00 Ha) of the total area were performed the NEAs.
3. **Mobilization of funds:** Significant delays were noted in the allocation of funds due particularly to the disbursement grouping system practiced by the IUCN, while the NEA do not operate at the same speed, thus having delayed the execution of activities in the field. Indeed, the system of grouping the disbursements of the funds implemented by IUCN / SG-MRU has created a certain financial immobility and difficulties in availability of funds at the level of the NEA to allow them to deal with certain expenses and to carry out at their pace their activities of annual work plans; What the most proactive brings them to bend to the rhythm of others.
4. **Defection of certain execution partners:** in some NEAs, there has been the withdrawal of the potential qualified partners planned to support the process of starting and execution of the project such as FFI and Rain Forest Alliance and who constituted a serious handicap in team performance.
5. **Logistical difficulties of mobility of agents in the field:** The project implementation has also been delayed especially at start -up, due to lack of logistical means, certain field equipment and tools, including internal procurement process and relevant documentation to obtain non -objection notices (NOA) from the IUCN, for their supply , thereby preventing agents from carrying out their activities in the field to meet, conduct meetings and supervise population activities on sites, thus delaying the project implementation.
6. **Inaccessibility of project sites:** Due to the road conditions, the COVVI -19 2020 pandemic and the weather risks (very rainy winter season, making the roads impracticable, floods, etc.) to conduct the activities of the project implementation, and particularly the monitoring of activities in the field according to the requirements adopted.
7. **Access to the landscapes:** especially the Southeast remains a major challenge as consultant and NEA appeals for reconsideration and reduction in the intervention areas has been accepted.
8. **Sometimes delays in approving No Objection** from IUCN contribute to change planned schedule and towards the delays in technical implementation of some activities;
9. Access to the landscapes and the basins remains a major challenge, especially during the rainy season.

G. Lesson learned.

The T.E provides several lessons to us, which are:

1. **The participatory process of the SAP**, involved governmental institutions, local communities, traditional authorities, and civil societies, proves to be decisive for the success of its design. The SAP prioritizes the sustainable management of land, forest and water resources.

2. **Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis:** it provided fundamental lessons within the implementation output of the project and highlighted significant challenges faced by the priority transboundary basins. These challenges highlight deforestation, pollution, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity including cross-cutting governance climate change and gender, thereby threatening the wealth of natural resources such as water, forests, and minerals in the Mano River Union region.
3. **Methodology for assessing forest landscape restoration:** In the context of the restoration of forest landscapes and the management of international water resources within the MRU, a series of important lessons have been learned, highlighting all the challenges and successes achieved. Capacity building at all levels, including among national consultants and within coordination units, has proven to be a fundamental pillar for the successful implementation of the interventions of FLR and monitoring-evaluation of results.
4. **Diversification and adaptation of forest landscape restoration:** Interventions to the local context, ranging from assisted natural regeneration to agroforestry systems, have been identified as key strategies to effectively address the specific environmental and socio-economic needs of targeted areas. A thorough understanding of the costs, benefits and ecosystem services associated with these interventions is essential to guide decision-making and foster community acceptance and participation (Rabe Gniapi Gasper, 2023).
5. **Need for Adapted Technical Training:** The interventions highlight the importance of adapted technical training to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and the development of sustainable agricultural practices. Indeed, the training programs have demonstrated their effectiveness in raising skills within communities, but their success relies on extensive personalization, respectful of local contexts and inclusive of all members of the community.
6. **Synergy between Conservation and Development:** Biodiversity conservation initiatives in all intervention sites have demonstrated the importance of creating community development synergies, in terms of agroforestry, improving agricultural productivity, thus contributing to food security. and increased income. This approach is reinforced by technical training adapted to local needs, improving agricultural skills while preserving the environment.
7. **Integrated Resources:** Integrated management of natural resources, embracing the interconnected dynamics of land, water, and biodiversity, is crucial to the success of conservation and sustainable development initiatives. This holistic strategy recognizes that effective ecosystem management cannot be done in silo but rather requires a systemic vision that takes into account the multiple facets and interactions of the natural environment (agriculture, forestry, water management, fishing, and nature conservation, etc.).
8. **Importance of Legal and Institutional Frameworks:** The application of legislative texts and the establishment of solid institutional frameworks are essential to support conservation and sustainable resource management efforts. They provide the basis for regulating resource use and resolving land use conflicts. Legal and institutional frameworks play a key role in the sustainable management of natural resources, establishing clear rules for their use and protection.
9. **The project indicators:** Most project indicators of the forest landscape restoration areas are ambitious and unachievable within the 4 years particularly in a harsh climate change-prone environment and limited institutional and technical capacities. Indeed, reversing land degradation under such hostile climate change threats and people high vulnerability required long-term (> 7

years) commitment at both financial and technical levels to make sustainable transformation vision happened.

- 10. Reversing resource degradation trends:** In turn, it looks like despite all efforts and activities achieved, the outputs were not effective to reverse the degradation of the transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems and transboundary basin water resource management at the regional, as the TDA and SAP design were only completed at the end of the project. The project has hinged the path and direction toward "sustainable forest restoration and biodiversity conservation", and "transboundary water resource management". However, the later were limited only to studies (TDA) and design of management strategies, without any implementation activities on the field due to several constraints having caused delays to demonstrate some tests before the end of the project.
- 11. Agroforestry Vs forestry:** It must be clearly understood by all practitioners that Agroforestry differs to many extents from forestry practices: Agroforestry usually applies in "tree-crop system" to improve soil fertility and agricultural production and protecting the land against erosion (water or wind), and providing goods (products, fruits, leaves, etc.), while Forestry practices rely on silvicultural practices to educate and expand natural forests and plantations for wood or timber production, on a state-owned, private or community lands, to a larger scale.
- 12. Forest development** will enable environmental improvement in harsh climate change and drought-prone areas, with erratic and uncertain rainfalls. Under traditional farming systems forest development may rely on strengthening the stakeholder's capacities at all levels of intervention (regional, national and local levels). However, this takes dedicated and effective skilled staff who are ready to work tirelessly.
- 13. Improving management of water-related sectors:** As water is among the primary needs for our life, the focus must be put on its conservation and sustainable use, whatever the size and quality of the water. However, it requires a sound integrated strategic plan framework which considers water resources as of the same importance as land resources and soil resources.
- 14. Difficulties encountered by Cote-d'Ivoire NEA:** During the year 2019 which highlighted the importance of respecting commitments made with the local populations: At Mount Nimba forest landscape the collaboration with communities was satisfactory with cordial relations with the populations, while with the communities of the Taï forest landscape, the NEA team couldn't build trust with the communities. It is therefore suggested to set a permanent motivation for the stakeholders to participate to ensure the achievement maintenance agreement prior to implementing the project activity execution.
- 15. Establishing a lasting collaboration with other organizations and institutions:** Collaboration between stakeholders was encouraged in the project design, but during the implementation mainly country's institutions and some CSOs were dully involved, thus a limited field synergy of actions has been initiated with some skilled organizations, such as WABiCC, FFI and the European Union, to avoid disparities in approach, operation, and duplication of actions around the intervention areas (Ziama reserve, etc.).

H. Challenges

The Mano River Union region faced significant challenges in its quest to preserve ecosystems and sustainably manage natural resources. These challenges are crucial for the survival of local communities, as well as environmental sustainability, and require immediate attention and actions. Indeed, perseverance

and continued commitment must have been among essential focus to overcoming obstacles facing conservation of ecosystems and relief of inhabitants, such as:

- Improving low human resource technical and logistic capacities of most of the national institutions and administrations.
- Enabling accelerated political will to enhance conservation strategies and management planning
- Poor information dissemination among partners.
- Setting communication networks in the project's target areas.
- Improving road conditions to access project's affected remoted communities.
- Fostering community's good will to participate in the project implementation is an added value

I. Recommendation

Considering the project implementation at its end after three consecutive extensions (from 4 to 6.5 years) at no additional cost, we wish to draw relevant recommendations to streamline and ensure sustainability of the impacts and improve the forest resources and water resources for the community's livelihood:

1. **Experience of stakeholders:** At the end of the project, it is imperative to keep the pace laid down by the stakeholders through established multi-sectoral committees and national transboundary policy-makers, technical bodies with support from government agencies and international institutions to better consolidate responsibly the sustainability of shared transboundary water resources, in strengthening awareness gained about water pollution (mining, waste management, siltation, etc.), as well as Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) studies and Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for more efficient and collaborative management of water resources and biodiversity.
2. **Taking stock of past experience:** Although we understand the project activities and outcomes are of long term process, it is sad to note that past efforts and investments provided by GEF and other donors (UNDP, USAID, European Union, etc.) in the basin, the ongoing GEF project objectives addressing management of the transboundary areas of the Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management and basin water resources resulted to same disillusion, as to some extent the achievements have not been so effective as expected to reverse the continuous degradation trends of lands and community vulnerability".
3. **Effective vision:** With regards to the wide area of intervention sites, the project implementation and works carried out despite the limited budget, the weaknesses and over ambitious vision and environment harshness, the operational weaknesses and strategy shortfalls of the executing entities, the project design lacks somehow a good reasoning which could have brought the experts to downsize the project scope to a feasible area during the time frame of 4 years.
4. **Consolidation of outcomes:** As the current GEF project phase has ended and no or limit field activities will be conducted by the communities engaged and the national forestry and water resource directorates, it is recommended to focus on consolidation of activities carried out from 2018 to April 2024, to give a change of promising achievement visibility to convince the communities that with determination and commitment everything is possible. This
5. **Awareness raising and capacity building: focusing**
 - i. activities on consolidation of the achievements, organizing awareness meetings and training of the communities on forest resource management at the level of the basins forest landscapes

- and water in involving all the partners, to identify synergies and complementary actions to maintain current outcomes;
- ii. Continuing advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national, regional and international levels, as well as through the inclusion of the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State officials, MRU Secretariat and IUCN).
 - iii. Encouraging and streamlining the established platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of sustaining the achievements resulting from the implementation of the project established
 - iv. Encouraging Regional Executing Agencies (MRUs) and National Executing Agencies to engage in the in-depth consultation process with the GEF and IUCN s to get them continuing their financial support under GEF 8 another implementation phase to ensure sustainability of outcomes and further train and motivate the populations and the national institution to pursuing the project activities.
 - v. Pursuing and adopting a consolidated framework for awareness and capacity building, as a mandatory tool for all NEA and government executing institutions.
 - vi. Encourage full-fledged awareness raising for farmers and local communities on building effective landscape restoration of the Gola forest;
 - vii. Encouraging the farmers to scale up the community farms for sustainable financial returns as that will give them higher yields that will attract buyers or market.
 - viii. All efforts should be made for the establishment of a Regional Transboundary Management Body for the MRU Transboundary Basins;
 - ix. Promoting and disseminating proven models for Forest landscape restoration to empower the national technical structures and prepare project documents for access the green funds and carbon funds to support local communities and NGOs.

6. Developing Forest landscape characterization and monitoring framework

- i. Consolidate existing activities, which means no new activity should be planned and implemented, thus focusing efforts on identified weaknesses and filling community knowledge gaps to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the outputs at the end of the project phase.
- ii. Conducting characterization and detailed mapping for monitoring changes of land cover, vegetation map, forest density, transboundary basin rivers and progress of the restored landscapes index (1:100,000 to 1:250,000). This should take advantage of the ROAM research findings, but in focusing on what is relevant for the project area.

7. Developing a field handbook for forestry and agriculture technicians on:

- i. Project monitoring-evaluation, based on output and outcome indicators.
- ii. Forest Landscape restoration and sustainable forest land management techniques.
- iii. Sustainable integrated land use management guidelines.

8. Developing a Web-based Land database survey and land cover mapping

- i. Land characterization.
- ii. Land feature description.
- iii. Soil survey,
- iv. Land cover, classification and mapping at large scale (1:10,000-250,000);
- v. Land and soil evaluation,
- vi. Soil physical and chemical properties characterization.
- vii. Assessment of Soil suitability and aptitudes.

9. Sustainable agroforestry land use system framework, including:

- i. Land use planning and management;
- i. Land preparation and fertility improvement;
- ii. Soil conservation and erosion control
- iii. Restoration of upland landscape and coastal land protection;
- iv. Agroforestry system and practices (alley cropping, cover cropping, windbreak, nitrogen-fixing trees, crop rotation, mixed tree establishment (fruit tree, leguminous, etc.).

10. Agricultural land rehabilitation framework:

- i. Develop agricultural land rehabilitation framework.
- ii. Develop forest landscape restoration schemes and practices framework for upland protection.

11. Develop Biodiversity conservation tools:

- i. Priority Terrestrial protected guidelines.
- ii. Management of transboundary basin areas.
- iii. Control of invasive species, etc.

12. Establishing Transboundary Landscape Platforms

The creation of transboundary landscape platforms established in Mounts Nimba and Diecké, Ziam and Wonegizi, and in the Gola Forest, symbolize the unified efforts of the Mano River Union countries by the project and highlighted the importance of regional collaboration for the preservation of ecosystems and the sustainable management of water resources, to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainability of local communities. All these serve as a improved framework for transboundary dialogue, harmonization of environmental policies, and capacity building, and integrated management of cross-border natural resources for regional sustainable development, through the implementation of action plans and the facilitation of exchanges of information:

1. Facilitation of transboundary Dialogue by bringing together key stakeholders;
2. Harmonization of Policies and Legislation;
3. Implementation and Monitoring of Action Plans;
4. Promotion of Participatory Management;
5. Local Capacity Building to be established through training and capacity building opportunities for local actors;
6. Promotion of Peace and Environmental Security: By facilitating transboundary collaboration, the platforms also contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the region;
7. Collaboration Agreements: the memorandum of understanding signed between members of the local advisory committees will mark a significant step towards strengthened cross-border collaboration for the conservation and management of the forest landscapes concerned;

8. As recommended by the regional workshop, capacity building must remain the driving force of the platform members to promote and disseminate themes and new approaches concerning the protection, monitoring, conservation, and management of forest areas.

J. Way Forward

At the end of the 8th session of the “Regional Steering Committee (RSC)”, the participants recommended the continuation of the actions initiated, among others:

1. Guinea's Forests implementing agencies (NEAs) participating in GEF8 should capitalize on the results of the SAP in the formulation of their national projects (Child Project)
2. GEF9 Preparation - Member States should start mobilizing their STAR funds to support GEF9 preparation and work with GEF operational focal points and line ministries in charge of Water, Environment and Forests in respective countries .
3. Update and submit the project asset register for approval by the MRU and IUCN, as well as subsequent transfer of assets to the SAP national implementing agencies.
4. ESMS/ESMP- NEA Sierra Leone technical assistant should consolidate the ESMP for all ANEx
5. Updating co-financing strategy for countries and partners to ensure it is consistent with upcoming GEF 9 project documents.
6. As agreed at the regional Steering Committee (RSC), it is imperative to capitalize, and valuing knowledge gained from the project to further streamline the basin development strategy.
7. It was also agreed to pursue the MRU project implementation for another phase, through specific country project, meaning each country should implement different project :
 - Cote-D'Ivoire Sub-Project to be financed and implemented by FAO;
 - Guinee Sub-Project to be financed by IUCN;
 - Liberia and Sierra Leone Sub-Project to be financed by Nature Conservation.

As it is, this is not consistent with the regional spirit and shared vision which motivated the MRU “Ecosystem Conservation and International water resources management” with tools and models for reversing the environmental and water course degradation and helped improving the livelihood of the communities and created a share vision.

We believe that the future of these forests and river basins will not take place in a separate vision but rather in a shared vision and a spirit of brotherhood. To do this, we recommend that the project continue in its current form and each of these three international agencies be considered as technical support agencies of the three defined sub-regions. This approach may ensure a guarantee of success and consolidation of fraternity/between communities.

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1. Evaluation background and context

1.1. Introduction

The current assignment is about the Terminal Evaluation of the Regional project on the "**Ecosystem Conservation and Management of International Water Resources of the Mano River Union**", funded by the GEF with contribution by IUCN and the four member states implemented by IUCN and MRU Secretariat General and executed by the four member states of MRU. The project was approved for 48 months and declared operational in January 2017, with end date initially on December 31st, 2020. However, due to several unforeseen circumstances and shortfalls, the implementation duration has been extended 3 times from 2020 to April 2024 to complete the work.

The long-term objective of the project is to provide global environmental benefits through the strengthening of the management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits and improved livelihoods for the forest adjacent communities as well as to maintain the intactness of the transboundary ecosystems including the protected areas and their surrounding zones where integrated land and water resource management strategies are implemented.

The project is executed by the Secretariat General of the MRU, as (Regional Project Executing and Management Agency), on behalf of the four member states (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) under the overall supervision of the "International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)" as implanting agency and the Regional Project Steering Committee. Being classified, under GEF rules and procedures, as a big size with a budget of over USD 2 millions, requires two evaluations: (i) Mid-Term (2.5 years) and (2) Terminal Evaluation at the end of its implementation, that is 6.5 years at its implementation completion.

This Terminal Evaluations is consistent with the GEF "Monitoring and Evaluation Policy"³ implying independence of the evaluator from the project design, approval, implementation and execution. It targets to provide, after the Midterm-Evaluation conducted in 2022, a comprehensive and systematic accountability of the performance of project implementation completion. It pursues the following expected results: (i) promote accountability and transparency; (ii) facilitate synthesis of lessons; (iii) provide feedback to allow the GEF and IUCN to identify issues that are recurrent across the GEF portfolio; and (iv) contribute to GEF databases for aggregation and analysis. It assesses activities conducted during the whole implementation period (from 2017-to April 2024) of the project, with particular focus on (i) progress made from January 2021 to April 2024, (ii) data collection, (iii) Stakeholder's interview, (ii) progress made, (iii) results achieved, and (iv) lessons learned from the project implementation, (v) strategy to implement recommendations resulting from the Terminal Evaluation.

This Terminal Evaluation complies with the five GEF evaluation criteria: (i) Relevance (context, objectives and conceptual result framework), (ii) Effectiveness of the implementation arrangements and achievements; (iii) Efficiency of the project achievements (quality, reliable data collected, stakeholder engagement and performance), (iv) Sustainability of the achievement outputs; (v) Impacts.

The report highlights the project implementation achievement findings extracted from various reports from IUCN (international implementing agency), MRU/Project Coordination Unit, NEAs (Côte d'Ivoire "CI", Guinea "Gui", Liberia "LB" and Sierra Leone "SL"), conclusion, lessons learned and recommendations.

³: GEF, 2017: "Guidelines on the project and program cycle policy; GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017; 52nd GEF Council Meeting May 23 – 25, 2017, Washington, D.C.; 93p.

1.2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

The International Consultant assessed the achievement of the outcomes and outputs the project to determine the extent to which the project objectives stated in the document submitted to the CEO for endorsement have been achieved.

The scope of this terminal evaluation consists of (i) assessing the project's framework relevance (objectives, result indicators, institutional set-up, etc.) and (ii) implementation achievements (effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, sustainability, etc.), lessons learned and recommendations to streamline the outcome benefits for environmental protection and community livelihood.

This Terminal Evaluation is guided by the TORs (Annex 1) and undertaken under the overall coordination of the MRU/SG and the direct supervision of the MRU/project Coordination Unit , in collaboration with IUCN-PACO (Regional Project Executing Agency- REA), and the participation of the National Executing Agency of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

We also understand the project objectives are consistent with the GEF-Strategic 5 objective aiming to manage sustainably forest landscapes, transboundary river water resources and biodiversity ecosystems of regional and global concerns. Indeed, the overall goal is from lessons learned and recommendations to ensure continuation of the activities initiated and engagement of the stakeholders (country key technical and policy institutions, leaders, CSOs and communities, etc.) to pursue their commitments and responsibilities for the sustainable development of the Mano River basin resources and empower the Mano River Union Secretariat capacities for sub-regional development.

The T.E findings aim to serve as a window of opportunity for MRU Executive Secretariat and the Member States to take make full-fledged decision to address any subsequent future environmental degradation risk and threat that might occurred in the region. To this regard, this T.E is considered as a turning point of SG/MRU and member countries to take advantage to design and implement strategic integrated project within a shared vision to move from "Marginally satisfactory" Implementation status to "Highly satisfactory" at the project completion.

As an independent evaluation, the International Consultant (I.C) abide by the *GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines* to assess the project performance, stakeholder's involvements, and results achieved, and addressing internal/external bottlenecks/challenges of project implementation.

1.3. Methodology

The evaluation is carried out through a participatory and inclusive approach, under the overall supervision of the MRU/Secretariat General, the direct supervision and support of the Project Management Coordination Unit and, in collaboration with the National Executing Agency (NEA) of each the four participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

The evaluation was conducted through a goal-based learning and participative approach aiming to determining to which extent the project implementation strategy and mechanisms addressed the design assumptions. We also assessed its compliances with IUCN project implementation professional code of ethics to enable the stakeholder participation and adherence to the principles and procedures of the GEF Project. The evaluation also focused both qualitative (case studies, document and literature reviews, and stakeholder consultations, as well as ministerial concerned departments, related projects and central agencies and others) and quantitative methods (data collection and analysis, advisory reports, surveys and monitoring-evaluation reports, etc.), to determine the degree to which the project objectives were achieved

and contributed to streamlining the “theory of change” (if any) assumptions and mechanisms of the project end results.

The activities includes (i) Review of project document framework design; (ii) Assessment of implementation strategy, (iii) Document review (annual and progress reports related to activities achieved as per the objectives and components output, audit reports, mid-term report, information from independent sources, etc.), (iii) Site visits and stakeholder and beneficiary’s interviews, (iv) Identifying critical weaknesses and difficulties encountered; (v) Lessons learned and recommendations for decision making for the future MRU similar projects.

Furthermore, the International Consultant undertook a 2 days-field in Kenema area selected sites in (Medina and Mao River basin), Sierra Leone to assess agroforestry plots in Gola Rainforest, interviewed beneficiaries, Moa river basin bed status and organized a ripe up meeting with Gola Rainforest Conservation LG (GRC-LG). We also met the national Director and Staff of “national Water resources Management Agency” to discuss about issues and achievements and way forward of the TDA and SAP implementation. We had a debriefing meeting on our evaluation findings and recommendations with the MRU Secretariat staff (Secretary General, Deputy SG, Accountant, Monitoring-Evaluation Officer, etc.) to discuss particularly about lessons learned and recommendations including follow up and support of the stakeholders engaged in the project implementation to take profit of results achieved.

The figure 1 below illustrates the conduct of the evaluation.

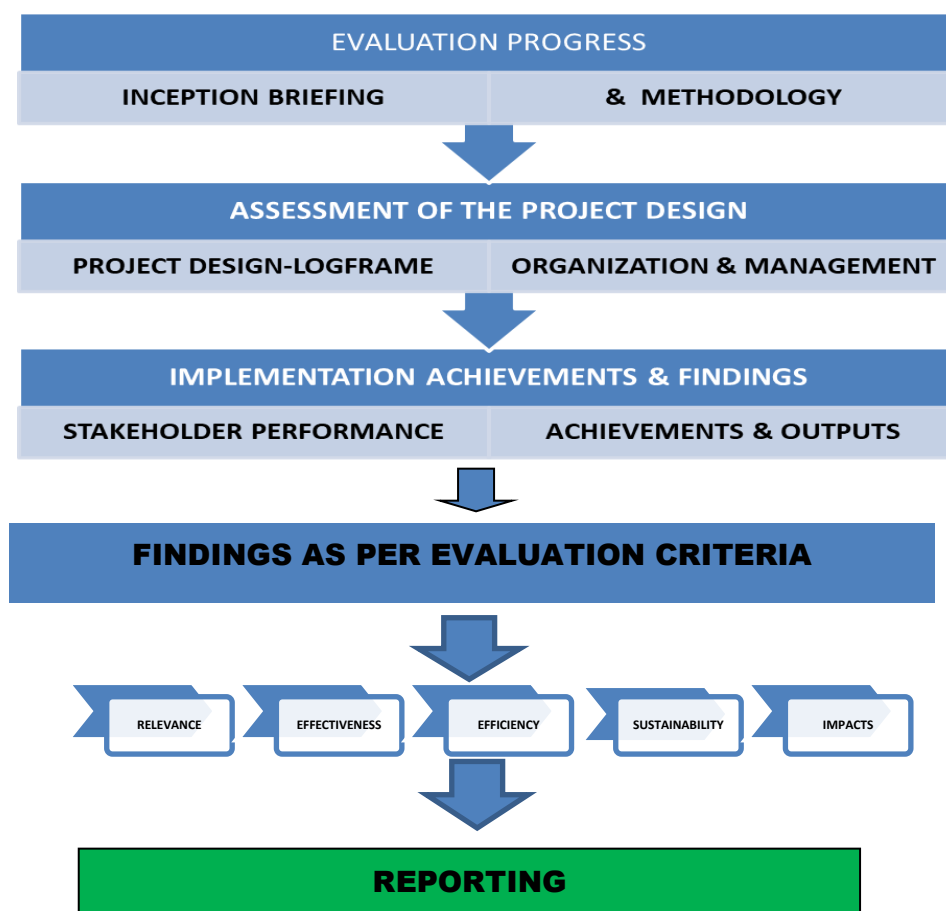




Figure 1: Evaluation approach and finding progress

The field visits and discussions with stakeholders helped the International Consultant (I.C) to capture the extent of the results achieved, lessons learnt and making subsequent recommendations from the project implementation to mainstream the sustainability of results achieved. The Terminal Evaluation (Draft and Final report) highlights the findings of the project implementation achievements (2017-2024), including (i) Design relevance, (ii) Performance effectiveness, (iv) Achievement efficiency, sustainability and impacts, as well as (the extent to which the evaluation met expected results, lessons learned and recommendations for any project terminal evaluation.

2. Project Relevance

We analyze below whether and how the project guideline, content, vision and priority interventions are consistent with the priorities of the 4 countries involved and the priority themes of restoration of forest landscapes and conservation of biodiversity, as well as the transboundary river basins in the project area. Is the program design flexible enough to consider changes in the regional context?

Our assessment proves the project content relevance is consistent with the framework design and the development priorities, objectives and targeted forest landscape restoration and Biodiversity Conservation, as well as the management of the transboundary basin water resources.

The two main components targeted are also relevant to the needs, priorities and responses to the threats and pressures of climate change and their impacts which weigh on the forest ecosystems and transboundary basins of the Mano River Union.

The project strategy identified the vision, which is associated with several specific objectives:

- i. Institutional strengthening to respond in a concerted and appropriate manner to environmental and economic issues at the regional scale, to provide a tangible contribution to the sustainable management of resources, habitats and socio-economic activities in the western coastal and marine zone. African;
- ii. Contribution of countries to resource management and sustainable development by protecting and enhancing ecosystems necessary for the maintenance and use of natural heritage through participatory management;
- iii. The strategic result is particularly relevant and in line with the objectives of the first two components and harmonizes common policies in terms of preservation, conservation and development of natural resources, with sub-regional cooperation strategies in terms of monitoring. ecological and the development of the capacity of the 4 countries to undertake sustainable development actions at the sub-regional level;
- iv. It is necessary to underline the relevance of the financed means even if they are not in line with the reality of degradation of the natural environment and the extent of the intervention zone. The project design seems not has emphasized the main pilers of a project's theory of change to provide a basis for evaluation of the activities and results. However, this terminal evaluation involves description of the project's context, objectives, activities and expected results, including description of the

outcomes, outputs, interim results and intended long-term environmental impacts of the project and, explicit assumptions.

2.1. Relevance of the project baseline context

The project baseline context is aligned with GEF 5 focal area strategies for biodiversity (BD), Land degradation (LD), and International waters (IW), in the long run vision to conserve, manage and use sustainably the unique richest of ecosystems natural resources, and associated benefits (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks, and considering the anticipated impact of climate change". It aims to overcome climate change risks, hazards and threats (storms, floods, drought, etc.) causing devastating environmental damages, forest and agricultural land resource degradation, food production insecurity and political instability problems and undermining country's efforts for sustainable socio-economic development and livelihood of the vulnerable communities in the region.

Furthermore, the project is also aligned with the "National Economic and Social Development Plan" of the regional and sub-regional shared vision promoted by the ECOWAS Vision 2030 which advocates the transition from a community of States to a community of peoples to support five transformational pillars, that are:

- i. Development of the region's resources;
- ii. Peace and security;
- iii. Governance;
- iv. Economic and monetary integration;
- v. Private sector growth;
- vi. Universal Agenda for Sustainable Development 2016-2030 and it's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement (COP21) on climate change of December 2015, the New Deal or the international commitment to fragile states for peacebuilding and state building".

The area includes more than ten (10) narrow-shape transboundary river basins) flowing across the four countries. They include rich biodiversity key areas with conservation stakes in their upstream catchments and large protected areas covering the outlet areas with remnant unique biodiversity hotspot area, and transboundary forest landscapes in the Upper Guinea. However, the transboundary basins face water quality and quantity issues (during low flows for the latter), in their downstream catchments, where mining operations and agro-industrial plantations are involved (MRU, 2021).

Before this GEF project, we wish to recall that several similar projects were initiated in the past at both national and regional levels in the Mano River basin and which targeted similar issues relevant to biodiversity conservation and land restoration in the four countries focused in the Upper Guinean Forest and on downstream ecosystems (coastal mangrove zones for instance) and were not successful, thus resulting to limited results. Unfortunately, despite the severe degradation, communities are still cutting down trees or practising "slashing & burn" practices which often result in severe SLD and loss of Carbon Stock sinking, etc. As demonstrated by the outputs, the GEF interventions related to International Waters will, in turn, also systematically benefit the regeneration of the large river basins crossing the areas.

Indeed, since the mid-seventies, the Mano River basin has been confronted with severe climate change threats with prolong drought impacts and subsequent environmental degradation throughout the whole project area. As consequences all these degradations had enhanced agricultural production loss, water resource quality pollution and siltation, as well as the loss of the rich biodiversity resources in the Upper Guinea forest, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, despite the severe degradation, communities are still cutting down trees or practising "slashing & burn" practices which often

result in severe SLD and loss of Carbon Stock sinking, etc. As demonstrated by the achievement outputs, the GEF interventions related to International Waters will, in turn, also systematically benefit the regeneration of the large river basins crossing the areas.

Thus, to overcome the subsequent environmental threats and consequences, through the Secretary General of the Mano River Union, the four member countries convened to join their vision and efforts to build a concerted strategy and approach to protect and restore the forest landscapes of the Upper Guinea and the 10 transboundary river basins.

The rapid assessment of the project implementation relevance based on the adequacy of its objectives aligned to the IUCN programme and MRU/SG shared vision and the country's development policies and goals could have enabled and fostering sustainable "integrated natural resource management, including water resource protection, adequate land use system, as well as biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods, with particular focus on (i) regional and country development issues; (ii) problems addressed by the project and the underlying assumption toward the country development priorities, (iii) strategies to achieve expected/intended results, and (iv) mainstreaming gender and youth empowerment to address cross-cutting issues and sustainable community livelihood.

Indeed, reversing the degrading trends, has been the pivotal strategic goal for the governments of the four member countries agreed to develop and endorse this GEF/IUCN to address climate change and environmental threats and risks, through sustainable management of forest landscape resources and conservation of biodiversity and management of transboundary river basins. The project also aims to develop effective alternative means driving locally and globally forest covers and income generation to improve livelihood of the communities depending on the "Mano River forest landscapes, ecosystems and natural transboundary basin water Resources).

Although the project activities and expected outputs are consistent with previous projects initiated in the same areas with the similar objectives, and which are directly relevant for GEF project and other similar projects' goals and vision, more focus could have been pushed forward to effectively address forest ecosystem conservation and sustainably management, including adjacent protected areas. To overcome issues enhancing severe Land Degradation Dynamic in fragile ecosystems, association with fruit and crop trees (Coffee and Cocoa) plantation inside the forest, could benefit the recovery of the vegetation.

The project was originally designed for 4 years (2017-2020) and financed by the GEF Secretariat resource grant, IUCN for a total budget of US\$6,970,000, with a cofinancing from the four Member countries, including Sierra Leone (SL), Guinea (Gui), Liberia (LB) and Côte d'Ivoire (CI).

Despite some shortfalls, the mission assessed the project baseline as relevant to the environmental and natural resource conservation concerns, thus relevant to the context of the subregion and, as relevant (R: 2/2).

2.2. Relevance of project objectives

As highlighted in above baseline context analysis, the "Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project" is funded by GEF to ensure sustainable conservation and use of the transboundary water basins and their biodiversity resources within the Mano River Union member states. It is executed by the four countries (Cote-d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) under the overall leadership and supervision of the "International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)" as an implanting agency and the Mano River Union Secretariat as the regional executing agency.

Its implementation scope and strategy are designed as a full fledged strategic framework with 4 objectives: (i) Support sustainably the Forest landscapes rich biodiversity and the unique transboundary ecosystems and natural resources, (ii) Strengthening regional and national institutions capacities, (iii) Developing effective alternative means of income generation, and (iv) Improving locally and regional forest covers, including associated benefits (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks).

Furthermore, it is expected all these objectives will play at both local and global levels important role to improve community livelihood in sustainably restoring forest landscape resources offering alternative means and incomes for the communities in the four participating countries. The utmost goal of the project is to create a comprehensive and reliable evidence base to support the implementation and management the country strategy, as well as stakeholder involved in mainstreaming "conservation and sustainable use of the transboundary water basins and biodiversity resources through landscape restoration.

The project objectives and targets are consistent with GEF 5 core Focal areas for (i) Biodiversity (DB) conservation, (ii) Land Degradation (LD) and (iii) International Waters (IW) and, aiming "to safeguard sustainably the use and management of the rich unique biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources globally, considering the anticipated impact of climate on biodiversity conservation, land degradation and international waters (IW), as well as its implementation strategy which is likely to address threats and challenges pertaining (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge, to overcoming existing barriers of the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins.

The specific objectives pursue 2 specific objectives aiming to:

- i. Strengthen the management and conservation for sustainable ecological benefits use of the transboundary water basins and transboundary forestland rich biodiversity resources and;
- ii. Improving livelihoods for adjacent forest communities' development from alternative means of income generation, associated with both locally and globally ecosystem services and carbon sinks within the Upper Guinea forest covering the Mano River Union member states (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire (CI).

They are in line with the GEF climate change mitigation issues and the "Multi-focal areas concerns and benefits management of transboundary natural resources to sustain ecological benefits and improved livelihoods for the forest-adjacent communities. It also embraces the proofing and consolidation of environmental policies, climate change resilience and adaptation capacities and development of priorities incentives for the four participating countries (Cote-d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Indeed, since the early 70s the intervention areas have been seriously affected by climate change hazards and threats, causing devastating environmental damages (storms, floods, etc.), land resource degradation impacts, agricultural and food production decline and political instability problems, thus undermining country's efforts for sustainable socio-economic development and livelihood with substantial vulnerability of the communities. To this regard, this GEF project implementation is seen to be a raising hope project to build a bright future in the transformational role for the communities living in the project areas.

The project also seeks to promote the stakeholder engagement through holistic, participatory and community-based food and medicinal plant needs and strategies to integrated ecosystem management concerns within their in-situ conservation and sustainable land use and water management strategies, along the transboundary river basins and watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

The implementation strategy design (objectives and targets) is consistent with the four countries vision and implementation strategy which is likely the only solution to address and overcoming existing threats and challenges pertaining (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge and livelihood through sustainable conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem.

However, although the baseline context assessment highlighted in the past decades a long period of severe climate change threats experienced by the populations of the four countries, and that are undermining their efforts towards sustainable integrated environmental and natural resource management, the project framework designed design and implementation did not adequately integrate “*climate change resilience and adaptation strategy into effectiveness to overcome connected issues*”.

As such, unfortunately expected results couldn't properly overturn climate and environmental disruptions trends, to ensure sustainable forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and water stream flows from upstream to downstream. Thus, the scope and objectives of the project interventions were not effective to ensure sustainable landscape restoration and water management along the river basins. Neither the activities achieved fully streamlined the NEAs and country stakeholder's interventions and improving resilience and adaptation strategy of sustainable agriculture and food security, thus improving livelihood of millions of people in the four countries⁴.

Despite some shortfalls, the mission assessed the project objectives rationale as (R:2/2).

2.3. Relevance of the project components, outcomes and outputs

2.3.1. Project framework overview

Although the project context narrative justified the context of the interventions area, the evaluator noted the logical framework did not conduct in-depth analysis of the rationale of the objectives and proposed interventions. Its relevance could have been considerably improved with consistent indicators with the scope and objectives of the project. Indeed, the logical framework and indicators defined make it difficult to measure the expected effects and impacts of the project, because they are not based on the principles of results-based management, and which would be applicable to a project of such size and complexity.

Indeed, the logical framework is of little relevance and could have been considerably improved by strategic and achievable indicators within the allotted time frame and not closely aligned with the targeted objectives. This obviously penalized the project monitoring-evaluation system by the various national implementing teams. The same applies to the mechanisms and criteria for selecting intervention sites.

The project framework is consistent with GEF 5 focal areas for biodiversity (DB), land degradation (TD) and international waters (IW) and also contributing to the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through the participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins, the project implementation strategy bears asset for hope to likely address in the medium and long terms current and future challenges regarding climate change, forest landscape degradation, rivers and tributaries, targeted environmental threats and knowledge barriers.

⁴: Sierra Leone (8.13 million in 2021 and 8.29 million in 2022 and with an annual rate of 2.21 %); Liberia (5.18 million persons in 2021 with an average annual rate of 2.62%); Guinea (13.43 million by the end of 2021 and around 13.77 million in 2022 with an annual rate of 2.73%); and Côte d'Ivoire (26.4 million people in 2020 and 27,742,301 with an annual increase rate of an increase of 2.40 %).

Furthermore, the project is also aligned to (i) the regional and sub-regional shared vision is consistent with the "National Economic and Social Development Plan" promoted by the ECOWAS Vision 2030 which advocates the transition from a community of States to a community of peoples to support five transformational pillars, that are (i) development of the region's resources, (ii) peace and security, (iii) governance, (iv) economic and monetary integration and (v) private sector growth, (ii) and the "Universal Agenda for Sustainable Development 2016-2030 and it's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement (COP21) on climate change of December 2015, the New Deal or the international commitment to fragile states for peacebuilding and state building".

The focus of the project design towards achievable objectives and results in the medium and long terms highlighted the project's realistic approach to overcome unsuccessful intervention and threats, such as (i) knowledge gaps of legislation and institutional set-up at local and national levels, (ii) poor agricultural, forestry, and land use planning and management practices, (iii) low income of communities due to fertility decline and poor knowledge of promising sectors, (iv) contradictory or lack of synergy between the various legislative frameworks (mining code and environmental code, community code and water code ...), (v) poor cooperation between the neighboring countries in the management of natural resources, (vi) Risk of conflicts over the management of transboundary natural resources.

Its implementation scope and strategy are designed as a full fledged strategic framework with 4 objectives: (i) Support sustainably the Forest landscapes rich biodiversity and the unique transboundary ecosystems and natural resources, (ii) Strengthening regional and national institutions capacities, (iii) Developing effective alternative means of income generation, and (iv) Improving locally and regional forest covers, including associated benefits (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks).

The third component support the management and operation of the project and contributes to strengthening the regional activities coordination between countries and stakeholders, with a particular focus on interventions coordination and budget execution and monitoring. It also contributes to strengthening the regional strategy and approaches, as well as the regulatory framework on the management of transboundary natural resources under the auspices of the Mano River Union.

From strategical approach point of view, the NEA teams adopted strategy recommended for GEF project implementation as "standard approach" to address social and environmental issues within and across the transboundary forest landscapes and river basins", with support from the NWRMA and the NPAA.

This raises some challenges to streamline the overall implementation and achievement of planned activities, as it is, somehow always difficult without good knowledge and dedicated methodological approach, it is difficult for the teams at the national and regional levels to build pioneering roles which could ease harmonizing interventions policies and strategies.

The mission assessed the project indicator framework design as overambitious and unachievable within the project timeframe of 4 years and to reversing the degradation of environmental and natural resource conservation concerns. However, in strict sense of indicators used to justify the project are assessed very relevant, as relevant (R: 2/2).

2.3.2.Result indicator framework

The project indicators in the selected four sites are as follows:

- i. Site 1: **88,400 hectares** in the Trans-boundary block of forest;
- ii. Site 2: **93,400 hectares** in the Trans-boundary block of forest;

- iii. Site 3: Trans-boundary block and corridor;
- iv. Site 4: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor.

Considering the initial project timeframe, the evaluator assessed the project framework result indicators as not in line with the principles of SMART⁵ criteria results-based management. The indicators are too ambitious and not achievable during the 4 years of the project timeline. Only quantitative and include targets which are not achievable in the time frame of the project implementation as defined in the selected sites and objectives for each component. Furthermore, a reference situation for each indicator is not provided. The impact indicators developed are not consistent with medium and long term effects and impacts.

Although the result framework is relevant and consistent with the project objectives, some indicators are not in line with the principle of SMART⁵ criteria, and either:

- i. too ambitious, unrealistic and not time-bound, thus unachievable in the 5 years of the project implementation timeframe;
- ii. beyond the capacity of the participating stakeholders (NEAs, NGOs, communities, etc.);
- iii. no measurable data to assess whether they are quantitative and monitorable.

Considering the existing low capacities demonstrated on the field at both national and regional levels, the International Consultant doubted how within 4 year period 100% of outputs are claimed as restored by the project teams. Indeed, it is obvious that withing such short period of 4 years and considering the serious gaps in technical experience observed in the field, it is not possible to achieve the 78% of output 1.1. a (88,400 hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks, Classified Forests, including output 1.1.b: +93,400 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests). No proven map of sylvicultural and forest landscape forest resource cover changes was demonstrated by a GIS map in 2017 and at the end of the project in 2024 on the field by the teams and that proved sustainable restoration of the degraded forest areas. The so claimed agroforestry practices and enrichment planting techniques are limited to some areas to meet the needs of the communities.

All these demonstrated serious weaknesses during the design of the project result framework, as it was obvious that in such harsh conditions climate change conditions and heavily socioeconomic pressure and lack of required intervention capacities, it was not possible to restore such degraded forest landscapes areas and effectively initiate and demonstrate successful landscape restoration activities at a larger scale. In addition, turned out that the restored area suffered from lack of frequent monitoring efforts and thorough attention to assess qualitative activity achievements. Proven experience in the sustainable restoration of the forest resource and ecosystem could have initiated to guide the designing team in downsizing their ambitious vision to match reasonable scope of works with the technical country technical institutional and community capacities.

Nonobstant the above technical gaps, we confirm the relevance of the project objectives and expected results with the regional vision of the GEF-MRU country context and needs to address environmental and biodiversity policies, in line with GEF and IUCN regional and national shared the long term vision of priority actions to (i) address climate change resilience and adaptation, (ii) mainstreaming sustainable environmental protection, international integrated transboundary water resource management (IWRM), (iii) ensuring sustainable management of ecosystems, conservation and valuation of rich biodiversity, landscape restoration and sustainable community livelihood.

Truly, while the restoration purpose is relevant, there is no evidence justifying at country level any capacity to reversing land degradation and restoring the forest landscapes in such big areas within a short period of 5 years. We wish to conclude that the indicators are overambitious and fare beyond the

⁵ SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

capacities of the NEAs. Therefore, considering current level of environmental and forest degradation status, as well as the size of targeted areas, the indicators are not SMART, as they cannot be achieved sustainably by the stakeholders⁶ within 4/5 years interventions timeframe. Indeed, there is no rationale justification to intend managing sustainably such important areas with no evidence of proven forest silviculture and management techniques at both national and regional levels. Therefore, the design lacks realism and is not achievable and time-bound outputs, thus assessed as not relevant (N: 1/2).

2.3.3. Project components and outcomes

The project is structured into relevant components: (i) **Integrated restoration of forest landscape resources**; (ii) **Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters**, both components address policy, institutional and technical capacities for the management of natural ecosystems and transboundary waters, and (iii) **Project Management Costs**.

While aiming to strengthen institutional, policy and technical capacities for local and regional management of natural ecosystems and transboundary waters, the project seeks true collaboration between stakeholders in the transboundary basin to adopt and share common approach to improving community livelihoods.

The project also contributes to strengthening regional coordination among countries and communities with a particular focus on vulnerable ecosystems, thus strengthening the regional regulatory framework of the transboundary natural resource management under the auspices of the Mano River Union.

The mission assessed both component and strategy in line with the project objectives, but they are not relevant enough to effectively address the baseline situation, thus assessed as relevant to the project objectives, thus assessed as relevant (R:2/2).

The Project is structured into two technical and one management components (table 2):

2.3.3.1. Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management

The selection criteria of this component is consistent with the vision pertaining efforts of the 4 countries national authorities, as well as international donors and NGOs, to conserve the last remaining biodiversity hotspots while at the same time developing sustainable land use management systems in the surrounding cultivated areas. Furthermore, the existing forest blocks embrace several protected areas, which constitute the core areas of highest conservation worthiness and linked between each other by various corridors and buffer zones (Prodoc, 2017).

Their management strategy is focused on sustainable forest restoration and forest landscape restoration and aiming to combat the various threats and causes pertaining to climatic change, environment and forest degradation in Upper Guinea, subsequent to increased forest fire and logging and poor traditional agricultural practices (slash and burn, shifting cultivation, monocropping, etc.), including mining, timber logging and charcoal production, poaching in protected areas and hunting using bush fires. Important activities were initiated in the four Transboundary landscapes (Guinea, Cote-D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone Leone⁷).

⁶: Again, we wish to recall that we are no proof of denying the truth that the project have achieved the output claimed, as we did not visited the forest landscape restoration sites, just only agroforestry areas.

⁷: **Trans-boundary landscapes: Site 1:** Trans-boundary block of forest (including protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké (GN), Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI) and National Park of the East Nimba (LB)); **Site 2:** Trans-boundary block of forest (including the National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziama (LB/GN)); **Site 3:** Trans-boundary block and corridor (including the protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest

2.3.3.2. Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters:

This component is focused on the management of international waters shared by the four members countries of the Union, with a unique rich biodiversity asset with important potentials for conservation of large protected areas in their upstream catchments of the three Trans-boundary Basins, that are:

- i. Transboundary basin 1: Moa/Makona river basin shared by Guinea 44%, Liberia 8.5% and Sierra Leone 47.5% (*in an incremental way based on the BRIDGE initial activities*);
- ii. Transboundary basin 2: Cavalla River basin shared by Cote d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea 5%, and Liberia 41%;
- iii. Transboundary basin 3: Great Scarcies/Kolenté basin shared by Guinea 66% and Sierra Leone 34%.

They host nearly 3,000,000 million people living in various communities, directly and indirectly, from the forest resources. As consequence of climate change threats and increasing vulnerability impacts due to mismanagement of the natural resources, communities are being confronted with unfolding livelihood consequences:

- i. The component 2 (Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters) focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Mano Union River basins in the upstream catchments and large protected areas that they cover.
- ii. As indicated in the Prodoc, the component achievement seeks to build a strategic consensus on transboundary issues to ensure sustainable management of related natural resources, including international waters, to mainstream the "Integrated Water Resources Management" approach at the regional level.

As indicated above, the intervention sites of this component being too big and complex with overambitious and unachievable targets did not ensure the effective management results awaited within the project timeframe (4 years), thus assessed as not enough consistent with required technical capacities and financial resources for the project implementation. Despite its overambitious targeted outcomes, the project design is relevant to context of the intervention area and sites, thus highly relevant (R: 2/2).

2.3.3.3. Component 3: Project Management Costs;

This component deals with the project operational, financial management, monitoring and capacity building issues. It played a pivotal role for the project result achievement.

Various communication tools were developed (banner, roll-up and newsletter, Facebook, Youtube, and websites) to raise awareness and promote integrated water management within and across the basin. Furthermore, 3 awareness posters to promote farming, fishing and mining sectors were developed and exhibited by the BRIDGE project, in June 2021 in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone at the celebration of the World Environment Day.

(SL) and the National Forest of Gola (LB)); **Site 4**: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor (including the National Park Protected Area Complex of Sapo (LB), the National Forest of Grebo (LB) and the National Park of Tai (CI));

Several awareness thematic activities were developed with focused on sustainable forest ecosystem conservation, as well as water pollution in the Little & Great Scarcies, Moa/Makona of Mano and Cavally basins were broadcasted by PACO NEWS at national and local radio, national TV, Press releases and on Social media (YouTube, Facebook @GefIUCNManoproject, and Twitter, 8 newsletters developed and published on 5 websites (www.mru.int, www.cfzguinee.org, www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr, www.dgre-minef.ci, www.mru.npaa-sl.org) of the project, highlighting these activities; under indicator 2.2.c: Nearly 20,000 people attended the events and reported on water quality and riparian ecosystem management.

As highlighted in the above, given the duration (4 years) of the project implementation and the complex forest landscape restoration and degraded transboundary basin environment, this component did not fully streamline the progress deliveries, thus was assessed with limited results, and not too much relevant for the purpose of the component (R: 1/2).

2.4. Relevance of the project transboundary sites

The selection of the project implementation sites within the 4 Transboundary landscapes and 3 transboundary basins intervention areas (table 2) complies with the national and regional visions and priorities to address and strengthen the conservation of the mosaic forest blocks covering diverse protected areas of importance for corridors and buffer zones, including support to ongoing efforts initiated by the country authorities.

Many national and regional GEF-supported projects targeted biodiversity conservation and land degradation evenly in the four countries. They focus both on the Upper Guinean Forest and on downstream ecosystems (coastal mangrove zones for instance). More specifically, some of them, currently under implementation, are directly relevant to the present project, since they address forest ecosystems conservation and protected areas development:

- i. Biodiversity Conservation Project, Sierra Leone, World Bank, #2948 (see description in the above section);
- ii. Protected Area Project (Projet d'Appui à la Relance de la Conservation des Parcs et Réserves, PARC-CI), Côte-d'Ivoire, World Bank, #3533;
- iii. Evolution of Protected Area systems about climate change in the West Africa Region, MRU, UNEP, #3781;
- iv. Biodiversity Conservation through Expanding the Protected Area Network in Liberia (EXPAN), Liberia, World Bank, #3837;
- v. Assessment of Land Degradation Dynamic in Coffee -Cocoa production and Northern Ivory Coast to promote SLM practices and Carbon Stock Conservation, CI, UNEP, #5788.

The targeted areas include nearly 3,000,000 million people living in various communities directly and indirectly from the forest resources, confronted with severe climate change threats and impacts and increasing vulnerability. As indicated above, the intervention sites are too big and complex with unrealistic and not achievable targets to be effectively managed within the project timeframe (4 years).

These four West African countries (Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) share the forest of Upper Guinea and 10 transboundary river basins and are all members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Region. It is confronted with severe climate change risks and threats undermining all country efforts towards integrated environment and natural resource management, including the socioeconomic development and community livelihood.

The table 1 below show the selected sites and past project interventions and relevant efforts implemented in the areas of the national stakeholders, international donors and NGOs involved in the conservation of remaining biodiversity hotspots and the sustainable land use systems in the surrounding cultivated zones. Furthermore, each of these forest blocks embraces several protected areas, which constitute the core areas of the highest conservation worthiness, and which are linked between each other by corridors or buffer zones (Prodoc, 2017⁸).

Table 1: The GEF Project reference baseline framework

GEF PROJECT SITES	BASELINE-ACTIVITIES
SITE 1	The transboundary protected area complex formed by the Mt. Nimba integrated Nature reserves in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, the East Nimba National Park (ENNP) and the West Nimba National Forest (WNNF) in Liberia, as well by the Diecke National Forest in Guinea (GEF project Site 1) is characterized by a large multitude of different projects. Several bilateral and multilateral efforts for collaboration and cooperation between these organisms have been undertaken in the last decades, supported and facilitated by many donors and international NGOs;
	EU/UNOPS project "Supporting the Operationalization of a Paramilitary Corps of Park Rangers in Guinea" (PAOCPCN), aims at (i) developing the capacity of Guinean Ministry of Water and Forest, through technical and material assistance, to help facilitate the efficient management, supervision and development of the CPCN; (ii) equipping, training and establishing three 'pilot units' of Paramilitary of Corp Park Rangers; and (iii) developing pilot activities launched at the sites covered by the project: Upper Niger National Park, Ziamia Massif and Mount Nimba Biosphere Reserve;
	PAOCPCN supports the management of protected areas through increasing the enforcement capacity at the local scale to reduce the degradation of forest ecosystems for poaching, wood fuel harvesting and other causes of forest encroachment. However, this project does not focus on the causes on forest encroachment. These include the absence of sustainable income-generating activities for local communities who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. The GEF project will build on the efforts of the PAOCPCN through promoting income-generating activities based on the sustainable use of natural resources. This will create incentive for local communities to protect these resources. The resulting conservation of forest resources will have multiple benefits from the local to the global scale including inter alia the maintenance of functioning ecosystems, reduced erosion and sedimentation, and carbon sequestration.
	UNDP/GEF project "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Nimba Mountains through Integrated and Participatory Management", involving <u>Fauna and Flora International (FFI)</u> , consists in (i) a support to the protection of three core reserve areas in the Nimba Mountains which cover a range of ecosystem types from high-altitude savannahs to mid-altitude and lowland rainforest formations plus their associated aquatic environments, (ii) improving agricultural intensification and revenues in the buffer zone and transition area of the Reserve (lateritic savannah, lowland rainforest, secondary bush, agricultural land), (iii) promoting culturally appropriate animal husbandry and sustainable management and use of wild fauna in the buffer zone and transition area, (iv) improving local health and hygiene conditions, by promoting complementarity between 'modern' and traditional

⁸: GEF/SG/MRU, 2016: "Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources"- GEF-IUCN Management (IWRM) - Ref.: GEF-N °: 4953/IUCN-ID: P01885

	medicines, and sustainable use management of traditional medicinal plants in the buffer zone and transition area, and (v) strengthening the management authority for the Biosphere Reserve by the " <i>Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management Project</i> ". The FFI project facilitated communication between Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire authorities to manage natural resources more effectively in the highly biodiverse Nimba mountains and also supported the Guinean government in managing the environmental impacts of mining concessions in the Nimba and Simandou mountains through CEGENS ⁹ infrastructure and equipment and focus on developing their technical capacity to limit damage to these highly biodiverse regions. This work is led in close cooperation with the above mentioned UNDP/GEF project.
	The GEF project built on the implemented approach of former projects and scale it up in the buffer zones of the targeted sites: i. USAID (PROSPER project) "<i>People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources</i>" aiming at increasing the number of sustainable agroforest-based enterprises by supporting the harvest of sustainable non-timber forest products, assisting the development of wood-based enterprises, and fostering cassava-processing and oil palm-based enterprises; ii. French Development Agency (AFD) supporting the Ministry of Water and Forests in Guinea through the "<i>Forest Resources Management Project</i> (phase II)", with focus on support to the <i>Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré</i> in the sustainable management of the classified forests.
GEF project Site 2	The projects site also benefit to the transboundary protected area complex formed by the Ziaman National Forest in Guinea and the Wonegisi National Forest, proposed Wonegisi National Park, in Liberia.
GEF project Site 3	Transboundary management of the protected area complex formed by the Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP) in Sierra Leone and the Gola National Forest (GNF), proposed Gola National Park, in Liberia.
GEF project Site 4	i. Transboundary management of the protected area complex constituted by the Sapo National Park (SNP) and the Grebo National Forest (GNF), proposed Grebo National Park, in Liberia and the Taï National Park (TNP) in Côte d'Ivoire, too, the cooperation between the Liberian FDA and the Ivorian OIPR, along with the Foundation for Parks and Reserves, has already been initiated; ii. Rainforest Alliance is also involved in the area since 2011 and works with the extension services of ANADER and research institutions like CNRS and ICRAF.

As highlighted above, the GEF proposed interventions are consistent with GEF-52 focal area strategies for biodiversity (BD), land degradation (LD), and international waters (IW) as it will contribute to the conservation of the Upper Guinea Forest ecosystem through the sustainable management of transboundary ecosystems.

The mano Union River being classified as large international transboundary river basins, it was eligible for GEF funds support. The area includes large international river basins and smaller transboundary watersheds, shared by the four MRU countries. The present GEF project supports local communities in restoring forest landscape and biodiversity, as well as management of transboundary basin rivers, and developing community alternative means of income generation, which will lead to an increase in forest coverage and its related benefits both at the local (ecosystem services) and global (biodiversity, enhanced carbon sinks) levels.

⁹: Centre de Gestion de l'Environnement des Monts Nimba et Simandou (CEGENS)

To do so, the proposed interventions addressed training needs for farmers and disseminating best practices in agroforestry and sustainable agriculture, to develop better land management of the protected areas buffer zones. It also aimed to enhance local stakeholders' involvement in the management of transboundary ecosystems, and reinforced regional coordination among countries with a particular focus on selected ecosystems and sites, strengthening the regional regulatory framework on management of transboundary natural resources under the auspice of the Mano River Union.

Table 2 below presents the selected sites of the project implementation within the 4 Trans-boundary landscapes and 3 trans-boundary basins areas. They are in line with the country's authorities' vision, needs and strategies to sustainably manage and protect the mosaic forest block of corridors and transboundary basin rivers.

Table 2: Project selected intervention sites

TRANS-BOUNDARY LANDSCAPE	LOCATION	AREA (Ha)
Site 1: Trans-boundary block of forest	Site 1: 88,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest, covering the "Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland" in Guinea and Cote-d'Ivoire, and the "Protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké + National Park of the East Nimba with) Libera. Cote-D'Ivoire (Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI) Guinea (Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI); protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké) Liberia (National Park of the East Nimba)	
Site 2: Trans-boundary block of forest	Site 2: 93,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest: (i) Guinea : National Forest Protected Area Complex, including the <i>National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam</i> , (ii) Liberia : National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam. Guinea : National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam & Centre de Gestion Environnementale de Mt Nimba et Simadou (CEGENS) and the Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF) with the Office des Forêts Classées de N'Zérékoré (former Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré) Liberia : National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam & Forestry Development Authority	
Site 3: Trans-boundary block and corridor	Site 3: Trans-boundary block and corridor : Guinea: Diecke ??National Forest Liberia: National Forest of Gola (LB), West Nimba National Forest (WNNF), Sierra: protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL); Guinea: Diecke National Forest Liberia: National Forest of Gola (LB), West Nimba National Forest (WNNF) Sierra: protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL)	
Site 4: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor	Site 4: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor : CI: National Park of Tai (CI); Liberia: National Park Protected Area Complex; National Park of Sapo (LB), the Grebo National Forest (Liberia) CI : National Park of Tai (CI). Liberia : National Park Protected Area Complex; National Park of Sapo (LB), the Grebo National Forest (Liberia)	

Trans-boundary Basin Target 1	Target transboundary basin 1: Moa/Makona river basin shared by Guinea 44%, Liberia 8.5% and Sierra Leone 47.5% (<i>in an incremental way based on the BRIDGE initial activities</i>); Guinea: Moa / Makona River Basin shared by Guinea 44% Liberia: 8.5% Sierra Leone : 47.5% (additionally based on initial BRIDGE activities) and Mano River Basin;
Trans-boundary Basin Target 2:	Target transboundary basin 2: Cavally River basin shared by Cote d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea 5%, and Liberia 41%; C.I: Cavally River Basin shared by Côte d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea: 5%, Liberia: 41%;
Trans-boundary Basin Target 3:	Target transboundary basin 3: Great Scarcies/Kolenté basin shared by Guinea 66% and Sierra Leone 34%. Guinea: Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins (66%) Sierra Leone: 34%.

However, considering the big population (3 million people) living inside the project area, the country low technical forest knowledge and capacities, and the extent of the selected complex transboundary landscape forests and water basins to be restored, the project size is assessed too overambitious, thus not achievable within the timeframe.

Indeed, despite the 6.5 years (instead of 4 years duration originally planned) of the project implementation and the complex and degraded forest landscapes and the environment transboundary basins, the site areas and objectives are overambitious and unachievable. However, in term of degradation the project sites are assessed highly relevant (R:2/2).

2.5. Relevance of project design at country level

The project design raised several bottlenecks challenges to streamlining the overall implementation of planned activities. Indeed, it is always difficult without sound preparation of methodological approach of the teams at both national and regional levels to build a compelling approach that could enable overcoming issues pertaining transboundary environmental and water resource integrated management, including harmonization of policies and strategies at both regional and country levels. Its framework design addressed the Global concerns, such as particularly (i) environment protection, (ii) conservation of rich biodiversity areas, (iii) overcoming increased rates of critical forest loss and hotspot area of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem, and critical issues affecting the Upper Guinea Forest (deforestation¹⁰, forestland conversion into agricultural land, mining activities, etc.).

i. Côte-D'Ivoire

Project interventions in Cote-d'Ivoire were mainly focused on component 2, and to a lesser extent on component 1, due to the location context in the project-concerned intervention area. However, the NEA doesn't mean forest landscape restoration is not a priority. Indeed, both components 1 and 2 interventions (forest conservation and water resources management) are consistent and relevant to the country's policy and priority needs, aiming to ensure sustainable management of the natural resource. It enshrines river basin management and integrates IWRM as an approach and international cooperation on water resources.

¹⁰: The remaining portion of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem is currently estimated at 93,047 km², which represents approximately 15% of its original coverage (estimation done in 2001, Olson et al. 2001). The deforestation rate is estimated at 300 km² per year.

The NEA team organization and local populations involvement through awareness campaigns and training provided are consistent and relevant to the country's vision and priority, particularly the implementation of IWRM in the hydrographic space of the national portion of Cavalla, which arouse local and national interest among stakeholders, who see with despair the degradation of resources in the basin.

ii. Guinea

The project objectives and outcomes/outputs design are consistent with (i) Guinea's legal environmental code (1987), stipulating in its article 9 "that the people have the right to the preservation of their heritage, culture and environment", including water code (1994), wildlife protection code and hunting regulations (2017), forestry code (2017), as well as a new mining code adopted in 2011. In addition, its institutional and policy framework for environmental management at the national level shares the same vision with the project and tends to promote the responsibility of local actors and populations vis-à-vis the management of their own terroirs and calls all Guineans to properly manage the natural heritage for present and future generations. To this context, the project objectives are fully in line with and complementary to PNDES intermediate objectives 6.1, 6.2 and 8.1 aiming to (i) preserve and restore terrestrial ecosystems; (ii) conserve and sustainably use water resources, (iii) address climate change events and impacts at the continental level as highlighted in conjunction with the "African Union's Agenda 2031" which also constitutes the foundation of "PNDES".

The project is also consistent with the country's national policies, development priorities and programmes and plans related to forest Landscape restoration and ecosystem management, including (i) REDD+, including National poverty reduction strategies; (ii) Strategies and plans for water resource management and IUCN Programme. Furthermore, the project bears hope the expected outcomes and outputs will likely help the country to overcome Forest landscape degradation and Water course siltation, and good practices to enhance land management sustainability, environmental protection, and community livelihoods.

iii. Liberia

The project's objectives and outcomes are in line with and consistent with Liberia's national environmental protection, and natural resource management policies, including strategies and priorities of IWRM biodiversity conservation, forest and land resource restoration policy and strategies.

Indeed, in seeking to address in its implementation strategy issues pertaining to climate change, forest landscape degradation, rivers and tributaries, environmental threats, and knowledge barriers, including awareness raising to building resilience and adaptation to natural catastrophes and another form of measure to reduce its impact, the project is relevant to the country related development policies. Moreover, hence in addressing such issues of restoration of vital resources, the protection interventions provide strengths and hopes for sustainable development.

Furthermore, its interventions at the community level, target to address the main social-economic threats are poverty, stereotype, and lack of income, while focusing on environmental and climate change threats,

¹¹: "African Union's Agenda 2063 aspires to: (i) achieve a prosperous based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, (ii) integrated, politically united continent, based on the ideals and the vision of Africa's renaissance, (iii) Africa where good governance reigns, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, (iv) a peaceful and secure Africa, (v) an Africa with an identity, a common heritage, shared values and a strong cultural ethic, (vi) Africa where development is people-centered, and is based in particular on the potential of women and youth, and (vii) an Africa, as a strong, united and influential actor and partner on the world stage.

loss of biodiversity, culture and physical infrastructure. These threats have been specifically targeted with a high sense of improving local population livelihood.

iv. Sierra Leone

The project is highly consistent with national policies. The government of Sierra Leone through the new Ministry of Environment has as its priority the restoration of degraded landscapes through afforestation. The process is coordinated with relevant MDAs and local councils also prioritizing tree planting. The government also has a relatively new Ministry of Water Resources with a new agency, the National Water Resources Management Agency (NWRMA) that is the focal point of the project.

The implementation strategy is likely to enhance the restoration of degraded landscapes, enhance conservation efforts, restore the livelihood of communities, and reduce the threats to natural resources, raising the awareness of communities and partners on the project outcomes and potentially can help the sustainability of the outcomes.

Indeed, its objectives and results are realistic but certainly needs more time for the implementation of the forest landscape restoration efforts, as it takes time to mobilize communities identify and prioritize sites for restoration but also what restoration strategies are to be implemented for a complete by in that will sustain the gains of the restored areas.

The project is assessed as highly relevant and consistent with national policies. The project implementation has been seized by the government of Sierra Leone to set up in its dedicated new Ministry of Environment priorities, the restoration of degraded landscapes through afforestation, under the coordination with relevant MDAs and local councils also prioritizing tree planting, as well as a new agency of "National Water Resources Management Agency (NWRMA)" that is the focal point of the project in the new Ministry of Water Resources.

Figure 2 below highlights the project implementation organization set-up at sites level, involving three categories of actors: Implementation agency (IUCN), Regional Executing Agency (The Mano River Union Secretariat), and National Execution Agencies in the four members countries and the transboundary landscape forest blocks and water basins.

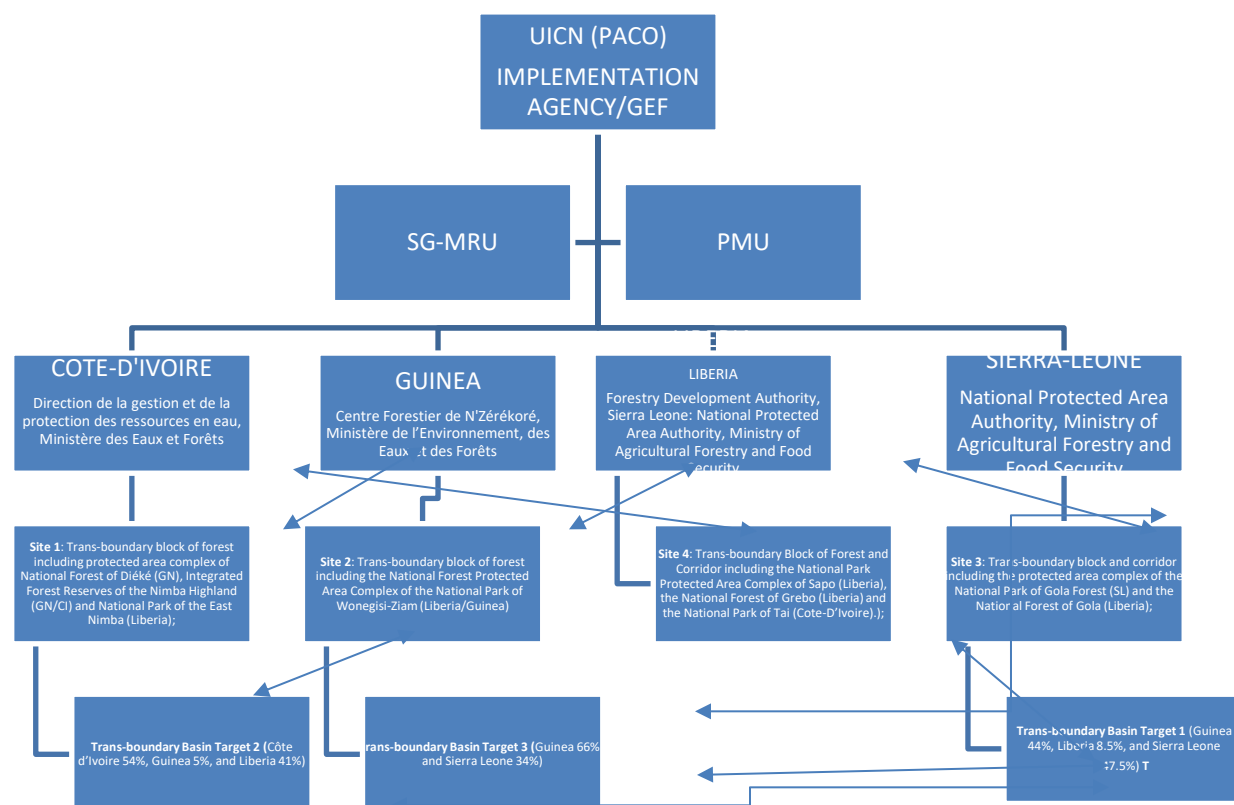


Figure 2: Project implementation Scheme, including countries' Transboundary blocks & transboundary Basins); (Arrows link the Transboundary & Basins to countries).

The selection of the project implementation sites within the 4 Transboundary landscapes and 3 transboundary basins areas, nonobstant overambitious indicators, are thus assessed highly relevant (R: 2/2).

2.6. Project implementation arrangements

This section presents the assessment of the project's implementation set up and institutional arrangements, since the project launching regional workshop in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from Monday 03 to Friday 07 July 2017 until April 2024.

The present assessment of the project implementation and execution takes into account the performance of the Implementing Agency (IUCN/IUCN-PACO), the Regional Executing Agency (Secretariate General of the Mano River Union) and the National Executing Agencies (Cote-d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) for day to day execution, management, backstopping, monitoring-evaluation activities and building staff and community capacities, in discharging their expected roles and responsibilities.

The focus of the project design towards achievable objectives and results in the medium and long terms highlighted the project's realistic approach to overcome environmental degradation risks and threats, such as (i) knowledge gaps of legislation and institutional set-up at local and national levels, (ii) poor agricultural, forestry, and land use planning and management practices, (iii) low income of communities due to fertility

decline and poor knowledge of promising sectors, (iv) contradictory or lack of synergy between the various legislative frameworks (mining code and environmental code, community code and water code, etc.), (v) poor cooperation between the neighboring countries in the management of natural resources, (vi) Risk of conflicts over the management of transboundary natural resources.

2.6.1.Implementation assessment overview

The evaluator also focus on quality of the implementation and results achieved by the project staff and partners, as well as GEF Agency staff involved in the project related activities, and assessing the extent to which the parties deliver effectively on the expected results, and with focus on elements that are controllable from the given GEF Agency's perspective. The assessment also addressed how risks have identified and managed on day-to-day basis, including administration of the overall oversight and supervision by the GEF and IUCN Agencies responsible for the successful deliveries, appropriate use of funds, and procurement and contracting of goods and services.

The performance *assessment of Implementation and Execution* of GEF full size projects takes into account Agencies and project executing entities (EAs) in discharging their expected roles and responsibilities. The Implementation is rated on a six-point scale.

- i. Highly satisfactory (HS): There were no short comings and quality of implementation / execution exceeded expectations;
- ii. Satisfactory (S): There were no, or minor short comings and quality of implementation / execution meets expectations.
- iii. Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were some short comings and quality of implementation / execution more or less meets expectations.
- iv. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected.
- v. Unsatisfactory (U): There were major short comings and quality of implementation /execution substantially lower than expected.
- vi. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): There were severe short comings in quality of implementation /execution.
- vii. Unable to Assess (UA): The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation / execution.

The project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

- i. **Highly satisfactory (HS):** Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings;
- ii. **Satisfactory (S):** Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings;
- iii. **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings.

The project implementation planned for 4 years (2017-2021) was launched, jointly by IUCN (implementing Agency) and the MRU/SG (Executing Agency), at a regional workshop co-organized in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone, from Monday 03 to Friday 07 July 2017, in accordance with the roadmap established by

SG/MRU and IUCN at the Regional Workshop held in Conakry (Guinea) on 12 and 13 May 2017). IUCN, in its capacity of implementing Agency of the project, provided full introductory information about the project design, in recalling particularly the rationale, objectives, outputs, as well as the institutional set-up, and guidelines of the execution, management, and monitoring-evaluation, etc.).

The launching workshop brought together all parties involved in the project and validated the implementation institutional arrangements, as following: (i) IUCN as the Regional Implementing, (ii) SG/MRU, as the regional executing agency and based at headquarters in Freetown and, (iii) Four National Executing Agencies, of which one by country, and (iv) A Regional Steering Committee in charge of monitoring-evaluation of the programme implementation progress and providing independent advices and guidance.

The workshop also validated: (i) Institutional arrangements, including project implementation procedures, (ii) Programme of actions to be carried out at regional and national levels; (iii) Budget allocation between the entities, (iv) Implementation roadmap. It also recalled the following obligations: (i) Informing adequately stakeholders and partners about the project objectives, expected results and progress made (ii) Presenting the project priority actions to be carried out during the 1st year 2017 and, (iii) Reviewing and approving the annual PTBA, starting from 2017.

Following the presentations and exchanges, IUCN made recommendation in calling on teams: (i) MRU staff; (ii) execution units at both national and regional levels; (iii) respect of procedures manual, (iv) solid capacity building trainings, (v) partnership engagement, (vi) mobilizing additional funds, and (vii). Awareness raising to provide full information about the project rationale, objectives, and outputs, institutional set-up, execution, management, and monitoring evaluation, etc. It was also recommended adherence to followings requirements towards:

- i. GEF and IUCN institutional set-up, administrative and monitoring guidelines.
- ii. Financial context and management mechanism guidelines.
- iii. Project management and the overall adherence to transparency and ethics governing IUCN-led projects, the GS/MRU ethic and operational guidelines, as well as the NEA duties in their respective countries.
- iv. IUCN administrative and financial accounting procedures and arrangements, including disbursements, control, and accounting guidelines in the procurement procedures in force at the UFM Secretariat. The forms used at each level for travel, missions, workshops, and procurement had been presented and widely explained.
- v. Work Plan and Budget design and monitoring-evaluation.
- vi. Reporting, etc.

The inception workshop report findings was submitted to the various implementing agencies for immediate implementation at the level of their respective countries.

IUCN also recalled obligations of SG/MRU and NEA to adhere to GEF administrative and financial accounting procedures, and procurement guidelines, including disbursements, and control/audit, into force at the UFM Secretariat. It also explained the mandatory forms to be used at each level for travel, missions, workshops, and procurement or financial disbursement request. As the Regional Implementing Agency, IUCN is the administrative, financial and accountable of the project operations, under the GEF principles and procurement procedures, Codes of ethics into force in the GEF implementation program.

The implementation strategy was likely to enhance the restoration of degraded landscapes, enhance conservation efforts, restore the livelihood of communities, and reduce the threats to natural resources,

raising the awareness of communities and partners on the project outcomes and potentially can help the sustainability of the outcomes.

Furthermore, despite the project implementation strategy was in line with the approach pertaining its smooth and compelling intervention strategy and commitment of parties involved and financial and equipment mobilized, the objectives and expected outcomes were too ambitious and unachievable within the timeframe of 4 years (2017-2021), due to:

- i. over-ambitious scope and extent of the project area size, objectives;
- ii. complex and not full-fleshed strategy and approach design in line with the intervention baseline context (mitigation of climate change risks and integrated conservation and restoration and management of both forest landscape and transboundary water resources);
- iii. lack of full-fleshed decisive and coherent interventions to properly address the basin environmental concerns and challenges across both regional and national levels;
- iv. lack of realism in selecting the intervention area in according with the existing weak capacities of the stakeholders and institutions (inadequate forest codes and laws, poor land use management and agricultural strategies, etc.) in charge of the project execution;
- v. limited logistics and inadequate financial budget resources to cover and properly manage a huge area (22,000 Km²);
- vi. Weak enforcement of existing environment and forest land use regulatory framework (mining code and environmental code, community code and water management code, etc.);
- vii. low level of cooperation between countries and stakeholders to ensure sustainable management of the transboundary natural resources, minimizing disparity of laws and regulations between the participating countries, etc.

Indeed, all above issues identified tend to weaken the project design lack of realism are true existing constraints and difficulties that may confront the project teams during the execution of the activities, and which may inevitably have undermined in the past country's efforts to safeguard and sustainably manage the forest landscapes and protect the river basin water resources.

Unfortunately, due to many uncontrolled circumstances having caused several delays couldn't end in 2021, thus the project implementation was extended up to November 2023, then on 31 December 2023. Despite the No Cost Extension that was granted for the GEF- Mano Project to be entirely completed on 31st December 2023, there were still outstanding activities, such as:

- i. reparation of final documents of the TDA and SAP.
- ii. Completion of project activities by the Liberian Team.
- iii. Organization of the Donor Conference.
- iv. Conduct of the project Final Evaluation.
- v. Final Audit, and the.

This warranted for the request for another No Cost extension for the project to end after the First Quarter of 2024 (on 30th April 2024); which was granted by IUCN.

2.6.2. Institutional set-up

The project is executed in the four West African countries (Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) sharing the forest of Upper Guinea and 10 transboundary river basins.

As previously said, the “Ecosystem Conservation and Water Resources Management of the Mano River Union” project is an ambitious initiative funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Nature (IUCN).

It aims to: (i) Preserve and sustainably use transboundary river basins and their biodiversity resources in the Member States of the Mano River Union, (ii) Manage forest and water resources sustainably, by actively involving local communities; (iii) Restore ecosystems and increase forest cover as well as ecological benefits.

Above figure 2 outlines the project institutional set-up through which the project is being implemented at both regional and national levels. Current evaluation evaluates and informs about its achievements, results, lessons learned and recommendations. Furthermore, figure 2 below presents the overall project implementation sequences and interconnexion between the sites and the countries , as well as its institutional arrangements, including annual work plan and budget and related attributes, financial execution records and reports.

It is implemented under the overall responsibilities of the SG/MRU and Technical support from IUCN, in compliance with the GEF technical, financial guidelines and arrangements between GEF and the MRU General Secretariat on behalf of the member countries, as follows:

1. General Secretariat of Mano River Union: At the regional level, the project is executed under direct Coordination and management responsibilities of the MRU Secretariat, assisted technically by a Regional Technical Management Team Unit, established within the General Secretariat of the Mano River Union, to oversee in close consultation, synergy, supervision and provide technical support to the country implementation agencies.
2. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): assisted by IUCN-PACO, its roles consist in advising, supervising, backstopping, guiding and tracking progress made in the implementation of the project, with the utmost commitment to ensure the project is implemented in compliance with the GEF technical and financial guidelines and arrangements between GEF and the MRU General Secretariat on behalf of the member countries.
3. Regional Project Steering Committee: composed of high-profile representatives from each of the four countries, the Regional Project Steering committee plays a key role to providing supervisory, monitoring and evaluating the activities at national and regional levels, and ensuring certification and compliance of the results in conformity with the project objectives, work plan and budget, and work plan.
4. Country NEAs

The project involves four categories of institutional structures: (i) Implementation Agency: IUCN, (ii) Regional Execution Agency: MRU Secretariat General/RPMU, (iii) National Execution Agencies: one in each country, that's 4 agencies: Côte-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, (iv) Regional Project Steering Committee. It was launched at a regional workshop held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in – July 2017, jointly by IUCN and the MRU/SG, The Agency (IUCN), in its capacity as the project implementation agency, provided full information about the project design, recalling particularly (i) the rationale, objectives, and outputs, as well as the institutional set-up, execution, management, and monitoring-evaluation, etc.).

It is implemented in an inclusive participatory and holistic approach, through strategic framework targeting: (i) Sustainable Resource Management practices of forest and water resources, (ii) Restoration of degraded

ecosystems and protection of water resources; (iii) Local Communities participation; (iv) Development of Alternative Means of Income; (v) Regional Coordination and Capacity Building to strengthening cross-border cooperation and implementing training to improve environmental management; (vi) Monitoring-Evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of initiatives and adaptation strategies accordingly.

The project being funded by GEF, complies with GEF financial and operational guidelines, accountability principles and procurement procedures. To this end, the regional and NEA teams should adhere to the Codes of ethics to implement the field programmes, in avoiding any provision against fraud and corruption, budget management and reporting on GEF funds and Co-Financing, including principles of operational procedures.

It is technically supported by both regional and national teams, in ensuring effective and consistent activities and results. The SG/RPMU has fulfilled professionally its commitment with determination and immense mindset responsibility to motivate the NEA teams and stakeholder engagement to build staff and other and local key partners to get them actively involved in the project execution process, through frequent field visits, workshops, meetings, and reporting on activities achieved, and follow-up.

As highlighted, the implementation approach has proved its relevance aiming to likely enhance the smooth and coherent execution of the project activities (restoration of degraded landscapes, enhanced conservation efforts, improvement of community livelihood, and reducing the threats to natural resources. The project has also raised the awareness of communities and partners on the project outcomes and potentially can help the sustainability of the outcomes.

The project implementation overall arrangements and interventions being consistent with the project objectives and outcomes, thus are assessed highly relevant (R=1)

3. Project Achievement effectiveness

This chapter presents the project implementation and outcomes activities carried out from 12 May 2017 to 31/12/2023 in the four member countries of the Mano River Union. The assessment involved document review, field visits and stakeholder interviews, and data collection.

It also includes assessment of the project (i) components, (ii) institutional arrangements, (iii) annual work plans and budget, including (iv) related issues, attributes, financial execution records and, (v) finding reports, (vi) stakeholder's organization, (vii) knowledge and capacities building through capacity building trainings, monitoring-evaluation performances of forest landscape restoration and transboundary water basin protection and management activities.

Table 3 below shows the level of evaluation of results achieved. The outcomes and outputs of the project component results were achieved to 100%, after 6.5 instead of 4 years as planned at the project design as initially planned. However, in terms of indicators, the achievements reveal disparities between them from one site to another, and do not make it possible to draw up a relevant assessment about the objectives set forth. In addition, the reference situations of the indicators were not characterized (between previous achievements and those not achieved) at the start of the project. Defining a reference situation for each indicator would have clarified accountability for the achievements of the current project.

The outputs projected by the project implementation highlighted new dynamics of interventions at national and regional decision-making processes to improve cooperation between governments and stakeholders involved in the project execution. The project contributed to (i) developing, testing, implementing and developing agroforestry and forest landscape restoration models, (ii) transboundary basin studies and (iii) sustainable water management strategies. The implementation of the project also contributed to establish networks of national and regional expert to disseminate good practices and supporting future processes.

However, the improvement of sub-regional environmental governance, harmonization of legislation in force, development of law on cross-sectoral and border areas, the establishment of regional SAP, the integration of the environment and the issues of Management of transboundary basins are a long-term process that requires constant and financially sustained support.

As highlighted on above figure 1, the implementation strategy has proved its effectiveness to likely enhance smooth and coherent development of the project activities (restoration of degraded landscapes, enhanced conservation efforts, improvement of community livelihood, and reducing threats on natural resources), in delivering expected results.

All the project team members at both regional and NEA levels, abide the Codes of ethics and guidelines into force for the GEF project implementation to avoid fraud/corruption and fostering due diligence, particularly regarding budget execution, financial reporting and regulations, as key success engaging responsible participation of stakeholders to drive all the benefices expected.

Indeed, important progress is done at all levels of implementation of the components, as well as at regional and country levels resulting to targeted outputs. The results reported here are updated with data extracted from available technical and financial reports. However, they may be at variance with the correct figures.

The project implementation proved its relevance through the operation models provided and advice provided to help to solve shortcomings and overturning threats into the strategic approach, to establish a direct field-based learning process to improve the overall land protection and /or production plots into key assets to support and strengthen the various forested areas. It is important to note that the forest of Upper Guinea alarming degradation, and adverse consequences for the quantity and quality of interconnected ecosystem services that underpin the productivity of land (DT), forests (DB) and water resources (IS), with a direct impact on human well-being, especially forest-dependent people who struggle daily for their livelihoods, often using rudimentary not adapted to the current climate context, as well as poaching and logging crimes and traditional burning farming practices and illegal mining.

3.1. At site levels

This section presents the findings of the project implementation assessment findings (institutional arrangements, annual work plan and budget, including related drivers and attributes, the budget cost-sharing and financial execution records and reporting guidelines and period) .

As highlighted in above table 1, only Guinean, Liberian and Sierra Leonean portions benefit from both on-the-ground interventions, financed by the GEF STAR national funds of the three countries, and the regional activities, funded by the GEF regional funds. The Côte d'Ivoire did not pledge any GEF STAR national fund because of the concentration of the activities on water management issues, therefore it only benefit from the regional funds to the same level as the other countries.

In relation to co-financing from the BRIDGE project, a workshop was held in Monrovia from 1st – 3rd June 2021. The overall objective of this workshop was to build the capacities of stakeholders in the Mano River Union basin on cross-border cooperation for the sustainable management of shared water resources. Participants were informed on the concept of transboundary water management, sharing the issues and challenges of cooperation and integrated management of transboundary basins. Participants also developed the concepts of water diplomacy, negotiation, and cost and benefit sharing, with examples and practical cases.

It was during this reporting period that the contract was signed for the regional consultant to finalize the awareness-raising program for cross-border and environmental issues specific to each of the project sites. The overall technical achievement of this component is estimated to 100%

Project interventions in Cote-d'Ivoire were mainly focused on component 2, and to a lesser extent on component 1, due to the location context in the project-concerned intervention area. Indeed, both components 1 and 2 interventions (forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation, and water resource management) are consistent and relevant to the country's policy and priority intervention needs to ensure sustainable management of the natural resource. It enshrines river basin management and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as an approach of international cooperation on water resources.

The NEA team organization and local populations involvement through awareness campaigns and training provided are consistent with and relevant to the country's vision and priority, particularly the implementation of IWRM in the hydrographic basin of the national portion of Cavally which involve local and national interest among stakeholders who see with witness the degradation the basin resources.

All above stakeholders have fulfilled their respective responsibilities and duties in providing daily regional and national administration, coordination, execution, management, monitoring-evaluation of the activities planned, supervision and technical support of the Country Implementation Agencies.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in his capacity of regional implementation institution played the overall supervision and leading guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins. As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management, the executing teams identified all stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their participation. During the development of the project, the institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities.

The project being funded by GEF, its implementation fully complied with the GEF financial and operational guidelines, and accounting principles, as well as the procurement procedures. The project is also consistent with the country's national policies, development priorities and programmes and plans related to forest Landscape restoration and ecosystem management, including (i) REDD+, including National poverty reduction strategies; (ii) Strategies and plans for water resource management and IUCN Programme. Furthermore, the project bears hope the expected outcomes and outputs will likely help the country to overcome Forest landscape degradation and Water course siltation, and good practices to enhance land management sustainability, environmental protection, and community livelihoods.

The inclusive participatory and holistic approach adopted by the teams enabled effective involvement of the stakeholders and communities is assessed to be an effective strategy for integrated ecosystem management including sustainable land use management, forest landscape restoration and inclusive in-situ conservation and natural resource uses in the river basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

As for the overall project implementation organization, despite some indicators are not SMART and unachievable during the timeframe allocated, the overall achievements are somehow minimal and far under the level of momentum raised at regional and country levels toward sustainable management of the forest landscape, biodiversity and the transboundary basin waters, thus assessed Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

3.2. At component and result indicator levels

The project implementation information and data discussed here are about activities carried out throughout the whole intervention period and areas, from 2017 to 2023. It highlighted result effectiveness in the selected sites of the four participating countries, and particularly related to "Environment protection and Biodiversity conservation sustainable benefits": (i) Component 1 "*Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management*" and (ii) Component 2 "*Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters*", aimed to sustainably restoration and conservation of the Mano River Union transboundary basin forest landscape and water resources within the four country ecosystems in actively involving authorities, local leaders and communities.

As highlighted in the various PIR and annual reports from the IUCN and MRU/Coordination Unit, as well as at the NEAs, the project activities have been effectively achieved to 100% of planned targets. Indeed, Component 1 which is the main objective aims to ensure sustainable management of the remaining natural forest landscape resource management and biodiversity conservation highlighted crucial role of local communities in restoring the forests and its essential ecosystem services. Unfortunately, results achieved are far from the desired situation expected to effectively improve the environment and the livelihood of local populations living closely or inside the forests.

As reported in PIR and other annual reports (2017-2024), the project activities have been implemented and outputs achieved to nearly 100% at regional and country levels.

The inclusive participatory and holistic approach adopted by the teams enabled effective involvement of the stakeholders and communities is assessed to be an effective strategy for integrated ecosystem management including sustainable land use management, forest landscape restoration and inclusive in-situ conservation and natural resource uses in the river basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

Table 3: Outcomes and outputs indicator levels

Composantes	Indicateurs Impacts	End of Project Targets	End Results	Assumptions / Risks
1 : Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Under indicator 1.1.d, 1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)	1.1.a: 88,400 ha: - 73,200 ha in the buffer zones of Gola forests (57,400ha in SL and 15,800 ha in LB) under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting. - 15,200 ha in the buffer zones of Sapo-Grebo forests in LB under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting	Under outcome 1: Site 1: 36,964 ha over 88,400 ha Sierra Leone NEA were restored, and guideline document was developed for the Gola Forest.	Assumptions: (i) The Governments of MRU Member States are committed at all levels of intervention and those underlying the Convention on Biological Diversity, rather than short-term gain; (ii) Forestry and mining sectors and local communities are willing to co-operate with the project and allow the information to be made available to interested groups. Risk: The newly established integrated land use and management system are too difficult to be properly maintained in the current context of extracting practices
	Under indicator 1.1.e 1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting, etc.)	1.1.b: +93,400 ha: - 49,600 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests (34,500 in GN and 15,100 ha in LB) different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment, - 43,800 ha in the buffer zones of Ziama-Wonegizi protected forests (27,400ha in GN and 16,400 ha in LB) under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)	Under outcome 2, In Site 2: 105,500 Ha/93,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest delimited in the Guinea and 308 farmers (22% female) benefited from capacity building to improve farming system management practices and meeting the certification process; in Sierra Leone 663/800 farmers and 225 farmers (39% female) were trained, and 130 farmers (13% female) were trained	

<i>Output 1.1.1.</i> Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems	1.1.d: Number of site-specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.		105/80 targeted farmers (gender disaggregated) were trained to improve the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas. In Sierra Leone, WHH also trained 5 staff (all male) while GRC LG and organized a training of 28 staff trainers (87.5% men) and 4 women (12.5% women) as trainers of farmers on the production plots, and 8 (7 men and 1 women) staff of GRCLG trained by Njala University (1 female)	
<i>Output 1.1.2.</i> Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented		2 new land use plans were developed with support from WABICC project to complete the first 2 previously developed and operational with the support of GEF-MANO-UNOPS-EU/WABiCC-USAID in Ziama biosphere to operate a land use plan developed for Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.	

<i>Output 1.1.3.</i> Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas		No staff or farmer was trained on (i) farm income generation issue from a sustainable managed forest products and agroforestry, as well as (ii) Data collection by many farmers applying best practices on their cash crop plots.	Trained national staff do not leave their position/sector once they acquire skills
<i>Output 1.1.4.</i> Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions	1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed 1.1.f: percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry			
Outcome 2.1. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs	2.1.a: Number of sub-basins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures		Under outcome 2.1, Site 2: 105,500 Ha/93,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest	<u>Assumption / Risk:</u> Project capacity to adequately develop and implement the needed national and regional coordination and communication frameworks Political will of riparian countries to continue to give priority to sustainable

				development and wise environmental management. Changes in economic, political and social conditions that may derail national commitments.
<i>Output 2.1.1.</i> National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational	2.1.b: Number of National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee (NIC) established 2.1.c: Number of sessions of National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee organized			<u>Assumption:</u> Smooth cooperation between national sectoral ministries <u>Risk:</u> Conflicts between sectoral ministries prevent regular meetings of the committee. No risk has been detected.
<i>Output 2.1.2:</i> Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity	2.1.d: Number of training programme established, and training material disseminated. 2.1.e: Number of Male/Female staff trained; 2.1.f: Number of training workshops organized about TDA-SAP and for water governance champions. 2.1.g: Number of study tours organized			<u>Assumption:</u> Continued good political relations in the region. Governments move forward in the implementation of IWRM at national and local levels; TDA-SAP methodology is accepted by the four governments. <u>Risks:</u> Institutional gaps and lack of funding prevent IWRM implementation and prevent local communities to benefit from the SAP actions
Outcome 2.2. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for	2.2.a: Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management			<u>Assumption / Risk:</u> Project capacity to adequately develop and implement the needed national and regional

transboundary water resource management				coordination and communication frameworks Political will of riparian countries to continue to give priority to sustainable development and wise environmental management. Changes in economic, political and social conditions that may derail national commitments
<i>Output 2.2.1.</i> Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented	2.2.b: Number of awareness raising tools and events developed and implemented: number of awareness-raising days, number and type of publications, and number and content of radio-programme 2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management			Assumption: Suitable awareness raising techniques can be adapted to local conditions.
<i>Output 2.2.2.</i> The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial	2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level. 2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed. 2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and			Assumption: No major disagreements between participating governments, and local communities regarding sources and impacts of environmental degradation.

level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared.	resilience measures in the SAP;			
<i>Output 2.2.3.</i> IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders	2.2.g: Number of websites created; 2.2.h: Number of newsletter published on websites; 2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed. 2.2.j: Number of experience notes 2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences			<u>Assumption:</u> The project RPMU and regional and national executing agencies dedicate adequate resources to IWRM learn and communication products, which made important difference with other sites.
<i>Output 2.2.4.</i> Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented	2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies 2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU			

	2.2.n: Number of international donors conference organized 2.2.on: Number of regional events in which the projects is presented			
Outcome 3.1: The project is effectively and efficiently managed				
<i>Output 3.1.1:</i> Project management team established and functional	2.2.p: Number of project management unit established at regional level 2.2.q: Number of project coordination unit established at national level			

3.2.1.Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management

Important progress is done at all levels of implementation components, as well as at regional and country levels to achieve the project outputs, as follows:

- ✓ This section presents the findings of the project implementation assessment about (i) institutional arrangements, (ii) annual work plans and budget, including (iii) related drivers, attributes, financial execution records and, (iv) reporting guidelines and period);
- ✓ The results reported here are updated with data extracted from available technical and financial reports. However, they may be at variance with the correct figures.

Under Outcome 1: “Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management”: nearly 36,964 ha/88,400 ha in the Trans-boundary block of forest, covering the “Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba highland” in Guinea and Cote-d’Ivoire, and the “Protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké + National Park of the East Nimba with) Libera.

As reported by the project teams (regional and national, as well as under PIR by IUCN), achievements of indicator was as follows:

- i. **Under 1.1.d**, Sierra Leone NEA produced a guideline document for the Gola Forest that is to be validated by the International Consultant;
- ii. **Under indicator 1.1.e : Guinea:** 308 farmers (22% female) were trained on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented 663/800 farmers; **Sierra Leone:** 225 farmers (39% female) were trained and 130 farmers (13% female) were trained;
- iii. **Under indicator 1.1.f:** 105/80 targeted staff (gender disaggregated) were trained to improve the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas. In Sierra Leone, WHH also trained 5 staff (all male) while GRC LG organized Training of Trainers for 32 staff (4 female) that will train farmers on the production plots, 8 GRCLG staff trained by Njala University (1 female);
- iv. **Under indicator 1.1.g:** 2/4 targets (countries) 2 land use plans were already in practice in operating with the support of GEF-MANO-UNOPS-EU/WABICC-USAID in Ziamia biosphere to operate a land use plan developed for Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia with support from WABICC project;
- v. **Under indicator 11. h:** No staff or farmer was trained on increased farm income generation from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry, as well as on Data collection. Many farmers already applied best practices learned on their plots and introduced cash crops.

According to PIR 2021-2023, the achievements of outcome indicators are becoming apparent as most field activities have been launched and developed.

- i. Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia are involved in the development of agroforestry systems. In Guinea, the 612 farmers (51% women) that were registered and trained used the knowledge gained from the training to establish nurseries. In Diecké and Nimba they planted 48.5 hectares each. They developed and validated 4 guides on

pepper, cocoa, coffee and oil palm, floristic inventory protocol for natural regeneration plots, including a maintenance guide;

- ii. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, the nurseries established only served as transit points for the seedlings that were sourced in the communities and supplied to the farmers. Each of the 800 farmers (20% females) in Sierra Leone was given cocoa seedlings, pineapple suckers, plantain/ banana suckers, guavas, and oranges planted on 1 acre per farmer.
- iii. Guinea, Liberia & Sierra Leone: Selected farmers are now applying skills they acquired from various trainings to maintain nursery and agroforestry demonstration plots. Over 700 farmers were identified and registered in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The NEA teams in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone trained several farmers who acquired sound knowledge in nurseries preparation and seedlings plantation during workshops involving men and women. As reported (PIR, 2020-2021, 2021-2023 and, 2023 capitalization report), most of the activities were focused on (i) tree-based agroforestry friendly-system and (ii) degraded forest landscapes and ecosystem restoration, including biodiversity conservation and successfully achieved in the four transboundary priority sites, with 36,964 ha/88,400 ha established on site 1, under Outcome 1 (Transboundary natural resources in Upper Guinea's forest ecosystems are managed sustainably), and 105,000/93,400 ha (site 2) achieved under Outcome 2 (Forests and other types of cover in buffer zones of classified forests in national parks).

1. Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities.

The project was developed within the framework of a proposed program and the assessment report highlighted the extent to which the project contributed to the outcome achievement.

- i. **Under Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of tree-based system productivity to promote the use best agricultural practices in forest landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main sector of forest ecosystems.**

This output has been performed at 100% in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in assisting farmers to establish natural regeneration plots with 92,000 seedlings (cocoa, oil palm and coffee, etc.) and maintained by skilled farmers (402 men + 210 women).

- ii. **Under the output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs.**

Under this output successful practical trainings for farmers were organized to improve their management skills and practices, and certification programmes targeting farmers in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It was recommended in 2019 at a Regional Steering Committee Session, to focus “*regional activities to be regrouped in order to achieve bigger impact and results and economic interest*”, particularly for activities 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 for bidding.

In Guinea training workshops and regional capacity building for production certification and establishment of plots was organized for the farmers. In Sierra Leone, the partner Gola Rain Forest Company Limited (GRC LG) established successful cocoa farmer cooperatives across 5 of the 7 operated Chiefdoms (i) Malema cocoa farmers’ cooperative (MACOFCO), (ii) Gaura cocoa farmers’ cooperative (GACFCO), (iii) Tunkia and (iv) Koya chiefdoms to form one cooperative (TUNKOCFCO).

In 2023, Sierra Leone NEA organized a refresher Training of the Local Consultative Platform Committees, Local Farmers and Local Stakeholders on the “New Agricultural Measures Focusing on Forestry and Certification Principles” in Pujehun District. The training benefit to (i) Local Consultative Platform Committee, (ii) Local Farmers and (iii) Local Stakeholders on the New Agricultural Measures Focusing on Forestry and Certification Principles. In Guinea the training was attended by ADECAM members (297 men + 71 women, in Liberia, 739 farmers from PaND & AVCCI attended the training, while in Sierra Leone : GRC LG about 240 farmers (147 men + 93 women inclusive) benefited from the training.

Farmers having benefited from these demonstration trainings on natural regeneration and planting selected cocoa farms on various landscape management practices (tree shade pruning, black pod management, pruning, spacing and harvesting procedures, etc.) acquired proven skills to improve crop productivity. These trained farmers have already started to harvest fruits and crops (Okra, pepper, groundnuts, banana, etc.) from their farms, thus, helping them to improve their family diet while waiting for the long-term crops (Oil-palm, coffee, cocoa) fruits. Some of them were able to harvest and sell the short-term crops and buy food, pay school fees for their children and undertake other expenses in the interest of their family members¹².

iii. Under Output 1.1.3: Improved management practices of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas.

Under the guidance of the MRU/PCU, the NEAs organized several relevant field trainings and Local Consultative Committee with relevant stakeholders and communities in the 4 countries.

- i. **Côte d’Ivoire:** Taï National Park in Taï- Para-Djouroutou
- ii. **Guinea:** For the Ziamá, Dieké and Nimba National Parks, the establishment of the Local Consultative Committees took place from 27th April to 7th May 2018.
- iii. **Liberia:** In Liberia, the establishment of the Local Consultative Committee for East Nimba National Reserve took place on 12th December 2018 at Sanniquellie. and for the Gola National Park, on 4th March 2019, gathering project team and stakeholders met in Than Town, Gola Konneh District-Grand Cape mount to establishment of the Local Consultative Committee (LCC) for the Gola National Reserve. The Local Consultative Committee for the Wonegizi National Reserve was established on 10th December 2018 by the project team and the relevant stakeholders in Konia-Korsor District, Lofa County;
- iv. **Sierra Leone:** For the Gola Rain Forest in Sierra Leone, the project team and stakeholders met in Forestry Division Conference Hall, in Kenema for the establishment of the Gola Local Consultative Committee on 19th April 2018.

Several trainings have also been organized for farmers on management of transformation transboundary platforms to establish:

- i. *In Diecké- Nimba Transboundary Landscape Platform:* On 4th and 5th October 2021, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia met in Sanniquellie- Republic of Liberia and established the Diecké-Nimba Transboundary Platform.
- ii. *In Gola Rainforest Transboundary Landscape Platform:* from 17th to 18th November 2021, Liberia and Sierra Leone met in Kenema and established the Gola Rainforest Transboundary Landscape Platform;

¹²: Rabe G. F, 2023: Rapport de capitalisation des réalisations du projet

- iii. *In Wonegizi – Ziama Transboundary Landscape Platform*: from 23rd to 24 November 2021, Liberia and Guinea met in Macenta, Republic of Guinea and established the Wonegizi-Ziama Transboundary Landscape Platform.

The latest activities of output 1.1.3 was combined with activity 1.3 and which needs further technical assistance and continuous monitoring of the agroforestry farms established continued up to December 2023. It was recommended to pursue them beyond the end of the project in managing properly their consolidation.

iv. Under Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions

Activities under 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.1.8 and 1.1.9 have been successfully completed in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The NEAs further organized several meetings and training sessions to enable farmers further consolidate the results achieved at the end of and beyond the project. The Local Concertation Committee was instructed to maintain close with and between the farmers and other partners.

Indeed, as reveled by the results from the assessment of the project activities, successful stories and awareness raising results were made by the stakeholders toward landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and improvement of community livelihood. These are a consequence of particular emphasis put on engagement of the local communities from the onset, including consultation meetings, information sharing sessions to highlighting long-term benefits of landscape restoration and sustainable land management practices.

However, although the project teams in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were engaged in the development of agroforestry systems, tree crop mixtures, natural regeneration protection and proven promoted agricultural systems, it looks like the activities carried out are fare from the forest landscape restoration which target the recovery of degraded lands, thus rather a reconversion the forest areas into agroforests.

2. Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated

Under this outcome, all the two outputs (Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders) and (Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out) were achieved to 100% of the targeted results.

Although the overall achievements are assessed 100%, the results are yet to have effectively reduced the burden impacted trend on the forest landscapes and biodiversity status degradation, as the impacts towards ecosystem recovering, as well as community vulnerability are still prevailing. Thus, the assessment is likely to be moderately satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

Table X below provides the important progress made at all levels of outputs as well as at regional and country levels.

3.2.2. Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

This component 2 is about the management of Mano River Union International waters shared by the four member countries of the Union. It acted as a strategic forehead project implementation key driver in ensuring a pivotal role in "strengthening capacities of the governmental technical and institutional execution agency capacities, as well as other stakeholders (CSO, communities, etc.), through administrative and accounting and budget management direct supports, trainings. It also ensures Sustainable Management of

Transboundary Waters from upstream catchments to downstream, crossing large forest landscapes and biodiversity protected areas of unique richest and value.

We wish to recall the project area hosts nearly 3,000,000 million people living in various communities, directly and indirectly from the forest landscape resources and biodiversity, and from water resources. Particularly, all these resources have been put under severe degradation from climate change and threats, resulting to increasing socioeconomic vulnerability impacts due to mismanagement of the environment and natural resources and frequent community unfolding livelihood consequences.

As indicated in the Prodoc, this component 2 aims to build a strategic approach on transboundary issues to ensure sustainable related international water resources and transboundary basins to mainstream the "Integrated Water Resources Management" approach at the regional level.

The activities focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Union, targeting the following Trans-boundary Basins:

- i. Trans-boundary Basin Target 1: Moa / Makona River Basin: shared by Guinea (44%), Liberia (8.5%) and Sierra Leone (47.5%); Liberia (8.5%), Sierra Leone (47.5%, as *an incremental way based on the BRIDGE initial activities*), and Mano River Basin;
- ii. Trans-boundary Basin Target 2: Cavally River Basin shared by Cote d'Ivoire (54%), Guinea (5%), and Liberia (41%);
- iii. Target transboundary basin 3: Great Scarcies/Kolenté basin shared by Guinea (66%) and Sierra Leone (34%);
- iv. Trans-boundary Basin Target 3: Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins¹³, shared by Guinea and Sierra Leone);

At the 5th Final Supervision Mission conducted by IUCN, a regional workshop was organized from 15th to 16th December 2023, in Côte d'Ivoire, to discuss with the representatives of the Regional Executing Agency (SG-MRU/PMU), NEAs officers and key stakeholders.

The objective of the mission was to review the technical and financial implementation of the project; review the project's performance indicators; assess the project's institutional management framework; assess risk management and gender issues. The mission did not include site visits to landscapes since Côte-d'Ivoire was not fully involved in the implementation of Component 1 of the project.

As indicated in the Prodoc, this component 2 aims to build a strategic approach on transboundary issues to ensure sustainable related natural resources, including international waters, to mainstream the "Integrated Water Resources Management" approach at the regional level.

The activities focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Union, evolving from Moa / Makona River Basin, the Cavally River Basin and the Great and to the Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins and Trans-boundary Basin, targeting.

¹³: **Trans-boundary Basin: Target 1** (Moa / Makona River Basin shared by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and Mano River Basin); the **Trans-boundary Basin Target 2** (Cavally River Basin shared by Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia), and the **Trans-boundary Basin Target 3** (Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins shared by Guinea and Sierra Leone).

1. Outcome 2.1: *“Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP)”.*

It aims to protect and manage the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area” at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs, of which 90% of "Regional water resources management is under the aegis of transboundary institutional bodies-Water resources and achieved:

- ✓ 100% achieved under the Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial committees established and operational) which activities are achieved at the National inter-ministry committees established and operational;
- ✓ 100% achieved of the Output 2.1.2. (Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity), with TDA report finalized.

At both regional and national levels, after a slow start in the first two years (2017-2021) the project had achieved from 2022 to 2023 in the four countries (Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and at regional levels contributed to the development of the TDA and Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and its Investment Plan, based on transboundary institutional organs.

Indeed, most of activities planned under this outcome made important progress to deliver the final outputs and expected results in 2023. Indeed, the SAP was launched in Monrovia in October 2022 with the objective to strengthen the stakeholders understanding of technical design and implementation opportunities to develop Long-Term Environment strategies for shared vision of the transboundary water basin management. It aims to protect and manage the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area” at the regional level based on existing institutional organs.

Achieved under this outcome 90% of expected results were achieved on outputs of "Regional water resources management of transboundary issues and institutional bodies-Water resources:

- ✓ 100% achieved under the Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial committees established and operational) with activities: 2-20%; which activities are implemented by a National inter-ministry committees established and operational;
- ✓ 100% achieved of the Output 2.1.2. (Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity), with TDA report finalized.

i. Output 2.1.1: National inter-ministerial committees established and operational

The MTC in each country is made up of technical experts in various fields. In 2023, they continued giving support and guidance for the smooth implementation of the project. They ensured effective quality control of reports submitted by national consultants and they attended workshops to review and validate the SAP and the NAP of the countries. The monitoring activities aims to ensure the project participants fully aware of results expected from them about the sustainability of the project achievements.

The national project coordination units supported the implementation of the MTC yearly action plans and cumulatively, 38 meeting sessions have been organized and their reports submitted to SG/MRU-PCU: 7 meeting reports submitted by Côte d'Ivoire, 14 by Guinea, 7 by Liberia and 10 Sierra Leone 10.

ii. Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity

To further reinforce the capacities of stakeholders, a study tour was organized to visit the "Organization for the Development of the Senegal River Valley" (OMVS¹⁴), for the GEF- Mano project selected staff and member states experts. The objective of the organization was to rationally develop the resources of the Senegal River basin, particularly the water resources. The organization is governed by texts drawn based on the common vision that the States have freely adopted. The main recommendation made by OMVS to MRU was to hold enough consultations with multisectoral stakeholders in order to commit all actors during the phase of preparation and development of TDA and SAP process.

In relation to the facilitation of the National Training workshops for Water Governance Champions, the following training workshops, among other were undertaken with support from the BRIDGE Project:

- ✓ Information and training workshop of the Moa-Makona cross-border cooperation in the management of shared courses and on the sharing of related benefits: case study of the Keno dam on the Makona River;
- ✓ Training on governance and cross-border cooperation of shared resources, for the management bodies of the Mano basin;
- ✓ Raising awareness among populations living in the Cavally, Mano, Moa/Makona and Great Scarcies/ Klenté river basins on environmental issues linked to water pollution;
- ✓ Celebration of World Environment Day (WED) especially in 2021.

The setting up of a simple regional database storing data and information about international waters and biodiversity was undertaken during the trainings and research work undertaken by the TDA International Consultant.

• **The Transboundary Diagnostic-Analysis (TDA):**

The TDA study process started with the identification of water sustainable management issues to keep regular flow from upstream to downstream along the Mano Union River basin. The National Executive Agency in each country hired a national consultant to conduct a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins. Each consultant was committed to identify issues pertaining water concerns along each in-country portion of transboundary basin and to design a training framework of the national staff and local stakeholders that will be involved in the TDA / SAP processes.

In each country, the trainings was organized focused on the methodological approach and the planning process for the TDA to enable the stakeholder mastering the principle and strategy for conducting comprehensive study and effective strategic plan. About 126 participants (13 women inclusive) from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were trained on TDA study process. The study team was assisted by an International Consultant and three Regional Consultants. The national reports from each country were submitted to the team of International and Regional Consultants for review and development of final regional report of the TDA Report. The TDA was validated and adopted at a regional workshop.

¹⁴: OMVS: established on 11th March 1972, as a sub-regional organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) was established. It brings together the countries bordering the Senegal River: Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.

The TDA includes the following 4 thematic sectors:

- i. Deforestation & Reforestation.
- ii. Degradation of water quality.
- iii. Biodiversity loss.
- iv. Erosion /degradation of land, Banks and Spring source heads).

The TDA, targeted cross cutting issues in 3 transboundary basins which are: Climate Change, Gender and governance.

- **The Strategic Action Programme (SAP)**

The “Regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)” served as the basis of the SAP development process (SAP). The SAP design process was launched in Monrovia, in October 2022 to strengthen the capacities of national and regional actors on the SAP development process such as strategic thinking and to develop a shared vision and build a “Long-Term Environment Objective” for each basin and identifying opportunities and options of all stakeholders to be on board. The already established national teams and the regional technical advisory team took active part in the launching of the SAP.

After the workshop in Monrovia, each National Executing Agency had developed its vision and Long-Term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) for each river basin through participatory processes with the national local river basin platforms and the MTCs and the advisory technical teams.

The shared Vision and “**Long-Term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO)**” developed for each river basin to initiate priority actions and tackling identified problems were adopted by member states to secure water flow from upstream to downstream.

Three (3) regional workshops were organized to validate the SAP at transboundary level:

- Kolente and Great Scarcies basins; the workshop was held in Kindia (Guinea) from 17-19 January 2023 by Guinea and Sierra Leone;
- Makona and Mano basins; the workshop was held in Kenema from 23-25 January 2023 by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone;
- Cavally Basin; the workshop was held in Danané (Cote d'Ivoire) from 30 January to 01 February 2023 by Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia;

These national action programmes and investment plans contributed to the development of the Regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and its Investment Plan (IP).

The regional workshop for Cavalla basin was organized from 12 to 14th June 2023 with the countries sharing the basin (Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia). For the Mano, Makona and Scarcies basins, the validation was held from 20th to 22nd July 2023 in Conakry with the countries sharing the same basin (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

After the adoption of the SAP vision and the LTEQOs, a “National Action Programme and Investment Plan (IP)” were developed by each national executing agency and validated at national workshops: (i) **Cote d'Ivoire** (31st May – 1st June 2023, in Abidjan); (ii) **Sierra Leone** (10th June 2023, in Bo); (iii) **Liberia** (9th – 10th June 2023, in Monrovia) and; (iv) **Guinea** (27th - 28th ,July 2023).

The SAP is conceived around 7 “Technical Environmental Quality Objectives-TEQO” and 5 Strategic actions (SA) and 629 activities to be implemented in: Côte d’Ivoire (184), Guinea (189); Liberia (110), and Sierra Leone (146), as follows.

Table 4: The Technical Environmental Quality Objectives-TEQO”

LTEQO	Number of Strategic Actions (SA)
LTEQO 1. The forest ecosystems of the MRU basins are restored, protected and sustainably managed	8 strategic actions
LTEQO 2. Good quality water is available to meet the essential needs of ecosystems and people in the MRU basins according to SDG indicator 6.3.2	9 strategic actions
LTEQO 3. The ecological integrity restored and conserved, and the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the MRU basins are managed in a sustainable manner	7 strategic actions
LTEQO 4. Lands, riverbanks and source heads restored and protected	7 strategic actions
LTEQO 5. Member States' capacities for adaptation, mitigation and resilience to climate change strengthened at all levels	14 strategic actions
LTEQO 6. Social vulnerable groups are involved in the SAP planning and implementation process	3 strategic actions
LTEQO 7. Transboundary cooperation between Member States, communities and other actors strengthened	8 strategic actions
Total of the activities/country	56 Strategic Action

IUCN and SG/MRU-Regional Project Coordination Unit, in collaboration with the NEAs of Côte-d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, organized a Regional Validation workshop of the SAP review and adoption, from 16-18th August 2023. Upon this workshop, the final SAP Document was endorsed in January 2024 by the Council of Forest and Water resources Ministers of the 4 Member States and the Secretariat General of the Mano River Union.

They project area hosts nearly 3,000,000 million people living in various communities, directly and indirectly from the forest landscape resources and biodiversity, and from water resources. Particularly, all these resources have been put under severe degradation from climate change and threats, resulting to increasing socioeconomic vulnerability impacts due to mismanagement of the environment and natural resources and frequent community unfolding livelihood consequences.

This outcome includes new programmes and projects proposed and adopted by the MRU member country ministries in charge of water resource management and Donors at Donors conference convened in Freetown from on 24-25. It includes a range of nine documents of two Program concepts and seven Project concepts as presented below:

Programme concepts:

- **Programme concept 1: Fighting Pollution and Ensuring Safe Water for People and Nature in the MRU countries** .

All the four countries (Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) will participate in the implementation and execution of the programmes and projects, under the guidance and supervision of IUCN (regional implementing Agency) and Mano River Union Secretariat General. The thematic focal areas are:

- i. Water Resources Management and conservation through prevention, reduction and remediations of risks caused by chemicals and wastes.
- ii. Biodiversity diversity conservation, especially through protection of aquatic species that clean water.
- iii. Climate Change Adaptation to reduce the effects of floods and droughts on water quality and actions to increase the resilience of ecosystems and people.
- iv. Land Management and conservation to reduce the impacts of land-based pollution that end up into water courses.
- v. Forest management and conservation to reduce the pollution from Agriculture and Mining activities.
- vi. Integration of gender issues.

The Project Concept note developed and adopted for implementation under "Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) components resourced from funds requested of 18 , 000,000 USD, donated by various International voluntary sources of both technical and financial institutions for the project preparation and subsequent activities implementation.

- **Programme concept 2: Co-Management of the Forest-Water Nexus to support Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation in the MRU countries**

All the four countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) will participate in the implementation and execution of the programme, under the Mano River Union (MRU) Secretariat. The thematic focal areas are:

- Biodiversity diversity conservation, especially through protection of aquatic species that clean water.
- Climate Change Adaptation to reduce the effects of floods and droughts on water quality and actions to increase the resilience of ecosystems and people.
- Land Management and conservation to reduce the impacts of land-based pollution that end up into water courses.
- Forest management and conservation to reduce the pollution from Agriculture and Mining activities;
- Integration of gender issues.

The estimated cost requested from various International voluntary sources of funding amounts 15,000,000 USD, with possible co-funding: 50,000,000 USD, that's a total cost: 65,000,000 USD.

- **Project concepts**

Project concept 1: Safeguarding Water and Food Security and Protecting Human Health through Operational Pesticide Management.

Their relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this project are as follows:

- Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP), which is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment.
- Management of Chemicals, especially Pesticides to reduce pollution on water and ecosystems
- Water Resources Management and conservation through prevention, reduction and remediations of risks caused by chemicals and wastes from Agriculture

- Food Security and Plant Protection through Integrated Pest Management
- Biodiversity conservation.
- Integration of gender issues: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are protected against pollution

Indeed, seven project concepts were developed and adopted by the participants at the Donors conference with firm commitments to support the Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) of the SAP through seven specific Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO), including:

- i. LTEQ 1: Monitoring and evaluation
- ii. LTEQO 2: Good quality water is available to meet the basic needs of ecosystems and people in MRU basins in accordance with SDG indicator 6.3.2.
- iii. LTEQO 3: Restored and conserved ecological integrity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the MRU basins are sustainably managed.
- iv. LTEQO 4: Land, stream banks and spring heads are restored and protected.
- v. LTEQO 6: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are taken into account in the implementation of the SAP .

The project Resource Mobilization activities are underway for both technical and financial support for project preparation and subsequent implementation

Project concept 2: MRU Partnership for Mercury Management to Safeguard Human Health and the Environment

The relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this project are:

- Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to protect human health and the environment
- Strategic planning for implementation of the health-related articles of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- Implementation of Resolution no. WHA67.11 of the World Health Assembly calling upon its member states to ratify and implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to address the health aspects of exposure to mercury and mercury compounds through collaboration between health authorities, environment authorities, and others.
- Water Resources Management and conservation through prevention, reduction and remediations of risks caused by chemicals and wastes.
- Integration of gender issues.

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to: 6, 000,000 USD with possible co-funding of 25,000,000 USD, that's a total cost: 31, 000,000 USD

Project concept 3: Fight Against Illegal Trafficking in Hazardous Toxic Waste in the Mano River Union (MRU) Countries

The relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this project are

- Acceleration of the implementation of the Bamako Convention on the Prohibition of the Import into Africa of Hazardous Wastes and on the Control of Transboundary Movements and the Issue of Hazardous Wastes Generated in Africa.

- Implementation Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.
- Protection of human health and the environment.
- Gender inclusion and protection of the most vulnerable groups

Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) of the PAS are :

- LTEQO 2: Good quality water is available to meet the basic needs of ecosystems and people in MRU basins in accordance with SDG indicator 6.3.2.
- LTEQO 3: Restored and conserved ecological integrity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the MRU basins are sustainably managed.
- LTEQO 4: Land, stream banks and spring heads are restored and protected.
- LTEQO 6: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are taken into account in the implementation of the SAP.
- LTEQO 7: The Cross-border cooperation between Member States, communities and other actors is strengthened.
- LTEQO 8; The utilization of non-bio-degradable plastic is avoided.

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to 6, 000,000 USD with possible co-funding of 25,000,000 USD, that's a total cost of 31, 000,000 USD.

Project concept 4: Implementing the GEF Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning in the Mano River Countries:

The relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this project are:

- International Waters
- The GEF Strategy For Knowledge Management and Learning
- Water Resources Management and conservation through prevention, reduction and remediations of risks caused by chemicals and wastes.
- Better Implementation of the Chemical Conventions, including the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; and the Bamako Convention prohibiting the import into Africa of any hazardous (including radioactive) waste.
- Biodiversity diversity conservation.
- Climate Change Adaptation to reduce the effects of floods and droughts on water quality and actions to increase the resilience of ecosystems and people.
- Land Management and conservation to reduce the impacts of land-based pollution that end up into water courses.
- Forest management and conservation to reduce the pollution from Agriculture and Mining activities.
- Integration of gender issues.
- The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM);

It includes all Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) of the SAP. The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to 5, 000,000 USD, with possible co-funding: 30,000,000 USD, that's a total cost of 35,000,000 USD.

Project concept 5: Project for Adaptation and Climate Resilience in the Forest Landscapes of the Mano River Union " (PARC-MRU/IUCN)

The relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this project are:

- Conservation of Transboundary Flora and Faunal Biodiversity between Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire,
- Integrated watershed management of transboundary landscapes
- Adaptation and Climate Resilience in Transboundary Ecosystems
- supporting the sustainable development and resilience of communities in the Mano River Union Landscape;
- capacity building of actors involved in transboundary landscapes
- Ecological monitoring (biomonitoring) through the establishment of permanent plots and setting trap cameras
- Monitoring the socio-economic resilience of resource-dependent populations in transboundary landscapes
- monitoring water quality in transboundary landscapes;
- the development of climate information and early warning systems

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to 15, 000,000 USD, with possible co-funding.

Project concept 6: Increasing resilience to Climate Change and Adaptation capacity of MRU countries:

The relevant Thematic focal areas regarding this Program are:

- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation to reduce the effects of floods and droughts on water quality and increase the resilience of ecosystems and people.
- Biodiversity diversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Land Management and conservation to reduce the impacts of land-based pollution that end up into water courses.
- Forest management and conservation.
- Integration of gender issues.

It includes the followings:

- LTEQO 5: The Member States' capacities to adapt, mitigate and be resilient to climate change are strengthened at all levels.
- LTEQO 6: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are taken into account in the implementation of the SAP.
- LTEQO 7: The Cross-border cooperation between Member States, communities and other actors is strengthened.
- LTEQO 1: Forest ecosystems in MRU basins are restored, protected, and sustainably managed.
- LTEQO 2: Good quality water is available to meet the basic needs of ecosystems and people in MRU basins in accordance with SDG indicator 6.3.2.
- LTEQO 3: Restored and conserved ecological integrity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the MRU basins are sustainably managed.

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to 5, 000,000 USD, with possible co-funding: 20,000,000 USD, that's a total cost: 25,000,000 USD

Project concept 7: Integrated water management and restoration of degraded ecosystems in the Cavally transboundary watershed

- ✓ The relevant Thematic focal areas of this project are:
- ✓ LTEQO 1: Forest ecosystems in MRU basins are restored, protected, and sustainably managed.
- ✓ LTEQO 2: Good quality water is available to meet the basic needs of ecosystems and people in MRU basins in accordance with SDG indicator 6.3.2.
- ✓ LTEQO 3: Restored and conserved ecological integrity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the MRU basins are sustainably managed.
- ✓ LTEQO 4: Land, stream banks and spring heads are restored and protected.
- ✓ LTEQO 5: The Member States' capacities to adapt, mitigate and be resilient to climate change are strengthened at all levels.
- ✓ LTEQO 6: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are taken into account in the implementation of the SAP.
- ✓ LTEQO 7: The Cross-border cooperation between Member States, communities and other actors is strengthened.
- ✓ LTEQO 8; The utilization of non-bio-degradable plastic is avoided

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources of funding is estimated to 8, 000,000 USD, with possible co-funding.

Project concept 8: Climate change Adaptation and Early Warning

The relevant Thematic focal areas of this project concept are:

- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation to reduce the effects of floods and droughts on water quality and increase the resilience of ecosystems and people.
- Food security and available livelihoods achieved for vulnerable communities
- Biodiversity diversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Land Management and conservation to reduce the impacts of land-based pollution that end up into water courses.
- Forest management and conservation
- Reduction of the number of natural disasters and climate risks
- Update and better implementation of the National Adaptation Plan and the National Determined Contribution
- Reinforcement of institutions in charge of Hydrometeorological and disaster management in MRU member states
- Increasing the number of WASH infrastructures that are resilient to the impacts of climate change
- Integration of gender issues.

It include the **Long-term Environmental Quality Objectives (LTEQO) of the Projects:**

- LTEQO 5: The Member States' capacities to adapt, mitigate and be resilient to climate change are strengthened at all levels.
- LTEQO 6: Vulnerable groups including women, youth and children are taken into account in the implementation of the SAP.
- LTEQO 7: The Cross-border cooperation between Member States, communities and other actors is strengthened.
- LTEQO 1: Forest ecosystems in MRU basins are restored, protected, and sustainably managed.
- LTEQO 2: Good quality water is available to meet the basic needs of ecosystems and people in MRU basins in accordance with SDG indicator 6.3.2.

- LTEQO 3: Restored and conserved ecological integrity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the MRU basins are sustainably managed.

The Fund requested from various International voluntary sources is estimated to be determined As well as the possible co-funding.

The overall programme concepts cost is estimated to 143,000,000 USD of which fund is requested from various International voluntary sources. As for project concepts the total cost is estimated to 195,000,000 USD. Therefore, the total of the programme concepts and project concepts is 338,000,000 USD .

The vision stated that « The countries sharing the MRU basins will cooperate in solidarity for peace, security on the sustainable management of water resources while improving their interventions on strategic climate change adaptation and resilience for health and socio-economic well-being of the communities and member states by 2043 ».

2. Outcome 2.2: Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management

It was acknowledged 100 % of activities and stakeholder financial capacity building for the protection and the transboundary water resources management in the Mano River Union basins strengthened are achieved by the Governmental institutions 100% of the outputs (Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented; (ii) Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis; (iii) Output 2.2.3: Strategic Actions Plan prepared and validated through a broad involvement of local communities, national and regional stakeholders.

Nearly 20,000 (5,000 per country) people were involved in reporting water quality issues and riparian ecosystem management undertaken by BRIDGE and the WABICC program and in various training thematic on water diplomacy, establishing cooperatives and benefit sharing across the basins. It is estimated that prior to this reporting period, 50,000 people have been sensitized on water quality and riparian ecosystem management supported by the same BRIDGE Project, as a financing partner under indicator 2.2.d (regional TDA was fully developed and conducted successfully to 100%.

As an exit result, the TDA/SAP process have been with view to use harmonized approach format at the regional and national levels. Indeed, the project teams built momentum in the four participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) through national validation workshops (at country level) attended by all national stakeholders to review and adopting the "Integrated Vision and Long-Term Environmental Quality Objectives (IV-LTEQO) of the basins of *Cavally, Mano, Moa / Makona and Kabba / Kolenté*. The 4 countries also shared the validated National Action Plans (NAP) and the "Strategic Action Programme (SAP)" framework were officially adopted in 2023 (Consultant, 2023).

To streamline and energize the SAP activities implementation, various trainings supported by performant educational and awareness tools (banners, roll-up and newsletters, Facebook, Youtube, websites, etc.) to effectively promote "integrated forest landscape restoration and transboundary water management within and across the basin". BRIDGE project support has been instrumental in supplying strategic tools (posters on farming, fishing and mining) to further improve capacities

of the stakeholders in the four participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone), particularly at the celebrated World Environment Day

- i. **Output 2.2.1:** Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented

The Regional Project Coordination Unit with the National Executing Agencies in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone organized several awareness raising activities highlighting good practices to maintain water quality and promote biodiversity in the MRU countries. Furthermore, National and Regional Technical Advisory Teams were established for the management and preparation of the TDA / SAP processes in the targeted basins. They comprise technicians from relevant ministries and representatives of the Water Users' Committees in the targeted basins. Indeed, in each country sharing a prioritized transboundary river basin on Moa/Makona, Cavally and Great / Little Scarcies), put in place a National Committee for Water Users:

- i. **SIERRA LEONE:** (i) National Committee for Water Users (Great Scarcies/Kaba/Kolente), (ii) National Committee for Water Users – Moa/ Makona.
- ii. **Guinea:** (i) National Committee for Water Users – Cavally, (ii) National Committee for Water Users – Kolenté, (iii) National Committee for Water Users – Moa/ Makona
- iii. **Liberia:** (i) National Committee for Water Users – Cavalla, (ii) National Committee for Water Users – Moa/ Makona

The Regional Project Coordination Unit in collaboration with the National Executing Agencies organized a pre-validation workshop of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and its Investment Plan (IP) at transboundary level in Conakry from 20th through 22nd July 2023 for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone sharing the transboundary basins of Mano, Moa/Makona and the Kolenté/ Kaba.

The National Executing Agency in Guinea validated its National Report of the SAP and its IP in Koya – Republic of Guinea on 27th and 28th July 2023. Furthermore, the Regional Project Coordination Unit in collaboration with the National Executing Agencies of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone organized a regional validation workshop of the SAP and its IP in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, from 16th to 18th August 2023. The final report was endorsed by the Council of ministers from the 4 member states.

- ii. **Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme (SAP) with initial actions are prepared and the SAP adopted at ministerial level.**

The regional cross-border diagnostic analysis is prepared and is being validated and adopted at the ministerial level at a Preliminary regional strategic action programme.

Consultative regional technical team and national executing teams were the key actors of the regional organization meetings and took important part in the validated of the TDA cross-border.

- iii. **Output 2.2.3: I.W learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders**

This output has been achieved to 100: with successful results generated and disseminated to a large community of local, national and regional stakeholder.

- iv. Under Outcome 2.3, expected outputs were achieved to 100%, monitored and evaluated output 2.3.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders) and output 2.3.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out).

The GEF-Mano project communication Experts developed and disseminated communication handouts and articles on the effective implementation of project activities highly depending on the operations conducted for the management of the project transboundary water basins. Various tools (6) were developed (banner, roll-up and newsletter, Facebook, Youtube and website messages) to raise awareness and promote integrated water management within and across the basin. Furthermore, 3 banners (posters on farming, fishing and mining) were developed and used by the BRIDGE project. In June 2021, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone celebrated World Environment Day.

Unfortunately, the two experts recruited-one after another- to operate activities under these outputs had both resigned and are not replaced. The strategy developed by the National Project Coordination aimed to ensure full contribution of "Local community radios" in people participation. Furthermore, the project websites were updated, though not on regular basis, and neither for the MRU Website.

It is sad to note that past efforts and investments provided by GEF and other donors (UNDP, USAID, European Union, etc.) and ongoing GEF project planned objectives addressing transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management and water management basins, resulting in some disillusion, as to some extent, the achievements have not been yet able, after 6.5 years, to reverse the continuous trends of land degradation and community vulnerability".

However, with regards to the wide intervention area of the project implementation and amount of work done and despite the many weaknesses in the project design harshness of the project areas, the operational weaknesses and strategy shortfalls of the executing entities, the project achievements and results achieved are very relevant to the reason of its development. It is expected with indue commitment, the outputs achieved will likely modify the evolutive trend and shape of the area toward expected change compared to the original situation having justified the project design and implementation. Even though little activities have been achieved, there is important hope the achievements will contribute to some extent to "Strengthen government agencies and stakeholder capacities to participate in the transboundary water resource management".

v. Output 2.2.4: Financial Resource mobilization Strategy Developed and implemented

During the 5th Supervision Mission, it was recommended the Regional Steering Committee members recommend (i) IUCN for act "a-no-cost extension" of the project for the first quarter of 2024 to enable finalizing the key remaining activities, including the endorsement of SAP by the Member States, and (ii) Organization of Donors meeting by March 2024 (Ref. Declaration)

The workshop also discussed and adopted the financial and management mechanisms. IUCN also recalled the SG/MRU and the NEA the obligation to adhere to the project document and GEF core value (administrative, financial accountability procedures, procurement guidelines, including disbursements, control/audit, etc.) into force at the GEF Secretariat. The forms used at each level for travel, missions, workshops, and procurement had been presented and widely explained. The preparatory tasks and branding of SAP in a format to be presented at the Donor meeting.

Table 5 below highlight the SAP "Technical Environmental Quality Objectives-TEQO".

Table 5: The Technical Environmental Quality Objectives-TEQO"

No.	Executing Agency	Actual Amount reported	Comment
1	Mano River Union	1,488,440	In-kind
2	Cote d'Ivoire	6,771,300	In-kind
3	Guinea	13,330,936	In-kind
4	Liberia	10,879,001	In-kind
5	Sierra Leone	10,831,255	In-kind
	Sub-total	43,300,932	
	Partners:		
1	WABICC/ USAID	10,000,000	In-kind. Consented to provide information on actual amount
2	BRIDGE Project	399,972	In-kind & Cash
3	ECOWAS	500,000	In-kind. Awaiting information on actual amount
	Sub-total	10,899,972	
	Total	54,200,904	

Currently, the contribution is 95% of the amount endorsed by the countries. Additional data and information will be collected on the contribution of all structures in charge of water and forest relating to the project's objectives. 6: The Technical Environmental Quality Objectives-TEQO".

The SAP implementation is divided into several 5-years implementation phases of which the first will be implemented in the first-five-year.

3. Outcome 2.3: Activities achieved, monitored and evaluated

The two outputs (output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders) and output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out) of this outcome have been achieved to 100% of expected results.

Due to the delay in finalizing the TDA activities of this output faced important delay and was only developed in April 2024 with full SAP and Investment Plan, thus no progress is achieved towards the output documents to be shared with all stakeholders.

Despite 100% of expected results were achieved, as a Results-based management approach, the participation of all stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels is seen as pivotal. Their roles are well identified and integrated into the SAP framework, as well as their missions, roles and responsibilities.

The Number of people targeted to benefit from the project awareness and achievements are estimated to 20,000 (5,000 per country). The awareness and monitoring activities were also supported by BRIDGE and the WABICC program which targeted the same project participants, thus nearly 300,000 people were involved.

The outcome achievement is assessed as highly relevant and consistent with national policies. Indeed, as a forehead strategy, the SAP has been pivotal to the four participating countries to set up or restructure a dedicated new Ministry of Environment priorities, like in Sierra Leone where a new "National Water Resources Management Agency (NWRMA)" that plays the role of focal point of the project of the project in the new Ministry of Water Resources.

Unfortunately, the TDA/SAP frameworks were not finalised and validated on due time before the end of the project implementation in 2023, and therefore at the workshops attended by Regional Project Management Unit and the National Project Coordination Units, there were no demonstration activity achieved at field level to test and verify the effectiveness of the SAP and related tools. As such, their effectiveness was not confirmed whether their application will meet the vision and development objectives across the transboundary forest landscapes and river basins water resources.

We noted the followings remarks:

- i. As a Results-based management project, all the outcomes and outputs of the component have been achieved to 100% of the targeted results. The participation of all stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels is seen as pivotal. Their roles were well identified and outlined in the component design, as well as the missions, and responsibilities.
- ii. The component execution rate (April 30, 2024) was estimated to 100%. However, the TDA/SAP frameworks effectiveness was not proved as not been tested on the field to verify their feasibility. As such, their effectiveness was not confirmed whether their application will meet the vision and development objectives across the transboundary forest landscapes and river basins water resources.
- iii. As exit results, the TDA/SAP process have been fully and comprehensively developed following a technical and scientific methodology (ROAM process) with view to use harmonized approach format at the regional level. Indeed, the project design is built on shared vision and momentum of the four participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). It was validated at national and regional validation workshops and attended by all concerned national and regional stakeholders to review and adopting the "Integrated Vision and Long-Term Environmental Quality Objectives (IV-LTEQO) and strategic objectives across the basins of *Cavally, Mano, Moa / Makona and Kabba / Kolenté*.
- iv. The validated "National Action Plans (NAP)" and the "Strategic Action Programme (SAP)" Report were shared with at all relevant levels of the project basins, in 2023 and officially endorsed by the four country Ministers of water resource management for donor meeting in March 2024.
- v. It was also recommended the project adopted an inclusive and holistic approach which proved elsewhere its adequacy with the country and regional institutional set up to ensure convenient promotion of integrated ecosystem management and participatory community-based strategies leading to in-situ conservation and sustainable use of soil, water, and biota in the river basins and on their watersheds.
- vi. Indeed, although all the workshops and TDA/SAP objectives, results and findings are realistic the participants expressed further utmost needs of more time to pursue the implementation and testing them with along the framework of "Forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation" to drive all their relevant effectiveness towards sustainable development of the natural resources and people livelihood.
- vii. The component achievements are assessed as highly relevant and consistent with national policies. As a forehead strategy, the project implementation has been seized by the government of Sierra Leone to set up in its dedicated new Ministry of Environment priorities, the restoration of degraded landscapes through afforestation, under the coordination with relevant MDAs and local councils

also prioritizing tree planting, as well as a new agency of "National Water Resources Management Agency (NWRMA)" that is the focal point of the project in the new Ministry of Water Resources.

viii. The Regional TDA and the Strategic Action Programme, as well as the "Long Term Investment Plan" were validated at regional level and submitted to the ministerial council for adoption. This was followed by the donor conference to organize for fund raising to roll out the investment plan. During the Donors' Conference, it was the signing of the Freetown Declaration on water, forests, biodiversity, climate change, and human wellbeing that climaxed the occasion.

The TDA and SAP design activities, although they have been fully achieved by the NEAs and validated at a regional workshop by the Stakeholders, Member country official Authorities, SG/MRU and Sierra Leone Government, and despite the results of the component have yet to prove its effectiveness towards relevant changes in the transboundary basins, due the fact no implementation test was conducted, we assess the outputs very relevant to streamline the management of the transboundary water resource management, thus rated satisfactory (HS: 5/6)

3.2.3. Component 3 : Project Management Costs:

This component presents activities of the project administration, management, monitoring-evaluation and backstopping activities carried out at the selected sub-basin site levels.

It aims to "Strengthen government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management" in implementing, monitoring and supervising the field Units and reporting, with focus on the project technical, operational and financial management, monitoring and capacity building

Indeed, the project Management Costs focused highlighted the management activities and the cost of the financial execution undertaken on an annual basis, throughout the duration of the project, from January-December 2017 to April 2024

The achievement are:

- i. Cote-d'Ivoire: 100% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.
- ii. Guinea: 100% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.
- iii. Liberia: 100% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.
- iv. Sierra Leone: 100% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.

Based on the above assessment, our rating shows that the project's overall implementation and execution outcomes and outputs are Moderately Satisfactory, at both regional and national levels, including component objectives, outcomes, and outputs. Furthermore, the effectiveness and functionality of the project's monitoring-evaluation systems are assessed as satisfactory, as well as data collection and analysis against indicators defined in the project's logical framework matrices highlighting the progress and quality of the work down by the communities, as demonstrated by the content of mandatory reports, especially semestrial and annual reports. The NEA in all four participating countries focused on gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities.

The project is managed effectively and efficiently with the aim to establish a regional level of Technical Coordination Unit and NEAs at the 4 four country levels. As per the indicators of this objective 100% of the target has been achieved, with frequent communication between the regional coordinating unit and national coordinating units, despite some gaps and needs for improvement, especially in relation to becoming responsive in a timely manner.

In summary: (i) the target of Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities is achieved at 100%; (ii) Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs, achieved to 100%, (iii) Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management, achieved to 90%.

The project management has been assessed to be effective and efficient at 100%, and Globally to 75%. Indeed, as stated under PIR from 2017 to 2024, the assumption of the four Government of MRU achievements was, rather than seeking a short-term gain, based on true commitments for Member States at all levels of the project to focus their interventions on the principles of sustainable development and underlying Biodiversity Convention, with the goodwill participation of forestry and mining sectors, as well as local communities, to cooperate and get involved truly in the project achievements and allow the information sharing to interested groups. Unfortunately, such expectation was not fully met, as some stakeholders didn't anticipate, inter alia, the climate change risks and cashflow delays supporting the expenses of the NEAs and pilot farmers on the field to meet their needs to maintain the agroforests developed and purchase agricultural inputs.

The project execution by MRU/SG/PMU is assessed by the mission as highly satisfactory (MS:5/6).

1. Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented.

i. Output 3.1.1. Project management team established and functional

The project management team have set up since the launching of the project in 2017 with full operational unit and staff at the regional and National levels. They have effectively managed the personal resources who geared and monitored all the activities.

At all levels of the project implementation, qualified staff have been appointed or recruited to assist the *management and coordination of the project activities, at regional and national levels. The team ensure effective and efficient execution of the project activities at all levels of interventions.*

The staff also involve *procurement and financial resource management at office at regional and national level to manage and coordination the NEA and the programme of activities.* The IUCN staff helped improving the working conditions of all NEAs for effective and efficient implementation of the field activities.

ii. Output 3.1.2: Project is monitored, evaluated and audited

• Monitoring:

The activities of the output 3.1.2 focused in organizing project annual reporting, review and planning, including Monitoring and Evaluation. Several missions were conducted by the NEAs team and who benefited from frequent supervisory missions from IUN, Steering Committee and MRU/project

coordination teams to collect information, assessing the quality of the work done and results achieved, and providing technical advice and guidance to effectively implement the project.

The NEAs and Annual technical and financial reports will be prepared, validated and submitted to the GEF. National executing agencies will contribute to these reports to be consolidated by the regional executing agencies and send to the implementation agency for submission to the GEF.

All three levels of the project implementation, mission and annual report are mandatory on timely basis (Monthly, quarterly and annual basis), including workshop and any other activities, and capacity building. The mission also consisted of the progress made and plan for next year. Periodic monitoring and supervision missions were organized to assess the progress made in the project implementation data from the field.

As a Results-based management project, the participation of all stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels is seen as pivotal. Their roles are well identified and defined in the project framework, as well as their missions, roles and responsibilities. The component technical execution rate (31st December 2023) was estimated to 96% for Component 1, 88% for component, 92% for component 2 and 92% for the overall component is 92% overall mean. The workshop also discussed and adopted the financial and management mechanisms. IUCN also recalled the SG/MRU and the NEA the obligation to adhere to the project document and GEF core value (administrative, financial accountability procedures, procurement guidelines, including disbursements, control/audit, etc.) into force at the GEF Secretariat. The forms used at each level for travel, missions, workshops, and procurement had been presented and widely explained.

It was also recommended the project adopted an inclusive and holistic approach which proved elsewhere its adequacy with the country and regional institutional set up to ensure convenient promotion of integrated ecosystem management and participatory community-based strategies leading to in-situ conservation and sustainable use of soil, water, and biota in the river basins and on their watersheds.

- **Communication**

For the year 2023, communications focused mainly on the visibility of the project during the various project activities with a view to raising awareness among a large public on issues related to the sustainable management of international water resources in the transboundary basins of the MRU with reference to the development of the SAP; which constituted as major components for knowledge generation.

Around the awareness raising programme on transboundary issues specific to each project site, important communications and visibility were carried out allowing the stakeholders to gain confidence in the continuation of the project and to have a clear vision of the evolution of field activities especially around the awareness raising programmes.

- ✓ **Major communication:** Dedicated efforts were made by the national and regional executing agencies to promote visibility of the project by ensuring that national and community radios and national TV channel covered the activities. The capacity building, monitoring-evaluation and SAP process generated several communication tools and products contributing to the visibility of the project including the awareness raising programme that was undertaken by Liberia in the Gola National Park, Cavalla and Mano River Basins.
- ✓ **Operationalization of website:** The websites created by the project , www.cfzguinee.org, www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr, www.dgre-minef.ci, www.mru.npaa-sl.org had effectively contributed to the visibility of the project at national and regional levels but some constraints still exist for the updating of some websites due to the absence of the regional communication expert. The different links have been

shared to IWLEARN to link them to the GEF website (SAP and IP Transboundary, 2023):

<https://www.facebook.com/100064457810337/posts/639155494909705/?mibextid=JFKZkCIdVCU4Y3zd>

- ✓ Below are some links for the SAP and IP Transboundary validation in August 2023 in Conakry:
<https://www.facebook.com/100068589525476/posts/pfbid025mwhqCnmwNSypvHNWEupvsVsYwniFXWPnFaPFyRF6xWK6LKbTZL6z6zgKLtmBZil/?d=w&mibextid=qC1gEa>
- ✓ And Link for the national validation of the Cavally Transboundary basin from 1st to 2nd June 2023 in Abidjan: <https://youtu.be/NENWqjjwy84>; <https://youtu.be/5Qav4hvexew>; <https://youtu.be/qPAIngeGxXE>; <https://youtu.be/3opzk--sdGY>
- ✓ **PACO News, TV, Radio and Local press report:** At community level, the 4 national project coordinators usually engage the media in the activities they undertake. Several press releases in the national newspapers related to the recruitment of consultants, opening ceremony of meetings and workshops at national and regional levels have been done. Pictures of some activities undertaken in 2023 are found below.

- **Constraints and difficulties encountered**

As per the PIR 2023, in the year 2023, the NPCUs reporting on time faced major challenge affecting usually all the processes of the project reporting to the Donors, especially reporting on project benefits. There was still a concern that the implementation of activities in 2023, the executing agencies to boost technical and financial execution rate to meet the results on time, appears to be a real challenge and to comprise the pursuing and consolidating the activities initiated and results achieved on the field.

A ministerial meeting convened in Freetown, Sierra Leone, gathering the four countries ministers of water resources met a consensus to mobilize funds to implement and monitor the activities in the transboundary and monitoring the SAP development. This is a prerequisite condition to be fulfilled before the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the SAP.

The donor meetings had endorsed in 2024 the SAP funding to the level of an estimated cost of USD 146,051,200 to be mobilized within a total period of 20 years, and annual **Investment need and US\$ 51,568,300 for five-year plans**. Medium- and long-term funding is estimated at US\$ 37,138,300 for the second five-year period, US\$ 35,270,300 for the third five-year period and US\$ 22,074,300 for the fourth quinquennial, respectively.

The TDA and SAP will be reviewed every 5 years to reflect results achieved and lessons learned from successive phases. To this end, a Monitoring and Evaluation system is established and must be applied as interventions are carried out.

2. Outcome 3.2: Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource

- ✓ **2.2.a:** Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management: 5 (100%)

Output 3.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and implemented

- ✓ **2.2.b:** Number of awareness raising tools and events developed and implemented : 16/17 achieved: > (100%)

- ✓ 2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management.: 20.00/52,114 >(100%)

Output 3.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared.

- ✓ 2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level: 1 (100%);
- ✓ 2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed: 1 (100%)
- ✓ 2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and resilience measures in the SAP: 1 (100%)

Output 3.2.3: I.W learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders

- ✓ 2.2.g: Number of websites created: 1/5 (>100%)
- ✓ 2.2.h: Number of newsletters published on websites: 8/8 (100%)
- ✓ 2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed: 1/0, (0% achieved)
- ✓ 2.2.j: Number of experience notes: 1/0 (0% achieved)
- ✓ 2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences: 1/1 (100%)

Output 3.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented

- ✓ 2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies: 1/1 (100%)
- ✓ 2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU: 1/1 (100%)
- ✓ 2.2. n: Number of international donors' conference organized: 30/30% (100%)
- ✓ 2.2.o: Number of regional events in which the projects is presented: 3/3 (100%).

3.3. Stakeholder organization, engagement and performances

3.3.1. Stakeholder performance

The technical support provided by IUCN and SG/MRU-Coordination team at both regional and national levels proved, to some extent, the effectiveness of the activities implemented, and results achieved. The SG/RPMU has fulfilled its institutional commitment with determination and proven mindset responsibility to build capacity and motivate the NEA teams and stakeholder and get them actively involved and effectively fulfill their duties, through frequent field visits, monitoring-evaluation, workshops, meetings, and reporting on activities achieved, ensuring and follow-up.

The NEA in all four participating countries focused on gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities. However, arises the question of whether this is sustainable of the fact forestlands belong to the state and women have limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses. Furthermore, the NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL in charge of Climate change coordination, played important contribution to the programs and GEF activities, and has been always very supportive to the implementation process.

As highlighted above, the implementation strategy has proved its effectiveness to likely enhance the smooth and coherent execution of the project activities (restoration of degraded landscapes, enhanced conservation efforts, improvement of community livelihood, and reducing the threats to natural resources. The project

has also raised the awareness of communities and partners on the project outcomes and potentially can help the sustainability of the outcomes.

The project overall implementation achievements discussed with the stakeholders and the NEA team, as well as communities, assessed the site intervention outcomes and outputs in line with the commitments of the NEAs and communities' engagement. The stakeholders acknowledged having gained substantial knowledge and capacities from their participation in the project, thus enabling them establishing nurseries, producing seedlings and establishing agroforests, orchards with cash crop trees and fruit trees on their own or community lands. They have been also trained in project achievement monitoring, such as seedling production and plantation, and landscape restoration activities. All these skills gained from the project staff improved their skills and fostered their performance in handling forestry activities.

However, it should be noted the above institution teams actively participated to the activities and adhere to the Codes of ethics in force in the implementation of IUCN program, including the provisions against fraud and corruption, diligence, requests for funds and transfers, budget management, financial reporting of GEF funds and Co-Financing, audit and archiving of IUCN and MRU financial documents.

Our review of the national annual implementation report indicated, to some extent, several pattern's gaps in monitoring and backstopping the field activities, such as National Executing Agencies (NEAs) and National key technical partners, considered as the project key executing bodies under direct technical support from their respective government ministerial authorities and by the Project Technical Management Team of the Secretary General of MRU and supervision by the Regional Steering Committee and coordination by IUCN-PACO, lacked due effectiveness. Therefore, the project execution could not benefit from effective and due time support from the several key partners identified during the project design phase and whose capacities were assessed as potentially valuable resources through an intense consultative process during the project design, including regional, national and local stakeholders from the country government institutions, private sectors and civil societies, in the 4 MRU member countries.

Therefore, considering above shortfalls of project teams to effectively support the project implementation, we have assessed the overall support as moderately effective, MS:4/6.

3.3.2. Secretariat General Mano River Union /Regional Executing Agency :

At the regional level, the project is executed under direct Coordination and management responsibilities of the MRU Secretariat, assisted technically by a Regional Project Management Unit, established within the General Secretariat of the Mano River Union, to oversee in close consultation, synergy, supervision and provide technical support to the country implementation agencies.

As highlighted above, the project implementation launching workshop at the regional level was held in Conakry on 12 and 13 May 2017 in Conakry, followed by the first year 2017 Work Plan and Budget workshop co-organized by IUCN and the SG/MRU, from 03 to 07 July 2017 in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone, and aiming to validate and adopt the WPB by the roadmap established by the Regional Workshop. for the Validation of Institutional.

The Project Regional Management Unit team held in Conakry, Guinea, in February 2017, aiming to officially present and endorse the project objectives and expected outputs to the stakeholders and validate its institutional, operational, and financial arrangements in compliance, with technical guidelines as per GEF and IUCN funded project implementation. The workshop brought together all the regional and national

stakeholders involved in the project implementation and drew the attention of the stakeholders to the followings:

- i. The project funding and implementation arrangements.
- ii. Setting and roles of the National Executing Agency.
- iii. Activity planning to be undertaken, including institutional arrangements (responsibilities of project implementing entities, partnership, design of the work plan and Budget for the Year 2017, etc.).
- iv. Institutional arrangements, and procedures for implementing the project,
- v. Actions to be carried out at national and regional levels,
- vi. Budget allocation between the entities
- vii. Terms of Reference of the Regional project implementation team.
- viii. A roadmap for the organization of the Project implementation planning.
- ix. Informing stakeholders and partners about the project objectives and expected results.
- x. Presenting the project framework and actions to be carried out during the 1st year of 2017.

Following the presentations and discussions between the participants, several recommendations were made about: (i) staff interventions and procurement guidelines; (ii) project implementation unit responsibilities at both national and regional levels; (iii) procedural manual, (iv) capacity building, (v) partner engagement and seek additional sources of funding.

The RPMU/SG-MRU and NEA were instructed to develop the first project implementation Work Plan and Budget for 2017, including activities to be conducted by the various implementing partners for immediate implementation at the level of each country.

Despite the fact the Mano River Union General Secretariat in its role of executing agency for the project and committed itself to actively gear the project implementation with a focus on a result-oriented management approach, all efforts devoted to the objectives and activities toward the successful project implementation by the MRU/Coordination team, to deliver satisfactory outcomes and targeted outputs, several lacks of vigilance and inconsistencies in the executing partner's approaches to ensure compelling actions toward the project timely outputs deliveries. Indeed, in this regard, the SG/MRU and the RPMU supported the NEA team and partners with tireless technical and operational support, including in-country field visits to monitor activities from 2017 to 2023 could not fully drive the effectiveness of the project activities.

Considering the extent of the areas covered by the project, the project execution technical team support to the field activity supervision and backstopping, as well as monitoring-evaluation by MRU/Coordination Unit team and the NEAs, the overall outcomes of the project are assessed by the mission as highly satisfactory (S:6/6).

3.3.3. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

Assisted by IUCN-PACO, its roles consist in advising, supervising, backstopping, guiding and tracking progress made in the implementation of the project, with the utmost commitment to ensure the project is implemented in compliance with the GEF technical and financial guidelines and arrangements between GEF and the MRU General Secretariat on behalf of the member countries.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its capacity of regional project implementation institution played the overall supervision, leading and guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins. As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management, the executing teams identified main stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their

participation. During the development of the project, the institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities.

Indeed, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its capacity as a regional implementation institution played a pivotal overall supervision and leading guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins.

As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management vision, the executing teams identified all stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their participation. During the development of the project, the institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities. Therefore, the project being funded by GEF, and its implementation fully complied with the GEF financial and operational guidelines, and accounting principles, as well as the procurement procedures. The teams also adhere to the Codes of ethics in force in the implementation of IUCN programmes, including the provisions against fraud and corruption, diligence, requests for funds and transfers, budget management, financial reporting of GEF funds and Co-Financing, audit and archiving of IUCN and MRU financial documents were brought to the knowledge of the staff and partners for their better understanding and mastering the principles and operational procedures.

However, the inclusive participatory and holistic approach ambitioned and promoted by IUCN and the MRU/SG-Coordination Unit team did not seem to have reached its utmost objectives to enable effective commitment and involvement of the stakeholders and communities as foreseen by the strategy promoted for integrated ecosystem management including sustainable land use management, forest landscape restoration and inclusive in-situ conservation and natural resource uses in the river basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

Considering the extent of the technical guidance brought by its intervention and the extent of areas covered by the project, the contribution of IUCN, as the implementing institution, is highly appreciated and assessed highly satisfactory (S:6/6).

3.3.4. Regional Project Steering Committee:

Composed of high-profile representatives from each of the four countries, the Regional Project Steering committee plays a key role to providing supervisory, monitoring and evaluating the activities at national and regional levels, and ensuring certification and compliance of the results in conformity with the project objectives, work plan and budget, and work plan.

The Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC) and National (NPSC), composed of high-profile representatives from each of the four countries, fulfilled their overall duties and responsibilities in compliance with the project implementation arrangements and GEF guidelines and procedures to match the work plan and budget contents and orientations. They played their responsibilities with professional spirit and shared vision in assessing the project achievement progress, monitoring and evaluating results achieved, and providing guidance as well as at national and regional levels to streamline the move towards the expected outputs.

The First Session of the Regional Steering Committee (PRSC) of the Project was held on 7 July 2017 at the BINTUMANI Hotel in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone. This inception session recorded the effective presence of the Statutory Members of the Regional Steering Committee except for major partner projects

such as West African Biodiversity and Climate Change (WABiCC) to review and adopt documents¹⁵ prepared by the implementing entities of the project (MRU/Secretariat and Member States representatives). The meeting passed documents presented and made observations on (i) the typical composition of the National Coordination Unit and the Multisectoral Technical Committee, their roles and responsibilities in the execution of the Project; (ii) the mechanisms provided to ensure effective synergy between the Regional Management Unit and the National Project Coordination Units; (iii) the exclusion of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of Component 1 of the Project, on the Conservation of Ecosystems; (iv) insufficient budget allocated to the project coordination units; (v) the delay in the establishment of the Regional Project Management Unit and the National Coordination Unit of Cote d'Ivoire. In addition, the mechanisms provided for in the framework of the Institutional Arrangements and the Project Implementation Procedures, as proposed by the Conakry Regional Validation Workshop (12-13 May 2017) are approved and adopted by the Regional Steering Committee. These are: (i) the alignment of the Project with ongoing initiatives at the forest basin/landscape level; (ii) the coherence of interventions between the regional and national levels; (iii) the practical modalities of Monitoring and Evaluation; (iv) the functioning of the Regional Steering Committee.

The Regional Steering Committee recommends the following:

- i. Set up before 31 July 2017 the Regional Project Management Unit and the National Coordination Unit of Côte d'Ivoire (Head SG/MRU);
- ii. Effectively set up national Multisectoral Technical Committees (Head of National Implementing Agencies);
- iii. Proceeding to the signing of a contract between IUCN and SG/MRU, (SG/MRU Managers, IUCN-PACO);
- iv. Proceeding to the signing of contracts between SG/MRU and the National Coordination Units (SG MRU Managers, National Implementing Agencies, National Coordinators);
- v. Organize a meeting at the forest landscape level with all the partners involved, to identify synergies, and complementarities to maximize the use of resources and, determine the gaps that will provide the elements for the mobilization of additional resources (Heads of National Implementing Agencies, National Coordinators);
- vi. Continue advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national and international levels, particularly at the national level by including the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State Officials, UFM Secretariat et UICN) ;
- vii. Stimulate and encourage the establishment of Platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of perpetuating the achievements that will result from the implementation of the Project (Head of National Implementing Agencies National Coordination);
- viii. Encourage regional and national implementing agencies (MRUs) to start a process of concrete discussion with the partners mentioned in the Project Document to involve them concretely in the implementation of the project activities.
- ix. Prepare the report of the Project Launch and Planning Workshop and circulate it to the participants, to collect their comments, amendments and comments and then integrate them into this report before its transmission to the GEF through IUCN-PACO (SG UFM Officer).

Furthermore, the RSC held their meeting on annual meeting aiming to review and validate the past annual report and the coming year WPB (2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021).

¹⁵: Progress report (technical and financial) of the Project since February 2017; (ii) Annual Work Plan and Project Budget for the year 2017 of the Regional Project Implementation Unit (SG/SRM); (iii) Annual Work Plans and Budget for 2017 of the National Project Coordination Units (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire).

The project Regional Steering Committee fulfilled very satisfactory (S: 5/6) its commitment to regularly supervising the implementation supervision and providing advice for the smooth execution of the project.

3.3.5. National Executing Agencies

The NEA in all four participating countries focused on gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities. However, arises the question of whether this is sustainable of the fact forestlands belong to the state and women have limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses. Furthermore, the NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL is also in charge of Climate change coordination, programs and GEF activities are also very supportive of the implementation process.

All above structures fulfilled their respective responsibilities and duties in providing daily administration, regional and national coordination of the activities planning and execution, management, monitoring-evaluation, supervision and technical support of the Country Implementation Agencies.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in his capacity of regional implementation institution played the overall supervision and leading guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins. As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management, the executing teams identified all stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their participation. During the development of the project, the institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities.

Therefore, the project being funded by GEF, its implementation fully complied with the GEF financial and operational guidelines, and accounting principles, as well as the procurement procedures. The teams also adhere to the Codes of ethics in force in the implementation of IUCN programs, including the provisions against fraud and corruption, diligence, requests for funds and transfers, budget management, financial reporting of GEF funds and Co-Financing, audit and archiving of IUCN and MRU financial documents were brought to the knowledge of the staff and partners for their better understanding and mastering the principles and operational procedures.

The inclusive participatory and holistic approach adopted by the teams enabled effective involvement of the stakeholders and communities is assessed to be an effective strategy for integrated ecosystem management including sustainable land use management, forest landscape restoration and inclusive in-situ conservation and natural resource uses in the river basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

The inclusive participatory and holistic approach adopted by the teams enabled effective involvement of the stakeholders and communities is assessed to be an effective strategy for integrated ecosystem management including sustainable land use management, forest landscape restoration and inclusive in-situ conservation and natural resource uses in the river basins and on their watersheds in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

The above structures fulfilled their respective responsibilities and duties in providing daily administration, regional and national coordination of the activities planning and execution, management, monitoring-evaluation, supervision and technical support of the Country Implementation Agencies.

As per the review from Rabe Gnapi Florent (2023) the national annual implementation report and the capitalization report (MRU/Coordination Unit indicated several partners at national level having provided significant contribution to the project achievements throughout the duration of the implementation. Below are the key partners who have been involved to some extent to the project activities.

1. **Farmers:** As beneficiaries of the project interventions, committees and local advisory committee were engaged in the project activities and benefit particularly from capacity building conducted by the project NEAs through formal training workshops and on the field with support from the SG/RPMU. Their participation was highly appreciated and focused on (i) seed collection and handling, (ii) nursery activities and (iii) seedling planting inside the forest landscapes using agroforestry practices, and Cross-Border Collaboration and Exchange Framework.
2. **Advisory committee:** supporting meetings between various stakeholders, such as administrative authorities, technical structures, civil society organizations, platforms and local communities. They also encourage traditional authorities to appoint their representatives, to ensuring that gender balance is respected in these appointments.
3. **Agricultural Research Institute of Guinea (IRAG):** focused the transformation of agricultural practices into models of sustainable forest conservation, a careful analysis of the traditional methods used by farmers. The objective was to redefine and support them towards an agricultural practice that integrates forest conservation. This strategic approach has facilitated the adoption of agroforestry systems, where the coexistence of crops such as coffee and cocoa with trees preserved for timber, shade, or even their medicinal properties, has been encouraged. This integration represents a balance between agricultural production needs and environmental preservation.
4. **Welthungerhilfe WHH:** worked closely with UFM and the Government of Sierra Leone to carry out this project in assisting 1,500 farmers to establish 200 nurseries of cocoa, timber and medicinal plants planned across 750 hectares of land. Beneficiary farmers received specific training and backstopping on nursery preparation based. This mixed approach combining training, technical assistance and direct monitoring made it possible to strengthen the capacities of farmers and promote sustainable planting technologies.
5. **Gola rainforest conservation (LG):** Its collaborative approach brought together government actors, non-governmental organizations, private companies and community representatives with the aim of fostering mutual understanding of the objectives linked to sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity. Additionally, the creation of digital collaboration platforms has enabled sharing of information, resources and best practices between communities, agroforestry experts and partner institutions, thus facilitating communication and dissemination of knowledge (new techniques of in situ biodiversity conservation and sustainable water resource management, innovative agroforestry systems, water management and soil fertility on a larger scale, etc.) over 192 community forests and organizing educational tours and hands-on workshops at these sites provided farmers, students and policy makers with a unique immersive learning opportunity, allowing them to directly grasp the benefits. According to Rabe Gnapi Florent (2023), the project boost the communities livelihood and the environment significance, through dedicated efforts to restoring degraded forest ecosystems, encouraged the development of forest-friendly agriculture, and contributed to a notable increase in biodiversity.

6. BIOSPHERE RESERVE: supported the farmers customary agroforestry practices in the forest, consisting of mixed crops with natural oil palms and other forest species. This combination creates a favorable microclimate, reduces soil erosion and increases agricultural productivity. In lowland areas, rice is cultivated in association with the raffia palm, used for the production of palm wine. This practice improves water management and increases the diversity of products available to farmers.

According to the indicators achieved reported in (PIR 2021-2023), the achievements of outcome indicators are becoming apparent as most field activities have been achieved in the four participating countries.

The role played by the NEAs and the NGOs in improving local organization and farmers are assessed as satisfactory (MS: 5/6)

Table 7: Stakeholders responsibilities and achievements

STAKEHOLDERS	RESPONSIBILITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS/ASSESSMENT
Regional Executive General Secretariat/Coordination team of Mano River Union	Regional Executing Institution of MRU on behalf of the 4 countries, assisted by technically by a <u>Regional Coordination Unit</u> established within the General Secretariat of the Mano River Union, to oversee in close consultation, synergy, supervision and provide technical support to the country implementation agencies.	Held an inception meeting in Conakry on 12 and 13 May 2017 to launch the project implementation, followed by the first year work program & and Budget planning, from 03 to 07 July 2017 in Freetown, co-organized by SG/MRU & IUCN.
MRU/Coordination Unit	The RPMU/SG-MRU and NEA were instructed to consolidate the first project implementation Work Plan and Budget for 2017, including activities to be conducted by the various implementing partners for immediate implementation at the level of each country	the MRU/Coordination team, to deliver satisfactory outcomes and targeted outputs, several lacks of vigilance and inconsistencies in the executing partner's approaches to ensure compelling actions toward the project timely outputs deliveries. Indeed, in this regard, the SG/MRU and the RPMU supported the NEA team and partners with tireless technical and operational support, including in-country field visits to monitor activities from 2017 to 2023 could not fully drive the effectiveness of the project activities.
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Assisted by IUCN-PACO, its roles consist in advising, supervising, backstopping, guiding and tracking progress made in the implementation of the project, with the utmost commitment to ensure the project is implemented in compliance with the GEF technical and financial guidelines and arrangements between GEF and the MRU General Secretariat on behalf of the member countries. in its capacity of regional project implementation institution played the overall supervision, leading and guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their	As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management , the executing teams identified main stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their participation. During the development of the project, the institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities. As a Result-based focus and positive change-oriented management, the executing teams identified all stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels and encouraged their participation. During the development of the project, the

	respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in his capacity of regional implementation institution played the overall supervision and leading guidance roles to support the Mano River Union Secretariat and the National Executing Agencies (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone) in their respective roles of the project execution in the forests of Upper Guinea and transboundary river basins.	institutional entities for its implementation were identified, as well as their missions, roles, and responsibilities.
Regional Project Steering Committee	Composed of high-profile representatives from each of the four countries, the Regional Project Steering committee plays a key role to providing supervisory, monitoring and evaluating the activities at national and regional levels, and ensuring certification and compliance of the results in conformity with the project objectives, work plan and budget, and work plan.	The Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC) and National (NPSC), composed of high-profile representatives from each of the four countries, fulfilled their overall duties and responsibilities in compliance with the project implementation arrangements and GEF guidelines and procedures to match the work plan and budget contents and orientations. They played their responsibilities with professional spirit and shared vision in assessing the project achievement progress, monitoring and evaluating results achieved, and providing guidance as well as at national and regional levels to streamline the move towards the expected outputs.
National Executing Agencies	The NEA in all four participating countries focused on gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities. However, the forestlands being state owned the question is how the population and particularly women can protect their rights to cultivate sustainably without being denied by the authorities to access the farms, particularly inside forestlands.	Furthermore, the NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL is also in charge of Climate change coordination, programs and GEF activities are also very supportive of the implementation process.
National Executing Agencies:	The project is executed by the National Execution Agencies (NEA) of the four participating countries (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia & Sierra Leone)	Under direct technical supported from the Project Technical Management Team of the Secretary General of MRU and supervision by the Regional Steering Committee and

		coordination by IUCN-PACO, most of activities have been achieved to 90-100% of expected results.
National key partners:	The project execution benefit from support of several national-based key partners identified during the project design phase and whose capacities were assessed potentially valuable at both regional and national levels by the country government institutions.	In the 4 MRU member countries, the partners worked in synergy with IUCN, MRU/Coordination team and others regional partners involved in the project implementation
COTE-D/IVOIRE: Directorate of Water Resources Management and Protection, Ministry of Water and Forests National Coordination Unit and a Multisectoral Technical Committee:		
Ivoirian Observatory of Natural Resources (OI-REN)	Activities: Coalition of environmental NGOs aiming at raising awareness on environmental issues in C.I	The management of the transboundary protected area complex constituted including (i) Sapo National Park (156,500 ha), (ii) Grebo National Forest (98,100 ha), (iii) Grebo National Park, in the Taï National Park (433,500 ha) in Côte d'Ivoire (GEF Project Site 4), involved collaboration between Liberian FDA and Ivorian OIPR, along with the Foundation for Parks and Reserves, has been already initiated; with GIZ supporting "Ivoirian institutional stakeholders (OIPR, FPR)" in the forest and protected management areas, especially in the Tai NP.
Office Ivoirian des Parcs et Reserves (OIPR)	Activities extension services of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development in charge of the management of the protected areas	
Executive Permanent Secretariat for REDD+	Permanent Executive Secretariat REDD + (MS -REDD +) intends to reduce <i>Gas Greenhouse end of Deforestation and Forest Degradation including stock conservation roles, sustainable management and increased carbon stocks</i>	
Civil society Rainforest Alliance (Conserve ecosystems and promote sustainable livelihoods)	FFI has facilitated communication with Côte d'Ivoire Authorities to manage natural resources more effectively in the highly biodiverse Nimba mountains, provided training and technical assistance through transformative land-use practices, business development and consumer behaviour trainings, as defined by international standards and instructed to community-based enterprises, indigenous communities, and smallholder farmers);	
Sapo National Park	Managed nearly 156,500 ha and the Grebo National Forest (98,100 ha) in the protected area complex, in the Taï National Park (433,500 ha) in Côte d'Ivoire (GEF Project Site 4) in cooperation between Liberian FDA and the Ivorian OIPR, along with the Foundation for Parks and Reserves, has already been initiated	
REDD+	The project is also consistent with the country's national policies, development priorities and programmes, including forest	

	Landscape restoration and ecosystem management plans, including "National poverty reduction strategies".	
IUCN Programme	Involved strategies and water resource management plans with hope to expect substantial outcomes and outputs that will likely help the country to overcome irreversible land degradation and water course siltation and environment sustainability, as well as community livelihoods.	
GUINEA: N'Zérékoré Forest Centre, Ministry of the Environment, Water and Forests: National Coordination Unit and a Multisectoral Technical Committee		
Centre for Environmental Management of the Nimba Mountains (CEGENS)	Coordination and promotion of protective activities by World Heritage Site,	Its supported the rational exploitation of biological resources (plant, animal, wildlife, insect, etc.) in the chain of Mount Nimba and the Simandou and their areas of influence
Civil Society: Guinée Ecologie – NGO	Protect the environment against the multiple forms of damage to live in harmony with nature	Support environment protection and biodiversity conservation against the multiple forms of damage
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	NGO (Safeguard the future of southern Africa's large mammal populations, which had declined alarmingly due to over-hunting and habitat encroachment	Awareness raising towards the population; Facilitating communication between Guinea authorities to manage natural resources more effectively in the highly biodiverse Nimba mountains
World Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF)	Promote the survival of the last wild chimpanzee populations and their habitat	Awareness raising to limit their hunting by the population
Institut de Recherches et d'Applications des Méthodes de développement – IRAM	Promote the development of quality coffee sector in Guinea, based on a territorial approach.	Strengthening the structure of the Geographical indication Ziam - Macenta through fair trade certification access to the European market and the development of the local market
Private sector	Involved in collaboration with the protected area managers,	Awareness raising toward the most significant Mining Society of Guinea (SMFG) located in the Guinea part of the Mt. Nimba nature reserve and the logging company "Forest Dense" in Nzérékoré in the vicinity of the Diecke National Forest

<u>Liberia:</u> Forestry Development Authority, Sierra Leone: National Protected Area Authority, Ministry of Agricultural Forestry and Food Security: National Coordination Unit and a Multisectoral Technical Committee		
Forestry Development Authority	Executing and managing agency	Sustainably manage and conserve all forest resources including by enforcing forest conservation in Liberia Provided several trainings and technical assistances in sustainable practices, as defined by internationally recognized standards, to community-based enterprises, indigenous communities and smallholder farmers.
Civil society: Rainforest Alliance	Conservation of ecosystems and promoting sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour.	
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)-INGO	Safeguard the future of southern Africa’s large mammal populations, which had declined alarmingly due to over-hunting and habitat encroachment	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)-NGO	Management of Gola rainforest NP in SL. Monitoring and analysis, identifying changes and problems facing wild birds, wildlife and the environment; and fulfilling existing cooperation agreement between the Liberian FDA and FFI	
Research centers: Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment (RICCE)	Empowering rural residents to build vibrant self-sustaining communities through peace building, in “Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)” to transform decision-making processes on natural resource management which benefits may be shared equally.	
The Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL)	Effectively involved in the conservation of the future Liberian Gola National Park, particularly promoting community forests in its peripheral zones	
<u>Sierra Leone:</u> National Protected Area Authority, Ministry of Agricultural Forestry and Food Security: National Coordination Unit and a Multisectoral Technical Committee		
Forestry Development Authority	Sustainably manage and conserve forest resources management and restoration, through forest conservation enforcement law and regulations.	Provide training and technical assistance in sustainable practices, as defined by internationally recognized

		standards, to community-based enterprises, indigenous communities and smallholder
Civil society: Rainforest Alliance	Sustainably Conserve ecosystems and promote sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour. farmers	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) – NGO	Management of Gola rainforest NP in SL.	Monitoring and analysis. Identifying the changes and problems facing wild birds, wildlife and the environment); Existing cooperation agreement between the Liberian FDA and FFI
Research centers: Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment (RICCE)	Technical support to communities	Empowering rural residents to build vibrant self-sustaining communities through peace building)
Sustainable Development Institute (SDI)	Transform decision-making processes of natural resource management so the benefits are shared equally.	Its established working facilities for the participation of local communities in decision making processes on natural resources and strengthening mechanisms that will ensure communities receive a fair share of the benefits derived from natural resource exploitation.
The Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL)	Involved in the conservation of the future Liberian Gola National Park	Provided advices supported particularly promoting community forests in Gola National park peripheral zones

As for the overall project implementation organization, despite some indicators are not SMART and unachievable during the timeframe allocated, the overall achievements are somehow minimal and far under the level of momentum raised at regional and country levels toward sustainable management of the forest landscape, biodiversity and the transboundary basin waters, thus assessed Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

Assessment of the project's monitoring-evaluation systems and data analysis against indicators as per the project's logical framework highlighted the important work carried out by MRU/Coordination Team Unit, NEA and the implanting partners in all the four participating countries demonstrated its implementation as per its framework design.

DBD), land degradation (LD) and international waters (IW), the implementation strategy was likely to effectively address threats and challenges about (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge, to overcome existing barriers of the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins.

However, during our sites visits, we noted that the extent to which the monitoring-evaluation of the activities was conducted lacked innovative and strategic approach to ensure reactive and quality follow-up of the forest landscape restoration management, as the activities have been mainly focused on fruit trees and agroforestry plantations inside the forest covers, and which in turn were not successful. Indeed, in most of the sites visited in 2022 and 2023 (Gola Forest, Sierra Leone), the assessment highlighted poor system of the monitoring-evaluation process of activities by the NEAs, as well as identification and addressing constraints and community's capacities to master nursery and tree planting maintenance inside forests, land restoration practices and biodiversity conservation. The I.C noted despite frequent supervision provided by IUCN and the MRU teams during their regular missions to the NEA couldn't ensure substantial changes of the forest landscape degradation and continuous riverbank erosions and water course siltation.

Indeed, some NEA, such as in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have established field monitoring and learning plots in selected areas, but mainly focused on fruit trees (Cacao, Coffee, etc.) for community and individual orchards. While the nursery activities seem to be successfully and satisfactory monitored well maintained (> 80% of seedlings), the seedlings transplanted in most of the sites (we visited in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia (table 3) at community levels did not meet the project quality of the technical quality standard claimed by the project. Indeed, the demonstration plantations erected at the border and inside the forests are still too small and not significant enough after five years (photos). Unfortunately, we couldn't visit the Gola Rainforest Company Limited by Guarantee established "Farmer's field school" in Sierra Leone, to have better insights on the field of its effectiveness.

As instructed at the regional launching workshop, on July 12-13, 2017, in Sierra Leone, the teams of the country NEAs abided by the obligation of the GEF/IUCN projects implementation guidelines to reporting on their respective achievements. The reporting system follows the configuration suggested by IUCN during the project inception workshop indicating the frequency (quarterly, semestrial and annual) of reports to be produced by the SG/MRU and the NEA, as well as contractual partners per year from 2017 to 2023. All the reports ensure the quality and respect of the frameworks and dates of submission of reports. As for the SG/MRU and IUCN, the reports are well presented with activity achieved, results accomplished and progress made towards the project completion, as well as problems faced and recommended solutions. The channel of the report transmission is consistent with the instructions provided by IUCN at the project inception workshop. At the national level, information is transmitted by the NEA in charge of the execution of the activities to the National Coordination Unit for approval. The final approved report is submitted by IUCN to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The technical monitoring support provided at both regional and national levels by the SG/RPMU proved, to some extent, the effectiveness ensured the consistent implementation of activities and

achieved the expected results. Indeed, the SG/RPMRU vowed due commitment and contribution to the project implementation and reporting on findings of the project, through frequent field visits, meetings and general follow-up on the field. Furthermore, the NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA has been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL, within its mandate in charge of Climate change coordination has been very supportive to the implementation process of this GEF/IUCN?MRU project.

3.4. Risk analysis and risk management measures

It is recognized that the key risk to the project sustainability is the **capacity of existing institutions and organizations**. The project addressed stakeholders and staff capacity building as a part of its objectives for its long-term sustainability, thus several training workshops and backstopping missions were organized by IUCN, SG/MRU-Project Management Unit to support the field staff.

3.4.1. Climate change impacts at higher than anticipated levels

Climate change is becoming a high-risk factor, that does not seem to be fully integrated in the project implementation strategy, as most of the forest resource restoration and transboundary waters dominated the field activities. The project area is likely to face more droughts and periods of erratic heavy rainfalls.

Despite weaknesses and gaps in the project implementation performances and activity monitoring-evaluation, all the 3 components have achieved the targets to 100%, thus the mission assessed the overall implementation and execution satisfactory (S: 5/6).

3.5. Project Efficiency

The project achievement against the financial resources shows in some countries inadequacy between the result achieved and the expenses. In this regard, the project implementation efficiency tends to measure activities and outcomes of the project and resource expenses for the various project components activities, such as management, procurement, equipment, operations, personnel salaries, field mission fees, capacity development workshops, hiring specialized experts to conduct specific studies, etc.

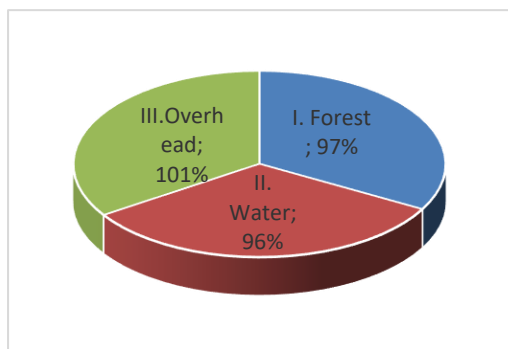
3.5.1.2023 Financial highlights

As per PIR 2021-2023 reports, important financial resources were used to support agroforestry plot development and finalization of TDA study and SAP framework design at the national, transboundary, and regional levels, requiring important financial resources. IUCN contributed in 2023 for about USD557,808 to support executing agencies (regional and national) against USD 810,801 against 2022.

Of the funds available total expenditures for 2023 amounted to USD1,180,068 for the implementation of project activities and administrative costs, representing a burn rate of 85%, a decreased of 18% when compared to 2022. While the cumulative expenditures over the lifespan of the project summed up to USD 6,142,127, representing a burn rate of 97% of the project budget with unutilized balance of USD181,647.

It is worth noting that most of the executing agencies have either exhausted all their funds or with minimal amount of funds at their disposal, except for MRU/ REA and Liberia. Currently the unutilized funds are those allocated purposely for the holding of donor roundtable conference, documenting the success stories, terminal evaluation, and final audit of the project. The below shows the use of the funds between components:

- i. **Component I:** Budget of USD 4,000,000, cumulative expenditures over the lifespan of the project summed up to USD 3,895,702 with unspent balance of USD104,296 representing a burn rate of 97%.
- ii. **Component II:** with a budget of USD 2,034,633, cumulative expenditures over the lifespan of the project amounted to USD 1,947,273, resulting in an unspent balance of USD 79,880, representing a burn rate of 96%.
- iii. **Component III:** budgetary allocation USD 301,731, with a burn rate of 100%.



The financial audit of the project for 2021 has been completed and findings presented at the Regional Steering Committee Meeting held in Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire. Recommendations of the auditors highlighted in the Management Letters of previous audit reports were resolved except for the accounting software. The issue of the accounting software has been unresolved given the huge cost and no provision was made in the project budget for said expenditure. Given the time constraint, the final audit of the project is expected to commence at the executing agencies that have completed their activities such as Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The audit of the Regional Executing Agency and Liberia will commence immediately upon the completion of the outstanding activities.

The financial resources made available to the program are quite substantial but fall short to cover the project planned activities needs. Furthermore, the organizational model adopted by the project teams is not adequate to ensure efficient implementation of the project.

3.5.2. Project financing arrangements

As highlighted in above table 1, only Guinean, Liberian and Sierra Leonean portions benefit from both on-the-ground interventions, financed by the GEF STAR national funds of the three countries, and the regional activities, funded by the GEF regional funds. The Côte d'Ivoire did not pledge any GEF STAR national fund because of the concentration of the activities on water management issues, therefore it only benefit from the regional funds to the same level as the other countries. The national and regional GEF Funds allocated to the project emanate from the GEF-5 programme (2010-2014). Delays in the preparation of the implementation of the Project Preparation Grant occurred, what explains why this project is implemented while the GEF-6 programme is now on-going.

The Mano River Union project (ID: 4953 "Ecosystem Conservation and of International Water Resources Management of the Mano River Union") is co-financed (i) GEF secretariat (through IUCN PACO), (ii) The Mano River Union member countries, (iii) IUCN (Bridge, WaBiCC) and MRU to design and implement the regional project.

The co-financing component of the project consists of the contribution of national and regional agencies, the national and local stakeholders working in the intervention areas. The main co-financing sources estimated are in kind for Executing Agencies. The financial resources provided by implementing partners to contribute to the same outputs also form part of the co-financing. In this regard, WaBiCC Program and BRIDGE are the main ones. The new financial agreement BRIDGE 4 signed in 2019 is 109 972 CH (Swiss Franc) equivalent to \$109 972 in addition the first funding \$290 000, which gives a total of \$399,972, while ECOWAS contribution amounts to \$500,000. The contributions of the four countries are stipulated in their endorsement letter. Below is a summary of the co-financing.

We understand that the project budget is funded by GEF and co-financing from various sources for the total amount of **USD63,360,642**, as follows:

- i. **GEF Financing (Grant): USD6,970,000**
- ii. **Co-financing:**
 - i. WA-BiCC / USAID project (in kind): USD10,000,000 {confirmed}
 - ii. ROAM-CI/IUCN-UNEP-DFID (in kind): USD307,772 {confirmed}
 - iii. Co-funding pledge, Liberia, and Guinea (in kind): USD45,686,290 {confirmed}
 - iv. BRIDGE / IUCN (in kind): 290,000 USD
 - v. MRU / Secretariat (in kind): 106,580 {confirmed}
 - vi. Sub-total co-financing: USD56,390,642

As indicated in section C of the prodoc, from the total amount of USD 63,360,642 fund only **USD6,970,000** is directly supporting the project implementation cost, that's 10.716 % of the overall committed funds.

We understand that co-financing is part of the GEF project financing mechanisms but usually it leads to an oversized project budget with ambitious objectives and outputs which in turn become unachievable. Therefore, it is evident that the amount of USD6,970,000 cannot meet the requirements of the implementation about the size of the areas covered by the 4 transboundary forest landscapes and river basins (Cavalla, Moa/Makona, Kaba & Kolente (or little & great scarcity), particularly in their upstream catchments and large outlet areas.

3.5.3. Budget execution

The projected cash is limited to the GEF contribution, aiming to directly support the implementation of the activities during the 5 years, for the total approved amount of USD 6,336,364. The allocated budget by component is as follows:

- i. MRU/SG 628,043 USD (9.91%)
- ii. Côte-D'ivoire 640,235 USD (10.10%)
- iii. Guinea 1,689,362 USD (26.66%)
- iv. Liberia 1,689,362 USD (26.66%)
- v. Sierra Leone 1,689,362 USD (26.66%)

Table 8: Budget execution as of December 2023

COMPONENT	ALLOCATION (USD)	EXECUTION	BALANCE
Component 1	4,000,000.00 (63.13%)	93.1%	6.9%
Component 2	2,034,633.00 (32.11%)	95.6%	4.4%

Component 3	301,731.00 (4.76%)	96.0%	4.0%
TOTAL	6 336 365.00 (100%)	94%	6.0%

The total amount of expenses is 5,956,183.1USD (94.0%) from 2017 to Decembre 2023. Cumulative disbursement as of June 30, 2024, as of given FY or Project that have been in implementation for at least one fiscal year (\$): USD 6,334,314.

The project financial resources are well distributed between the components (i) Component 1 with more than half (63.13%), (ii) Component 2 with 32.11%, and Component 3 with 4.76% of the total budget of USD 6,336,365.00 (95.24%) allocated for the project key field activities (administration, operations, management and capacity building, monitoring-evaluation, etc.), as well as between the executing entities.

At the Co-financing levels, the fund mobilization was low considering the US\$56,390,642 amount approved in the project design. Improved reporting of co-finance from all executing partners is required: (i) WABICC /USAID Project supported \$10,000,000 of the project expenses; (ii) BRIDGE supported during phases 1 to 4 a total amount of \$399,972; (iii) ECOWAS supported the total amount of \$500,000. The SG/MRU and benefiting member countries contributed in-kind the following: (i) MRU = \$1,469,209; (ii) Guinea: \$11,161,357; (iii) Liberia: \$517,315; (iv) Sierra Leone: \$ 21,280; and (v) Côte d'Ivoire: \$ 49,824 (To be updated).

In Cote-d'Ivoire, the project has been financially supported by the BRIDGE project from the "International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)" to support the invited participant to a workshop activity in the PTAB 2020.

During the period under review (July 2023 to June 2024) funds at the disposal of the executing agencies summed up to USD 2,166,445, which encompassed 6th tranche funding amounting to USD 496,098 transferred by IUCN and USD 1,670,347 brought forward from prior period. Of the total funds available, the sum of USD1,488,164 was expended in the implementation of project related activities and management costs with unutilized balance of USD 678,281 representing a burn rate of 69% for the period under review. Figure 1 depicts a pictorial presentation of the funds received by executing agencies and summation of corresponding expenditures.

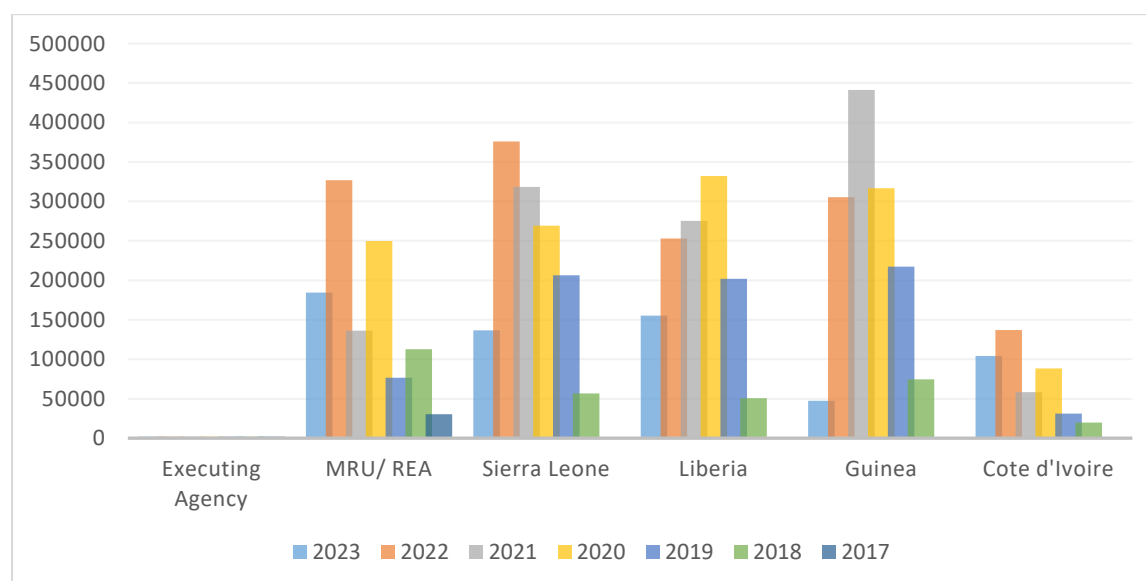
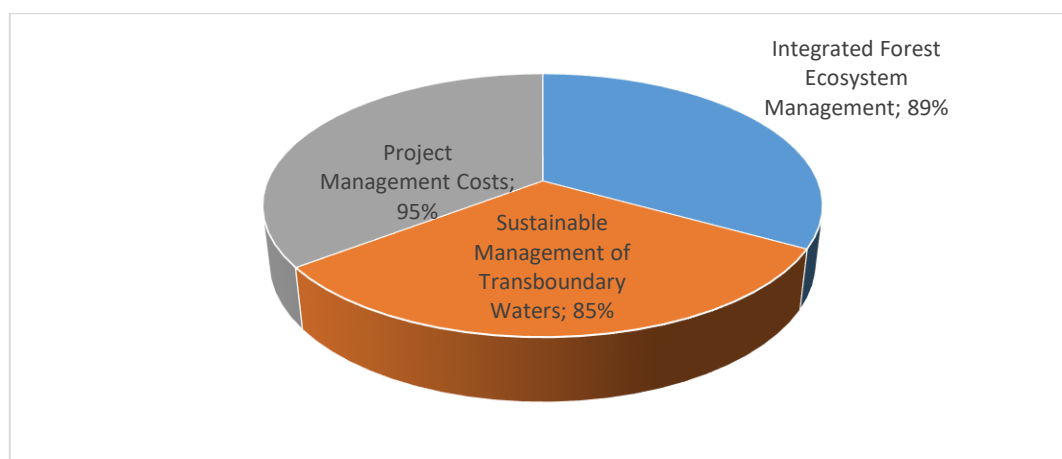


Figure 3: Financial budget execution by Agency (Year-on-Year) IUCN, PIR-2024

Cumulative funds transferred to the executing agencies over the life of the project summed up to USD 6,250,578 representing 98.6% of the overall budget of the executing agencies of USD 6,336,364. Figure 2 provides an overview of the year-on-on financial execution of the executing agencies spanning over the lifespan of the project.

Considering financial execution of the project by components, Component 3 with a budget of USD301,731 of which cumulative expenditures primarily on project management costs summed up to USD 287,706, representing a burn rate of 95% while component 1 with a budget of USD 4,000,000 and cumulative expenditures totalling USD 3,572,206 representing a burn rate of 89% and component 2 with a budget of USD 2,034,633, cumulative expenditures summed up to USD 1,730,690, signifying a burn rate of 85%.



4. Project Sustainability

La Durabilité des résultats, transfert de capacités et de gouvernance environnementale peut être évaluée en tenant compte des risques liés à la financière, sociopolitique, institutionnelle, et environnementale de la durabilité des résultats du projet. L'évaluateur peut également prendre en compte d'autres risques qui peuvent affecter la durabilité. La durabilité globale sera évaluée à l'aide d'une échelle à quatre points.

The assessment findings show the achievements are focused on fruit tree planting inside the forest for community livelihood. Furthermore, the functionality of the project's monitoring and evaluation systems, in particular the collection and analysis of information/data against indicators in the project's logical framework matrices and advice highlighting the regularity and quality of the work done by the NEA and communities, as demonstrated by the content of mandatory reports, especially semestrial and annual reports.

The stakeholder engagement and contribution of the partners highlighted interesting developments and in-depth commitment to ensure in the future sustainable inputs towards the achievements of the project, particularly in providing sound knowledge, capacities and skills gained from the project (i) establishment of nurseries, (ii) seedling management, (iii) tree planting and practical training pieces of training, including fostering the project performances and sustainability.

The NEAs in all four participating countries integrated in their approach "gender difference mainstreaming and participation" as the most vulnerable groups in the project areas. However, the sustainability of the achievements is assessed as very weak and a challenging concern about the fact forestlands belong to the state and women have limited access right to community lands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses.

The IC assessed the overall project achievement sustainability as Moderately unlikely (MU: 2) with:

- i. Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2): The NWRMA, NPAA and all MDAs in the Multisectoral Technical Committee have all been very important partners that will enhance the sustainability of achievements.
- ii. Environmental Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2): the agroforestry plots have a very good chance of success as the community benefits are enough incentive for them to carry on. However, the challenge now is market access because of the poor road network and reforestation of degraded areas using forest trees.
- iii. Social Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2), (in the medium term), and expected the national and regional platforms will be sustained and especially as the NEAs are looking to integrate them into their plans and implementation,
- iv. Sustainability/Financial and Economic Viability: Moderately Unlikely (MU:2)

However, at the community level, through capacity-building pieces of training the project raised valuable awareness towards the population and partners on the relevance of forest resource management and degraded forest landscapes and ecosystems and mainstreaming the project outcomes and potentially helping the sustainability of the outcomes.

Although the interventions and results achieved are relevant, it is obvious they need certainly more time and support (financial and technical) to ensure the sustainability of the forest landscape restoration efforts and substantial benefits to the communities. As assessed in the field visits, the commitments of the communities are still very sporadic, except for individual farmers who embarked on coffee and cacao farming for cash. The major threats which may undermine forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation are mainly traditional agricultural practices "slash-and-burn", mining, and poor road infrastructure, which unfortunately were not given focus.

Considering a multifactor integrated approach involving various issues, such as ecosystem characteristics, climate change impacts, community vulnerability, stakeholder involvement and attitude changes, land use practices, and soils characteristics, which are often subject to changes and degradation with time and the output indicators, it is likely the achievement sustainability will meet the landscape forest restoration and biodiversity conservation expected targets. Furthermore, it is not sure, current achievements are consistent to overturn the degrading trend of the forest landscape and biodiversity conservation, as well as the river basin siltation.

Indeed, through our document review and field visits at the MTE and this TE , the activities outcomes seemed to be mostly focused on agroforestry plantations and orchards related to community livelihood which is seen as major means and incentives to motivate community participation, rather than to applying forest sylvicultural practices and proven restoring of the forest landscapes and, biodiversity which rely on long-term intervention.

As such, the approach lacks proven forestry techniques and integrated land use management approach that could have enhanced the sustainability of the forest ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, as well as farmers agroforest plots.

The sustainability of results outputs are assessed probable (L: 3).

5. Project Impacts

The impact in general case, positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (OECD/DAC 2002). This definition is used by the Development Assistance Committee Evaluation Network of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the International Financial Institutions, and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

7. The goal of the GEF is to achieve **environmental impact**, which is defined as changes in biophysical parameters that could take the following forms.

9. Furthermore, impact has a **spatial dimension**; it can be measured at different geographical, socio-ecological, or administrative impact scales such as demonstration sites, landscapes or seascapes, markets, in local or national administrations, in regions, or worldwide. 10. **System-level impact**, occurring at landscape, seascape, market-wide, and higher administrative scales and worldwide is measured through both biophysical and socioeconomic parameters that identify the dynamics of the system. System-level changes are difficult to attribute as too many actors and processes of interaction occur, but may have identification of contribution.

The project highlighted the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources by favoring the integration of trees into agricultural plantations through agroforestry systems. This strategy has had notable positive impacts, particularly in terms of restoring forest landscapes and improving community livelihoods. By diversifying income sources and continuing agricultural production, the agroforestry approach has not only strengthened environmental resilience, but also contributed to accumulated economic prosperity for the communities concerned.

The project achievement impact assessment highlighted the key drivers supporting sustainable protection of ecosystem, as well as the environmental sustainability and people's livelihood.

The execution of the work plans was assessed based on the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, interviews of selected plot beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and communities regarding constraints and weaknesses of the involvements and achievements of the project, including the involvement of the key implementation stakeholders, communities and the beneficiaries' socioeconomic benefits and impacts (Ref. methodology used, Annex 2.). To this regard, the I.C. visited selected implementation sites in the four Transboundary landscapes and the 3 Transboundary basins, across the member counties (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; except Côte d'Ivoire). There is no doubt about the fact the NEAs and their partners had achieved important activities and made substantial progress towards the project's targeted outputs.

1. Biodiversity and Natural Resources

The awareness and education trainings have contributed to making populations and fraudulent timber operators understand their role in increasing awareness regarding the protection of forests and the importance of conserving biodiversity. This awareness resulted in a significant reduction in deforestation, as local communities became more responsible for landscape cultivation and management. As result, reforestation and restoration activities on degraded areas have become successful, thus enabling effective rehabilitation of natural habitats, and regeneration of useful plant and animal species in extension in the areas.

2. Capacity building

As part of these training efforts, a training manual specifically adapted to local conditions was developed. This practical guide offers detailed instructions on nursery preparation, planting and management of agroforestry systems focused on cocoa cultivation. This tool has proven essential to guarantee the transmission of adapted and immediately applicable knowledge by farmers in their specific context. The manual constitutes a valuable resource, ensuring that the lessons provided remain anchored in the daily reality of producers and respond effectively to their needs. This initiative highlights the importance of local adaptation in training programs, essential for successful and sustainable implementation of agroforestry practices. Initiatives taken to strengthen agricultural skills, involved 1,500 targeted farmers having received in-depth training, embracing a wide range of skills essential for the effective management of nurseries and agroforestry plots. This training included modules on planting techniques, crop management, as well as the preservation of biodiversity. The

objective was twofold: not only to improve traditional agricultural practices but also to promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally friendly methods.

- i. Capacity building: Training of stakeholders (CFZ, CEGENS, CCL) focused on new agricultural methods focused on silviculture and certification principles to facilitate change in forest conservation practices.
- ii. Communities and parties have engaged in innovative and sustainable practices for the management and restoration of forest ecosystems. These initiatives include the integration of agroforestry systems, capacity building around silviculture and certification principles, and other measures to promote forest conservation and sustainable development.
- iii. Agroforestry Systems
- iv. Crop and Tree Diversification: Agroforestry systems in the Nimba Mountains combine food crops with forest and fruit tree species, creating a diverse landscape that promotes biodiversity and improves ecosystem resilience. These systems make it possible to maintain forest cover while meeting the food and economic needs of communities.
- v. Soil Conservation Practices: Agroforestry techniques adopted in the Nimba Mountains include soil conservation practices, such as mulching, terrace cultivation, and the use of hedges. These methods help prevent erosion, improve soil fertility and conserve water.
- vi. Capacity Building and Certification
- vii. Training on Forestry: Training provided to local stakeholders, including agents from the N'Zérékoré Forestry Center (CFZ), the Environmental Management Center of Mounts Nimba and Simandou (CEGENS), and the Lola Communal Council, focused on silviculture and sustainable use of forests. These sessions aim to encourage silvicultural practices that respect the natural cycles of forests and maintain their regeneration.
- viii. Certification Initiatives: The implementation of certification principles in the Nimba Mountains Biosphere Reserve aims to ensure that agricultural and forestry practices meet strict environmental and social standards. Certification provides market recognition for products derived from sustainable practices, incentives as well as economic incentives for conservation.
- ix. Other Best Practices
- x. Protection and Restoration of Critical Areas: Specific efforts are being made to protect and restore critical areas within the reserve, particularly habitats essential to the unique biodiversity of the Nimba Mountains. This includes assisted natural regeneration in degraded areas and the creation of ecological corridors to facilitate the migration and movement of wildlife.
- xi. Community Participation: The engagement of local communities in decision-making processes and the implementation of management and restoration activities is fundamental. Participatory approaches ensure that conservation strategies are adapted to local realities and benefit from the support and investment of local populations.
- xii. Ecological Surveillance and Monitoring: Surveillance and monitoring systems are put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of management and restoration measures. This makes it possible to adjust practices according to the results obtained and to guarantee adaptive management of natural resources.
- xiii. Common and specific points:
- xiv. Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANN) and agroforestry have been promoted as effective means to restore and sustainably manage forest ecosystems while improving food security and biological diversity.
- xv. RNA and agroforestry contribute to improving soil fertility through the provision of organic matter decomposed by the leaves and branches of trees. This process enriches the soil with essential nutrients, thereby promoting healthy crop growth.
- xvi. These practices enable water conservation in agricultural and forestry ecosystems. The root systems of agroforestry trees improve water infiltration into the soil, preventing erosion and retaining essential moisture for crops.
- xvii. By integrating agriculture with forestry, farmers can diversify their sources of income, taking advantage not only of annual crops but also of fruit production, timber harvesting and other non-timber forest products, thus including their vulnerability to market fluctuations.

- xviii. Practical training was provided to teach farmers the different techniques and methods of biodiversity restoration to resolve various problems related to forest degradation. These practical training courses focused on adaptation to climate change, teaching farmers
- xix. GOLA LANDSCAPE application of the MEOR: The application of MEOR in the landscapes of Gola National Park, the proposed protected area of Wonegizi and the Nimba East Nature Reserve made it possible to assess landscapes that have lost part or all of their ecological productive capacities and economic.
- xx. The RNA: Training and Distribution of Seedlings aiming to protect and conserve young trees that develop naturally in forest areas or probable forest areas: Cocoa and Palm Oil Plantations with Indigenous Species. The diversification of agroforestry plantations with native species is encouraged to improve biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and the resilience of farms to climate change. Native shade trees are maintained or introduced in cocoa and coffee plantations to provide shade, while the integration of native or exotic fruit and medicinal trees is more common in shade cocoa and coffee plantations. This approach not only supports biodiversity on farms but also contributes to carbon stocks, an aspect increasingly demanded by certification schemes.

The impact of this training and capacity building was not long in coming. It resulted in a notable increase in agricultural knowledge and practices among the participants. Farmers have embraced more ecological and sustainable approaches, marking a turning point in the conservation of ecosystems and the rational management of water resources. This evolution of agricultural practices demonstrates the success of the training strategy and highlights the importance of education and ongoing support in transforming agriculture towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly models.

Furthermore, specific training modules have been developed to cover the general notions of ANR, the classification of agroforestry systems, and the practical implementation of ANR in Forest Guinea. This comprehensive educational approach made it possible to strengthen the knowledge and skills of agricultural practices.

3. Conservation of Water Resources:

About water resources, due to tireless awareness and educational campaigns towards the population had a significant impact on the perception of water resources by local communities, in encouraging them to adopt more responsible practices, that may lead them to significantly reduce the water pollution, following measures taken to protect sources and preserve water quality (wells and watercourses). Improved water quality increases the resilience of communities to water-borne diseases, thereby contributing to their overall well-being.

4. Agroforestry practices

The effectiveness and benefits of this agroforestry model have generated growing interest, leading to its recognition and replication beyond the initial boundaries of the project. Other projects and institutions in the region (see Adoption and Regional Expansion), inspired by the results obtained, have begun to adopt and promote this approach, thus testifying to its positive environmental and social impact.

The farmers received in-depth training. These educational sessions covered a range of crucial topics, from agroforestry techniques and nursery management to soil conservation. Thanks to this training, producers have seen their knowledge and skills significantly enriched, thus equipping them to adopt environmentally friendly and more efficient working methods.

Furthermore, the introduction of agroforestry systems marked a turning point in the way in which producers began their agricultural activity. By integrating agricultural species with forest trees within their farms, they were not only able to diversify their crops but also increase their sources of income. This diversification has reduced their dependence on a single crop, thus providing better food and economic security.

Increased Productivity and Income.

At the same time, the diversification of crops generated by agroforestry systems has opened new avenues for producers. By growing a wider variety of products, they were able to significantly increase their sources of income. This increase in productivity, coupled with successful diversification, has had a direct and positive impact on the standard of living of farmers. They were thus able to improve their economic well-being, ensuring a better ability to provide for their families. This transition to more sustainable and productive agricultural methods demonstrates how innovation in agricultural practices can simultaneously benefit the environment and the socio-economic development of rural communities.

5. Food Security and Livelihoods

Most of the activities achieved were focused on food and cash crop cultivation within the forest through slash and burn systems, resulting many areas of forestland encroachment. Thus, through awareness and training farmers shifting from the old farming system to agroforestry improved practices, in mixing their preferred fruit and crop trees for food and economic revenue generation, mainly coffee, pineapple, cacao, etc. However, the so-called agroforestry system practised by the farmers demonstrate effective practices such as "alley cropping, soil fertility improvement, improving forest cover to protect soil against erosion and land degradation through tree planting, forest regeneration and management which are the main substance of component 1 to cutter human pressure on the forest landscape. Furthermore, there are few activities targeting climate change issues which could have in the future better information about the potential changes on degraded land recovery as results of the project achievements and guide the subsequent actions to streamlining the implementation of future similar projects.

In terms of food security, the project teams and the regional consultant (Rabe Gnapi Florent, 2023) witnessing an improvement in sustainable agricultural practices, particularly through agroforestry practices and the introduction of fruit plants which has demonstrated a significant increase in food production at the local level. Communities were able to more adequately meet their growing food needs, thereby helping to strengthen their food security. The more efficient agricultural practices, promoted by the project initiatives, have thus led to a notable increase in the income of local farmers. This increase in income has had a direct impact on the quality of life of communities, improving their access to food, education and other essential services.

6. Interinstitutional Cooperation and Collaboration:

The partnership initiated between government institutions, communities and partners (NGOs, RSPB, WHH and GRLG, etc.), particularly in Sierra Leone, highlighted its effectiveness in demonstrating impacts wherever it has been concluded. These collaborations have also demonstrated their ability to revitalize the implementation of conservation and preservation initiatives.

The consultant also assessed the project achievement impacts and the key drivers to support their overall contribution towards sustainable ecosystem management and environmental sustainability, as well as people's livelihood. The project achievements being at their initial stage, their impacts are still somehow limited if the project momentum is valued by NEAs with help from the actual partners, the impact may be tremendous and transforming the shape of the forest landscape, biodiversity status, land management practices, community livelihood, etc.

However, the project's contribution to building institutional capacity overall impact is assessed as satisfactory (S:5/6). However, institutional capacity is assessed, as satisfactory (S:5/6); Technical capability building impact (nurseries and tree planting), as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6); Operational capability building, as Moderately Satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

6. Theory of change

At this stage of the evaluation, the IC need to have an in-depth discussion with the MRU/SG/PMU project team after validation of this draft report to draw the theory of change observed as the project implementation output impacts the overall environment, ecosystem, water resource stream flow and community livelihood, etc. He will also address the various factors having enabled or undermined the changes expected.

Despite the implementation being conducted in line with the organization set-up and the orientation of the annual work plans and budget, the transformational changes expected are unsatisfactory due to the fact most of the indicators of outcomes related to landscape restoration are not consistent with the key intervention practices, pertaining reversing land resource degradation and restoring targeted forest landscapes, biodiversity and water resources. Neither the activities achieved strategically lifted underlying causes of land resource degradation and low farm income revenues undermining efforts pertaining to community livelihood issues that were justified at the origin of the project restoration and conservation of the biodiversity focus. Furthermore, the indicators used to design the project objectives and outcomes to enable the significant contribution of the achievements to overcome and streamlined effective restoration of the forest landscapes in the logical framework.

It is not possible to estimate at this terminal evaluation to fully drive the effectiveness of the project achievements and impacts to the required extent to which the project has contributed to reducing substantively the rate of the forest landscape, biodiversity and river basin water degradation, resulting from combined impacts of unfolding climate change and socioeconomic. In addition, one should be aware most of the project's activities, particularly those related to reforestation and sustainable management of land use planning, are of long term (> 10 consecutive years) and effectiveness cannot be demonstrated within 5 years to enhance and reverse environmental paradigm change and vulnerable community substantial income generating activities.

The assumption of the four Government of MRU achievements was, rather than seeking a short-term gain, based on true commitments of the Member countries at all levels of the project did not apply as required in the implementation of this project, as interventions have been mostly directed by activity achievement whatever are the outputs with little focus on the principles of sustainable development and underlying biodiversity Convention. Expected goodwill from forestry and mining sector institutions, as well as local communities, supposed to build close cooperation and get involved truly in the project achievements, were not met. Thus, it did not allow information sharing between interested groups.

Furthermore, only few several key strategies initiated resulted to (i) improve to some extent the existing situation, through capacity building training of local communities and local advisory committees; (ii) motivate education on Good Agricultural and Agro-Forestry practices for sustainable land use; (iii) adoption of innovative forest management and restoration techniques. These measures are designed to create a sustainable natural resource management that respects both environment and ecosystems livelihood of local communities.

However, our evaluation findings highlighted, despite important achievements carried out, revealed a mixed of weak and unsustainable outcomes that still requiring further technical efforts and financial supports to effectively sustain and streamline the results achieved towards needed changes.

Therefore, *the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period at this project completion, it is too early to develop a theory of change resulting from the project achievements toward a secure environmentally situation, as well as financially and socially sustainable.*

7. Conclusion, lessons learned and recommendations.

7.1. Conclusion

This terminal evaluation report provides interesting and hopeful information and end results on the project implementation and environmental bonification. This includes contribution and support

provided by all participants, such as GEF Secretariat, for financing, other donors and collaborative partners for their co-financing and sharing information and data, the project countries participants, etc.

The terminal evaluation report provides information based on document review, site visits, consultation and interviews of stakeholders and beneficiaries who was involved, including tremendous support from the SG/MRU, particularly the MRU-Project Coordination Unit and the NEAs, and particularly from IUCN in its role of implementing agency and GEF for the financial support and the overall guidance of the project development. We acknowledge the important work carried out by the project with hope with time, all these achievements will contribute to sustainable transformation for the good of the communities living and relying on sustainable protected environment in harmony with the climate.

We also remain aware that the work is still colossal and will have to be continued for several more years ahead to establish a stable situation, as designed by the SAP, notwithstanding its huge budget (difficult to meet), despite the GEF/ Mano River Union project is embedded and committed to integrating the concerns and principles of participatory management, conservation and sustainable development at the heart of its activities.

By focusing on innovative and inclusive approaches, this project not only targeted the improvement of environmental conditions of the four countries and local communities but also strengthening stakeholder capacities. The set of lessons learned, arising from this experience aims to ensuring environmental and ecosystem sustainability of the Mano River Union and its tributaries.

The project offers feasible but challenges prospects to develop new strategic framework for the restoration of forest landscape ecosystems and river basins protection with support from the member countries of the Mano River Union and their unwavering support of regional and international partners.

In 2023, the activities on the field progressed especially for Component 2. The commitment of the communities was also demonstrated. They have been motivated by the agroforestry activities which have affected positively their livelihood. The generation of knowledge activities (TDA and SAP), the capacity building of national actors and rural communities and the support to the field activities will be implemented. There will still be the Donor conference meeting which will take place in 2024.

The project overall objectives and expected results are 100% achieved achievements and after 6.5 instead of 4 years of project implementation as initially planned. However, in terms of indicators, the achievements reveal disparities between them from one site to another, and do not make it possible to draw up a relevant assessment about the objectives set forth. In addition, the reference situations of the indicators were not characterized (between previous achievements and those not achieved) at the start of the project. Defining a reference situation for each indicator would have clarified accountability for the achievements of the current project.

The achievements make it possible to breathe new dynamics into national and regional decision-making processes and to improve regional cooperation between the different governments and actors involved in the project execution. The project contributed to developing, testing, implementing and developing agroforestry and forest landscape restoration models and transboundary basin studies and sustainable, rational and more participatory management strategies.

The implementation of the project also contributed to establishing networks of national actors and technical expertise at the regional level which will make it possible to disseminate good practices and support future processes.

However, the improvement of sub-regional environmental governance, the harmonization of legislation in force, the development of law on cross-sectoral and border areas, the establishment of regional SAP, the integration of the environment and the issues of Management of transboundary basins are long-term processes that require constant and financially sustained support. Furthermore, the networks and expertise developed are not yet autonomous and require additional technical and financial support, for several years, as anticipated in the SAP financial strategy.

7.1.1. Project achievements

The leverage effect in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, created from GEF and IUCN contributions, as well as the stakeholder and beneficiaries' collaboration, encountered some weaknesses having caused delays in the implementation. The internal coherence of the program was therefore somehow affected.

However, the response capacities of the project teams to the problems faced in implementing, such as ambitious indicators, monitoring the various interventions through different strategies, incoherence of interventions, visions and lack of steadiness in action and activities by all stakeholders, had undermined the level of expected results. In addition, the logical framework and indicators that were developed to enable the establishment of a monitoring-evaluation approach of the project did not follow the principles of results-based management.

Indeed, most indicators are not "SMART", neutral and inclusive in their target's identification and definition, as some of them are not necessarily relevant for the project purpose and interventions, and measuring the achievement of the objectives of the program.

As stated above, the project is relevant to the country's needs and policies to meet their engagement towards the "United Nations Determined Conditions" to ensure sustainable environment/land management, climate change and biodiversity conservation.

- i. Various stakeholders from the Secretariat General of the Mano River Union, the Government and their specialized institutions of the four, the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National and International organisations and local communities have support financially and politically the project implementation.
- ii. The assessment of the output findings in many sites revealed well-managed nurseries by dedicated communities, particularly women, trained by the NEAs and national/international partners and thriving to livelihood improves in taking care of their nurseries (< 2 acres) to produce various seedlings for the establishment of small orchards for the household food and cash generation, as well as forest landscape restoration plantations and land degradation control purpose. Their contributions towards foreseen changes from previous situation, because of the project interventions or magnitude, seem to be more relevant than ever, after almost 5 years achievements due to stakeholder's commitments to the project implementation;
- iii. However, the achievements seem to be dominated by agroforestry activities, very much appreciated by women and considered as a key practice driving substantial benefits to improve their livelihood while protecting the forest and the river basin against heavy socio/economic pressure and environmental impacts. Indeed, promoting the project outputs throughout the basin could have been an inspiring way to build sustainability. However, although these

interventions are relevant and well done, agroforestry practices inside good forest landscape into orchards, raise a concern about the rationale or threat to converting to encourage farmers to convert forestlands into farms to grow crops and cash fruits., knowing that undoubtedly to wide encroachments in the forests, rather than guaranteeing sustainable protection of the existing forests. Thus, appropriate application of mitigation and environmental and social risks management should have been encouraged as a prerequisite of agroforestry system adoption in the dense forests in relation to GEF project implementation requirements towards environmental procedures.

- iv. Although they are very much appreciated by the populations, these activities cover small areas, thus with limited impacts on socioeconomic and income generation. Furthermore, most of the sites we visited during the mid-term-evaluation and at this T.E are still young although some of them started fruiting as the plantations are of 3-4 years. Therefore, their effectiveness is still insignificant and needs the plantations need to be better and further nurtured by the communities or owners with support by Environment or Forestry Directorates.
- v. It's sad to note that after five years of interventions agroforestry plantations and forest landscape restoration achievements and outputs did not enable to overcome the major environmental threats inherent from climate change and correlated to socioeconomic pressure from the people living in the forest edge and depending on fragile natural ecosystem and degradation land resources. Despite important sensitization and training activities carried out to raise awareness of the importance of protecting and conserving the forest landscape resources, neither the situation has significantly improved their livelihoods.
- vi. Indeed, what could have been considered as the project achievement flag sheet- landscape restoration and sustainable farming practices in the buffer zones, was not strategically tackled enough by the country NEA team works to illustrate the effectiveness of the forest landscape restoration and integrated water resource conservation feasibility. The demonstrate of salvatory way enabling the communities to reach sustainable on-farm income generation and self-sufficiency food security was not fully achieved. Therefore, apart from the capacity building and knowledge improvement, the project achievements resulted in limited impacts, and which may probably impact the forests and community livelihood in a long-term perspective (10-15 years), as the project component 1 objective and outcomes effectiveness was not enough demonstrated yet to boost any effective change in the forest resource degradation and biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, the component 2 activities were limited to study (TDA and SAP) without any actions of implementation .
- vii. In most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional-specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration have not been adequately applied to address the complexity of the forest vegetation patterns in introducing various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers, despite instructions provided by the Knowledgeable Monitoring-evaluation Expert at MRU/Coordination Unit.
- viii. All the above considerations call for questions about the appropriateness of the techniques applied, as basic silviculture knowledge and techniques seem to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities and NEAs. Indeed, there are many gaps in the forest landscape restoration based on silvicultural management practices to overcome land degradation and ensuring viable tree planting inside the forest and sustainable management of the restored forest lands within the degraded areas. It was also noted a lack of focus in the introduction of the tree seedlings inside the forest as was noted during our field visits. Such introduction should first answer the question "to which extent a project activity

should be undertaken, for which purpose, and which proven techniques would be appropriate and for how long"?

- ix. Discussions and interviews with the stakeholders during out field visits at the MTE and at the current T.E provided relevant achievements highlighting relevant results and commitment from the population to pursue the project activities and improve their capacities and skills to pursue the activities beyond the project closure.
- x. Considering the harshness of the region's weather and climate change conditions, the socioeconomic vulnerability of the landscapes and basin areas, and the political instability which may put at risk most of the achievements related to environment and natural resource management, the project teams achieved tremendous work, even though the outputs did not result to substantial change on the forest landscape improvement and community vulnerability and poverty reduction.
- xi. It happens that many activities of partners and communities involved are compromised at the site level, particularly those related to component 1, which are very fragile and unable to take any decision to restore and preserve forest resources, either upstream or downstream to allow for engagement. However, the contracts signed between the project NEA and the national consultants in November 2018 to support the field activities demonstrated the interest of the population to reengage themselves in the project activities.

7.1.2. Constraints faced

The project implementation faced several constraints, such as:

- 10. **Delay of the implementation start-up:** Despite the project implementation inception workshop was launched on 11-12 July 20217 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, its execution at the level of the 4 countries only started In January-March 2018, thus creating a delay of 7 to 9 months. According to the country, this delay was due to the long delay in the assignment of the technical staff and lack of rolling facilities, and particularly the slowness of the first disbursement of financial resources by the IUCN.
- 11. **Limited operational capacities:** At the start of the project, most of the NEA faced a lack of qualified technical staff due to the slowness of recruitment, in particular in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, and necessary qualified partners having proven knowledge in matters of restoration and management of forest resources and conservation of biodiversity to cover an area of 700,000 ha of protected area. In reality the total amount of forest landscape restored is overestimated, fare beyond the reality, less than 20% (140,000.00 Ha) of the total area were performed the NEAs.
- 12. **Mobilization of funds:** Significant delays were noted in the allocation of funds due particularly to the disbursement grouping system practiced by the IUCN, while the NEA do not operate at the same speed, thus having delayed the execution of activities in the field. Indeed, the system of grouping the disbursements of the funds implemented by IUCN / SG-MRU has created a certain financial immobility and difficulties in availability of funds at the level of the NEA to allow them to deal with certain expenses and to carry out at their pace their activities of annual work plans; What the most proactive brings them to bend to the rhythm of others.
- 13. **Defection of certain execution partners:** in some NEAs, there has been the withdrawal of the potential qualified partners planned to support the process of starting and execution of the project such as FFI and Rain Forest Alliance and who constituted a serious handicap in team performance.

14. **Logistical difficulties of mobility of agents in the field:** The project implementation has also been delayed due to lack of logistical means, especially at start -up, so that agents go to the field to meet, conduct meetings and supervise population activities, and frequently supervise project activities on sites. Indeed, certain field equipment, including field work tools have been delayed due to the long time to obtain non -objection notices (NOA) from the IUCN, for their supply.
15. **Inaccessibility of project sites:** Due to the road conditions, the COVVI -19 2020 pandemic and the weather risks (very rainy winter season, making the roads impracticable, floods, etc.) to conduct the activities of the project implementation, and particularly the monitoring of activities in the field according to the requirements adopted.
16. Access to the landscapes, especially the Southeast remains a major challenge as consultant and NEA appeals for reconsideration and reduction in the intervention areas has been accepted.
17. Sometimes delays in approving **No Objection** from IUCN contribute to change planned schedule and towards the delays in technical implementation of some activities;
18. Access to the landscapes and the basins remains a major challenge, especially during the rainy season.

7.1.3. Challenges

The Mano River Union region faces significant challenges in its quest to preserve ecosystems and sustainably manage natural resources. These challenges, crucial for the survival of local communities as well as environmental sustainability, require immediate attention and action.

Faced with these challenges, the “Ecosystem Conservation and Water Resources Management of the Mano River Union” project has worked over the last 5 years to reverse the trend of degradation, as much as it could. Indeed, the project's initiatives, focused on raising awareness and educating local communities on the importance of ecosystem conservation, the promotion of sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, and the implementation of protective measures for natural resources, aim to reverse current worrying trends.

Efforts made so far have borne fruit, with notable advances such as reduced deforestation, better land management and increased awareness of environmental issues among local communities. However, despite this encouraging progress, there is still a long way to go.

Perseverance and continued commitment will be essential to overcoming the obstacles facing the region's ecosystems and ensuring a sustainable future for all its inhabitants:

- Low level capacity of most of the national institutions and administrations
- Accelerated political will to enhance conservation strategies and management planning
- Poor information dissemination among development partners
- Access to information in project affected communities is a challenge
- Lack of communication networks in some of the project's target areas
- Deplorable road conditions to access project's affected communities
- Communities' willingness to participate in the project is a plus

7.2. Lesson learned.

The T.E provides several lessons to us, which are:

16. The participatory process of the SAP, involving governments, local communities, traditional authorities, and civil society, proves to be decisive for the success of its implementation. The SAP prioritizes the sustainable management of land, forest and water resources. The adoption of sustainable management practices, including integrated water resources management (IWRM) and sustainable forest management, is vital to prevent environmental degradation and promote sustainable use of natural resources. It also places another essential pillar of importance on adaptation to climate change and strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities.

17. Cross-border Diagnostic Analysis

The ADT carried out fundamental lessons within the framework of the project and highlighted significant challenges faced by the priority basins. These challenges highlight deforestation, pollution, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity, thereby threatening the wealth of natural resources such as water, forests, and minerals in the Mano River Union region. The environmental problems, knowing no borders, therefore require a coordinated and collaborative response between the member countries of the UFM to ensure sustainable management and conservation of these shared resources.

Its success depends on the ability to prioritize and effectively address cross-border environmental problems by focusing on the most pressing issues. The adoption of solutions such as agroforestry, the protection and restoration of natural habitats, the rigorous regulation of the exploitation of mining and forest resources, and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, are essential to counter these challenges. Furthermore, the engagement of local communities in resource management is vital to the success of conservation efforts, ensuring that initiatives are tailored to their needs and that they actively participate in decision-making processes.

18. Methodology for assessing forest landscape restoration opportunities

In the context of the restoration of forest landscapes and the management of international water resources within the UFM, a series of important lessons have been learned, highlighting all the challenges and successes achieved. Capacity building at all levels, including among national consultants and within coordination units, has proven to be a fundamental pillar for the successful implementation of the interventions of FLR et monitoring-evaluation of results. The application of spatial analysis and geographic information systems (GIS) is an essential asset that has made it possible to precisely identify priority areas for restoration, thus optimizing the efficiency and impact of the actions undertaken.

19. Diversification and adaptation of FLR interventions to the local context, ranging from assisted natural regeneration to agroforestry systems, have been identified as key strategies to effectively address the specific environmental and socio-economic needs of targeted areas. A thorough understanding of the costs, benefits and ecosystem services associated with these interventions is essential to guide decision-making and foster community acceptance and participation (Rabe Gniapi Gasper, 2023).

20. The Need for Adapted Technical Training:

The interventions highlight the importance of adapted technical training to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and the development of sustainable

agricultural practices. Indeed, the training programs have demonstrated their effectiveness in raising skills within communities, but their success relies on extensive personalization, respectful of local contexts and inclusive of all members of the community. The interventions highlight the importance of adapted technical training to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and the development of sustainable agricultural practices. These training programs have demonstrated their effectiveness in raising skills within communities, but above all their success is based on extensive personalization, respectful of local contexts and inclusive of all members of the community.

21. Synergies entre Conservation et Développement :

Les initiatives de conservation de la biodiversité dans l'ensemble des sites d'intervention ont démontré l'importance de créer des synergies de développement des communautés, en matière d'agroforesterie, d'amélioration de la productivité agricole, contribuant ainsi à la sécurité alimentaire et à l'augmentation des revenus. Cette approche est renforcée par des formations techniques adaptées aux besoins locaux, améliorant les compétences agricoles tout en préservant l'environnement.

22. Gestion Intégrée des Ressources :

La gestion intégrée des ressources naturelles, embrassant les dynamiques interconnectées de la terre, de l'eau, et de la biodiversité, se révèle cruciale pour le succès des initiatives de conservation et de développement durable. Cette stratégie holistique reconnaît que la gestion efficace des écosystèmes ne peut se faire en silos mais nécessite plutôt une vision systémique qui prend en compte les multiples facettes et interactions de l'environnement naturel (agriculture, foresterie, gestion de l'eau, pêche, et la conservation de la nature, etc.). Un tel cadre permet de créer des synergies et de minimiser les conflits potentiels entre les usages des terres et des ressources, assurant ainsi que les stratégies de développement sont à la fois écologiquement viables et socialement équitables.

23. Importance des Cadres Légaux et Institutionnels :

L'application des textes législatifs et la mise en place de cadres institutionnels solides sont essentielles pour soutenir les efforts de conservation et de gestion durable des ressources. Ils fournissent la base nécessaire pour réguler l'utilisation des ressources et résoudre les conflits d'utilisation des terres. Les cadres légaux et institutionnels jouent un rôle clé dans la gestion durable des ressources naturelles, établissant des règles claires pour leur utilisation et protection. Ils spécifient les pratiques agricoles durables, régulent l'exploitation des ressources et protègent les habitats vitaux, prévenant ainsi la surutilisation et la dégradation. Ces cadres facilitent la création de mécanismes de gouvernance, comme des agences ou comités, pour une mise en œuvre cohérente des politiques environnementales et de développement durable.

24. The project is designed with ambitious objectives with a lack of focus and appropriated demonstrative approach when dealing with natural resource management in harsh and climate change-prone environments.

25. In turn, it looks like despite all efforts and activities achieved by this GEF Project, the outcomes reach, less, the same results as for previous projects implemented or supported by precedent donors and the governments, which were unable to address the degradation situation of the same transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management at the regional level: (i) The Guinean forests of West and Central Africa ecosystem Profile Project – Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) - IUCN - 2013/2015. In 2013, IUCN (PACO and GSP) and the United Nations Environment Program's World Conservation Monitoring Centre developed an Ecosystem Profile that includes investment strategy for the Upper and Lower Guinean Forests to guide future grant making to civil society groups working in the region, (ii) USAID "Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development" (STEWARD) Program (2007/2016) joint investment of EGAT, AFR, USAID/West Africa and US Forest Service, focused on regional threats to biodiversity, forests while capitalizing on regional opportunities to spread best practices, harmonize policies and improve regional markets (as a trans-boundary protected area conservation and livelihoods improvement project, between Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone) with main objective to build capacity for increased regional collaboration in biodiversity conservation, fisheries, forestry, sustainable agriculture and trade within national and regional institutions; foster regional policy innovations and harmonization of national policies.
26. Reversing environmental and land degradation under severe and unpredictable climate change threats, and vulnerable populations striving for their survival, required long-term commitment at both financial and skills staff engaged in transformation vision to make change happen, particularly in the Shared River basin, such as the Mano River Union region. Mainstreaming the basis of forest management, sustainable land use planning and management at the farm level, and climate change resilience and adaptation to improve crop yield and overall agricultural production to sustain food security and on-farm generation.
27. It must be clearly understood by all practitioners, that Agroforestry differs to many extents from forestry: Agroforestry usually applies in agricultural lands to improve soil fertility, protect the farm against erosion (water or wind), and provide goods (products, fruits, leaves, etc.), while Forestry relies on silvicultural practices to educate and expand forest plantations and woodlots in a dedicated land for wood or timber production, or for any other use, on a state-owned land or private or community land, but at a larger scale.
28. Forest development will enable environmental improvement in harsh climate change and drought-prone areas, with erratic and uncertain rainfalls, and traditional farming systems may rely on strengthening the stakeholder's capacities at regional, national and local levels. However, this takes dedicated and skilled staff who are ready to work tirelessly.
29. Based on the achievements of this GEF project and of the previous project call for an in-depth baseline study by knowledgeable and experienced experts/practitioners to design and propose execution strategies and subordinate the project implementation by the commitment in cash from the government and the existence of compelling legislation frameworks. The rationale of this is to avoid doing and redoing repeatedly similar projects and designing legal frameworks which in turn nobody follows while in the jobs on the field, thus becoming suddenly outdated.
30. This project has hinged the path and direction of previous or ongoing forest and biodiversity management focusing on the "promotion of cooperation through transboundary water resource management", with the same rhetoric of TDA and SAP, which in most cases are not implemented in the life span of the project, but just studies and developing strategies without any solid foundation.
31. Improving management of water-related sectors: as water is among the primary needs for our life, the focus must be put on its conservation and sustainable use, whatever the size and quality

of the water. However, it requires a sound integrated strategic plan framework which considers water resources as of the same importance as land resources and soil resources.

32. Difficulties encountered by Cote-d'Ivoire NEA: During the year 2019 which highlighted the importance of respecting commitments made with the local populations: At Mount Nimba forest landscape the collaboration with communities was satisfactory with cordial relations with the populations, while with the communities of the Taï forest landscape, the NEA team couldn't build trust with the communities. It is therefore suggested to set a permanent motivation for the stakeholders to participate to ensure the achievement maintenance agreement prior to implementing the project activity execution.
33. Establishing a lasting collaboration with other organizations and institutions present in the field for a better synergy of actions has started initiated with some stakeholders, such as WABiCC, FFI and the European Union, to avoid disparities in approach, operation, and duplication of actions around the intervention areas (Ziama reserve, etc.).

7.3. Recommendation

Considering the period remains to complete the project (less than one year), to deliver expected results, the following recommendations are made to improve the project implementation progress toward expected results:

1. At the end of the project, it is imperative to keep the pace laid down by the stakeholders through established multi-sectoral committees and national transboundary policy-makers, technical bodies with support from government agencies and international institutions to better consolidate responsibly the sustainability of shared transboundary water resources, in strengthening awareness gained about water pollution (mining, waste management, siltation, etc.), as well as Transboundary Diagnostic Studies and Strategic Action Programme for more efficient and collaborative management of water resources and biodiversity.
2. It is sad to note that past efforts and investments provided by GEF and other donors (UNDP, USAID, European Union, etc.) and ongoing GEF project planned objectives addressing transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management and water management basins, resulting in some disillusion, as to some extent, to the same conclusion "achievement have not been able to reverse the continuous trends of land degradation and community vulnerability".
3. With regards to the wide area of intervention sites, the project implementation and works carried out despite the limited budget, the weaknesses and over ambitious vision and environment harshness, the operational weaknesses and strategy shortfalls of the executing entities, the project design lacks somehow a good reasoning which could have brought the experts to downsize the project scope to a feasible area during the time frame of 4 years. However, the project achievements and results achieved are very relevant to the support of the MRU member countries and communities.
4. **Consolidation of outcomes:** From January to June 2023, it is recommended to focus consolidation of unsuccessful activities carried out from 2018 to December 2022, to give a change of achievement visibility and convince the communities that with determination and commitment everything is possible. This means, as of December 31st, 2022, no new field activities, such as tree plantations for landscape restoration within the forests, should not be conducted at the field level. Unfortunately although there has been tremendous efforts to bring the level of achievements to nearly 100% for most of the results, the quality and the sustainability of results achieved still remained questionable and it is needed to agree on strategic exit plan that's based on consolidation of the outcomes, particularly backstopping and improving stakeholder capacities
5. **Awareness raising and capacity building:**

- i. All activities that felt short in 2022 at the MTE, have improved and reaching almost 100% of achievements. The development of the TDA and design of the SAP generated sound momentum for hope and transformation of forest landscapes and the community's livelihood.
 - ii. Organizing frequent virtual meetings for exchange of information and knowledge at the level of Country NEA and regional, will help ensuring sustainability of results achieved and sharpen the portions of forest landscapes managed by the project, with all the partners involved, in identifying synergies, complementarities and strategies to maximize the use of resources and determine the gaps that will provide the elements for the mobilization of additional resources (National Implementing Agency Managers, National Coordination);
 - iii. Continuing advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national and international levels, particularly at the national level through the inclusion of the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State officials, MRU Secretariat and IUCN).
 - iv. Encouraging and streamlining the established platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of sustaining the achievements resulting from the implementation of the project established
 - v. Encouraging Regional Executing Agencies (MRUs) and National Executing Agencies to engage in the in-depth consultation process with the project implementation partners to involve them in the implementation of the project activities.
 - vi. Continuous Awareness raising for farmers and local communities on the importance of landscape restoration within their vicinity.
 - vii. Pursuing and adopting a consolidated framework for awareness and capacity building, as a mandatory tool for all NEA and government executing institutions.
 - viii. Encourage full-fledged awareness raising for farmers and local communities on building effective landscape restoration of the Gola forest;
 - ix. Encouraging the farmers to scale up the community farms for sustainable financial returns as that will give them higher yields that will attract buyers or market.
 - x. All efforts should be made for the establishment of a Regional Transboundary Management Body for the MRU Transboundary Basins;
 - xi. Promoting and disseminating proven models for Forest landscape restoration to empower the national technical structures and prepare project documents for access the green funds and carbon funds to support local communities and NGOs.
- 6. Further focusing of the restoration of "Forest landscape", management of transboundary rivers and monitoring strategies**
- i. Consolidate existing activities, which means no new activity should be planned and implemented, thus focusing efforts on identified weaknesses and filling community knowledge gaps to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the outputs at the end of the project phase.
 - ii. Conducting characterization and detailed mapping: land cover, vegetation map, forest density, and landscape map with degradation index (1:100,000 to 1:250,000) for the four-basin transboundary forest landscapes. This should take advantage of the ROAM research findings,

but in focusing on what is relevant for the project area and not translate results from the other countries included in the study.

7. Developing a field handbook for forestry and agriculture technicians on:

- i. Project monitoring-evaluation, based on output and outcome indicators.
- ii. Forest Landscape restoration and sustainable forest land management techniques.
- iii. Sustainable integrated land use management guidelines.

8. Developing a Web-based Land database survey and land cover mapping

- i. Land characterization.
- ii. Land feature description.
- iii. Soil survey,
- iv. Land cover, classification and mapping at large scale (1:10,000-250,000);
- v. Land and soil evaluation,
- vi. Soil physical and chemical properties characterization.
- vii. Assessment of Soil suitability and aptitudes.

9. Sustainable agroforestry land use system framework, including:

- i. Land use planning and management;
- ii. Land preparation and fertility improvement;
- iii. Soil conservation and erosion control
- iv. Restoration of upland landscape and coastal land protection;
- v. Agroforestry system and practices (alley cropping, cover cropping, windbreak, nitrogen-fixing trees, crop rotation, mixed tree establishment (fruit tree, leguminous, etc.).

10. Agricultural land rehabilitation framework:

- i. Develop agricultural land rehabilitation framework.
- ii. Develop forest landscape restoration schemes and practices framework for upland protection.

11. Develop Biodiversity conservation tools:

- i. Priority Terrestrial protected guidelines.
- ii. Management of transboundary basin areas.
- iii. Control of invasive species, etc.

12. Establishment of Cross-Border Landscape Platforms

The creation of cross-border landscape platforms established in Mounts Nimba and Diecké, Ziama and Wonegizi, and in the Gola Forest, symbolize the unified efforts of the Mano River Union countries by the project and highlighted the importance of regional collaboration for the preservation of ecosystems and the sustainable management of water resources, to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainability of local communities. All these serve as a framework for cross-border dialogue, harmonization of environmental policies, and capacity building, and integrated management of cross-border natural resources for regional sustainable development, through the implementation of action plans and the facilitation of exchanges of information:

- i. Facilitation of Cross-Border Dialogue by bringing together key stakeholders from different countries, the platforms facilitate an inclusive cross-border dialogue that makes it possible to coherently address shared environmental challenges. This communication strengthens regional cooperation and ensures that conservation and management strategies are aligned and mutually beneficial;

- ii. Harmonization of Policies and Legislation: Platforms play a crucial role in the harmonization of environmental policies and legislation between neighboring countries. They ensure that efforts to conserve and sustainably manage water resources are supported by a coherent legal framework, thus facilitating their effective implementation.
- iii. Implementation and Monitoring of Action Plans: Beyond the implementation of action plans, platforms are essential for the monitoring and evaluation of these plans. They allow progress to be measured, challenges to be identified and strategies to be adjusted accordingly, ensuring that conservation objectives are met.
- iv. Promotion of Participatory Management: By integrating local communities and promoting their traditional knowledge, the platforms encourage participatory management of ecosystems and water resources. This approach ensures that conservation and management actions are adapted to local realities and contribute to improving the livelihoods of communities.
- v. Local Capacity Building to be established through training and capacity building opportunities for local actors, particularly in natural resource management, environmental monitoring, and conflict resolution. This increase in skills is essential for the sustainability of conservation efforts.
- vi. Promotion of Peace and Environmental Security: By facilitating cross-border collaboration, the platforms also contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the region. By jointly addressing environmental issues, they help prevent resource conflicts and strengthen ties between countries.
- vii. Collaboration Agreements: the memorandum of understanding signed between members of the local advisory committees will mark a significant step towards strengthened cross-border collaboration for the conservation and management of the forest landscapes concerned, with robust legal and institutional frameworks, and define the roles, responsibilities and commitments of participating countries, promoting a coordinated approach to the protection of biodiversity and sustainable management of forests. The pooling of resources,
- viii. AS recommended by the workshop, capacity building must remain the driving force of the platform members to promote and disseminate themes and new approaches concerning the protection, monitoring, conservation, and management of forest areas. This will allow members to better understand the current challenges related to forest management.

13. Way Forward

As the project has ended on June 30th, 2024 without any firm and concrete commitment from donor (local, regional, international), and expectation from the last decision made by the Regional Steering Committee, IUCN, SG/MRU and the four Country members and the donor meeting, at the meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 2024, the future of the project momentum is at risk of reversing back to previous situation having justified the project. Despite the question marks about the steadiness of the mobilization of funds requested it is not whether and when it will be made available, considering the huge budget convened at the Donor consultation and which could enable the Regional Executing Agency to organize the launching and resource mobilization of the SAP before end of 2024 to avoid, the project architecture collapse. One should avoid the syndrome of big ambitious and less financial resource that often leads to be scramble and collapse.

We understand, without any written confirmation, that at the end of the 8th session of the "Regional Steering Committee (CRP)", the participants recommended the continuation of the actions initiated, among others:

1. GEF 8 Integrated Program for Guinea's Forests - National implementing agencies (NEAs) participating in GEF8 should capitalize on the results of the SAP in the formulation of their national projects (Child Project);
2. GEF9 Preparation - Member States should start mobilizing their STAR funds to support GEF9 preparation and work with GEF operational focal points and line ministries in charge of Water, Environment and Forests in respective countries .

3. .Project Contract Report – create a Google Drive for all project documents
4. ESMS/ESMP- NEA Sierra Leone technical assistant should consolidate the ESMP for all ANEx;
5. Update co-financing for countries and partners to ensure it is consistent with project documents
6. It was agreed to pursue the MRU project for another phase. However, the approach should be changed, meaning the basin area will be spited into 3 different projects but convergent :
 - i. Cote-D'Ivoire Project to be financed and implemented by FAO;
 - ii. Guinee Project to be financed by IUCN;
 - iii. Liberia and SierraLeone Project to be financed by Nature Conservation.

As it is, this is not consistent with the spirit and vision which motivated the MRU Ecosystem Conservation and International water resources management with built tools and models for reversing the environmental and water course degradation and helped improving the livelihood of the communities and created a share vision.

We also believe that the future of these forests and river basins will not take place in a separate vision but rather in a shared vision and a spirit of brotherhood. To do this, we recommend that the project continue in its current form and each of these three international agencies be considered as technical support agencies of the three defined sub-regions. This approach is a guarantee of success and consolidation of fraternity/between communities.

8. REFERENCES

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9. ANNEXES

9.1. Annex 1: TORs



GEF Project on the "Ecosystem Conservation and Management of International Water Resources of the Mano River Union"

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final Evaluation

I- Background

GEF has financed a project on the **"Ecosystem Conservation and Management of International Water Resources of the Mano River Union"** which covers the four countries of the Mano River Union, including Sierra Leone (SL), Guinea (Gui), Liberia (LB) and Côte d'Ivoire (CI). The objective of this sub-regional project is to strengthen the management of trans-boundary natural resources for sustainable ecological benefits and improved livelihoods for adjacent forest communities. It supports local communities in the development of alternative means of income generation, which will lead to an increase in forest cover and its associated benefits both locally and globally (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks). Results and change-based project management requires the participation of all stakeholders at different scales (local, national and regional).

The project intervenes in component **1 on 4 Trans-boundary landscapes** consisting of a mosaic of forest vegetation almost intact and corresponding to the last blocks of forests in the area of the Mano River Union, selected as intervention sites. These forest blocks cover several protected areas, which are core areas of importance for conservation, and are interconnected by corridors and buffer zones.

The intervention sites of the project are:

- **Site 1:** Trans-boundary block of forest including protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké (GN), Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI) and National Park of the East Nimba (LB);
- **Site 2:** Trans-boundary block of forest including the National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam (LB/GN);
- **Site 3:** Trans-boundary block and corridor including the protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL) and the National Forest of Gola (LB);
- **Site 4:** Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor including the National Park Protected Area Complex of Sapo (LB), the National Forest of Grebo (LB) and the National Park of Tai (CI).

For Component **2**, actions will be conducted at the level of the following trans-boundary basins:

- **Trans-boundary Basin Target 1:** Moa / Makona River Basin shared by Guinea 44%, Liberia 8.5% and Sierra Leone 47.5% (additionally based on initial BRIDGE activities) and Mano River Basin;
- **Trans-boundary Basin Target 2:** Cavally River Basin shared by Côte d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea 5%, and Liberia 41%;–
- **Trans-boundary Basin Target 3:** Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins shared by Guinea 66% and Sierra Leone 34%.

II- Justification

The project was initially intended to end on 31st December 2020. However, a No Cost extension was granted for it from 1st January to end on 30th June 2023 and then extended to 31st December 2023. Therefore, the project was executed for 6 years (July 2017 to December 2023) after three No Cost Extensions. As all full-sized GEF – IUCN financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of implementation, this Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the GEF - Mano Project on the *"Ecosystem Conservation and Management of International Water Resources of the Mano River Union."*

The purpose of this Final Evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency, and assesses the extent of project accomplishments. The TE focuses on determining the **RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY, TIMELINESS and IMPACT** of the GEF- Mano Project in order to capture lessons learnt for possible formulation in the event of implementing another phase of the GEF- Mano project in the MRU region.

IIIa. Objective of the project

GEF-Strategic Objective is to conserve, sustainably use and manage biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources globally, taking into account the anticipated impact of climate.

IIIb. Overall Objective of the Terminal Evaluation (TE)

The overall objective of the final evaluation is to enable the MRU, IUCN and GEF to evaluate the implementation of actions during the duration of the project and to make decisions on the aspects to consider in the implementation of future projects of this type.

Specific Objectives of the T.E

The specific objectives of this Terminal Evaluation are: -

- To determine the **RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY, TIMELINESS and IMPACT** of the GEF- Mano Project.
- It also means to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this GEF – Mano project.
- The Terminal Evaluation is also based on the findings of the Mid Term evaluation to assess if the Mid Term evaluation recommendations have been implemented.
- It is also expected to objectively review the seven (7) key findings of the Mid Term Evaluation and state whether the ratings are at variance with the ratings of the final evaluation (**Reference the MTE Report**). This means that the gaps captured by the Mid-Term Evaluation should be captured and reassessed in the Terminal Evaluation.

Please see below a summary of the MTE Key Findings:

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE MID TERM EVALUATION

1. Project indicators of forest landscape restoration

MTE FINDINGS: Despite the relevance of the result framework design, the assessment of the project outputs highlighted (i) the indicators are not conform to SMART16 criteria (too ambitious output 1.1.a - 88,400 ha of forests and other land cover in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests, and output 1.1.b - 93,400 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests, and not achievable in the project timeframe of 48/56 months, thus not time bound, and over the stakeholder and beneficiary capacities). indeed, in such hostile ecosystem areas prone to climate change threats and impacts with vulnerable communities, sustainable management of degraded forest landscape areas is a big challenge, particularly in a short run (5 years of the project implementation), and when applying unappropriated restoration techniques/practices limited to natural forest regeneration, agroforestry practices, uncontrolled reforestation through tree enrichment planting techniques, etc.).

Therefore, because of inconsistent available skills and limited silviculture capacities of the stakeholders to overcome land degradation and subsequent biodiversity loss, the overall design of the project result indicators is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

2. Overall project achievements

MTE FINDINGS: *However, considering the ambitious approach and multisectoral linkages beyond the capacities of the stakeholders and communities to run such complex project that requires demonstrated experience and proven technologies/practices that the teams were unable to demonstrate at country and community levels to streamline the achievements, including the time required to achieve tangible results, mainly those of component 1, and the light touch on the vulnerable community concerns apart from nursery and tree planting which are long term benefit activities. Despite the work done and the stakeholder commitments, the outputs expected were not adequately and full-fledged addressed in such way to enable change in the overall basin environment and the specific targeted intervention sites. Therefore, the I.C. assessed the overall project achievements as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).*

3. National partner involvement in project execution

MTE FINDINGS: *The national partners involvement in the project execution in support to the NEAs and achievements are assessed by the I.C as Moderately Satisfactory (S:4/6).*

4. Effectiveness of the project output achieved and deliveries

MTE FINDINGS: *However, considering the ambitious approach and multisectoral linkages beyond the capacities of the stakeholders and communities to run such complex project that requires demonstrated experience and proven technologies/practices that the teams were unable to demonstrate at country and community levels to streamline the achievements, including the time required to achieve tangible results, mainly those of component 1, and the light touch on the vulnerable community concerns apart from nursery and tree planting which are long term benefit activities. Despite the work done and the stakeholder commitments, the outputs expected were not adequately and full-fledged addressed in such way to enable change in the overall basin environment and the specific targeted intervention sites.*

Therefore, the I.C. assessed the overall project achievements as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

5. Project efficiency

MTE FINDINGS: As highlighted in the section of financial resources management, the achievements indicated 61% (3,865,627.77USD) of the project budget were spent, meaning a balance of 39% (2,470,736.23 USD). This low budget absorption within 5 years of the project implementation forces us to believe that the funds disbursement grouping might have been an inefficient factor inducing important delays of the execution of the annual work plan. Indeed, as acknowledged by the MRU/SG/PMU team, the funds are disbursed quarterly, and all the 4 National Executing Agencies (NEAs) must submit their requests together. Consecutively, this collective submission of funds has

¹⁶ SMART: Strategic, measurable, achievable, and timebound.

made it difficult for some NEAs to accelerate the execution of their work plan at their own pace since they must wait for the slow ones to submit financial requests, thus causing important delay and prejudices on the activity progress towards the project expected outputs. This explains the fact that the project still has a total amount of 2,470,736.23 USD (39%) of the total budget to spend from August 2021 to June 2023.

The assessment highlighted inconsistencies between the financial resource use and the project activity outputs, therefore, the I.C assessed project efficiency as Moderately Satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

6. Project sustainability

- i. **MTE FINDINGS: Institutional Sustainability:** The NWRMA, NPAA and all MDAs in the Multisectoral Technical Committee have all been very important partners, but their contributions have not yet been efficient and translate into enhanced sustainability of the project outputs. However, maintaining the pace of their current commitments may result to enhance the sustainability of their achievements. Therefore, at this MTE, the I.C assessed the sustainability as **Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2/3)**.
- ii. **Environmental Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2/3):** the agroforestry plots have a very good chance of success as the community benefits are enough incentive for them to carry on. However, the challenge now is market access because of the poor road network and reforestation of degraded areas using forest trees;
- iii. **Social Sustainability:** At this MTE, the activities (orchards, fruit trees, cash crops and Cacao and Coffee trees planted, etc.) implemented by the communities and NEAs are not yet in the stage to provide any substantial benefit. The social sustainability will depend upon on the continuous support of the national and regional platforms by the NEAs in integrating them into their workplans and budget. **Therefore, at this MTE, the I.C assessed the sustainability as Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2/3);**
- iv. **Sustainability/Financial and Economic Viability will depend upon the quality and effectiveness of the outputs achieved by the project and the beneficiary communities. Therefore, the I.C has rate the financial and economic viability as Moderately Unlikely (MU:2/3)**

7. Project impacts

MTE FINDINGS: Apart from community awareness raising and capacity building, the project achievements being at their initial stage, no evident relevance of impacts induced by the project outputs, either from the field site visited or assessment of results achieved, neither at the level of forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, improved land management practices, improving community livelihood, etc.

Therefore, the project impacts are therefore assessed negligible: 1. However, institutional capacity is assessed, as Significant (S:2); Technical capability building impact (nurseries and tree planting), as Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6); Operational capability building, as Moderately Satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

The TE will be carried out on the 4 transboundary block sites and the 3 transboundary basins indicated in the project document and some selected adjacent communities. The TE consultant will try to map out specific areas visited and he/she will provide information in and around the areas visited in relation to the objective of the mission (at least one area per site per country).

The TE consultant shall discuss with all executing entities prior to departure and ensure their review and conclusion of work done during the mission period. The following generic issues related to the following keys points shall be addressed by the TE:

- (i) Review progress of project implementation on a component-by-component basis. The mission will also review achievements made against targets set in the annual work plans and budget(s), in addition to assessment of overall progress since project effectiveness, as well as assessing the implementation of recommendations that were made during the midterm evaluation.
- (ii) Assess the project progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes, and in the use of funds, and recommend measures, if any.
- (iii) Assess the performance of the project in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness of the activities undertaken including project procurement.
- (iv) Review compliance with all grant conditions.
- (v) Assess the adequacy and efficiency of the executing agency and the project management unit;
- (vi) Review the appropriateness and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the project.
- (vii) Verify functionality of the project's monitoring and evaluation systems, in particular the collection and analysis of information/data against indicators in the project's logical framework matrices and advise PMUs on the regularity, quality and content of mandatory reports especially semi-annual or annual reports [depending on the implementing agreement signed between IUCN and the Executing Agency].
- (viii) Undertake project risk analysis and determine how this was managed during the life span of the project.
- (ix) Discuss with project beneficiaries, other project stakeholders and collaborating institutions to ascertain their views on implementation and achievements.
- (x) Assess the status and progress in implementing the environment and social management plan and the gender plan.
- (xi) Assessing the status of the various approved procurement activities and performance of the approved contracts for services, goods and works under the GEF – Mano Project.
- (xii) Assess the Annual Audits in addition to following-up and verifying implementation of the recommendations arising from external audits for the GEF – Mano project.
- (xiii) Determine the appropriateness of the logical framework, activities and outputs of the project, the overall budget lines allocation (within the approved budget), procurement and disbursements that would be required.
- (xiv) Bringing out the gaps documented during the mid-term evaluation.

Findings and recommendations of the mission will be presented to the government officials and the Project Management Unit (PMU) staff at a wrap-up meeting to be organized at the end of the mission.

The Regional Executing Agency (REA) will prepare the required data and information (progress reports, financial reports, procurement reports, disbursements reports) before the mission takes place.

Details of locations visited should be given in the table below:

Name of site visited	Geographic coordinate	Type of intervention(s)	Name and contact of community leader(s)
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IV. Methodological Approach and tools

The TE will be conducted under the supervision of the Regional Project Executing Agency (REA) and will be carried out in the project areas mentioned above in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone in collaboration with the National Project Executing Agency (NEA) in each country.

This Terminal Evaluation has three components: -

- Desk review of project documents (project reports including the Mid-Term Evaluation Report)
- Visits to project sites and
- Conduct interviews (through survey questionnaire, Focus Group discussions and or Key informant interviews) with individuals (gender considerations) who are either affiliated to the

project on the one hand or that have had the effect / impact of the project on the other hand as project participants (directly or indirectly). An appropriate software (SPSS or other software package) that can process the collected data in real time should be used.

Desk Review

The TE consultant has to familiarise himself/herself with the project by going through pertinent project documents before the field visits. The following documents among others are key : -

- The Mid-Term Evaluation Report
- Activity reports for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023
- The Multisectoral Technical Committee reports from the 4 project countries
- Aides mémoires of the four (4) supervision missions and progress on the recommendations made.
- Other relevant documents as required.

Hard copies of selected documents that are not available in electronic form will be made available to the TE Consultant by the Regional Project Management Unit at MRU Secretariat before the mission.

Field visits

The TE Consultant will visit the project countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) for the 2 components of the project as required and will use both quantitative and qualitative tools. The scope of data collection will be proposed by the consulting firm and finalized with the project team in terms of number of survey questionnaires to be administered and the number of key informant interviews and focus group discussions to be conducted.

Interviews

The TE Consultant will conduct interviews with persons or groups of persons as follows: -

- Project personnel (Regional Coordinator, National Coordinators, Regional and National Experts, accountants, technical Assistants, M&E Specialist, and the Procurement Assistant),
- Personnel of the Mano River Union Secretariat,
- Government representatives from the beneficiary countries,
- Selected members of the project Regional Steering Committee,
- Representatives of local stakeholders,
- Other stakeholders that are not directly involved in the implementation of the project but who might have experienced the impact of the project.

Although the TE Consultant is independent and should feel free to discuss issues concerning his /her tasks with authorities that are related to the project, he/she is not authorised to undertake any engagement in the name of IUCN and or the Mano River Union Secretariat.

V. Terminal Evaluation indicators

The indicators of the TE are detailed in the project Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The following can be cited among others : -

- ✓ The reports of the Baseline research to establish the level of the project indicators
- ✓ The project output and outcome indicator tracking matrix
- ✓ Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)
- ✓ The training of 678 farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs
- ✓ The training of 115 participants in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)
- ✓ The type of Forest Landscape Restoration undertaken on the 4 project landscapes; detailing the number of hectares already under restoration through project support;

VI. Expected results, conclusion and recommendations

Based on the objectives and methodology above, the TE Consultant will have to provide the conclusions and recommendations, including:

General recommendations on the implementation of the project;
The degree to which the project objectives have been met both regionally and in each of the member countries;
Important lessons that can be learned from the experience and results of the project, particularly those elements that worked well and those that did not work well;
Recommendations on further actions after completion of the current project.

VII. The report of the Terminal Evaluation

The TE Consultant will submit an inception report detailing their full understanding of the assignment and the methodology. The plan including the itinerary, the budget for the assignment and should not exceed 22 working days. The final report should contain at least the following annexes: -

- The Terms of Reference for the Terminal Evaluation (in annex)
- The itinerary (in annex)
- List of meetings held with participants lists (with their contacts if any in annex)
- Liste of persons interviewed (in annex)
- Field visit summary report
- List of documents consulted
- Any other relevant documents

Since the final report is the product of the TE Consultant, it is his / her duty to ensure that the information collected during the mission is made available. It is his /her responsibility to ensure the correctness of the information given to him/her before the finalisation of the report. To ensure that the report took into consideration the opinion of the relevant stakeholders, it is important to share a draft with the secretariat before finalisation. The final version of the report should be submitted in soft copy (MS word) and 6 hard copies (printed) 3 in French and 3 in English to the Mano River Union Secretariat two weeks after the end of the mission. The T E Consultant is expected to communicate perfectly (write and speak) in the working languages (French and English) of the Mano River Union.

VIII: Costing

Eligible costs for this evaluation include:

1. Consultant's fees;
2. Per Diem
3. Data collection cost
4. Reimbursable expenses related to travel and local transport (only reimbursed on the submission of the boarding passes and the tickets of related expenses)
5. Other expenses related to the production and translation of reports.

The financial offer must include these distinct parts with a differentiation of the cost categories.

IX. Budget

The project budget will finance the Terminal Evaluation

X. Profile for the Terminal Evaluation Consultant

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) Consultant will be an individual consultant recruited by the Mano River Union Secretariat. The individual consultant is expected to be well grounded in the intervention areas

(in forest landscape restoration and in the management of transboundary water resources and legislations). It is imperative for the TE Consultant to have good knowledge in Forest Landscape Restoration and in the management of international water resources including a scientific understanding and the pertinence of project evaluation techniques particularly GEF / IUCN projects and a good knowledge of the Mano River Union region. The TE Consultant is expected to have :-

- **A Master's Degree** in the management of natural resources with at least 10 years' experience in environment, soil science, geography or similar domain. The Specialist should have experience related to land degradation and in Forest Landscape Restoration processes and vast experience in project evaluation techniques particularly GEF / IUCN projects.
- He / she is expected to be an Agro-economist or an Agronomist or a socio-economist trained (Bac +5) with at least 10 years' experience in rural development and in developmental project analysis.
- He / she is expected to be a Specialist in financial management trained (at least Bac +4) with at least 5 years' experience in financial management, economics or another related field. The Specialist should have an understanding of the Mano River Union region and knowledge on the operational procedures and disbursement of GEF /IUCN projects.

XI. Timeline, duration and itinerary of the Terminal Evaluation

This terminal evaluation will be conducted from 5th October to 5th November 2023. The duration of the consultancy including travelling days will not exceed one calendar month. The itinerary will be finalized by the TE Consultant and the project Regional Coordinator at the Mano River Union Secretariat.

XII. APPLICATION

Offers from consultants consisting of an updated CV, a letter of submission, a letter of commitment (indicating the availability for the period of the mission) and of a technical and financial offer (separate) are admissible (in electronic version) no later than September 25th, **2023** at the e-mail addresses below:

- For sending the proposal: doumbial959@gmail.com,
tayirogerdore@gmail.com ; leonardoswilson@gmail.com.
- With copy to dominique.endamana@iucn.org

The technical offer must include: the detailed methodology of the Consultant's intervention, a chronogram on the duration of the consultation, a travel plan in the 4 countries of the Mano River Union.

The separate financial offer must include the various cost categories set out in point VIII above, according to the defined headings.

XIII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Intellectual property rights

All legal rights throughout the world in works or inventions created by the contractee in connection with the Contract shall vest in MRU. The contractee recognizes that such rights include, but are not limited to, copyright and other rights in written material (hard copy or electronic), sound and video recordings (including films), maps, photography, etc., as well as patents and other rights in inventions, and that the said rights enable MRU to control all publications, publicity material and other exploitation of the said works and inventions.

The contractee will refrain from exploiting the works or inventions and from using them in some manner, except with prior written approval by MRU.

B. Liability, Indemnity and Insurance

B1. IUCN does not accept any liability for damages of any kind caused to the personnel or goods of the contractee in the course of or from the performance of this contract. Therefore, no claim or request of increase of fees related to such damages will be accepted by MRU.

B2. The contractee is solely responsible toward third parties, including for all damages caused by the latter, in the course of performance of this contract. The contractee will release MRU from any responsibility related to claims or lawsuits from infraction to law and regulations committed by the contractee, its employees or all persons under its control, or from a violation of a third-party rights.

B3. IUCN does not accept any liability for acts of third parties, accident, sickness or losses of any kind, however caused, arising in the course of or from the performance of the Contract. The contractee is advised to take out whatever insurance is appropriate to cover such risks and contingencies.

C. Anti-corruption

The contractee shall not give to a third party, nor ask for, nor accept, nor promise, directly or indirectly, for itself or for another party, any gift or advantage constituting or could be constituting an illicit practice or a corruption.

D. Amendments

The parties reserve the right to make, where necessary and by mutual agreement, amendments to certain provisions of this contract.

Any modification must be consigned in an amendment duly signed by the two parties.

E. Termination

E1. Any failure by either party to fulfil its obligations under the present contract will cause, at the discretion of the other party, the full cancellation of the contract, 15 days after receipt of a formal notice to carry out the unexecuted contract terms and conditions, if such notice remained without effect, without prejudice to any damages.

E2. The exercise of this termination right will not exempt the faulty party from completing the obligations contracted up to the termination date, and without prejudice to any indemnifications that the other party claims due to the damages caused by the anticipated termination of the contract. Such termination will not have effect to release the consultant from its obligations, mainly but not only, the obligation to deliver all reports due up to the effective date of termination.

E3. Either party may terminate this contract through written notice. The period of notice is 15 days.

In the event of cancellation, the Consultant will be paid the work satisfactorily completed until the date of the cancellation. For this purpose the Consultant will have to establish the proof of the activities carried out as well as the expenditures that he will submit to MRU for approval.

E4. In the event that a contract is terminated prior to the date of expiration the consultant will be compensated on a pro-rata basis for no more than the actual amount of work performed to the satisfaction of MRU. Additional costs incurred by MRU resulting from the termination of a contract by the consultant will be deducted from any amount due to him/her by MRU. The Consultant will reimburse to MRU any unused funds with any the interest earned.

E5. MRU reserves the right to terminate immediately this contract without any liability for damages of any kind in case the funds from the donor become unavailable.

XIV. Additional Information

For further information please contact the Coordinator of the Regional Project Management Unit (based at the Mano River Union Secretariat in Freetown) at +232 750 46948 or send an e-mail to the e-mail addresses mentioned above.

Table X below provides the important progress made at all levels of outputs as well as at regional and country levels.

Component 1:

Outcomes <i>(Copy and paste outcomes from Result Framework)</i>	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Progress rating (HS, S, MS,MU,U,SU)
Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities.	1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment	75,915 +	MS
	1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g.,	217,946.5 ++	MS
Outputs <i>(Copy and paste outputs from Result Framework)</i>	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Implementatio n status (%)
Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems	1.1.d: Number of sites specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.	6	100%

Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented	678	84.75%
Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	864	>100%
Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions	1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed	2	50%
	1.1.h: percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry	25%	25%

Table X: IUCN, 2024: Outcome achievements; Report January-April 2024; 44p

9.2. Annex 2: Selected project intervention areas and output targets

Component 1

Outcomes (Copy and paste outcomes from Result Framework)	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Progress rating (HS, S, MS,MU,U,SU)
Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities.	1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment	75,915 +	MS
	1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g.,	217,946.5 ++	MS
Outputs (Copy and paste outputs from Result Framework)	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Implementatio n status (%)
Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions	1.1.d: Number of sites specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.	6	100%

and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems			
Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented	678	84.75%
Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	864	>100%
Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions	1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed	2	50%
	1.1.h: percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry	25%	25%

Table X: IUCN, 2024: Outcome achievements; Report January-April 2024; 44p

Table 2: Component 2: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs

Outcomes <i>(Copy and paste outcomes from Result Framework)</i>	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Progress rating (HS, S,MS,MU,U, SU)
Outcome 2.1. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs.	2.1.a: Number of subs basins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures.	4	HS
Outputs <i>(Copy and paste outputs from Result Framework)</i>	Indicators	Result to Date (from project start)	Implementa tion status (%)
Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational.	2.1.b: Number of National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee NIC established.	4	100%
	2.1.c: Number of sessions of National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee organized	38	>100%
Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity	2.1.d: Number of training programme established, and training material disseminated;	1	100%
	2.1.e: Number of Male/Female staff trained;	115	>100%

	2.1.f: Number of training workshops organized about TDA-SAP and for water governance champions;	2	100%
	2.1.g: Number of study tours organized	1	100%

Table 3: Component 3: **Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management**

Objective 3: Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management							
Outcomes (<i>Copy and paste outcomes from Result Framework</i>)	Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of project Target	Periodic Result (01/07/2023-30/06/2024)	Result to Date (from project start)	Progress rating (HS, S,MS,MU ,U,SU)
Outcome 3.2. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource	2.2.a: Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management	5	N/A 5	5	0	5	100%
Output 3.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and	2.2.b: Number of awareness raising tools and events developed and implemented	0	N/A 15	16	2	17	>100%

implemented.	number of awareness-raising days,	0	N/A 12	9	19	31	>100%
	number and type of publications, and	0	N/A 13	8	0	13	>100%
	number and content of radio programme;	0	N/A 6	9	6	12	>100%
	2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management.	0	N/A 50,000	20,000	252 - Gui 95-CIV 1700- CIV 67- CIV 2,114	52,114	>100%

Output 3.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared.	2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level;	0	N/A 1	1	1	1	100%
	2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed;	0	N/A	1	1	1	100%
	2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and resilience measures in the SAP	0	N/A	1	1	1	100%

Output 3.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders	2.2.g: Number of websites created;	1	N/A 5	4	0	5	>100%
	2.2.h: Number of newsletters published on websites;	0	N/A 8	12	0	8	67%
	2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed.	0	N/A 0	1	0	0	0%
	2.2.j: Number of experience notes	0	N/A 0	1	0	0	0%
	2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences	0	N/A 1	1	0	1	100%

Output 3.2.4. Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented	2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies	0	N/A 0	1	1	1	100%
	2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU	0	N/A 0	1	1	1	40%

	2.2. n: Number of international donors' conference organized	0	N/A 0	30%	0	0	30%
	2.2.o: Number of regional events in which the projects is presented	0	N/A 3	3	3	3	100%

Annex 2.1: Project outcome achieved at country level (as of December 2021)

Table 9: Annex 2.1: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Cote-d'Ivoire, as of December

Component	Outcome	Outputs rating (%)	ACHIEVEMENT STATUS & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. Not applicable	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoring the productivity of tree systems disseminated to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in key production sectors affecting forest ecosystems. Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	Because several activities are not carried out in CI Pending deliverables from activities 4 and 1.15 not carried out in CI
		Output 1.1.2 : Establishment of training systems for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs. Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	Pending deliverables from activities 4 and 1.15 not carried out in CI
		Output 1.1.3 : Improved management of	The implementation of the Taï – Grebo – Sapo forest landscape

		agricultural activities in the vicinity of protected areas Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	platform is still pending. The NTP Landscape Advisory Committee is established.
		Output 1.1.4 : Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions. Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated Executed 100%	Output 1.2.1 : Project progress towards outcomes is documented and shared with all parties involved. Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	Activities attributed to the IC were regularly monitored
		Result 1.2.2 : Completion of a project evaluation and audit engagement Not applicable because only a few activities are performed	Evaluation is ongoing
Component 2: Sustainable Management of	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation	Output 2.1.1 : Established and Operational Interdepartmental National Implementation Committees 83.33%	Almost reached, remains the execution of an activity

Transboundary Waters 66.06%	of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); Executed at 88.8%, 75%	100%	The MTC's field activities had not yet begun.
		Output 2.1.2 : Strengthened capacity to prepare for and adopt ADD and PAS for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.66.67%	Delay in the preparation of the ADT document Delay in execution: ARE
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2);	Output 2.2.1 : Design and implementation of an outreach program focused on transboundary and environmental issues.53% 83.33%	Partially carried out with the support of the BRIDGE project/ Pending the programme of the programme carried out for this purpose

	48,8%/48.17%		
		Output 2.2.2 : The regional cross-border diagnostic analysis is prepared and is being validated and adopted at the ministerial level. Preliminary regional strategic action programmes are prepared, 39.67% 40%	Pending the establishment of the regional technical team. The national team is already in place. Remains the organization of meeting of the cross-border committee Awaiting regional ADT report Pending the preparation of the validated regional ADT report Linked to the realization of the ADT
		Output 2.2.3 : Inland navigation learning products generated and disseminated to a large community of local, national and regional stakeholders.100%	

		58%	
		Output 2.2.4 : Financial Resource Mobilization Strategy developed and implemented 0%	Can only start after the SAP has been developed Linked to the implementation of the SAP Linked to the implementation of the SAP
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 100% 75%	Output 2.3.1 : Project progress towards outcomes is documented and shared with all parties involved. 100%	
		Result 2.3.2 : Completion of a project evaluation and audit engagement 50%	Only the evaluation mission is in progress
Component 3: Project Management Costs 100%	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented 100%	Output 3.1.1 : The project management team is developed and functional 100%	The audits are carried out, but not yet the evaluation of the project

Tableau 10- Annex 2.2: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Guinea, as of December 2021

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	Weaknesses
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 90% Satisfaisant	Output 1.1.1: Site- specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree- based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems 95% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.1.1.1: Procure project operation logistics; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.1.2: Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.1.3: Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems; 85 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.1.4: Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop	Project administration and logistics ongoing. (i) slow administrative proactivity and financial constraints, (ii) late appointment of the essential staff and selection of the intervention sites on the ground caused undermined the progress of the activities, (iii) lack of equipment and materials, including vehicles and office equipment, as well as the withdrawal of some key partners, encountered by the NEA in the project implementation and the recruitment of Technical

			systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.1.5: Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders; 100 % Satisfaisant	Assistants which was only became effective in December 2018, that is, at the end of the second year.
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs 90% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.1.2.1: Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.2.2: Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on silvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles; 85% Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.2.3: Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups; 85 % Satisfaisant	

		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas 91% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.1.3.1: Activity 1.9: Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.3.2: Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.3.3: Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.3.4: Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings; 70 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.3.5: Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results; 86 % Satisfaisant	Final maps to be produced after all the restoration activities
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		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions 84% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.1.4.1: Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.4.2: Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations; 95% Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.4.3: Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.4.4: Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups; 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 1.1.4.5: Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees; 50 % Satisfaisant	Second stage of Activity ongoing
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			Activity 1.1.4.6: Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers; 60 % Satisfaisant	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 76% Satisfaisant	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 77% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.2.1.1: Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 76 % Satisfaisant	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 75% Satisfaisant	Activity 1.2.2.2: Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits. 75 % Satisfaisant	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational	Activity 2.1.1.1: Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.1.2: Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their	This is ongoing and has been largely succesful

	(2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 82% Satisfaisant	92% Satisfaisant	mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.1.3: Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans. 75% Satisfaisant	
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of	Activity 2.1.2.1: Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins. 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.2.2: Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders	

		international waters and biodiversity 100% Satisfaisant	involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme . 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.2.3: Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin. 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.2.4: Activity 2.7: Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP. 0% Activity 2.1.2.5: Activity 2.8: Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5. 60 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.1.2.6: Activity 2.9: Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), 100 % Satisfaisant	
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			Activity 2.1.2.7: Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues. 0%	
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented 100% Passable	Activity 2.2.1.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. 100 % Highly satisfactory Activity 2.2.1.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. 100% , Highly satisfactory Activity 2.2.1.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. . ?? Activity 2.2.1.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, 100 % Highly satisfactory Activity 2.2.1.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. 100 %	

	Union area (Outcome 2.2); 27.75% Passable		Activity 2.2.1.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.??%	
			Activity 2.2.1.7: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination. ??%	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared 100% Tres satisfaisant	Activity 2.2.2.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. 53% Satisfaisant Activity 2.2.2.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.2.2.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. 100 % Satisfaisant Activity 2.2.2.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, 00 %	

			Activity 2.2.2.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. 00 % Activity 2.2.2.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 00 %	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders 100% Highly satisfactory	Activity 2.2.3.1: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 48% Moyen	
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented 50%	Activity 2.2.4.1: Activity 2.18: Development of the resource mobilization strategy. 00% Activity 2.2.4.2: Activity 2.19: Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-	

			tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity. 00%	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 57.5% Moyen	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 65% Satisfaisant	Activity 2.3.1.1: Activity 2.20: Organize project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 100% Satisfaisant	
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50% Moyen	Activity 2.3.2.1: Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits. 100% Satisfaisant	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented 94% Satisfaisant 80%	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional 94% Satisfaisant	Activity 3.1.1.1: Activity 3.1: Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. 100% Satisfaisant Activity 3.1.1.2: Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units 98% Satisfaisant	

Tableau 11- Annex 2.3:: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Liberia, as of December 2021

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	NOT YET ACHIEVE ACHIEVEMENT SATUS & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 70%	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems	Activity 1.1.1.1: Procure project operation logistics; 80% Activity 1.1.1.2: Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems 60% 100% Activity 1.1.1.3: Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems; 100% Activity 1.1.1.4: Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized	

		80%	agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]; 100% 80% Activity 1.1.1.5: Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders; 100% 80%	
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs 100%	Activity 1.1.2.1: Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners 100% Activity 1.1.2.2: Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on silvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles; 100% Activity 1.1.2.3: Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups; 100% 80%	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the	Activity 1.1.3.1: Activity 1.9: Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from	

		vicinity of protected areas 70%	creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods; 100% Activity 1.1.3.2: Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers; 100% Activity 1.1.3.3: Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazettement the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures; 100% Activity 1.1.3.4: Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings; 100% Activity 1.1.3.5: Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results; 100% 80%	
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources	Activity 1.1.4.1: Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ; 100%	

		of income from different restoration interventions 70%	Activity 1.1.4.2: Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations; 80% Activity 1.1.4.3: Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas; 100% Activity 1.1.4.4: Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups; 100% Activity 1.1.4.5: Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees; On going Activity 1.1.4.6: Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers; On going	
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	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 85%	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 70%	Activity 1.2.1.1: Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 70%	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 100%	Activity 1.2.2.2: Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits70%	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis	Output 2.1.1: National Inter- Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational 100%	Activity 2.1.1.1: Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU 100% Activity 2.1.1.2: Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks 100%	

	(TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 50%		Activity 2.1.1.3: Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans100%	
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity 0%	Activity 2.1.2.1: Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins. (100% Activity 2.1.2.2: Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme 100% Activity 2.1.2.3: Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin. 100%	

			Activity 2.1.2.4: Activity 2.7: Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP. 0% Activity 2.1.2.5: Activity 2.8: Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5 0% 50% (BRIDGE project 4) Activity 2.1.2.6: Activity 2.9: Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), 0% 100% Activity 2.1.2.7: Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues. 50%	
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	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); 32.5%, Not yet fully achieved as the SAP is yet to be initiated	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented 50%	Activity 2.2.1.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. 0% 100% Activity 2.2.1.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively 100% Activity 2.2.1.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. 100% Activity 2.2.1.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, 30% Activity 2.2.1.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins 0% Activity 2.2.1.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 30%	This was supposed not to be implemented: Not yet achieved, TDA was validated and subject to conclusion base on the recommendation, while the SAP is yet to begin
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			Activity 2.2.1.7: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 40%	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared 50%	Activity 2.2.2.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. 100% Activity 2.2.2.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. 100% Activity 2.2.2.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. 100% Activity 2.2.2.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, On going Activity 2.2.2.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. 100% On going	

			Activity 2.2.2.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 0+++%	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders 15%	Activity 2.2.3.1: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 0% 40%	
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented 15%	Activity 2.2.4.1: Activity 2.18: Development of the resource mobilization strategy. 0% Activity 2.2.4.2: Activity 2.19: Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity. 0%	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and	Activity 2.3.1.1: Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 15%	

	32.5%	shared with all stakeholders 15%		
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50%	Activity 2.3.2.1: Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits (50%)	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented Achieved	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional 100%	Activity 3.1.1.1: Activity 3.1: Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. 0% 100% Activity 3.1.1.2: Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units 90% .	

Tableau 12- Annex 2.4:: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Sierra Leone, as of December 2021)

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	ACHIEVEMENT STATUS & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 87%	Output 1.1.1: Site- specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems	Activity 1.1.1.1: Procure project operation logistics; (70%) Activity 1.1.1.2: Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems; (100%) Activity 1.1.1.3: Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems; (95%)	

		90%	Activity 1.1.1.4: Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]; ; (100%) Activity 1.1.1.5: Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders; (98%)	
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	Activity 1.1.2.1: Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners (95%) Activity 1.1.2.2: Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on silvicultural oriented new agricultural	

		90%	measures/approaches and their certification principles; (95%) Activity 1.1.2.3: Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups; (95%)	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas 98%	Activity 1.1.3.1: Activity 1.9: Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.2: Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers; (20%) Activity 1.1.3.3: Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project	

			relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.4: Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.5: Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results; (95%)	
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions 70%	Activity 1.1.4.1: Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.2: Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated	

			planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations; (85%) Activity 1.1.4.3: Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.4: Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.5: Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees; (60%) Activity 1.1.4.6: Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers; (60%)	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 55%	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders	Activity 1.2.1.1: Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions (60%)	

		60%		
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50%	Activity 1.2.2.2: Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits. (50%)	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water	Output 2.1.1: National Inter- Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational 90%	Activity 2.1.1.1: Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU (90%) Activity 2.1.1.2: Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks (98%) Activity 2.1.1.3: Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans. (75%)	

	resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 85%			
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity 80%	Activity 2.1.2.1: Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins. (98%) Activity 2.1.2.2: Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme (98%) Activity 2.1.2.3: Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin. (40%) Activity 2.1.2.4: Activity 2.7: Organize a study tour in one other international river basin	

			organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP. (0%) Activity 2.1.2.5: Activity 2.8: Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5. (45%) Activity 2.1.2.6: Activity 2.9: Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), (95%) Activity 2.1.2.7: Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues. (10%)	
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	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); 27.5%	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented 30%	Activity 2.2.1.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. (90%) Activity 2.2.1.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. (96%) Activity 2.2.1.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. (96%) Activity 2.2.1.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%) Activity 2.2.1.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted	

			Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. (80%) Activity 2.2.1.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. (30%)	
			Activity 2.2.1.7: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination (30%)	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared	Activity 2.2.2.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. (96%) Activity 2.2.2.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. Activity 2.2.2.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. 100%	

		50%	Activity 2.2.2.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, 15% Activity 2.2.2.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. On going Activity 2.2.2.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 30%	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders	Activity 2.2.3.1: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 40%	

		30%		
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented 0%	Activity 2.2.4.1: Activity 2.18: Development of the resource mobilization strategy. 0% Activity 2.2.4.2: Activity 2.19: Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity. 0%	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 45%	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 40%	Activity 2.3.1.1: Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 40%	
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out	Activity 2.3.2.1: Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.(50%)	

		50%		
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented 92.5%	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional 92.5%	Activity 3.1.1.1: Activity 3.1: Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. (95%) Activity 3.1.1.2: Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units (90%) .	

Project results achieved at regional level, as of December 2021

Tableau 13- Annex 3.1: Achievements of the operation plan (From Patrick 2021 consolidated report;

How did you get the data from Cote-d'Ivoire, since it is not concerned by Component 1? LINKS WITH TABLE 8?)

OUTPUTS OF COMPONENT 1:	SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA	LIBERIA	COTE D'IVOIRE I UNDERSTAND COMPONENT 1 IS NOT IMPLEMENTED IN COTE-D'IVOIRE AS PER THE QUESTIONNAIRE FILLED IN AND I RECEIVED FROM THEM	MRU	GLOBAL
Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary	93%	88 400 ha 93%	79%	60% ??	93%	81%

agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems						
Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	92%	95%	100%		20%	77%
Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	76%	91%	60%		81%	77%
Output 1.1.4. Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions	63%	87%	56%		92%	74%
Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders	68%	68%	68%	68% ??	68%	68%
Output 1.2.2 Project evaluation and audit mission carried out.	50%	50%	50%	50% ??	50%	50%
Average Component 1 (6 Outputs)	73%	80%	69%	59% ??	67%	71%
OUTPUT OF COMPONENT 2:	SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA	LIBERIA	COTE D'IVOIRE	MRU	Global
Output 2.1.1: National inter-ministerial committees established and operational	93%	90%	85%	87%	100%	91%

Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.	75%	75%	75%	67%	75%	73%
Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented	56%	60%	60%	60%	60%	59%
Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared.	38%	35%	33%	31%	34%	34%
Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders	48%	40%	38%	40%	40%	41%
Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders	68%	68%	63%	68%	68%	67%
Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out.	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Average Component 2	53%	52%	50%	50%	53%	52%

Tableau 14- Annex 3.2. Outcomes and outputs achievement as per indicator (From MRU, Report)

	Outcome/Output Indicators	Results to Date	Project Target	Progress
C. Outcomes achievements and project effectiveness	Objective 1: - Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities.			78.25%
	1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)	38964	88400	44%
	1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting, etc.)	105,000.0	93,400	112.42%
	Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs			100%
	2.1.a: Number of subbasins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures	4	4	100%

	Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management			100%
	2.2.a: Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management	5	5	100%
	Objective 4. The project is effectively and efficiently managed			100%
	2.2.p: Number of project management unit established at regional level	1	1	100%
	2.2.q: Number of project coordination unit established at national level	4	4	100%
Output achievements and project delivery	Objective 1. Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities			65%
	1.1.d: Number of site-specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.	2	4	50%
	1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented	678	800	85%
	1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	80	80	100%
	1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed	2	4	50%

1.1.h: Percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry	10%	25%	40%
Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs			91%
2.1.b: Number of Multi sectorial Technical Committee (MTC) established	4	4	100%
Number of events/tools developed and implemented:	6	6	100%
Number of awareness-raising days,	10	6	167%
Number and type of publications,	5	8	63%
Number and content of radio-programme	6	9	67%
2.1.c: Number of sessions of Multi sectorial Technical Committee meetings (MTC) organized	24	24	100%
2.1.d: Number of training programme established	1	1	100%
Number training material disseminated	1	1	100%
2.1.e: Number of Male/Female staff trained;	20	20	100%
2.1.f: Number of training workshops organized about TDA-SAP and for water governance champions;	2	2	100%

	2.1.g: Number of study tours organized	0	1	0%
	Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management			45%
	2.2.b: Number of awareness raising tools	15	16	94%
	Number of awareness-raising days,	6	6	100%
	Number and type of publications,	5	8	63%
	Number and content of radio-programme	6	9	67%
	2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management	20,000	20000	100%
	2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level;	0	1	0%
	2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed;	0	1	0%
	2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and resilience measures in the SAP;	0	1	0%
	2.2.g: Number of websites created;	4	4	100%
	2.2.h: Number of newsletters published on websites;	6	12	50%
	2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed.	0	1	0%

	2.2.j: Number of experience notes	0	2	0%
	2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences	1	1	100%
	2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies	0	1	0%
	2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU	0%	30%	0%
	2.2.n: Number of international donor's conference organized	0	1	0%
	2.2.o: Number of regional events in which the projects are presented	3	3	100%

Tableau 15- Annex 3.2: Progress towards the project output completion at regional level

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	Weaknesses
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 87%	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems 90%	Activity 1.1.1.1: Procure project operation logistics; (70%) Activity 1.1.1.2: Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems; (100%) Activity 1.1.1.3: Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems; (95%) Activity 1.1.1.4: Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree- based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree- crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree	Project administration and logistics ongoing. Final Stage

			species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]; ; (100%) Activity 1.1.1.5: Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders; (98%)	
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs 90%	Activity 1.1.2.1: Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners (95%) Activity 1.1.2.2: Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on silvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles; (95%) Activity 1.1.2.3: Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups; (95%)	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture	Activity 1.1.3.1: Activity 1.9: Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from	Final maps to be produced after all the

		activities within the vicinity of protected areas 98%	creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.2: Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers; (20%) Activity 1.1.3.3: Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazettement the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.4: Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings; (80%) Activity 1.1.3.5: Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results; (95%)	restoration activities
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of	Activity 1.1.4.1: Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and	Second stage of Activity ongoing

		income from different restoration interventions 70%	pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.2: Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations; (85%) Activity 1.1.4.3: Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.4: Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups; (98%) Activity 1.1.4.5: Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees; (60%)	
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			Activity 1.1.4.6: Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers; (60%)	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 55%	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 60%	Activity 1.2.1.1: Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions (60%)	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50%	Activity 1.2.2.2: Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits. (70%)	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational 90% (Not achieved: Multisectoral Technical)	Activity 2.1.1.1: Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU (90%) Activity 2.1.1.2: Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks (98%)	This is ongoing and has been largely succesful

	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 85%		Activity 2.1.1.3: Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans. (75%)	
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity 80%	Activity 2.1.2.1: Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins. (98%) Activity 2.1.2.2: Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme (98%)	

			Activity 2.1.2.3: Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin. (40%) Activity 2.1.2.4: Activity 2.7: Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP. (0%) Activity 2.1.2.5: Activity 2.8: Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5. (45%) Activity 2.1.2.6: Activity 2.9: Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), (95%)	
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			Activity 2.1.2.7: Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues. (10%)	
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented 30% (Awareness raising programs tors designed for the recruitment of Communication expert to help implement those activities)	Activity 2.2.1.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. (90%) Activity 2.2.1.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. (96%) Activity 2.2.1.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. (96%) Activity 2.2.1.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%)	

	River Union area (Outcome 2.2); 27.5%		Activity 2.2.1.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. (80%) Activity 2.2.1.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. (30%)	
			Activity 2.2.1.7: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination (30%)	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared 50% (National and Regional TDA Completed and	Activity 2.2.2.1: Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. (90%) Activity 2.2.2.2: Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively (95). Activity 2.2.2.3: Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. (90%) Activity 2.2.2.4: Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional	

		validated. Awaiting the start of the SAP)	levels of the final geographically-specific TDA. To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%) Activity 2.2.2.5: Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins. (80%) Activity 2.2.2.6: Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. (30%)	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders 30%	Activity 2.2.3.1: Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination (30%)	
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented	Activity 2.2.4.1: Activity 2.18: Development of the resource mobilization strategy. (0%) Activity 2.2.4.2: Activity 2.19: Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for	

		0%	the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity. Base (0%)	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 45%	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 40%	Activity 2.3.1.1: Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions (0%)	
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50% (Audit mission carried out twice since inception)	Activity 2.3.2.1: Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits. (0%)	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented 90%	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional	Activity 3.1.1.1: Activity 3.1: Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. (95%)	

		90% (NPCU actively functioning in the project implementation)	Activity 3.1.1.2: Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units (90%)	

Annex 4.1-Activites des Parties Prenantes

TableauT 16- Annex 4.1: Contribution of the Stakeholder engaged in the project implementation (extracted from Monitoring-Evaluation Officer)

STAKEHOLDERS	COUNTRY	ROLE / PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT	ACHIEVEMENTS
Rainforest Alliance	SL-LIB-GN	Support activities 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8	
RSPB-SL – Gola Rainforest NP	SL	Support activities 1.13, 1.15, 1.17, on SL sites	
Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	SL	Support activities 1.13 on SL sites	
Farmers Association for Conservation of the Environment (FACE)	LB	Support activities 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 1.17 & 1.19 on LB sites	Implemented the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology
Rural Integrated Centre for Community Empowerment (RICCE)	LB		

Partner for Nature and Development (PAND)	LB	Support to the implementation of activities 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8	Output 1.12, Training system established for Farmer how to improve management patrices to meet certification program.
GREENLIFE/ FACE PARTNERSHIP	??	Worked with FACE (partnership) to implement Activities 1.2, 1.9, 1.14 and 1.17, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.15	Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems
SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (SEC)	??	Implemented Activity 1.16	Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions
WEDE Agriculture Development Industry	??	Implemented Activity 1.10	Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	LB	Support activities 1.13 on LB sites	
Fauna and Flora International, (FFI)	GN	Support activities 1.13 on GN sites	
Environmental management Centre of the Nimba Mountains (CEGENS)	GN	Take advantage of the project's support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	
Nzérékoré Forest Centre	GN	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	

Cooperative Woko associated with the Research Institute and Applications of Development - IRAM (Production Robusta Coffee Certified « Coffee Ziama-Macenta")	GN	Support activities 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 1.19 on GN sites	
National Council of Civil Society national in Guinea	GN	Support activities 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.15 for the portions of basin organizations	
Ivorian Observatory Resources (OI-REN)	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	
Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR)	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	Uninflamed activities in Cote-d'Ivoire. However, the OIPR was involved in activities 1.12 (100%) and 2.3 (100%)
Parks and Reserves Foundation	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	Activities not carried out in CI. However, the Foundation is invited to some activities: Project Launch, Activities 2.6, Activity 2.13.
National Partnership of Water in Côte Côte d'Ivoire (PNECI)	CI	Support activities 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.15, for National portions of the targeted basin	Activity 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 (100%). Activity 2.15 not yet performed

Rowland Stevens	Information not provided	Outcome 2.4.	No information provided
Rowland Stevens	Information not provided	Outcome 2.5.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 1.9.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Act. 1.17.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 1.2.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Act.1.11.6	
Greenlife West Africa	Information not provided	Outcome 1.14.	
Ecosys SL Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 2.9 & 2.13	
Gola Rainforest National Park	Information not provided	Outcome 1.6, 1.7 & 1.8	
Welt Hunger Hilfe	Information not provided	Outcome 1.3 & 1.13	
Greenlife West Africa	Information not provided	Outcome 1.4, 1.5 & 1.15	

Annex 5.1: Budget

Tableau 17- Annex 5.1: Detailed budget expenditures (From MRU Report)

un rapport de démarrage a été produit (voir en annexe)

II. ETAT D'AVANCEMENT DU PROJET AU 31 décembre 2023

Activités	Budget Contractuel	Dépenses	Solde	Taux d'exécution Financière (%)	Taux de réalisation Technique (%)	Commentaires
Activité 1.1: Procurer la logistique pour les activités du projet	385 533	385 533	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 1.2: Réaliser une enquête et une compilation de données sur les meilleures pratiques et les résultats de différentes interventions de restauration des forêts et des paysages telles que la foresterie durable, la régénération naturelle, la plantation d'enrichissement, le reboisement, l'exploitation minière respectueuse de l'environnement et d'autres pratiques arboricoles telles que les systèmes agroforestiers traditionnels et améliorés	11 630	11 630	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 1.3: Identifier et mettre en place des parcelles d'apprentissage/de production en plein champ pour soutenir et renforcer les diverses composantes arboricoles des systèmes agricoles existants	49 067	49 067	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>

Activité 1.4: Élaborer des documents d'orientation propres à chaque site ou relatifs aux possibilités d'utilisation des systèmes arboricoles	19 173	19 173	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.5: Diffusion des documents d'orientation pendant les campagnes de sensibilisation organisées en coopération avec les principales parties prenantes	22 200	22 200	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.6: Mettre en place des offres de formation et en faire la promotion, par voie médiatique, auprès des différents groupes cibles comme les agriculteurs et les planificateurs de l'utilisation des terres.	9 300	9300	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.7: Elaborer les termes de référence de la formation des organismes stratégiques (Centre Forestier de Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Institut de formation de Tubman burg/Bomi) aux nouvelles mesures/méthodes agricoles axées sur la sylviculture et leurs principes de certification ;	81 700	81700	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.8: Offrir des sessions de formation à l'intention des principales parties prenantes et de leurs groupes cibles ;	31 733	31 733	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.9: Produire les premières cartes de possibilités de restauration arboricole,	21 325	21325	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée

préparer des rapports sur les résultats et les besoins de levé au sol.						
Activité 1.10: Sélectionner et former des personnels pour mettre au point des synergies entre le point de rencontre entre les forêts et l'agriculture et les nommer dans les services de vulgarisation pour les services-conseils offerts aux agriculteurs ciblés ;	36 267	36267	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.11: Réviser et produire des documents juridiques où sont classées les zones de réhabilitation forestière du projet ayant un rapport avec les mesures agroforestières	51 667	47 490	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.12: Mettre en place des comités consultatifs locaux et des plateformes transfrontalières et organiser leurs réunions	45 000	45 000	-	100%	100%	Activité en cours
Activité 1.13: Fournir une assistance technique in situ et assurer le suivi pendant la durée de vie du projet afin d'assurer la pérennité des résultats	219 200	219 200	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.14: Recueillir des informations sur les populations humaines et la dynamique socioéconomique afin d'évaluer les origines des menaces qui pèsent sur les ressources naturelles et les voies par	31 720	31720	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée

lesquelles elles impactent les moyens de subsistance et la gestion durable des ressources ;						
Activité 1.15: Tester et soutenir les meilleures pratiques expérimentales permanentes pour faire une démonstration des méthodes d'utilisation des terres améliorées en milieu de travail avec la réorganisation du zonage de l'utilisation des terres rurales autour des aires protégées et organiser des ateliers de planification et d'évaluation au terme desquels des recommandations sont formulées	70 667	70667	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.16: Élaboration de recommandations formelles relatives au (re)classement et au zonage des zones forestières prioritaires identifiées	36 933	36 933	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.17: Négociation de la planification intégrée de l'utilisation de terres de manière participative avec les parties prenantes et les groupes cibles	10 667	10667	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée
Activité 1.18: Organisation de réunions des comités consultatifs	8 800	8800	-	100%	100%	Activité terminée

Activité 1.19: Vérifier par le biais des rapports d'activité et d'évaluation, et des visites aux agriculteurs ciblés	16 000	16000	-	100%	1000%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Sous Total	1 158 582	1 158582	-			
Activité 1.20: Organiser les rapports annuels, la revue et la planification du projet, y compris les missions de suivi-évaluation	42 333	42 333	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité Régionale</i>
Activité 1.21: Organiser des réunions du comité de pilotage du projet	8 333	8 333	-	100%	75%	<i>Activité Régionale</i>
Activité 1.22: Mission d'évaluation et d'audit effectuée	18 356	18 356	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité Régionale</i>
Sous Total	69 022	69 022	-			
Activité 2.1: Organiser des concertations ministérielles pour identifier les membres compétents des comités nationaux interministériels	12 000	12 000	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.2: Installation officielle des comités nationaux interministériels et préparation de leur mission, de leur plan d'action et de leurs organigrammes	5 000	5 000	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>

Activité 2.3: Soutenir la mise en œuvre des plans d'action des comités nationaux interministériels.	34 000	34 000	-	89%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.4: Réalisation d'une étude détaillée des parties prenantes du secteur de l'eau dans les bassins transfrontaliers prioritaires.	4 520	4 520	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.5: Détermination des besoins de formation des parties prenantes régionales, nationales et locales impliquées dans le processus d'élaboration de l'ADT et du PAS et élaboration d'un programme de formation.	4 520	4 520	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.6: Organisation de sessions de formation dans chaque pays participant concernant l'approche méthodologique et le processus de planification de l'élaboration d'une ADT et d'un PAS dans un bassin transfrontalier.	20 120	20 120	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.7: Organisation d'un voyage d'étude dans une autre organisation internationale du bassin ayant élaboré une ADT et un PAS.	17 280	17 280	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.8: Animation des ateliers nationaux de formation à l'intention des champions de la gouvernance de l'eau sur les thèmes comprenant les compétences en	10 080	10080	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>

leadership, l'élaboration des plans d'action, l'influence politique et l'intégration du genre dans chaque bassin prioritaire (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté)						
Activité 2.9: Constitution d'une simple base de données régionale stockant les données et les informations compilées sur les eaux internationales et la biodiversité	2 980	2 980	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Sous Total	110 500	106 283	-	100%	100%	
Activité 2.10: Élaboration et mise en œuvre d'un programme de sensibilisation aux questions transfrontalières et environnementales propres à chaque site	42 800	42800	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.11: Mise en place des équipes consultatives techniques nationales et régionales en vue de la gestion de l'élaboration des processus de l'ADT et du SAP dans les bassins prioritaires.	14 475	14 475	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.12: Appui à la mise en place d'un comité transfrontalier dans les bassins des fleuves (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) et Great Scarcies-Kolanté respectivement.	12 225	12 225	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.13: Réalisation de l'analyse diagnostique transfrontalière de la région.	95 125	95125	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>

Activité 2.14: Suivi et appui à l'examen et à l'adoption au niveau ministériel et régional de l'ADT finale propre à chacun des bassins prioritaires	24 000	24 000	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.15: Large distribution/diffusion de l'analyse diagnostique transfrontalière adoptée à l'échelle régionale et locale dans les 3 bassins prioritaires	4 500	4500-	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.16: Élaboration du Programme d'action stratégique préliminaire	94 575	94575	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 2.17: Élaboration et diffusion des produits d'information de IW:LEARN.	13 000	13000	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>
Activité 2.18: Développement de la stratégie de mobilisation des ressources	11 040	11040	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>
Activité 2.19: Coopération avec les donateurs bilatéraux et multilatéraux: conférence internationale des donateurs et communication des événements régionaux	11 147	11147 -	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>
Activité 2.20: Organiser les rapports annuels, l'a revue et la planification du projet, y compris les missions de suivi-évaluation			-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>
Activité 2.21: Organiser des réunions du comité de pilotage du projet			-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>

Activité 2.22: Organiser des évaluations à mi-parcours et finales, et des audits			-	100%	100%	<i>Activité régionale</i>
Sous Total	322 887	256 907	-	100%	100%	
Activité 3.1: Désignation des cellules de gestion et de coordination du projet à l'échelle régionale et nationale.	22 500	22 500	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Activité 3.2: Dotation en matériel de bureau des cellules de gestion et de coordination du projet.	5 760	5 739	-	100%	100%	<i>Activité terminée</i>
Sous Total	28 260	28260	-	100%	100%	
Grand Total	1 689 250	1689250	-	100%	100%	

1.1. Annex 6: Sites visités

1. Guinea:

- i. Guekedou: X: 8° 30' 00" N; Y: 10° 07' 56" W; Description: Forest landscapes + farms;
- ii. Iama Forest, Mont Nimba: X: 7° 37' 48" N; Y : 8° 28' 03" W; Altitude: 571 m; Description :Nimba landscape, fruit tree plantation (coffee, palm, cacao, etc.) on community demonstration plots to promote fruit tree planting in the area though agroforestry technics and training farmers on forest natural regeneration, without any soil preparation work or improvement, including animal husbandry (small ruminants, pigs, poultry, etc.).
- iii. Bah Village: X: 7° 37' 02" N; Y : 8° 32' 27" W; Altitude: 576 m; Description : Before we used to clear the forest to implement farm through "Slash and burn" practices in the forest to cultivate crops, and once the fertility declines, we open a new farm leaving behind a shrubby fallow. Now we take care of the forest without cutting down the trees, just direct planting of fruit trees in opened areas (cacao, Coffee, Pineapple, The community trained is composed of 17 men and 17 women. The nursery requires some improvements with supply of plastic bag and seeds for nursery



Discussion avec les populations du Village de Bah, Guinée

2. Liberia:

- i. Site 1 : ???; X: ??; Y: ??; Altitude: ??; Description: Two sites visited. Tree seedling planted along lines opened inside the forest and planted with fruit trees (Cacao, Coffee, etc.);
- ii. Site 2: ??; X: ???; X: ??; Y: ??; Altitude: ??; Description: Coffee and Cacao farm planted randomly on forest area after clearing, without any land improvement. The young, planted seedlings have a good shape and well maintained much better than the inside forest planted lines



3. Sierra Leone:

- i. Site 1: Hunger project; X: 7° 53' 17" N; Y: 11°11' 32" W; Activities: Briefing meeting with the staff
- ii. Gola forest: X: 7° 51' 12" N; Y : 11°11' 09" W; Altitude: 169 m; Description: Meeting with Staff of the Gola forest conservation;
- iii. Site 2 : Baoma village: X: 7° 33' 07" N; Y : 11°18' 10" W; Altitude : ??; Description : Village center;
- iv. Site 3: Mapuma: X: 7° 33' 09" N; Y : 11°19' 27" W; Altitude : ??; Description : Community individual farmer's fruit tree plantation: 29 Farmer plots: Fruit Trees garden (450 coco, 50 pineapple, 50 Banana plantain, 6 bamboos, 6 Medicinal plants, etc.); training on nursery, tree planting; poor seedlings;
- v. Site 4: Gola demonstration site: X: 7° 33' 07" N; Y : 11°17' 39" W; Altitude : 115 m; Description : 25 owners (15 men & 10 women) on area of 1 acre; weak plants needing more maintenance support at least for 3 years
- vi. Site 5: Slush and burn tree farm; X: 7° 33' 38" N; Y: 11°18' 08" W; Description: Forestland clearing through Slash & Burn for farming.





Photos of 2023: Nurseries were established for the seedlings to reach maturity before transplanting