GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Promoting Sustainable land management for the achievement of Land Degradation Neutrality for Improved Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience in Rice Landscapes of Liberia

Region	GEF Project ID
Liberia	11720
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Liberia	FSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
FAO	754252
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
Environmental Protection Agency	Government
Ministry of Agriculture	Government
Central Agricultural Research Institute	Government
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Multi Focal Area	9/18/2024

Project Sector (CCM Only)

AFOLU

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Influencing models, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Land Degradation, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Cover and Land cover change, Land Productivity, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Sustainable Land Management, Sustainable Agriculture, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Livelihoods, Ecosystem Approach, Food Security, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Women groups, Beneficiaries, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Access to benefits and services, Participation and leadership

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	60
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
5,114,019.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
485,832.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
5,599,851.00	37,582,973.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

150,000.00	14,250.00
PPG total amount: (e+f) 164,250.00	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f) 5,764,101.00
Project Tags CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No	

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B "project description".(max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Approximately 69 percent of Liberia's land is covered by forests[1][1], providing essential ecosystem services for both Liberians and the global community. The forest ecosystems are seen as key to driving the nation's economic development[2][2]. However, land-use changes and unsustainable agricultural practices increasingly endanger these valuable ecosystems. The expansion of rice cultivation to meet the demands of a growing population, combined with unsustainable farming practices, is exacerbating land degradation and reducing productivity. Land degradation, compounded by climate change, intensifies rural and coastal poverty and food insecurity.

To address these challenges, the proposed project will focus on rice landscapes, aiming to improve land use, enhance soil health, and reduce land degradation through the large-scale adoption of sustainable land management practices. The project aims to sustainably intensify productivity and reduce shifting cultivation encroaching into natural forest land, by promoting rice cultivation in lowlands, which can support three growing seasons per year, compared to uplands that only allow one This strategy will enhance livelihood options while preserving critical ecosystem services provided by forests that predominate highland areas. Global environmental and development benefits will be achieved through three integrated components: (i) strengthening the enabling environment for land degradation neutrality (LDN) by addressing fragmented policies, weak institutional capacities, and supporting Liberia's LDN targets; (ii) integrating sustainable land management and gender-sensitive approaches to achieve LDN outcomes; and (iii) promoting knowledge management for scaling innovation in monitoring and evaluating LDN targets

The project, along with baseline investments, focuses on the sustainable management and productivity intensification of rice landscapes. As of 2016, 312,314 farming households were engaged in rice production, with an average cultivated area of 0.85 hectares and a yield of 1.26 Mt/ha[3][3] (LISGIS 2018). Major rice-producing counties include Lofa, Nimba, and Bong, which are among the target areas for this project. Using a comprehensive landscape approach, the project will collaborate with parallel investments, such as the GEF-8 CFB-IP, to holistically address the impacts on Liberia's natural and production lands.

[1] Victor K Agyeman et al., *Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Liberia—The 4Cs Approach* (Forest Development Authority, 2022).

[2] Agyeman et al. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Liberia—The 4Cs Approach (Forest Development Authority, 2022).

[3] Liberia National Rice Development Strategy II: 2018 - 2030

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To promote sustainable land management practices in rice landscapes that support the achievement of Liberia's voluntary LDN targets

Project Components

Component 1: Enabling environment for the achievement of Liberia's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1,782,000.00	4,380,963.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: Strengthened national institutional capacity for improved policy implementation and coordination among mandated agencies for the achievement of land degradation neutrality

Indicators: 1.1a: Number of institutions strengthened for improved policy implementation and coordination for achievement of land degradation neutrality

1.1b: Number of Inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms on LDN institutionalized

Outcome 1.2: Enhanced capacities for scaling of SLM at subnational and smallholder-farmers levels

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Gender inclusive Inter-agency coordination mechanisms for LDN implementation among Liberia's mandated agencies established

Output 1.1.2: Gender responsive lessons learned on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and LDN mainstreamed in land use related policies

Output 1.1.3: SLM regulatory instruments and incentive mechanisms to support LDN reviewed and updated

Output 1.1.4: Capacity for SLM of degraded landscapes strengthened within Liberia's mandated agencies

Output 1.2.1: Capacity in SLM, LDN and monitoring of LDN indicators (using LADA, WOCAT, applying Gender action learning (GAL) and farmer field school approaches) in Liberia's degraded landscapes strengthened at subnational level.

Output 1.2.2: Capacity for smallholder farmers and community producer groups to adopt SLM gender responsive practices enhanced

Component 2: Integrating SLM and gender-sensitive approaches to achieve land degradation neutrality

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
2,424,796.00	30,000,000.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: Increased integration of SLM practices and gender-responsive approaches in selected demonstration rice landscapes

Outcome Indicator: (a) Number of ha in the targeted landscapes that are undertaking SLM practices for LDN

Target a: At least 25,000ha of degraded land.

(b) Number of people in the targeted landscapes that are undertaking SLM practices for LDN

Target b: At least 60,000 people in five counties for five years

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Participatory gender responsive integrated land management plans (land use plans, forestry / agroforestry management plans, wetland management plans) in the target landscapes *(Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Montserrado & Grand Kru)* developed

Output 2.1.2: SLM practices in degraded landscapes demonstrated to avoid, reduce and restore degradation

Output 2.1.3: A framework for integration of gender-sensitive SLM practices for LDN developed

Component 3. Promoting knowledge management for the scaling up of innovation in monitoring and evaluation of land degradation neutrality targets

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
510,278.00	285,715.00

Outcome:

3.1: Established knowledge management system for SLM and LDN approaches with a gender-sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy

Indicator: 3.1a: Number of new data products on LDN national level reporting, research efforts and decision-making

Output:

Output 3.1.1: A functioning National LDN monitoring and reporting system developed

Output 3.1.2: Knowledge management and gender-sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy in place

Output 3.1.3: Results for replication of LDN approaches documented and disseminated

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
153,420.00	1,126,630.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1: An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project

Outcome Indicator 4.1: Number of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks developed for the project

Outcome Target 4.1: At least 5 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by FAO-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Output:

Output 4.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to FAO-GEF Agency.

Output 4.1.2: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and FAO-GEF Evaluation Policies

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)

Outcome:

Output:

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
Component 1: Enabling environment for the achievement of Liberia's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets	1,782,000.00	4,380,963.00
Component 2: Integrating SLM and gender-sensitive approaches to achieve land degradation neutrality	2,424,796.00	30,000,000.00
Component 3. Promoting knowledge management for the scaling up of innovation in monitoring and evaluation of land degradation neutrality targets	510,278.00	285,715.00
Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	153,420.00	1,126,630.00
M&E		
Subtotal	**4,870,494.00**	**35,793,308.00**

Project Management Cost	243,525.00	1,789,665.00
Total Project Cost ($)	**5,114,019.00**	**37,582,973.00**

Please provide justification

N/A

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Liberia's biophysical and socio-economic context

Liberia, situated along the west coast of Africa, boasts diverse ecosystems that include tropical forests, savannas, and coastal plains. Spanning approximately 9.6 million hectares, the country is home to around 5.2 million people. Its economy is heavily reliant on natural resources, particularly agriculture and forestry, which are vital for the livelihoods of its predominantly rural population.

Agriculture contributes significantly to Liberia's GDP (38%) and employs 70% of the workforce, especially smallholder farmers. Liberia's agricultural system is primarily **rain-fed and subsistence-based**, with smallholder farmers cultivating rice, cassava, and other crops on plots of land typically under 2 hectares. The low use of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers and improved seeds, combined with poor infrastructure and limited market access, constrain productivity. Farmers face additional challenges from land tenure insecurity and weak institutional support, further complicating efforts to adopt sustainable land management (SLM) practices.

Rice, the main staple crop, is central to the livelihoods of rural communities, but as productivity remains low, the country depends on imports to meet domestic demand. Poverty is pervasive, with over 50% of the population living below the poverty line, and rural areas are the most affected. **Gender disparities** also persist, with women playing a crucial role in agriculture yet having limited access to resources and decision-making opportunities.

Environmental degradation, driven by deforestation, shifting cultivation, and unsustainable farming practices, has led to the loss of fertile land and a decline in agricultural productivity. **Climate change** is compounding these issues by increasing the frequency of extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, which further stress fragile ecosystems and vulnerable communities. The population, particularly

youth, is increasingly migrating to urban areas or abroad in search of better opportunities, contributing to labor shortages in rural agriculture.

Land degradation putting Liberia's natural resource base – upon which the economy relies - at risk

Over the last 20 years, Liberia's population has increased by 65%, placing significant pressure on the country's natural resources, particularly its forests[1]4 [2]5. Liberia is home to two of West Africa's three largest remaining rainforest blocks, which cover approximately 69% of the nation's total land area. However, the demand for alternative land uses now threatens the country's rich biodiversity. Since 1975, land-use change is believed to have contributed to the loss of 650,000 hectares of forest, representing an overall 15% loss by 2017 [3]6.

The forestry and agriculture sectors, which together accounted for 95.3% of Liberia's export earnings in 2001/2002, are at the heart of this competition for land use[4]7. While agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for many Liberians[5]8, land degradation puts smallholder households at considerable risk. Complex land ownership patterns and the lack of an equitable land tenure system exacerbate the expansion of shifting agriculture, driving deforestation and worsening land degradation and biodiversity loss[6]9. Furthermore, poor coordination and management by mandated institutions, particularly the lack of extension services, contribute to further degradation[7]10. Unsustainable agricultural practices, particularly shifting cultivation, threaten the country's forests, biodiversity, and livelihoods, resulting in the depletion of soil organic matter and accelerated land degradation[8]11.

Liberia's degraded land spans 496,500 hectares of declining land, 674,300 hectares of moderately declined land, and 1,220,900 hectares of stressed areas. [9]12 The country's 2020-2030 National Adaptation Plan (NAP) emphasizes the urgent challenge of environmental degradation, compounded by climate change. Agricultural productivity—already hindered by land degradation and extreme weather—is further threatened by a changing climate, as key crops such as rice are highly climate-sensitive. [10]13

An assessment of land degradation trends using UNCCD data highlights significant changes over 15 years in all three indicators (land cover/land use change, land productivity dynamics, and soil organic carbon levels). These shifts indicate Liberia's vulnerability to land degradation. Liberia ranks 8th globally in climate change

vulnerability[11][14], with climate change exacerbating environmental degradation, reducing agricultural productivity, and increasing the risk of flooding, landslides, and disease outbreaks.

Climate change further intensifies environmental risks by exacerbating soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and habitat degradation, which in turn results in crop losses. As Liberia's primary crops, including rice and vegetables, are highly sensitive to changes in temperature, humidity, and rainfall, rural communities—particularly women and children—are left more vulnerable to food insecurity and income loss. [12][15] [13][16] A landscape-level approach is needed to address land degradation and restore productivity.

Key landscapes affected by degradation in Liberia include tidal swamps, floodplains, valley swamps, and low hills, where rice—Liberia's staple crop—is predominantly grown[14][17]. Rice cultivation, practiced by 71% of Liberia's 404,000 farming families, mainly relies on traditional slash-and-burn shifting methods, which lead to low productivity. Despite a high annual per capita rice consumption of 133 kg, one of the highest in Africa, domestic production has not kept up with demand. In 2010, rice was grown on 251,230 hectares with an average yield of 1.1 metric tons per hectare, producing 296,090 metric tons. By 2016, 312,314 farming households were engaged in rice cultivation, averaging 0.85 hectares per farm with a slightly higher yield of 1.26 metric tons per hectare[15][18]. The widespread use of labor-intensive and low-yielding traditional methods, has exacerbated deforestation, soil erosion, and environmental degradation[16][19].

Land degradation status and trends

A 2013 analysis carried by FAO, and reported in the LDN Target Setting Report of Liberia, revealed that two-thirds of Liberia's land was forested, but 44% of it was degraded. Key drivers of land degradation in Liberia fall into three categories, two of which will be addressed directly by this project:

- Deforestation, mainly driven by slash-and-burn shifting cultivation agricultural production activities.
- Unsustainable Agricultural Practices leading to a decline in soil organic matter, threatening forests, biodiversity, and the land people depend on.
- Urbanization, with infrastructure development encroaching on agricultural and forest land, contributing to degradation.

An assessment of land degradation trends using the UNCCD's LDN indicators (Land Cover/Land Use Change, Land Productivity Dynamics, and Soil Organic Carbon) over 15 years highlights negative trends[17][20]:

- Land Cover/Land Use Change (LUC): Based on data from 2000–2015, forest areas in Liberia decreased by 5.25%, while cropland increased by 4.9%. Grassland and wetland areas also declined slightly, while artificial surfaces increased by 35.2%.

- Land Productivity Dynamics (LPD): Land productivity is measured using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) to assess vegetation health and the land's ability to sustain life. Degraded areas show symptoms of moderate decline or stress, with forests experiencing the greatest net area change and the highest levels of degradation.

- Soil Organic Carbon (SOC): Baseline SOC stocks were estimated using ISRIC's SoilGrids250m model for topsoil. Wetlands have the highest SOC content, while artificial surfaces show the most change. Conversion from forest to cropland has resulted in significant carbon losses, accounting for nearly 24% of the total SOC stock in 2000.

Liberia's Commitments to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

Through the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting Programme, Liberia, as a signatory to the UNCCD, is actively working towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 15.3: 'By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought, and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.' Liberia's involvement in the LDN Target Setting Programme began with the submission of a Letter of Interest at COP13, followed by a national inception workshop that brought together key stakeholders involved in land, forest, environment, and natural resource management. This workshop led to the creation of the National Drought Initiative and Land Degradation Neutrality Technical Working Group, which, in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), drives Liberia's LDN target-setting process.

Liberia's vision for LDN aligns with its broader development goals, such as poverty reduction, food security, environmental protection, and the sustainable use of natural resources. The country has established specific LDN targets, including improving land cover and productivity, increasing forest cover by 10% by 2030, enhancing soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks, reducing soil erosion, and restoring one million hectares of degraded landscapes to managed forest land by 2030.

The LDN target-setting process is integrated into Liberia's existing national coordination mechanisms, with active participation from various stakeholder groups. To meet these targets, the government has proposed several measures, including promoting sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, biodiversity conservation, fire management, integrated coastal zone management, and reclaiming degraded mining areas. Additionally, education, awareness, and capacity building are prioritized to support the successful implementation of LDN.

The LDN Working Group (WG) was formed with representatives from key institutions, including:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Forestry Development Authority (FDA)
- Liberia Land Authority (LLA)
- Liberia Institute for Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)
- Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
- Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection
- Ministry of Transport (Meteorological Unit/Department)
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)
- Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)
- Academic institutions (e.g., University of Liberia, Cuttington University, AME University)
- Research institutions (e.g., Central Agricultural Research Institute - CARI, World Resources Institute - WRI)
- Private sector representatives
- National Disaster Management Agency
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- UNFCCC Focal Point
- UNCBD Focal Point

Following the submission of the LDN target-setting report, the objectives for the creation of the LDN Working Group were successfully achieved. Given the success of the group, the proposed project will serve as a key accelerator to revive the WG, with a focus on implementing LDN targets.

Key barriers to overcome

The project seeks to transform land management in Liberia by promoting sustainable land management practices aimed at restoring degraded land and contributing to the achievement of national Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. However, there are significant barriers to scaling sustainable land management (SLM) and meeting these goals, including:

1. **Inadequate Institutional Capacity**: At both national and subnational levels, institutional capacity is insufficient to support the implementation of sustainable agriculture. Extension services are under-resourced and lack the ability to coordinate or enforce sustainable land management practices. This is compounded by the limited capacity to monitor and gather data on land productivity, soil organic carbon (SOC), and the environmental impacts of

sustainable practices. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) have not effectively planned land use nor established robust monitoring systems. Furthermore, institutional coordination is weak, with minimal collaboration between extension services and the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) to provide farmers with essential agricultural inputs. Component 1, and to a lesser extent component 3 as well, of the project will address these institutional capacity weaknesses.

2. **Limited Capacity Among Smallholder Farmers**: Smallholder farmers, particularly in rural areas, lack the knowledge and resources to implement sustainable agricultural practices. There is limited access to information and expertise on SLM, which has resulted in low adoption rates. Farmers face challenges in scaling up their operations due to the lack of quality agricultural inputs, such as seeds, and inadequate support from extension services. Rural women, who are disproportionately affected, face additional barriers in accessing the necessary tools and training for sustainable farming. Capacity issues will be addressed in component 1, while demonstration and co-creation of knowledge will be carried out in component 2 of the project.
3. **Lack of Landscape-Level Coordination**: Sustainable land management and LDN require coordination across landscapes, involving both state and non-state actors. However, there is limited capacity to implement such approaches at scale. While research institutions may generate useful information, access to this data is often limited, preventing stakeholders from effectively managing landscapes for long-term sustainability. Demonstration activities in component 2 in priority rice landscapes will equip partners with skills, information, tools and capacity to work at landscape level for potential replication in other counties and landscapes.
4. **Insufficient Knowledge Sharing and Innovation**: The dissemination of knowledge and expertise on SLM practices is inadequate, both within Liberia and across the region. There is a lack of structured approaches to sharing best practices, which hinders innovation and the replication of successful models. Furthermore, the absence of an operational monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system prevents stakeholders from accessing vital information, limiting their ability to scale up successful SLM approaches. Component 3 addresses these shortcomings in a systemic way.

Overcoming these barriers will require targeted efforts to strengthen institutions, improve farmer support, enhance coordination, and foster innovation through better knowledge dissemination, as proposed by the project.

Baseline and ongoing investment

Liberia's government, along with international partners, is working to address these challenges by promoting SLM, improving land tenure security, and enhancing institutional capacity for better land governance. Investments aimed at restoring degraded lands, improving agricultural practices, and building resilience to climate change are critical for achieving long-term food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable development in Liberia.

Five projects were identified as potential co-financing and leveraging opportunities. They are currently operating in the proposed project landscapes and contribute to achievement of the GEF project objectives. The projects include:

1. *Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilience and Livelihood (Sweden/2022-2025:US$ 1,812,973).* The project is facilitating climate-smart agriculture approaches that empower smallholder farmers, mainly women and youths, to employ sustainable and regenerative farming practices in Northern Nimba County. Activities include setting up upland rice farming groups, vegetable and fruit production and farmers' field schools as learning and demonstration sites. These activities may contribute to the GEF project outcome 2.1 by adopting an integrated approach.

2. *Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (Sweden/2022-2026:US$ 7 million)*. The project seeks to strengthen the management of community forests through an improved governance, improving the habitat and status of key species, using participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation approaches, including supporting sustainable livelihood options for forest fringe communities. These activities contribute to this project in terms of community forest and land management monitoring.

3. *Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)- (IDA/World Bank/2021-2026: USD: US$55 million).* The project aims to improve productivity and market access for smallholder farmers and Agri-enterprises for selected value chains by addressing challenges for developing agri-food value chains. Nimba, Bong and Montserrado counties are part of group 3 counties focusing on the poultry value chain. These activities contribute largely to component 2 outcomes of this project.

4. *Smallholder Agriculture Development for Food and Nutrition Security Project (SADFONS) - (AfDB/2019-2026:US$ 8.2 million).* The project aims to increase the productivity of cassava, rice and vegetables production and support the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes for rice cultivation in upland areas. Montserrado County is part of intervention zones. These activities contribute mainly to component 2.

5. *Global Transformation of Forests for People and Climate: a focus on West Africa (component 3) (Sweden/FAO/2019-2024: US$ 4,441,671).* The project aims to promote and highlight the potential economic, social, and environmental contributions of community-based forest (CbF) and land management and the generation and dissemination of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned in the sub-region and globally. These activities contribute to components 1 and 3 of this project.

Lessons learnt from current investments

- *Liberia forest sector project (LFSP): (World Bank/Norway/2016-2023: US$ 37.50 million).* The project was designed to focus on strengthening the capacity for Management of Targeted Forest Landscapes through the incorporation of a Participatory mapping and zoning; Developing a Forest Monitoring Information System for MRV system established and operational according to roadmap. This project will build on this project regarding the information system related to forest management.

- *Strengthening soil analysis and information systems to enhance sustainable soil management and support evidence-based decision making in Liberia (FAO/2021-2023: USD 440,000*). The project was designed to generate and avail soil information to inform land suitability and enhance productivity towards land degradation neutrality. This project will build on the achievements regarding the information system related to land suitability for farming and land degradation.

- *Linking Extension and Research to Farmers for Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (FAO-EU/ 2019-2023: EUR 2,000,000).* The project aims to strengthen the organizational and managerial capacity of both agriculture research and extension initiatives in Liberia for efficient extension service delivery, focusing on accountability and linkages between entities and farmers, policymakers, and other extension service providers, and to build and strengthen the professional relationships of agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) actors for an effective promotion of agriculture production, productivity, and food security.

Selecting representative rice landscapes for demonstration and replication

Liberia's natural resource base for agriculture is characterized by generally fertile soils, particularly in its main rice-producing regions—Lofa, Nimba, Grand Kru, Montserrado, and Bong counties. These counties consist of both upland and lowland areas, each facing distinct challenges. Upland areas are more vulnerable to soil erosion due to unsustainable farming practices and climate variability, while lowland rice fields often struggle with water management issues, such as flooding and drought. The pressure on these landscapes is further compounded by agricultural expansion, population growth, and competing land uses like forestry, leading to increased degradation.

Water resources in Liberia are abundant, with numerous rivers and high annual rainfall, particularly during the wet season (April to November). However, the uneven distribution of water across regions results in seasonal shortages and flooding, creating additional challenges for rural agricultural communities. Liberia also has significant groundwater potential, but it remains underdeveloped and poorly managed. Given that 70% of the population relies on rain-fed agriculture, erratic rainfall patterns and extreme weather events place significant stress on the country’s food security. To bolster agricultural resilience, the development of water management infrastructure—such as irrigation systems and water storage facilities—remains crucial.

Liberia is highly vulnerable to climate change, with projected increases in temperature, shifting rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events such as droughts and floods. These changes pose significant risks to agricultural productivity and natural resources, particularly in rice-producing counties. Upland rice landscapes, where land degradation is already severe, are especially vulnerable to increased rainfall variability, which could worsen soil erosion. Lowland areas are at risk of heightened flooding, further compromising rice production and water management systems.

The project is designed to address these climate challenges by promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices that build resilience in rice production systems. By incorporating climate adaptation strategies, restoring degraded lands, and improving water management, the project aims to enhance long-term sustainability in the target counties.

The selection of counties for project implementation is based on several key criteria, including the extent of land degradation, the competing demands of forestry and agriculture, and the vulnerability of these regions to climate change. Priority was given to counties identified in Liberia’s Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting Report, where efforts are focused on achieving LDN by 2030. Additional factors considered include the socio-economic importance of the regions, population density, and the severity of land degradation challenges.

The target landscapes for intervention include tidal swamps, floodplains, valley swamps, and low hills—key rice-growing regions that also support other crops and subsistence farming. These areas were selected due

to their critical role in national food production and the increasing threats posed by environmental degradation.

Based on these criteria, the project will target five key rice-producing counties: Lofa, Nimba, Grand Kru, Montserrado, and Bong. Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Kru were prioritized based on Liberia's LDN strategy, while Bong and Montserrado were selected due to their contributions to Liberia's food supply and their high population densities, which exacerbate land degradation. These counties represent areas where land degradation is most severe, offering significant opportunities for restoration and the promotion of sustainable practices.

The final selection of specific landscapes and communities within these counties will be confirmed during the project preparation phase, ensuring that the most vulnerable areas receive targeted interventions. The overall aim is to restore degraded lands, promote SLM practices, and improve institutional capacity to achieve long-term sustainability and support Liberia's LDN goals.

Lofa County is one of Liberia's major agricultural hubs, known for its vast rice-producing areas. However, poor farming techniques and unsustainable land use have led to significant soil degradation, affecting both productivity and local livelihoods. The county's landscape, characterized by rolling hills and fertile valleys, is vulnerable to erosion and deforestation. Addressing these issues through SLM practices will be key to sustaining rice production and improving soil and water conservation. Lofa has a mix of subsistence farmers, and institutional support here will focus on capacity-building and improving access to inputs and technical assistance for smallholder farmers.

Nimba County is rich in both mineral and agricultural resources, with rice being a primary crop. However, intensive land use, deforestation, and mining activities have contributed to extensive land degradation. The soil quality in Nimba varies, with some areas becoming increasingly infertile due to unsustainable practices. Water resources, though relatively abundant, are often poorly managed. The socio-economic profile of the county includes a blend of farming and mining communities. Efforts here will concentrate on integrating SLM and gender-sensitive approaches to restore degraded rice landscapes, while enhancing local institutions' ability to manage natural resources effectively.

Grand Kru County is a coastal area with less favourable conditions for large-scale rice production, but it remains an important rice-growing region for local consumption. The county faces severe land degradation due to deforestation, poor farming methods, and overuse of soil resources. The coastal and riverine systems provide vital water resources that are often under strain from poor land management practices. Grand Kru's socio-economic structure is largely composed of smallholder farmers who rely on traditional farming methods. The project's interventions here will focus on preventing further degradation through sustainable farming practices and better land use planning, particularly in areas vulnerable to coastal erosion.

Montserrado County, which includes Liberia's capital, Monrovia, has limited rice production compared to the other counties but still plays a role in regional food security. Urban expansion and industrial activities have severely degraded much of the available agricultural land, limiting rice cultivation to small patches of rural areas. Soil and water resources are highly stressed due to urbanization. The socio-economic profile of Montserrado is diverse, ranging from urban professionals to rural farmers. The project will focus on integrating SLM into land use policies and practices to prevent further degradation and promote more efficient land use in rural areas of the county.

Bong County is a key agricultural region with extensive rice cultivation, but it also suffers from significant land degradation due to deforestation, poor agricultural practices, and mining activities. The county's fertile soils and adequate water resources provide opportunities for high productivity, but mismanagement has led to declining yields. Bong's socio-economic profile is predominantly agrarian, with many smallholder farmers relying on rice as a staple crop. The project will target Bong with initiatives to rehabilitate degraded lands and implement SLM practices that will both restore productivity and enhance the resilience of local farming systems.

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[1] International Food Policy Research Institute (Ifpri), "West African Agriculture and Climate Change A Comprehensive Analysis," 0 ed. (Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2013), https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896292048.

[2] EPA, "National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan II 2017-2025," n.d.

[3] EPA. National Adaptaion Programme of Action, 2008, EPA, Monrovia, Liberia.

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B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Liberia faces significant land degradation challenges driven by competing demands for forestry and agriculture, which threaten ecosystem health, agricultural productivity, and the livelihoods of rural communities. Contributing factors include inadequate land use planning, insufficient landscape

management, limited institutional capacity, and unsustainable agricultural practices. These issues exacerbate land degradation and endanger rural communities.

The primary goal of this project is to transform land management practices by integrating Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approaches to restore degraded lands across Liberia. This transformation will be evident through enhanced national capacities to overcome institutional barriers and manage land for sustainable agricultural production, thus contributing to Liberia's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. The project aims to bolster capacities for sustainable land management at national, subnational, and smallholder-farmer levels, integrating SLM and gender-sensitive approaches to achieve national LDN targets. Additionally, it will promote effective knowledge management and the scaling of innovative monitoring and evaluation techniques for land restoration.

The Theory of Change Diagram (ToC), provided in Figure 2, illustrates the approach adopted to achieve the project's objectives. The interventions are designed to tackle the root causes and barriers to Liberia’s commitment to achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030. This involves promoting sustainable production amidst anticipated population growth from 53% to 90% by 2038. According to the NAP 2020-2030, increased rainfall and flooding are impacting agriculture and forestry, exacerbating land degradation due to climate change and rising demand for food and forest resources. Although the Liberian government has established an institutional framework for agricultural extension and advisory services through the Ministry of Agriculture, these interventions lack coordination and fail to effectively transform land management practices to meet LDN goals.

The main challenges include:

1. Limited coordination among institutions and inadequate capacity to promote SLM for achieving Liberia’s LDN targets.
2. Insufficient capacity and knowledge at national, subnational, and farm levels to integrate sustainable land management practices.
3. Ineffective knowledge management frameworks for data collection and dissemination of critical information for LDN decision-making among relevant Liberian institutions.

The project will introduce transformative actions through three main components:

1. **Enabling Environment**: Strengthening institutional capacities to achieve Liberia’s LDN targets.
2. **Integration of Approaches**: Incorporating sustainable land management and gender-sensitive approaches to achieve land degradation neutrality.
3. **Knowledge Management**: Promoting the scaling of innovation in monitoring and evaluation for land degradation neutrality targets.

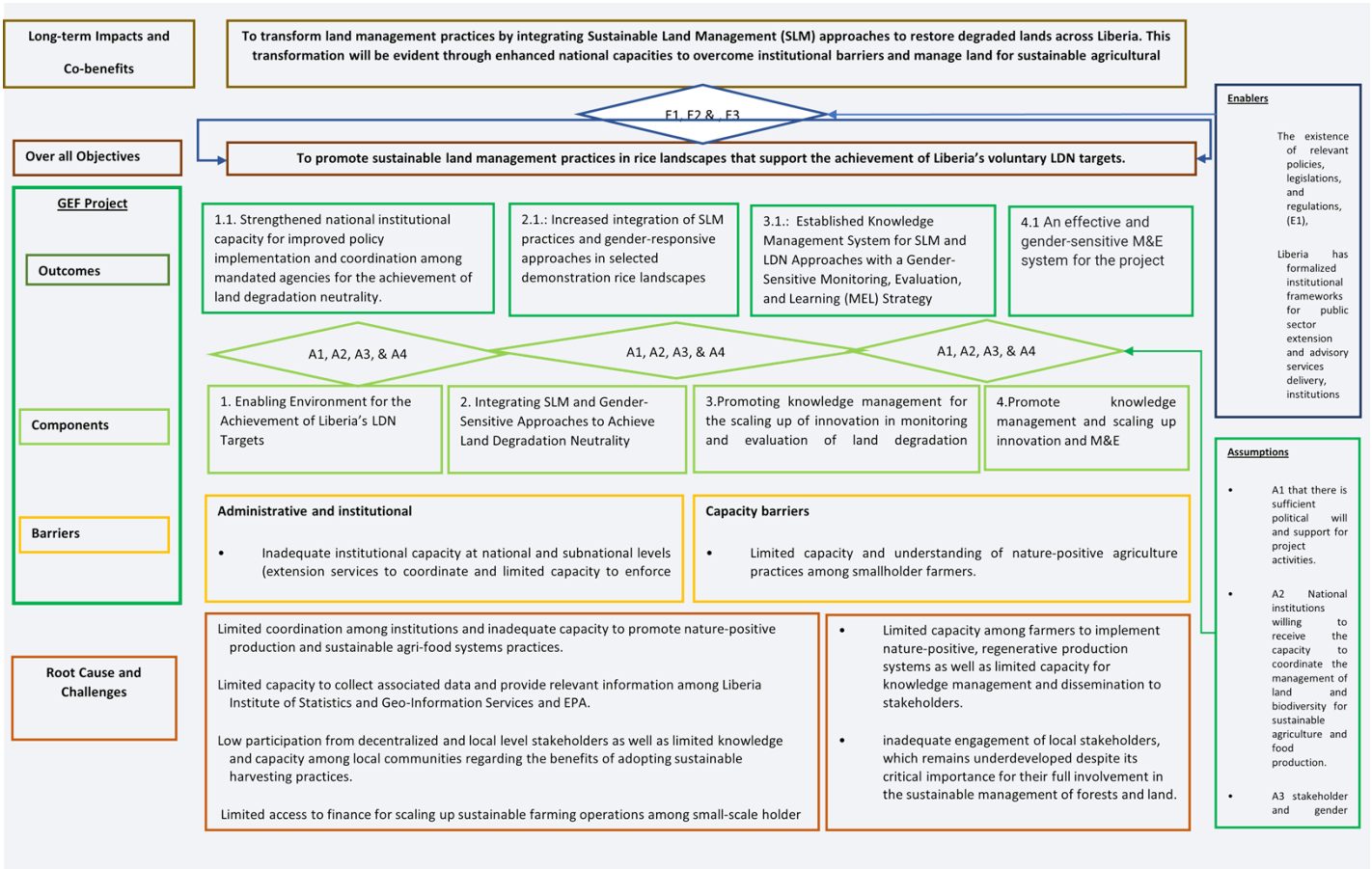
Expected outcomes include achieving Liberia’s LDN targets through enhanced national institutional capacity for improved policy implementation and coordination among mandated agencies. The project will also develop enhanced capacities for sustainable land management within degraded landscapes among national, sub national, and smallholder-farmers through gender-sensitive and sustainable production approaches. Additionally, it will establish a robust knowledge management system with a gender-sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategy.

The overall impact anticipated from the project’s interventions includes transformed land management approaches, reduced land degradation, decreased biodiversity loss, and sustainable agricultural production. This will significantly contribute to achieving Liberia’s LDN targets, select SDGs and other national development ambitions.

The logical pathway identifies several drivers of change, including enablers (E1, E2, E3) and underlying assumptions (A1, A2, etc.) that are critical to the project's success:

- **Enablers**:
  1. Existence of relevant policies, legislation, and regulations (E1).
  2. Formalized institutional frameworks for public sector extension and advisory services (E2).
  3. Presence of private sector, academic, and community-based organizations to support co-investment and adoption of sustainable land management practices (E3).
- **Assumptions**:
  1. A1: Sufficient political will and support will facilitate project activities and lead to integrated landscape management.
  2. A2: National institutions are receptive to capacity-building for coordinating land and biodiversity management for sustainable agricultural production.
  3. A3: Effective stakeholder participation and gender equality will enhance resilience and adaptive capacity for reduced biodiversity loss and land restoration.
  4. A4: Capacity building in sustainable production approaches and sustainable agri-food systems will be embraced by smallholders.

The project's impact pathway envisions the transformation of land management approaches at the landscape level to reduce biodiversity loss and restore degraded lands using SLM.
The interventions are crafted to address the primary barriers, and the project design aligns with the necessary pre-conditions for achieving the desired impact, as detailed in the ToC (Figure 2).



A brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

Component 1: Enabling Environment for the Achievement of Liberia's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Targets

Component 1 focuses on creating a robust enabling environment for Liberia's LDN targets by strengthening policy implementation and fostering coordination among diverse stakeholders. Effective governance of land management is hindered by weak collaboration among state and non-state actors, leading to fragmented efforts in addressing land degradation. This component aims to bridge these gaps by employing a "whole-of-society" approach, which engages both formal institutions (e.g., government departments, ministries) and informal actors (e.g., local communities, civil society organizations, and private sector). By enhancing collaboration and ensuring that all relevant parties are involved in sustainable land management practices, this component seeks to build a cohesive framework for the effective implementation of LDN strategies. This collaborative approach will not only improve the governance of landscapes but also empower local communities to actively participate in and benefit from sustainable land management practices. The component will be delivered through an integrated outcome targeting national and subnational levels.

Outcome 1.1: Strengthened national institutional capacity for improved policy implementation and coordination among mandated agencies for the achievement of land degradation neutrality.

It aims to bolster the capacity of national institutions to effectively implement and coordinate policies essential for achieving land degradation neutrality. The project will enhance the capabilities of these institutions by establishing and operationalizing inter-agency coordination mechanisms. This will involve targeted training, strategic planning, and advocacy to ensure that institutions are well-equipped to tackle land degradation challenges. By creating structured coordination platforms, reviving the LDN Working Group for instance, the project will facilitate integration of SLM practices across sectors and levels of government. The outcome will be marked by improved policy implementation and more cohesive efforts among mandated agencies, resulting in a unified approach to land management that aligns with Liberia's LDN targets.

Output 1.1.1: Establishment of gender inclusive inter-agency coordination mechanisms for LDN implementation among Liberia's mandated agencies.

This will involve creating multi-sectoral fora that bring together high-level political and technical decision-makers to foster collaboration and coordination. Key activities include sector-specific training to enhance understanding and ownership of SLM practices, the formation of a coordination mechanism, and the organization of annual strategic planning

meetings. These efforts will ensure that all relevant institutions are aligned in their approach to land management, facilitating better integration of SLM practices and more effective response to land degradation challenges. By improving the functionality and networking of mandated institutions, this output will lay the groundwork for a more coordinated and effective approach to achieving LDN targets.

Output Indicator 1.1.1: Number of gender inclusive inter-agency coordination mechanisms for LDN implementation among Liberia's mandated agencies.
Output Target 1.1.1: At least two national-local level coordination and collaboration mechanisms established, institutionalized and functional for LDN implementation among Liberia's mandated agencies (with at least 40% women representation).

Output 1.1.2: Integration of lessons learned on SLM and LDN into land use-related policies.

The government of Liberia has formulated several legal instruments which support LDN in Liberia including a National Development Policy and Strategy and Cross-Sectoral Environmental Regulatory Framework and Sector-Specific Regulatory Framework[1][21] These provide a foundation for addressing land degradation and there are specific policies that were developed such as the National Environmental Policy of 2003, Land Rights Policy of 2013, the National Policy and Response Strategy on Climate Change of 2018, Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy (FAPS- 2008); National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (FSNS- 2009): Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Program (LASIP- 2009) among others. The most recent is the National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030 with a major aim of achieving food security for all Liberians[2][22]. There is a need for a deliberate effort to mainstream SLM and LDN approaches into the implementation of such policies. The process of integration will involve documenting successful approaches and challenges, facilitating gender-inclusive collaborations between mandated agencies, and empowering local community-based groups. Lessons such as the need to provide a platform for discussion and negotiation among national stakeholders, creation of awareness and sensitization on LDN and drought resilience initiatives among affected stakeholders nationwide and implementing Soil Organic Carbon monitoring which is a measurable component of soil organic matter need to be mainstreamed. The initiative of encouraging rice growing utilizing degraded lowlands that can sustain three seasons of rice growing in a year compared to uplands that can only allow one season rice growing in a year is a lesson that may improve food security while reducing shifting cultivation. The aim is to ensure that land use policies are informed by practical experiences and are inclusive of diverse perspectives, including those of marginalized groups. By mainstreaming these lessons into

policy development, the project will help to create more effective and adaptable land management frameworks that reflect rural Liberia's context and promote more sustainable and equitable land use practices.

Output Indicator 1.1.2: Number of land use related policies, plans, and frameworks with SLM and LDN lessons integrated.
Output Target 1.1.2: At least 5 land use related policies, plans, and frameworks with LDN and SLM lessons integrated.

Output 1.1.3: SLM regulatory instruments and incentive mechanisms reviewed and updated to support LDN.

The project will facilitate a comprehensive review and harmonization of existing policies, followed by stakeholder validation to ensure that the new regulations meet the needs of all parties involved. Activities will include synthesizing policy frameworks, conducting sector-specific training, and monitoring the implementation of new recommendations. By developing and operationalizing these regulatory instruments and incentives, the project aims to create a supportive environment that encourages the adoption of sustainable practices and drives progress towards land degradation neutrality.

Output Indicator 1.1.3: Number of SLM regulatory instruments and incentive mechanisms reviewed to support LDN.
Output Target 1.1.3: At least 2 SLM regulatory instruments and incentive mechanisms reviewed to support LDN.

Output 1.1.4: Strengthening the capacity of Liberia's mandated agencies for SLM of degraded landscapes.

Output will involve conducting a thorough assessment of capacity needs, validating these needs with stakeholders, and implementing targeted capacity-building initiatives. By focusing on the specific requirements of these agencies, the project will ensure that they have the skills and resources necessary to lead and support SLM efforts. Strengthening institutional capacity in this way will enable agencies to better coordinate and execute land restoration activities, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable management of degraded landscapes.

Indicator 1.1.4: *Number of state and non-state actors (from key government ministries, departments, agencies, local governments, civil society organizations, private sector and communities) trained to support implementation of SLM approaches.*
Target 1.1.4.: At least 20 state and 30 non-state agencies (from key government ministries, departments, agencies, local governments, civil society organizations, private sector and

communities) trained to support implementation of SLM approaches. (Target at least 200 trainees of which 40% women: 100 people from state agencies and 100 from non-state agencies).

Component 2: Integrating SLM and Gender-Sensitive Approaches to Achieve Land Degradation Neutrality

Component 2 is dedicated to integrating SLM practices with gender-sensitive approaches to restore degraded landscapes and improve land management to avoid and reduce degradation in the future. This component addresses the direct impacts of unsustainable resource use and poor cropping practices on land degradation. By focusing on rice production lands that have been degraded through poor farming methods, the project aims to implement SLM practices that restore productivity and prevent further degradation. The project seeks to sustainably intensify productivity and reduce shifting cultivation particularly through encouraging rice growing utilizing degraded lowlands that can sustain three seasons of rice growing in a year compared to uplands that can only allow one season rice growing in a year. This strategy will enhance livelihood options while preserving critical ecosystem services provided by forests that predominate highland areas. The target landscapes—Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Montserrado, and Grand Kru—will benefit from comprehensive land management plans that incorporate both SLM and gender considerations. This integrated approach will not only rehabilitate degraded lands but also enhance the overall resilience and sustainability of agricultural production systems. The Government of Liberia is promoting degraded lowland ecology for rice and vegetable cultivation by investing in the development of irrigation infrastructure. With such infrastructure, farmers' cooperative and smallholder farmers are able to produce (rice and vegetable) 2-3 times a year. This approach reduces conversion of upland forest areas for rice and vegetable production. Like in many parts of Africa, upland rice farming is associated with shifting cultivation and so lowland rice growing reduces deforestation rates consequently reducing pressure on high value forests.

Outcome 2.1: Increased integration of SLM practices and gender-sensitive approaches in selected demonstration rice landscapes.

Outcome 2.1 seeks to advance the integration of SLM practices and gender-sensitive approaches in selected demonstration landscapes. By focusing on specific rice production areas, the project will demonstrate effective SLM practices that contribute to land degradation neutrality. This outcome will be achieved through the development and implementation of participatory land management plans, which will address site-specific challenges and promote sustainable practices. Additionally, gender-sensitive approaches will be incorporated to ensure that the needs and contributions of all community members

are considered. The result will be a set of demonstration landscapes that serve as models for successful integration of SLM practices, showcasing their benefits for land restoration and productivity.

Output 2.1.1: Development of gender-responsive participatory integrated land management plans for the target landscapes.

The development of participatory land use plans will leverage on existing projects working in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, CARI, the Liberia Agriculture and Commodities Regulatory Authority (LACRA), National Standards Laboratory, the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Regulatory Agency and other partners in the landscape. The role of participatory development of integrated land use management plans is to ensure sustainability along the value chain but more specifically enhancing the capacities at production and productivity level in the target landscapes.

Liberia has developed an ambitious strategic Agenda, the National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030- and this project will contribute in implementation of the agenda, in which the government prioritizes site specific land use planning to ensure crops are grown in suitable areas. In reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Liberia to transforming its agriculture sector, the Ministry of Agriculture led the process of formulating the second generation of the Liberia National Agriculture Development Plan (called the Agricultural Sector Investment Plan, or LASIP II), which builds on past progress supported by donor actors of the sector. The Government of Liberia also set a strategic long-term vision for the agriculture sector geared towards promoting an inclusive approach for sustainable land management. The integrated plans will thus be a contribution to the government's aim to draw up and implement a support plan for women and young agripreneurs benefiting from training and incubation in self-employment or entrepreneurship in targeted value chains. Rice is produced under slash-and-burn shifting cultivation systems, predominantly in the uplands and some lowland regions. Households mainly process most of the rice using simple technology. The development of comprehensive, participatory land management plans will help to focus best cropping systems for each landscape sites. The plans will be tailored to the needs of the target landscapes and will involve detailed land use mapping and planning, producing and validating land use maps, and facilitating the implementation of these plans. By engaging local communities and stakeholders in the planning process, the project ensures that the plans are practical and aligned with local needs. Monitoring changes in land use throughout the project will provide valuable feedback and allow for adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of the plans. This participatory approach will lead to more sustainable land management practices and improved outcomes for the target landscapes.

> ***Indicator 2.1.1.:*** *Number of gender-responsive participatory spatial/landscape plans for the target Landscape developed/updated and implemented using participatory approaches*

Target 2.1.1.: *At least two (2) gender-responsive participatory spatial/landscape plans for each county Landscape developed or updated and implemented* using participatory approaches.

Output 2.1.2: Demonstration of SLM practices in degraded landscapes to avoid, reduce, and restore degradation.

In its "LIBERIANS FEED YOURSELVES AGENDA" National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030, the government of Liberia expects to develop 50 000 ha of lowland for irrigated rice production over five years. The intention is to promote lowland development and integrated farming to reduce upland shifting cultivation and increase sedentary farming. This will involve mainstreaming SLM practices into local resource planning, conducting community education sessions based on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent principles, and implementing site-specific SLM practices. Training will be provided to community members, including women and marginalized groups, to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to adopt these practices, through farmer field schools. By supporting SLM, this output will contribute to the restoration of degraded areas and the enhancement of land productivity.

Indicator 2.1.2a: *Number of ha in the targeted landscapes that are undertaking SLM practices for LDN*
Target 2.1.2: *At least 25,000 ha of degraded land ha in the targeted landscapes that are undertaking SLM practices for LDN*.

Indicator 2.1.2: *Number of gender-sensitive community awareness/education initiatives implemented*
Target 2.1.2: *At least 5 gender-sensitive community awareness/education initiatives implemented per county reaching out to at least 60,000 people within the five counties, of which 60% are women*.

Output 2.1.3: Development of a framework for integrating gender-sensitive SLM practices for LDN.

An LDN working group had been set up during the LDN target setting programme in Liberia. It is however now inactive and a frame work will be developed to include a revamped LDN working group. After the development of this framework, it will be validated through a stakeholder workshop. The framework will be mainstreamed into local government resource planning programs to ensure its practical application. By addressing gender considerations and promoting inclusive practices, this framework will support the equitable implementation of SLM strategies and enhance the overall effectiveness of land management efforts. This approach will ensure that the benefits of SLM practices are widely shared and contribute to the achievement of LDN targets.

Output Indicator 2.1.3: Number of National frameworks established and operationalized with at least 30% women representation.
Output Target 2.1.3: At least 1 National framework established and operationalized, with at least 30% women representation.

Component 3: Promoting Knowledge Management for Scaling Up Innovation in Monitoring and Evaluation of LDN Targets

This component aims to enhance knowledge sharing through collaboration with researchers, academia, and both state and non-state actors to improve access to and use of critical information that empowers stakeholders, including farmers, in sustainable land management (SLM) practices. The project will generate significant information and lessons during implementation, and sharing this knowledge will foster shifts in mindset and encourage broader stakeholder participation in sustainable land management efforts. The establishment of a comprehensive knowledge management system and a gender-sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategy will support the dissemination of valuable insights. This will enable evidence-based decision-making and promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement in land management practices. The dissemination of results and lessons learned will contribute to scaling up effective Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) approaches and will guide future project designs.

Outcome 3.1: Established Knowledge Management System for SLM and LDN Approaches with a Gender-Sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Strategy

This outcome seeks to establish a comprehensive knowledge management system and a MEL strategy designed to support LDN initiatives by facilitating the collection, analysis, and dissemination of essential data related to SLM and LDN. The gender-sensitive MEL strategy will ensure that the unique needs and contributions of various groups are integrated, promoting inclusive participation in decision-making. The outcome will be characterized by the development of new data products, enhanced reporting mechanisms, and improved accessibility of information. Collectively, these efforts will contribute to more effective monitoring and evaluation of LDN progress, ensuring the project's goals are achieved. The outcome also involves linkage with other on-going initiatives. There is a great opportunity to enhance collaboration and coordination at landscape level in Nimba as well as enhance collaboration between Liberia and Sierra Leone as they execute activities promoting sustainable land management of selected transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes through the Guinean Forest IP with the associated child projects particularly the Liberia child project, the Sierra Leone child project and the Regional Coordination Platform. Th Guinean Forest IP through the Guinean RCP provides a platform for a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing

solutions, and innovation. This project will explore possible collaborative interventions to enhance project delivery.

Outcome Indicator 3.1: Number of initiatives coordinating with the Project
Outcome Target 3.1: The GEF-8 Liberia Project coordinating, learning and sharing with at least 5 initiatives at Landscape, National and Regional levels.

Output 3.1.1: A Functioning National LDN Monitoring and Reporting System Developed

To support LDN efforts, the project will develop a comprehensive national-level monitoring and reporting system to track progress toward achieving LDN targets. This system will be designed collaboratively with stakeholders to align with national priorities and meet the needs of key end users, including local government authorities, researchers, and policymakers. After validation through stakeholder workshops, the system will be integrated into the planning processes at the county and local government levels. By embedding it within these institutions, the project will strengthen local capacity to monitor land degradation trends and make informed decisions that promote climate-resilient and sustainable land management practices.

This system will provide a robust, quantitative basis for preventing future land degradation and achieving LDN targets by 2030. Its design will involve identifying, testing, and calibrating key LDN metrics—such as land cover, soil organic carbon, land productivity, and soil erosion rates. These metrics will allow decision-makers to assess trade-offs and synergies between different land uses, practices, and national objectives, including food security, nutrition, and poverty reduction. The selection of these metrics will build on ongoing national efforts related to desertification, drought management, erosion control, climate resilience, and other relevant areas. These metrics will then be incorporated into a software tool based (Open Foris toolbox). Once developed and tested, a LDN Decision-support system will enable decision-makers to evaluate land-use options effectively, balancing development goals with sustainable land management.

Output Indicator 3.1.1: Number of LDN Monitoring and Reporting Systems developed and disseminated
Output Target 3.1.1: At least 1 National LDN Monitoring and Reporting System developed and operational by the end of the project.

Output 3.1.2: Knowledge Management and Gender-Sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Strategy in Place

The project will establish a comprehensive MEL framework that includes a gender-sensitive approach to tracking and evaluating project outcomes. During the project's inception phase, the existing MEL framework will be reviewed, and necessary adjustments will be made to align it with current best practices and project-specific needs. The new framework will guide the monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring that all activities are regularly assessed for effectiveness and impact. Additionally, the project will produce regular progress reports, including Quarterly Reports, Project Progress Reports (PPR), Project Implementation Reports (PIR), and End-of-Project or Terminal Evaluation Reports, which will be shared with CIGEF and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate transparency and accountability.

Output Indicator 3.1.2: Number of project knowledge management and Gender-Sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategies developed and implemented
Output Target 3.1.2: At least 1 project knowledge management and Gender-Sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategy developed and implemented for LDN

Output 3.1.3: Results for Replication of LDN Approaches Documented and Disseminated

Throughout the project's implementation, the approaches used to achieve LDN targets will be carefully documented and disseminated to ensure that successful strategies can be replicated in future initiatives. The project will collect and compile data on the effectiveness of different LDN approaches, providing a detailed record of best practices, challenges encountered, and lessons learned. These findings will be shared through various channels, including reports, publications, and workshops, to engage a wide audience of stakeholders. The documentation of results will not only support the scaling up of successful LDN practices but also provide valuable insights that can inform the design of future projects aimed at achieving land degradation neutrality in other contexts. A great opportunity for lesson sharing is the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP), working closely with the 3 child projects. Under the Guinean RCP each country will convene national and community level meetings to determine land management issues that are priority at local and national level based on an already agreed regional Strategic Action Plan (SAP) which then informs regional engagements for experience sharing. The RCP thus provides a forum for lesson sharing of country-level interventions on sustainable land management with other countries of the MRU including documentation and dissemination of LDN approaches and experiences.

Output Indicator 3.1.3: Number of LDN Knowledge Management Products developed and disseminated
Output Target 3.1.3: At least 5 policy briefs, 5 fact sheets and 5 storytelling videos integrating gender, equality and inclusion aspects prepared and disseminated by the end of the project.

Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
Outcome 4.1: **An effective and gender-sensitive M&E system for the project.** This outcome will provide an unbiased evaluation of the proposed project's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact, foster evidence-based decision-making by providing data and insights for policy and strategic planning; Identify potential risks and challenges encountered during project implementation, and ensure adherence to standards, regulations, and donor requirements.

Outcome Indicator 4.1: Number of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks developed for the project
Outcome Target 4.1: At least 5 Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) approved by FAO-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Output 4.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to FAO-GEF Agency -This output will track the project's progress and effectiveness, provide stakeholders with timely insights on the performance of the project and facilitate evidence-based decision-making, allowing for adjustments and improvements to enhance project outcomes and resource allocation.

Output Indicator 4.1.1: Number of periodic M&E Reports submitted to FAO-GEF Agency.
Output Target 4.1.1: Five Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), 20 technical and financial quarterly reports; and 2 Climate Change Adaptation Core Indicator worksheets.

Output 4.1.2.: Independent evaluations conducted in accordance with the GEF and FAO-GEF Evaluation Policies.
Output indicator 4.1.2: Number of Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Reports
Output Target 4.1.2: One Mid-Term Evaluation and One Terminal Evaluation Report approved by FAO-GEF and submitted to the GEF.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Under the description of the baseline scenario and ongoing investments in this PIF, five projects have been described as initiatives with great potential for co-financing and leveraging opportunities. They include: (a) Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilience and Livelihood (*Sweden/2022-2025:US$ 1,812,973*); (b) Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (*Sweden/2022-2026:US$ 7 million*); (c) Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)- (*IDA/World Bank/2021-2026: USD: US$55 million*) (d) Global Transformation of Forests for People and Climate: a focus on West Africa (component 3) (*Sweden/FAO/2019-2024: US$ 4,441,671);* and (e) Smallholder Agriculture Development for Food and Nutrition Security Project (SADFONS) - (*AfDB/2019-2026:US$ 8.2 million*). These are currently operating in the proposed project landscapes and contribute to achievement of the GEF project objectives. In addition, there are other projects and initiatives that provide opportunities for collaboration; either because they are operating nationally, or address some of the thematic areas of this project or have some of their focus in the target sites for this project. Such projects are briefly described in the Table below and the PPG process will provide an opportunity to elaborate the coordination and cooperation aspects with them:

Other projects/ Initiatives	Description and Potential lessons and collaboration
Building Climate Resilience Project (BCRP) - Building Climate Resilience in Liberia's Cocoa and Rice Sectors. - Adaptation Fund through the International Fund for Agricultural Development: USD 9,592,082	This five-year project is implemented in Bongo County. It is still under implementation: The project development objective is to promote agriculture as a business for enhanced incomes and reduced rural poverty in Bong County. The project became effective for disbursement on 19 September 2019. The project's current completion date is 30 September 2025 and closing date is 31 March 2026. The overall objective of the project is to address key climate vulnerabilities in agriculture and water resources management in the rice and cocoa value chain, and hence contribute to immediate and longer-term development and resilience needs of poor vulnerable smallholder farmers in Liberia. The project objectives to be delivered through the implementation of three interrelated components namely: (1)- Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood Diversification; (2) Climate resilient rural infrastructure rehabilitation and (3) Institutional capacity development and policy engagement. This project provides lessons to build on and collaborate with is project particularly with respect to the rice value chain.
Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Transformational Livelihood Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA) - 2025 – 2030 Total finance: $US112,870,526 (GEF-LDCF grant $8,932,420 + co-finance)	This proposed 5-year project (2025 – 2030) will introduce a systemic, integrated adaptation approach to build the resilience of communities and food production systems in the country. This approach will employ nature-based solutions to address the climate vulnerabilities of rural livelihoods. It provides an avenue for collaboration particularly with respect to component 2 of this project.
Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Liberia (Liberia CIS) Grant: USD 10,000,000 Project Period 2020-2027	The project aims to reach 7.7 million beneficiaries and to increase the resilience of Liberia's population and infrastructure to climate change through: improved hydrometeorological service generation and provision, in line with WMO requirements for establishing a functioning National Meteorological and Hydrological Service, improved risk knowledge and awareness of both Government institutions and communities. There great potential for collaboration particularly with respect to provision of Weather data and information to the farming communities.
Good Growth Partnership 2018- 2021, USD 2 million	This global UNDP/GEF project seeks to remove deforestation from supply chains for beef, soy, and palm oil. In partnership with CI, it includes funding to initiate a pilot in Liberia working with the concession formerly held by Sime Darby and now by MANCO and also to advance a national palm oil platform for multi-stakeholder sectoral coordination. The proposed project will build on this effort by including the concession and impacted communities in land-use planning processes, supporting smallholder oil palm development, and linking other smallholders in Northwest Liberia to the commercial palm oil value chain.
CI/GEF project: Conservation and Sustainable use of Liberia's Coastal Natural Capital 2020- 2024, USD 3.9 million	In this project, EPA and CI seek to improve the conservation and sustainable use of Liberia's coastal natural capital by mainstreaming the value of nature into Liberia's development trajectory. The project includes building a Natural Capital Accounting system for Liberia; once operational, the inclusion of a forest satellite account will be highly relevant to integrated landscape management and land-use planning. The PPG phase will provide an avenue to explore lessons and potential collaboration.
UNDP/GEF project: Strengthening National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the Framework of Sustainable Development Priorities Approved 2017, USD 1.5 million	This project intends to strengthen a targeted set of national capacities to deliver and sustain global environmental outcomes within the framework of sustainable development priorities. The proposed project will build on these investments, as integrated landscape management through land-use planning, investment in sustainable agricultural production, and restoration each support both environmental obligations and sustainable development.
UNDP/GEF project: Strengthening Liberia's capability to provide climate information and services to	This project aims to strengthen Liberia's capability to provide climate hydrological information and services that enable climate-resilient sustainable development. The proposed project will build on this UNDP/GEF project by applying climate information in the land-use planning process to achieve

enhance climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change—October 2013-2017, USD 6.7 million	climate-resilient integrated landscape management. The PPG process will undertake stakeholder engagement to document clear areas of collaboration with this project.
UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program	The proposed project will build on work supported by the UNDP Small Grants Program (SGP). Examples of recent SGP projects relevant to this project include: • Reforestation of Foya grasslands • Biodiversity conservation and rural livelihoods improvements • Promoting climate-change resilience through livelihoods activities • Strengthening community capacity to conserve the remaining Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve effectively. • Introducing Conservation Farming in Zeyeama clan, Zorzor District, Lofa County • Building farmers' capacity to increase rice production through improved upland farming methods that promote forest preservation and reduce their vulnerability to the effects of climate change • Improving livelihoods and biodiversity conservation around Wonegizi through conservation education and inland farming. • Promoting community-driven sustainable land use and conservation of biodiversity through the strengthening of women's economic empowerment. • Protection for forest land through sustainable land management
DFC Project financing USAID/Liberia currently has active portfolio loan guarantees totalling USD 9.2 million with two of Liberian commercial banks. Implemented nationwide with more than $90 million in active commitments.	DFC has more than $90 million in active commitments in Liberia, with eight clients as of February 2022, including USD 60 million to support lending to small and medium enterprises through the International Bank (IB) Liberia Inc. and the Liberian Enterprise Development Finance Company (LEDFC). There is great potential and opportunities in private sector support and linkage to the rice value chains and other sectors in project counties.
Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP)	The proposed project will continually share lessons and collaborate with the LFSP as it is implemented. Project management will work closely with FDA as a key implementing partner to ensure the two projects build on each other's successes in institutional capacity building and livelihood development for local communities. Further areas for coordination include land-use planning, forest restoration, policy development, continued development of the Liberia Conservation Fund, and participation in global carbon markets.
2012 – March 2016, USD 2.4 million	The FCPF has approved a REDD Readiness grant of USD 3.6 million to Liberia to develop and build capacity for its national REDD Readiness Plan. The proposed project will coordinate through the REDD Focal Point and the REDD Technical Working Group to include restoration in the Liberia REDD+ strategy.
UNDP/ GEF Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change by Mainstreaming Adaption Concerns into Agricultural Sector Development in Liberia	The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) led this project to enhance community-level resilience to climate change. Coordination with the MOA will be critical in ensuring that the approach used in the proposed projects reinforces previous efforts, especially as it pertains to agricultural development. CI and EPA participation on the Steering Committee for the MOA project makes them well-placed to facilitate coordination.
CI/GEF- GEF Project ID: 11144 Strengthening conservation and effective governance of Liberia's critical forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape – GEF Project grant of USD 3,103,823.	This is a full sized GEF project under the PPG stage and stakeholders' consultations are on-going in Liberia. It is panned to be executed by the Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)Forestry Development Authority (FDA); Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Mines and Energy and Liberia Land

	Authority. It thus provides great potential for collaboration to enhance biodiversity conservation and reduce biodiversity loss in the target sites.
CI/GEF Project: GEFID11147- Guinean Forests Regional Coordination Project (RCP) under the Guinean forest IP	There is a great opportunity to enhance collaboration and coordination between Liberia and Sierra Leone as they execute activities promoting sustainable land management of selected transboundary watersheds and forest landscapes through the Guinean Forest IP with the associated child projects particularly the Liberia child project (Strengthening Conservation and effective governance of Liberia's critical forests in the Northwest Landscape) and the Regional Coordination Platform under the knowledge management component. This may include linking with the SierraLeone Child project (Strengthening Conservation and effective governance of Sierra Leone's critical forests in the Gola Forest Landscape). The RCP provides a forum for lesson sharing of country-level interventions on sustainable land management with other countries of the MRU including documentation and dissemination of LDN approaches and experiences.
Guinean IP (GEFID 11142): GEF-8 Guinean Forests Integrated Program (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone)	This programme (GEF agencies: FAO, CI and IUCN) provides GEF Project Financing of up to USD20,077,828 and is intended to support the development of integrated, participatory land-use and spatial plans and update the necessary data and information for the Guinea forest biome. The Guinean Forests of West Africa comprise a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot spanning the southern part of West Africa into the northern region of Central Africa.1 Covering approximately 620,000 km^2, the region includes two sub-regions: the Upper Guinean Forests (starting in Guinea-Bissau and extending eastward to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and part of Benin); and the Lower Guinean Forests extending from southern Nigeria into southwestern Cameroon. The Guinea RCP and the three child projects are anchored under the Guinean Forest IP and provide an opportunity for collaboration with this project both at national and regional levels.

[1] Liberia National Report - Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Program; Environment Protection Agency Monrovia, Liberia March 2019.

[2] "LIBERIANS FEED YOURSELVES AGENDA" National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030. Government of Liberia, Monrovia, July 2024.

[1] Liberia National Report - Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Program; Environment Protection Agency Monrovia, Liberia March 2019.

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Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

Under the description of the baseline scenario and ongoing investments in this PIF, five projects have been described as initiatives with great potential for co-financing and leveraging opportunities. They include: (a) Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilience and Livelihood (*Sweden/2022-2025:US$ 1,812,973*); (b) Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (*Sweden/2022-2026:US$ 7 million*); (c) Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETRAP)- (*IDA/World Bank/2021-2026: USD: US$55 million*) (d) Global

Transformation of Forests for People and Climate: a focus on West Africa (component 3) (*Sweden/FAO/2019-2024: US$ 4,441,671);* and (e) Smallholder Agriculture Development for Food and Nutrition Security Project (SADFONS) - (*AfDB/2019-2026:US$ 8.2 million*). These are currently operating in the proposed project landscapes and contribute to achievement of the GEF project objectives. In addition, there are other projects and initiatives that provide opportunities for collaboration; either because they are operating nationally, or address some of the thematic areas of this project or have some of their focus in the target sites for this project. Such projects are briefly described in the Table below and the PPG process will provide an opportunity to elaborate the coordination and cooperation aspects with them:

Other projects/ Initiatives	**Description and Potential lessons and collaboration**
Building Climate Resilience Project (BCRP) - Building Climate Resilience in Liberia's Cocoa and Rice Sectors. - Adaptation Fund through the International Fund for Agricultural Development: USD 9,592,082	This five-year project is implemented in Bongo County. It is still under implementation: The project development objective is to promote agriculture as a business for enhanced incomes and reduced rural poverty in Bong County. The project became effective for disbursement on 19 September 2019. The project's current completion date is 30 September 2025 and closing date is 31 March 2026. The overall objective of the project is to address key climate vulnerabilities in agriculture and water resources management in the rice and cocoa value chain, and hence contribute to immediate and longer-term development and resilience needs of poor vulnerable smallholder farmers in Liberia. The project objectives to be delivered through the implementation of three interrelated components namely: (1)- Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood Diversification; (2) Climate resilient rural infrastructure rehabilitation and (3) Institutional capacity development and policy engagement. This project provides lessons to build on and collaborate with is project particularly with respect to the rice value chain.
Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Transformational Livelihood Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA) - 2025 – 2030 Total finance: $US112,870,526 (GEF-LDCF grant $8,932,420 + co-finance)	This proposed 5-year project (2025 – 2030) will introduce a systemic, integrated adaptation approach to build the resilience of communities and food production systems in the country. This approach will employ nature-based solutions to address the climate vulnerabilities of rural livelihoods. It provides an avenue for collaboration particularly with respect to component 2 of this project.
Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Liberia (Liberia CIS) Grant: USD 10,000,000 Project Period 2020-2027	The project aims to reach 7.7 million beneficiaries and to increase the resilience of Liberia's population and infrastructure to climate change through: improved hydrometeorological service generation and provision, in line with WMO requirements for establishing a functioning National Meteorological and Hydrological Service, improved risk knowledge and awareness of both Government institutions and communities. There great potential for collaboration particularly with respect to provision of Weather data and information to the farming communities.
Good Growth Partnership 2018- 2021, USD 2 million	This global UNDP/GEF project seeks to remove deforestation from supply chains for beef, soy, and palm oil. In partnership with CI, it includes funding to initiate a pilot in Liberia working with the concession formerly held by Sime Darby and now by MANCO and also to advance a national palm oil platform for multi-stakeholder sectoral coordination. The proposed project will build on this effort by including the concession and impacted communities in land-use planning processes, supporting smallholder oil palm development, and linking other smallholders in Northwest Liberia to the commercial palm oil value chain.
CI/GEF project: Conservation and Sustainable use of Liberia's Coastal Natural Capital 2020- 2024, USD 3.9 million	In this project, EPA and CI seek to improve the conservation and sustainable use of Liberia's coastal natural capital by mainstreaming the value of nature into Liberia's development trajectory. The project includes building a Natural Capital Accounting system for Liberia; once operational, the inclusion of a

	forest satellite account will be highly relevant to integrated landscape management and land-use planning. The PPG phase will provide an avenue to explore lessons and potential collaboration.
UNDP/GEF project: Strengthening National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the Framework of Sustainable Development Priorities Approved 2017, USD 1.5 million	This project intends to strengthen a targeted set of national capacities to deliver and sustain global environmental outcomes within the framework of sustainable development priorities. The proposed project will build on these investments, as integrated landscape management through land-use planning, investment in sustainable agricultural production, and restoration each support both environmental obligations and sustainable development.
UNDP/GEF project: Strengthening Liberia's capability to provide climate information and services to enhance climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change—October 2013-2017, USD 6.7 million	This project aims to strengthen Liberia's capability to provide climate hydrological information and services that enable climate-resilient sustainable development. The proposed project will build on this UNDP/GEF project by applying climate information in the land-use planning process to achieve climate-resilient integrated landscape management. The PPG process will undertake stakeholder engagement to document clear areas of collaboration with this project.
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Core Indicators

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
25000	0	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	25,000.00			

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
100000	0	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
100,000.00			

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	1080200	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	1,080,200			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2026			
Duration of accounting	20			

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				

Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	36,120			
Male	24,205			
Total	**60,325**	**0**	0	**0**

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

Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (ha)

Core indicator 3.1: Area of degraded agricultural lands restored

The total size of degraded land in Lofa, Nimba, Grand Kru, Montserrado and Bong is estimated at 278,551 hectares. The project plans to reverse degradation on at least about 10% of this, focusing on 5000 ha of degraded production land per county, therefore contributing to the restoration of 25,000 hectares of rice and vegetables degraded land in low and upland areas by implementing regenerative agricultural production practices in selected sites.

Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares)

Core indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Through integrated sustainable land management plans and sustainable agriculture practices (e.g. crop rotation, reforestation, intercropping, mulching, manure management and other land regenerative approaches) in Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, Bong and Grand Kru the project will bring 100,000 ha under sustainable land management, therefore avoiding and reducing degradation (LDN hierarchy). The resident communities in the project counties will be supported to improve their level of appreciation sustainable land management. This is to enable them to adopt SLM practices better, as well as develop their food security and adaptive capacity for climate change impacts. The targets will be further reviewed during the PPG.

Core indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO2e)

Core Indicator 6.1: Greenhouse emission mitigated in the AFOLU sector (Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use):

Sustainable land management activities will lead to improved agroforestry and thus improve carbon sequestration, and will contribute to an estimated GHG emissions of 1,080,200 metric tons of CO2e.

This is an initial rough estimate from the EX-ACT tool (based on indicators 3 and 4, with estimation of land under the different land uses in the target landscapes), for a 20-year period and will be recalculated during the PPG period based on further determination of specific activities to be carried out in relation to land-uses and cropland management under Components 2.

Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

The total target number of direct beneficiaries is approximately 60,325 people (60% women) broken down in Table 3. The target number of beneficiaries was informed by the estimated number of staff in state and non-state institutions that will participate in the project, as well as the number of community members in the five counties that will be targeted within the landscape project area where the SLM practices will be introduced coupled with awareness activities. The total population in the five counties as of 2017 indicates 2,744,503 people . Considering the percentage population in the target landscapes, the intervention addressing challenges of land degradation will benefit an estimated half the population of Liberia. The project will directly work with about 20% of the population therefore approximatively 60,000 people in the target counties mainly smallholder farmers. In addition, 125 government staff (DRDRE and LIFAAS agents, EAS, research institutions) and non-government workers including from private sector, academia, and those involved in monitoring and information systems will directly benefit through capacity building. The project will deliberately target all gender categories including women, youth and other vulnerable groups. Almost 200 people will benefit from knowledge, innovation, demonstrations and functional extension services for LDN. At least 60% of the beneficiaries will be women and youth. The exact number of direct beneficiaries will be determined during the PPG phase.

They will also benefit from knowledge management products and information sharing (Output 3.1.3), and the LDN monitoring system (Output 3.1.1) MEL strategy (output 3.1.2) and general sensitization and awareness events such as the Inception and stakeholder validation Workshops. The target beneficiaries for training and awareness raising will consist of both direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project outcomes, including community-based groups (especially those led by women or youths), cultural leaders, opinion leaders, as well as political leaders.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	Liberia experiences several climate change and climate-related hazards which includes increases in temperature, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events such as droughts and floods pose significant threats to agricultural productivity and land resources. In upland rice landscapes, where land degradation is already severe, increased rainfall variability may lead to greater soil erosion, further exacerbating land degradation. Similarly, in lowland areas, the risk of flooding may worsen due to changes in rainfall, compromising rice production and water management systems. The promotion of SLM practices, livelihood diversification and the promotion of resilient production solutions will mitigate these risks and is considered in the design of the project.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	As productivity will increase through the adoption of the regenerative practices and the development of value chains, farmers might consider expanding their farmland into natural forest areas, leading to deforestation. Additionally, agricultural activities may involve the use of pesticides, but the risk is low with

		the integrated crop and pest management practices to be applied. Regarding social risks, conflicts between project stakeholders competing to benefit from the project may arise, posing a threat to the sustainability of the project and resulting outcomes. To reduce these risks, supported farmers will be involved in conservation programs to monitor farmland extent, forest cover, and farm mapping to track deforestation trend under output 2.1.2 and 2.1.2. Additionally, to avoid conflict related to competition among beneficiaries to benefit from the project, the participation in the project is volunteer and the number of lead farmers and extension services to be strengthened will the designed according to the number of interested participants which will be determined during the PPG phase. A grievance and redress mechanism will be established during the PPG phase. The project will ensure that tools and methods used for awareness raising are well established for behavior change.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Political and Governance: The conception of the project, development and the implementation of many project activities rely on government commitment and support. Transitions after the elections may affect the pace of the full development of the project. Once settled, challenges and risks related to project implementation, particularly insufficient support may be minimal. The project manager will monitor the political situation and will ensure that the capacity for delivering the project is built at multiple levels in order to avoid delays. The latter includes involvement of Government and decentralized entities that may support implementation of the project or benefit from the project. In addition, Government entities will take lead during implementation of respective activities as mentioned in the project description. In terms of governance, the SEP will ensure relevant stakeholders in sub-national and national level are identified and participate in project decision-making.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	The risk could be institutional changes, such as changes in leadership or staff turnover that can disrupt project implementation and continuity. With respect to policy the risk could be policy misalignment and inconsistencies between project goals and existing policies and regulations. The policy framework has however been assessed and found to be aligned unless there will be changes during the course of project implementation particularly with respect to transboundary natural resources management. Institutional mitigation measures include to develop strong institutional memory through documentation and knowledge management practices that has been inbuilt into the project design. With respect to policy, the mitigation is thus undertaken through thorough policy assessments and stakeholder consultations to ensure alignment with national priorities, land degradation abatements and biodiversity conservation frameworks, climate change policies, and development strategies. Proactive engagements will also be undertaken during project implementation.

Technological	Low	The risk could be inadequate adoption of any relevant technology for effective project implementation. Mitigation is capacity building as well as mentoring by the IA and sharing lessons with other child projects.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	The risk includes inflation and exchange rate pressures- High inflation rates can increase project costs, affecting budgeting, procurement, and overall project implementation. The mitigation measures with respect to financial inflation pressures will basically relate to Regularly monitoring and reviewing inflation and exchange rates to adjust financial planning accordingly including contingency budgeting.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Low	FAO will serve as the GEF implementing agency, and recipient of project funds. Using an Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM) and based on capacity assessments of selected Operational partners (OPs) including governmental and non-governmental institutions, funds will be channeled to implementing partners to lead delivery of results consistent with their respective mandates and comparative advantages. However, with an OPIM being used, FAO's role in managing day-to-day activities will be limited; hence, national institutions and non-governmental organizations capacities, if not increased, might reduce pace of implementation. Based on the consultations, potential implementers, in addition to NGO partners, include MoA; EPA; CARI and LISGIS. Mitigation measures include the already inbuilt capacity building activities that the project will address as well as regular meetings of the project steering committees. Mentoring will also be undertaken through regular interaction of the implementing agency and the executing agency to address any potential lack of capacity in project management. To further address these risks, FAO retains overall responsibility, for the technical soundness of project implementation. Due diligence processes throughout the project cycle from formulation to final reporting will be undertaken with each potential governmental and non-governmental institution partner. Under OPIM, an Operation Partners Agreement (OPA) will be signed with each selected OP. During implementation of the project FAO will provide continued technical assistance to enhance their ability to manage and implement project activities effectively and ensue monitoring of funds through quality assurance activities like spot checks and audits. Field visits and evaluation of progress in achieving agreed results will be undertaken. Regular communication and coordination will ensure smooth project implementation.
Fiduciary	Moderate	Financial Management and Procurement - With an OPIM, the management capacity of implementing government and non-governmental institutions, if not improved, will affect project delivery as their current capacity to ensure effective Financial Management and Procurement is challenged. To reduce the risk, FAO retains overall responsibility for financial prudence of project implementation. Due diligence and fiduciary risk assessment will be undertaken with each potential OP and a fiduciary mitigation and assurance plan will be developed accordingly during the PPG phase. During the project

		implementation phase, FAO will provide continued technical assistance to enhance their ability to manage fund effectively and ensue monitoring of funds through quality assurance activities like spot checks and audits.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Some stakeholders may not be aware of the project or its potential impact. Ineffective communication or a lack of clear and consistent messaging can lead to stakeholders not understanding the project's purpose, goals, or benefits and then decrease their engagement on the project. To reduce the risk, a stakeholder engagement plan will be developed during the PPG phase and implemented. The involvement of relevant stakeholders at all levels during project development will be ensured to consider their interests and expectations to support the project.
Other	Low	Another risk could be inadequate adoption of lessons from earlier initiatives
Overall Risk Rating	Low	The overall risk to project outcomes considering the country setting and ambition of the project is low and project success is envisaged. The project is country owned and addressing country level priorities.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Alignment with GEF-8 programming strategies.

The project aligns with the GEF focal areas, particularly focusing on land degradation with co-benefits from sustainable land management (SLM), and climate change mitigation, while also mainstreaming biodiversity and gender considerations. Component 1 contributes directly to LD-2-5 by enhancing national institutional capacities and coordination for land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets. Through improved governance, inter-agency mechanisms, and policy integration, the project creates an enabling environment for scaling up and mainstreaming SLM. Outputs like the establishment of coordination mechanisms and the integration of SLM lessons into policies strengthen Liberia’s capacity to achieve LDN and create co-benefits for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. The regulatory and incentive mechanisms developed under this component further reinforce the systemic impacts on land use, aligning with the goal of sustaining agro-ecosystem services and supporting livelihoods (LD-1-1).

Component 2 is closely tied to LD-1-1 and delivers CCM co-benefits by demonstrating SLM practices that restore degraded landscapes and enhance food systems through sustainable rice production. The participatory land management plans and gender-sensitive approaches ensure that the needs of marginalized groups are addressed, contributing to inclusive conservation of biodiversity. Outputs under this component, such as the development of integrated land management plans and the implementation of SLM

practices in degraded landscapes, directly contribute to preventing further land degradation and restoring ecosystem services. By embedding gender-sensitive frameworks, the project promotes inclusive, equitable approaches to land management, ensuring that the benefits of restored landscapes are shared among all stakeholders.

Alignment with the environmental and development country's priorities

Liberia has recently developed an ambitious strategic Agenda "LIBERIANS FEED YOURSELVES AGENDA" National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030 a comprehensive six-year National Agriculture Development Plan intended to revitalize the agricultural sector and enhance the country's self-sufficiency in food production[1][23]. In the NADP the country re affirms commitment to make agriculture robust and sustainable, using it as an accelerator of growth to provide the nutritional needs of the people with a focus on developing the value chains of targeted agricultural commodities, including food crops and cash crops. This project aligns with the NADP which includes all aspects that had been included in the LASPII that has elapsed as well as in other relevant frameworks such as the NAP. While the Liberia NAP provides for a sectoral-based approach to climate change adaptation planning in Liberia, with adaptation priorities identified for sectors such as agriculture, forestry and coastal zones management, the NADP proposes a holistic approach. An LDN target setting report has also been prepared specifically setting LDN targets and prioritizing reducing land degradation. Addressing the drivers of land degradation and reducing biodiversity loss, while promoting the national economy and contributing to the global efforts to reduce GHG emissions and global warming are part of Liberia's priorities. Specifically, the PAPD (2018-2023)[2][24], the National Policy and Response Strategy on Climate Change (2018), the National Adaptation Plan (2020-2030), the revised NDC (2021) as well as several sectoral policies including the Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Plan II (LASIP II), the national agricultural extension and advisory services policy (2023-2030), the National Environmental Policy (2003), the National environmental action plan (2019), Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy (FAPS- 2008), the National forestry policy and implementation strategy (2006), the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Program (LDN TSP) (2017) and the National Biodiversity Strategy And Action Plan-II (2017-2025) set up priority actions aiming to (i) Increase agricultural production, productivity and diversification using integrated, sustainable, low-carbon and resilient practices; (ii) Ensure sustainable management and uses of resources and promote biodiversity conservation and ecosystem preservation; (iii) Enhance the country's capacity to produce and access to and effective use of accurate information for decision-making and, (iv) Ensure effective stakeholders participation at all levels. The "LIBERIANS FEED YOURSELVES AGENDA" provides a framework for a comprehensive approach to National Agriculture Development and emphasizes sustainable land management approaches uncluding promoting development and implementation of land use plans to ensure sustainability.

The project activities under the 04 outcomes were designed to contribute to these environmental and development country's priorities. In addition, they contribute to the Revised National Gender Policy (2018-2022) objectives related to Agriculture and employment by integrating gender-based approaches in the nature positive agriculture production for LDN.

[1] "LIBERIANS FEED YOURSELVES AGENDA" National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2024-2030. Government of Liberia, Monrovia, July 2024.

[2] Republic of Liberia. Pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development (PAPD) 2018-2023.

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[1] Republic of Liberia. Pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development (PAPD) 2018-2023.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

Consultations were undertaken between April and August 2023, building on findings from a four-day training and stocktaking exercise on GHG emission and NDC reporting held with all government and partner institutions of the high emission sectors. A one-day joint stakeholder consultation workshop was conducted at the Corina Hotel in Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia on August 30th, 2023. In a workshop hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) with online support from an International GEF expert and FAO GEF Technical Specialist, the GEF PIF workshop was facilitated for the development of a GEF PIF for an integrated land management project towards the utilization of Liberia's STAR allocation of the GEF 8 cycle. The primary objective of the workshop was to bring together key stakeholders to provide support and input to the draft PIF document on areas of intervention as part of the development of the Project Identification Form (PIF). As a core purpose, key findings and recommendations obtained from the engagement were incorporated in the PIF.

Table 1: Participants during the PIF consultation workshop

Categories	Participants
Government Ministries and agencies	Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Forestry Development Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Central Agriculture Research Institute, Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), and the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA),
Academia	University of Liberia, Cuttington University, Tubman University, Stella Maris Polytechnic and Bong County Technical College
Non-state institutions	Environmental organizations, Media organizations, forest and farm producer organizations
FAO Liberia	Assistant FAOR for Programme, National Soil Specialist/Land Degradation Support, Partnership & Project Coordination, the National Forestry & NRM Specialist, the National Agronomist, and the Gender & Social Inclusion Specialist
CSO	• Society for Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) • Foundation for Community Initiative (FCI) • The Nature Compact (TNC) • Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) • Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF) • Agro Tech Liberia • Multistakeholder Platform on Land Governance and Responsible Agricultural Investments • Partners in Development (PADEV) • Champions for Change • Skills and Agricultural Development Services (SADS) • Community of Hope Agricultural Program (CHAP) • Liberia Rural Women Organization for Climate Actions Engagements with these partners were held as part of efforts to collaborate on strengthening biodiversity conservation, through existing programmes, aligned with the NBSAP and NDC, and enhancing the framework on biodiversity through the formulation of the new NBSAP (2024 – 2029). Working together to achieve land degradation neutrality, consistent with the set targets, was also explored, especially for partners working under the $8 million SIDA-funded biodiversity conservation programme, using community-based forestry and protected area management. The community forestry project is implemented by FAO and UNDP, with SCNL, FCI, TNC, SDI, PADEV as implementing partners in the two forestry priority landscapes.
Private sector	Private sector actors were engaged at various levels. For instance, Mining Concessionaire ArcelorMittal Liberia was engaged through its Biodiversity Team on how co-financing from the company could support efforts aimed at enhancing biodiversity conservation and achieving land degradation neutrality, working with

	communities, fringing its operations, to ensure sustainable agricultural and other land use practices. First Afriland Bank was also engaged on how derisked financing for agriculture could be used to promote sustainable production practices of smallholders accessing credit. Others consulted with were smallholder farmers, non-timber forest and farm producers through their value chain-based associations (National Rice Federation, Botanical Products Association of Liberia, National Oil Palm Platform – comprising large agricultural concessions including Mano Oil Palm, Liberia Agricultural Company, Golden Veroleum, Equatorial Oil Palm). Medium to large scale rice processors from Agriculture Infrastructure Investment Company (AAIC) and Selma Agriculture Development Company (SADC) were also engaged towards ensuring that paddy aggregated and processed are produced under sustainable conditions. Whilst this sets the tone for private sector participation and ownership, additional consultations will be held with other actors during the PPG stage. @octavious, please update, please ensure you add a brief summary of your areas of discussion

This built on several community-level engagements undertaken in the proposed project areas, using existing FAO programming funds to conduct site assessments/studies focusing on the ecological, topographical, soil and hydrological (irrigation) suitability and potentials.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing ($)
FAO	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	2,962,620.00	281,449.00	3,244,069.00
FAO	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	1,203,264.00	114,310.00	1,317,574.00
FAO	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: CCM-1-1	Grant	948,135.00	90,073.00	1,038,208.00
Total GEF Resources ($)						**5,114,019.00**	**485,832.00**	**5,599,851.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount ($)

150000

PPG Agency Fee ($)

14250

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
FAO	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	86,897.00	8,255.00	95,152.00

FAO	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: LD-1	Grant	35,293.00	3,353.00	38,646.00
FAO	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: CCM-1-1	Grant	27,810.00	2,642.00	30,452.00
Total PPG Amount ($)						**150,000.00**	**14,250.00**	**164,250.00**

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total($)
FAO	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	3,339,221.00
FAO	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,356,220.00
FAO	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,068,660.00
Total GEF Resources					**5,764,101.00**

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
LD-1	GET	1,203,264.00	8842798
BD-1-1	GET	2,962,620.00	21772321
CCM-1-1	GET	948,135.00	6967854
Total Project Cost		**5,114,019.00**	**37,582,973.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Private Sector	Afriland First Bank	Equity	Investment mobilized	5000000
Private Sector	Arcelor Mittal Liberia	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6300000

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, WB/IFAD/IFAD project	Loans	Investment mobilized	15000000
Recipient Country Government	National Road Fund/Ministry of Public Works	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	2870000
Donor Agency	Sweden	Grant	Investment mobilized	1812973
Donor Agency	Sweden	Grant	Investment mobilized	1000000
Recipient Country Government	World Bank	Loans	Investment mobilized	4500000
Recipient Country Government	Africa Development Bank	Loans	Investment mobilized	800000
Donor Agency	Sweden/FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	300000
Total Co-financing				**37,582,973.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Co-financing is being sourced from both the public and private sectors. Principally, most of private sector co-financing would be provided by the Afriland First Bank Liberia, through its agricultural credit facilities and other windows for agricultural value chain actors. About $5 million, representing a portion of its loan portfolio covering farmers and value chain actors in the areas of interventions, will count. In addition to the Bank, ArcelorMittal Liberia, a mining company operating in 3 of the targeted counties (Nimba, Bong and Grand Bassa), and covering 51,000 hectares, will support as co-financier, through its conservation, agricultural and biodiversity support to farmers. This amount, for the duration of the project, is put at $6.3 million.

Complementing the private sector efforts, co-financing was identified from ongoing projects with interventions in the GEF project landscape with a total budget estimate of US$ 8,412,973. But the final co-financing amount will be determined during the PPG phase, following the discussion with each project implementing partner. Sweden is implementing a project in Nimba County to setting-up upland rice farming groups farming groups, vegetable and fruit productions, and farmers' field schools as learning and demonstration sites. It is also working in seven counties, including Lofa county, to establish improved governance structure, promotion of participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation approaches, support sustainable livelihood options for forest fringe communities to strengthen their capacities to become less forest dependent and more climate resilient and facilitate the establishment and strengthening of a knowledge management system. FAO is implementing a project at regional level to the potential economic, social, and environmental contributions of community-based forest (CbF) and land management and the generation and dissemination of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned in the sub-region and globally, including Liberia. And finally, the World Bank with Norway, is implementing a national project in strengthening the capacity for Management of Targeted Forest Landscapes through the incorporation of a Participatory mapping and zoning; Developing a Forest Monitoring Information System for MRV system established and operational.

Finally, the co-financing public sector funds invested in road maintenance for both primary and feeder roads in areas of intervention. Through the National Road Fund/Ministry of Public Works, such amount will be contributed as co-financing support, by providing the required public goods (roads) for farmers/producers, and other value chain actors to contribute to a sustainable agri-food system. The GoL through IDA/ World Bank financing is developing poultry value chain many counties, including in Nimba, Bong and Montserrado counties, while with the AfDB, it is investing in some counties including Montserrado County to increasing

the productivity of cassava, rice and vegetables production and supporting the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes for rice cultivation in upland areas.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

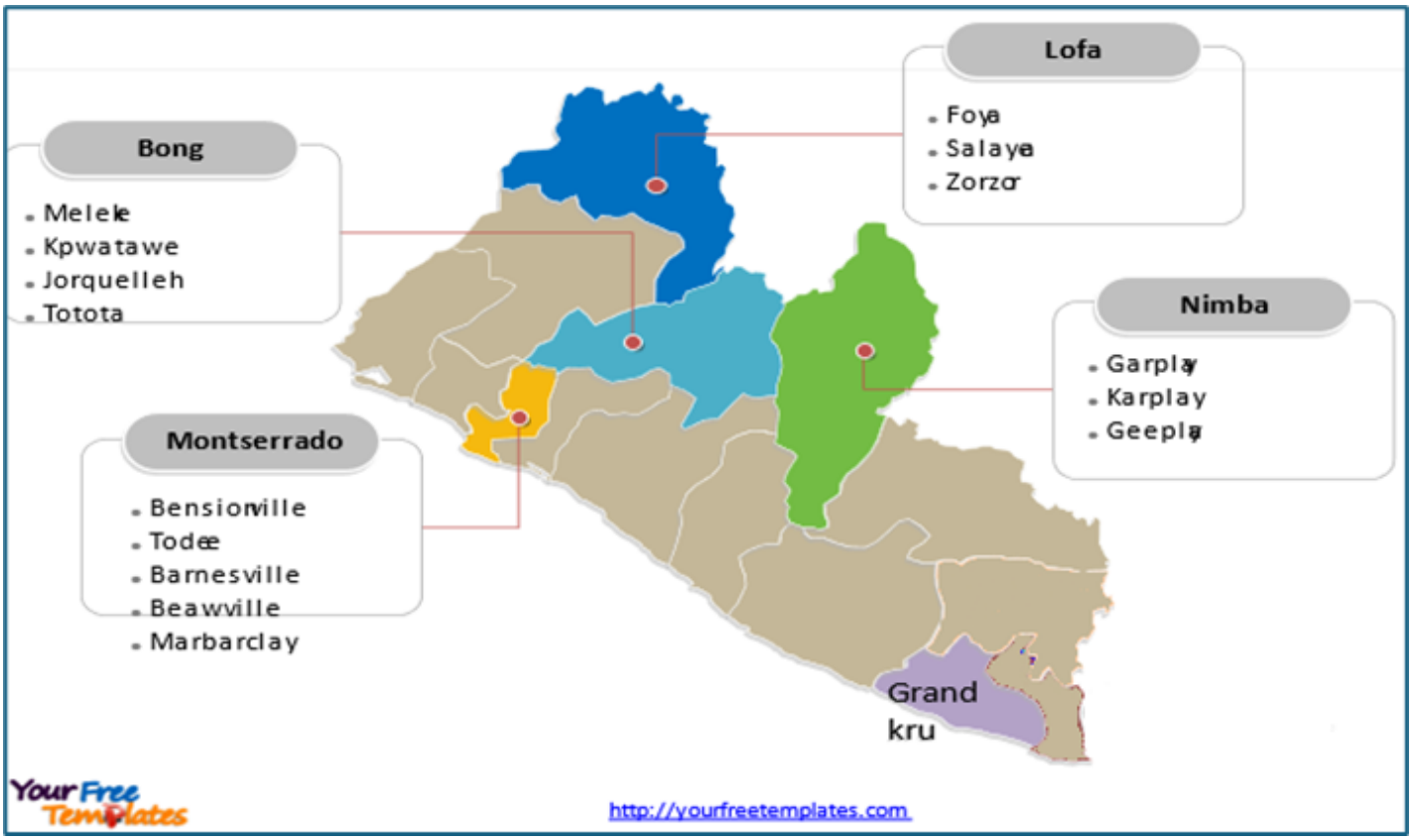
GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Mr Jeffrey Griffin	9/16/2024	Mr Jeffrey Griffin		jeffrey.griffin@fao.org

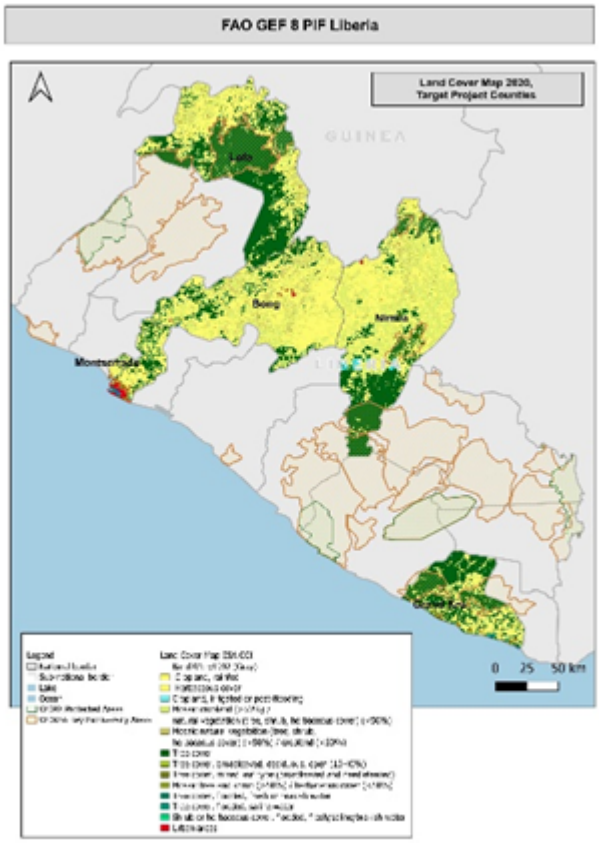
Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

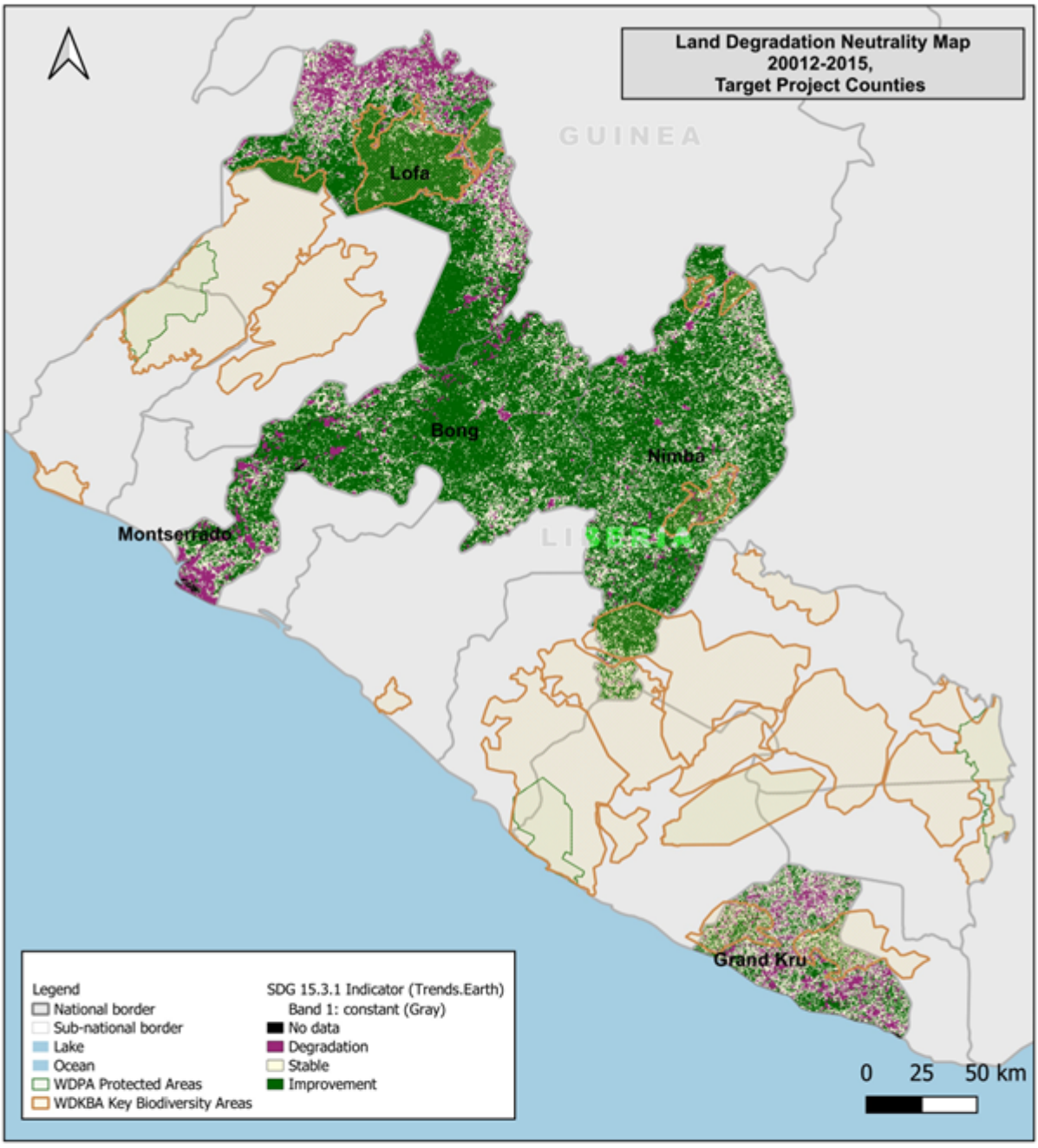
Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Dr Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo	Executive Director / CEO	Environmental Protection Agency	10/16/2024

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place




FAO GEF 8 PIF Liberia
Land Cover Map 2020,
Target Project Countries
GUINEA
Lofa
Bong
Nimba
Montserrado
Grand Gedeh
0 25 50 km



Description: This map has been developed in the framework of the FAO GEF 8 PIF for Liberia

Projection: EPSG:4326 - WGS 84 - Geographic
Author: Carmen Morales, Land Monitoring and Climate Specialist, FAO.
Sources: WDPA, WDKBA, GAUL, ESA, MODIS.

The Land Cover Map and Land Degradation Neutrality Maps have been downloaded with the trends.earth plugin of QGIS. Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) maps use three key indicators—land cover, land productivity, and soil organic carbon (SOC)—to monitor and assess land degradation trends for sustainable land management.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

County of intervention	Proposed locality	Description of support
Nimba	Garplay, Gbehleh-Geh, Twah River	Production-focused, Irrigation superstructure development; training on SLM, inputs support
	Karnplay, Geeplay	
Lofa	Foya or Zorzor, Salayea, Zorzor, Voijama, Foya and Foya Protected Area fringed communities	
Bong	Tumutu / Frelela, Jorquelleh, Totota Panta (Garmu), Melekee, Kpatawee and CARI	Infrastructure development, sustainable production practices
Montserrado	Bensonville AVTC, Barnersville, Todee, Virginia, Mont Barclay, Brewerville, Bensonville AVTC / Todee	
Grand Kru	Garraway	SLM practices

Figure 2: Proposed target project counties

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title
ESS Risk Screening checklist for Liberia 754252

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing models			
	Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
	Demonstrate innovative approaches		
	Deploy innovative financial instruments		
Stakeholders			
	Private Sector		
		Capital providers	
		Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		Large corporations	
		SMEs	
		Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
		Non-Grant Pilot	

		Project Reflow	
	Beneficiaries		
	Local Communities		
	Civil Society		
		Community Based Organization	
		Non-Governmental Organization	
		Academia	
		Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
	Type of Engagement		
		Information Dissemination	
		Partnership	
		Consultation	
		Participation	
	Communications		
		Awareness Raising	
		Education	
		Public Campaigns	
		Behavior Change	
Capacity, Knowledge, and Research			
	Enabling Activities		
	Capacity Development		
	Knowledge Generation and Exchange		
	Targeted Research		
	Learning		
		Theory of Change	
		Adaptive Management	
		Indicators to Measure Change	
	Innovation		
	Knowledge and Learning		
		Knowledge Management	
		Innovation	
		Capacity Development	
		Learning	
	Stakeholder Engagement Plan		
Gender Equality			
	Gender Mainstreaming		
		Beneficiaries	
		Women groups	
		Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		Gender-sensitive indicators	
	Gender results areas		
		Access and control over natural resources	
		Participation and leadership	
		Access to benefits and services	
		Capacity development	
		Awareness raising	
		Knowledge generation	
Focal Areas/Theme			
	Integrated Programs		

		Commodity Supply Chains (Good Growth Partnership)	
			Sustainable Commodities Production
			Deforestation-free Sourcing
			Financial Screening Tools
			High Conservation Value Forests
			High Carbon Stocks Forests
			Soybean Supply Chain
			Oil Palm Supply Chain
			Beef Supply Chain
			Smallholder Farmers
			Adaptive Management
		Food Security Sub-Sahara Africa	
			Resilience (climate and shocks)
			Sustainable Production Systems
			Agroecosystems
			Land and Soil Health
			Diversified Farming
			Integrated Land and Water Management
			Smallholder Farming
			Small and Medium Enterprises
			Crop Genetic Diversity
			Food Value Chains
			Gender Dimensions
			Multi-stakeholder Platforms
		Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration	
			Sustainable Food Systems
			Landscape Restoration
			Sustainable Commodity Production
			Comprehensive Land Use Planning
			Integrated Landscapes
			Food Value Chains
			Deforestation-free Sourcing
			Smallholder Farmers
		Sustainable Cities	
			Integrated urban planning
			Urban sustainability framework
			Transport and Mobility
			Buildings
			Municipal waste management
			Green space
			Urban Biodiversity
			Urban Food Systems
			Energy efficiency

			Municipal Financing
			Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
			Urban Resilience
	Biodiversity		
		Protected Areas and Landscapes	
			Terrestrial Protected Areas
			Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
			Productive Landscapes
			Productive Seascapes
			Community Based Natural Resource Management
		Mainstreaming	
			Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)
			Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
			Tourism
			Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
			Fisheries
			Infrastructure
			Certification (National Standards)
			Certification (International Standards)
		Species	
			Illegal Wildlife Trade
			Threatened Species
			Wildlife for Sustainable Development
			Crop Wild Relatives
			Plant Genetic Resources
			Animal Genetic Resources
			Livestock Wild Relatives
			Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
		Biomes	
			Mangroves
			Coral Reefs
			Sea Grasses
			Wetlands
			Rivers
			Lakes
			Tropical Rain Forests
			Tropical Dry Forests
			Temperate Forests
			Grasslands
			Paramo
			Desert
		Financial and Accounting	
			Payment for Ecosystem Services

			Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
			Conservation Trust Funds
			Conservation Finance
		Supplementary Protocol to CBD	
			Biosafety
			Access to Genetic Resources Benefit Sharing
	Forests		
		Forest and Landscape Restoration	
			REDD/REDD+
		Forest	
			Amazon
			Congo
			Drylands
	Land Degradation		
		Sustainable Land Management	
			Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			Ecosystem Approach
			Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach
			Community-Based NRM
			Sustainable Livelihoods
			Income Generating Activities
			Sustainable Agriculture
			Sustainable Pasture Management
			Sustainable Forest/Woodland Management
			Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques
			Sustainable Fire Management
			Drought Mitigation/Early Warning
		Land Degradation Neutrality	
			Land Productivity
			Land Cover and Land cover change
			Carbon stocks above or below ground
		Food Security	
	International Waters		
		Ship	
		Coastal	
		Freshwater	
			Aquifer
			River Basin
			Lake Basin
		Learning	
		Fisheries	

		Persistent toxic substances	
		SIDS: Small Island Dev States	
		Targeted Research	
		Pollution	
			Persistent toxic substances
			Plastics
			Nutrient pollution from all sectors except wastewater
			Nutrient pollution from Wastewater
		Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan preparation	
		Strategic Action Plan Implementation	
		Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	
		Large Marine Ecosystems	
		Private Sector	
		Aquaculture	
		Marine Protected Area	
		Biomes	
			Mangrove
			Coral Reefs
			Seagrasses
			Polar Ecosystems
			Constructed Wetlands
	Chemicals and Waste		
		Mercury	
		Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining	
		Coal Fired Power Plants	
		Coal Fired Industrial Boilers	
		Cement	
		Non-Ferrous Metals Production	
		Ozone	
		Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		Sound Management of chemicals and Waste	
		Waste Management	
			Hazardous Waste Management
			Industrial Waste
			e-Waste
		Emissions	
		Disposal	
		New Persistent Organic Pollutants	
		Polychlorinated Biphenyls	
		Plastics	
		Eco-Efficiency	
		Pesticides	
		DDT - Vector Management	
		DDT - Other	
		Industrial Emissions	
		Open Burning	

		Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices	
		Green Chemistry	
	Climate Change		
		Climate Change Adaptation	
			Climate Finance
			Least Developed Countries
			Small Island Developing States
			Disaster Risk Management
			Sea-level rise
			Climate Resilience
			Climate information
			Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			Adaptation Tech Transfer
			National Adaptation Programme of Action
			National Adaptation Plan
			Mainstreaming Adaptation
			Private Sector
			Innovation
			Complementarity
			Community-based Adaptation
			Livelihoods
		Climate Change Mitigation	
			Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
			Energy Efficiency
			Sustainable Urban Systems and Transport
			Technology Transfer
			Renewable Energy
			Financing
			Enabling Activities
		Technology Transfer	
			Poznan Strategic Programme on Technology Transfer
			Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN)
			Endogenous technology
			Technology Needs Assessment
			Adaptation Tech Transfer
		UNFCC	
			NDC
			Paris Agreement
			Sustainable Development Goals
		Climate Finance (Rio Markers)	Climate Change Mitigation 1
			Climate Change Mitigation 2

			Climate Change Adaptation 1
			Climate Change Adaptation 2