Guinean Forests (GEF-8 Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program)

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title:	Guinean Forests (GEF-8 Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program)		
Country(ies):	**Regional,** Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone	**GEF Program ID:**	**11142**
Lead GEF Agency:	CI	**GEF Agency Program ID:**	
Other GEF Agenc(ies):	FAO IUCN	**Submission Date :**	**4/12/2023**
Type of Trust Fund:	GET		
Anticipated Program Executing Entity(s):	**Nzerekoré Forestry Centre (CFZ)**	**Anticipated Program Executing Partner Type(s):**	**Government**
	Bossus Environmental Research Institute (IREB)		**Government**
	Guinean Parks and Reserves Office (OGUIPAR)		**Government**
	The Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)		**Government**
	The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) (Liberia)		**Government**
	The Ministry of Agriculture (Liberia)		**Government**

	The Ministry of Mines and Energy (Liberia)		Government
	The Liberia Land Authority		Government
	The Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)		Government
	National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) (Sierra Leone)		Government
	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) (Sierra Leone)		Government
Sector (only for Programs on CC):		Program Duration (Months):	72
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	Program Commitment Deadline:	12/1/2024

Taxonomy:
International Waters, Focal Areas, Freshwater, River Basin, Forest, Forest and Landscape Restoration, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Forest, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Cover and Land cover change, Land Productivity, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Climate Change, Climate Change Adaptation, Mainstreaming adaptation, Livelihoods, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Climate resilience, National Adaptation Programme of Action, National Adaptation Plan, Climate finance, Least Developed Countries, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Paris Agreement, Enabling Activities, Nationally Determined Contribution, Climate Change Mitigation, Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, Financing, Energy Efficiency, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Productive Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Mainstreaming, Ceritification - International Standards, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Forestry - Including HCVF and REDD+, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approache, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Private Sector, Stakeholders, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, SMEs, Large corporations, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Community Based Organization, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Communications, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Behavior change, Type of Engagement, Participation, Information Dissemination, Partnership, Gender results areas, Gender Equality, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Participation and leadership, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Gender Mainstreaming, Women

Program Summary
Provide a brief summary description of the program, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the program objectives, and how will the program promote transformational change? iii) how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs 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 program should be in section B "program description". (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP) seeks to stem and reverse forest loss and degradation in this critical forest biome. The GFIP will serve as a regional platform to apply a whole-of-biome approach to engage governments and other partners throughout the region to enhance the enabling environment for conservation and sustainable management of Guinean Forests, including dissemination of knowledge, tools, and best practice; support for technical and institutional capacity growth; innovative financing solutions; and facilitation of processes to enhance regional harmonization of policies relating to forest ecosystems. To address threats posed by expanding agriculture, unmanaged timber and non-timber resource extraction, and infrastructure development, country projects in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will apply multiple levers of transformation, including an enhanced enabling environment for sustainable forest management through supportive government policy and sustainable financing solutions; alternatives to unsustainable land and resource use through land use planning and support for sustainable livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises; and enhanced forest governance through multi-stakeholder dialogues for co-management of protected areas and landscape-level coordination for improved planning and decision making. The regional component of the GFIP will reinforce these areas of work with technical support and capacity building, learning and knowledge exchange, and facilitation of transboundary forest landscape management and regional policy dialogue. Noting the institutional gap at the biome level with respect to policy alignment focused on forest

management, the program will explore the development of a regional policy coordination body; in doing so, the GFIP will help advance the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, and help impacts endure and expand throughout the biome beyond program implementation. Collectively, these efforts will expand and strengthen the management of 781,389 ha of forest areas under formal protection and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), improve the sustainable management of 257,308 ha in wider forest landscapes outside Protected Areas (PAs), and restore 24,433 ha of land, thereby mitigating GHG emissions by at least 3.5 million Mt CO_2e. Critical to achieving these results will be ensuring inclusive, gender-equitable socioeconomic benefits for at least 85,667 (of which at least 49% will be women). Lastly, the economic empowerment of communities through investment in nature-based local livelihoods and enterprises coupled with participatory land use planning, strengthening community governance of natural resources including expansion of OECMs, and overall, mainstreaming gender in the proposed program interventions will entice local communities to protect and manage the forests hence deter further encroachment and destruction.

Indicative Program Overview

Program Objective

To protect and improve the effective governance of the Guinean Forests in-order to maximize global environmental benefits, contribute to the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being.

Program Components	Component Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Program Financing($)	Co-financing($)
COMPONENT 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available	GET	5,498,336.00	16,921,780.00
		Outcome 1.2: Integrated participatory land-use and spatial plans developed			
COMPONENT 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs	Technical Assistance	Outcome 2.1: Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs	GET	5,549,091.00	17,051,430.00
		Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas and OECMs			

COMPONENT 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3.1: Improved sustainability of productive sectors in forest landscapes	GET	4,478,790.00	13,887,922.00
		Outcome 3.2: Improved inclusive and equitable access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises			
		Outcome 3.3: Strengthened inclusive community forest governance			
COMPONENT 4: Policy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management	Technical Assistance	Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning	GET	1,000,000.00	150,600.00
		Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g. incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies			

COMPONENT 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning	Technical Assistance	Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications	GET	1,931,115.00	6,481,309.00
		Outcome 5.2: Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives			
		Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated			
		Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization			

M&E

M&E	Technical Assistance	Outcome 6.1: A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework in place	GET	664,411.00	2,330,205.00
		Sub Total ($)		**19,121,743.00**	**56,823,246.00**

Program Management Cost (PMC)

			GET	956,085.00	2,841,160.00
		Sub Total($)		**956,085.00**	**2,841,160.00**
		Total Program Cost($)		**20,077,828.00**	**59,664,406.00**

Please provide justification
N/A

PROGRAM OUTLINE

A. PROGRAM RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems that the program will address, the key elements and underlying drivers of environmental change to be targeted, and the urgency to transform associated systems in line with the GEF-8 Programming Directions document. Describe the overall objective of the program, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

The Guinean Forests of West Africa comprise a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot spanning the southern part of West Africa into the northern region of Central Africa. Covering approximately 620,000 km^2, the region includes two sub-regions: the Upper Guinean Forests (starting in Guinea and extending eastward to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and part of Benin); and the Lower Guinean Forests extending from southern Nigeria into southwestern Cameroon and including São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea's islands.

An estimated 10 million hectares of forest have been lost in West Africa since the beginning of the 20th century, with only around 15% of the original forest cover still intact. Decades of poor natural resource governance, civil conflicts, and high levels of poverty and income inequality have left the region's ecosystems in a precarious state, making the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services upon which the population depends all the more challenging and urgent.

Principal threats to the Guinean Forests include agricultural expansion, unsustainable logging and fishing, bushmeat hunting and trade, industrial and artisanal mining, and climate change and pollution. Expansion of the agricultural frontier for both subsistence and commercial crops is the leading cause of forest loss, such that approximately 80% of the region's original habitat is considered an "agriculture-forest" mosaic. Root causes of these threats include high levels of poverty and wealth inequality, intense pressure for economic development, expanding infrastructure and settlements, and inadequate definition and recognition of land tenure and resource rights. Weak governance of natural resource use and management is a contributing factor to these threats throughout the region. Notably, some of the threats mentioned above are transboundary in nature, such as, unsustainable logging and fishing, bushmeat hunting and trade and artisanal mining where miners move between countries.

Forests continue to be lost and degraded across West Africa, with Nigeria having one of the world's highest deforestation rates and Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire's primary forest loss rates increasing by 60% and 26% respectively from 2010-2020.[5] (Table 1 below summarizes forest trend data for the eight countries originally eligible for the GFIP.) Failure to address the drivers of forest loss and degradation will result in continued habitat and ecosystem service loss, and loss of natural capital will erode the socioeconomic wellbeing of forest-dependent communities and foreclose sustainable economic development options.

Table 1: Forest Trends in GFIP-eligible Countries

Country	Stable Forest Cover (2000-2020)	Disturbed Forest (2000-2020)	Net Forest Loss (2000-2020)	Total Net Change (% of total tree cover, 2000-2020)
Cameroon	33,900,000 ha	1,670,000 ha	626,000 ha	-1.7%
Côte d'Ivoire	16,800,000 ha	4,380,000 ha	1,650,000 ha	-6.9%
Ghana	8,670,000 ha	1,690,000 ha	573,000 ha	-5.1%
Guinea	14,600,000 ha	2,626,000 ha	1,590,000 ha	-8.3%
Liberia	6,420,000 ha	2,530,000 ha	334,000 ha	-3.6%
Nigeria	20,600,000 ha	1,180,000 ha	1,470,000 ha	-6.1%
São Tomé-Principe	NA	NA	77 ha*	-0.5%
Sierra Leone	3,400,000 ha	1,990,000 ha	545,000 ha	-9%

Source: Global Forest Watch (2023).(2001-2021)*

The program's objective is *to protect and improve the effective governance of the Guinean Forests in-order to maximize global environmental benefits, contribute to the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being*. The Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP) will help maintain globally significant biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services through the following Global Environmental Benefits:

Protected Areas: Create 347,875 ha of new PAs; improve management of 433,514 ha of PAs; establish sustainable management in 257,308 ha

Restoration: Restore 24,433 ha of degraded land

CO2 sequestration: Absorb and sequester an estimated 3.5 million Mt CO2e through improved landscape management and forest protection, climate-smart agriculture, and restoration

Community well-being: Benefit at least 85,667 people (of which 49% will be women) through training, development of new income-generating opportunities, and incentives for sustainable practices and restoration.

Reversing current trends in forest loss and degradation will require addressing the following barriers that characterize the baseline scenario:

Lack of comprehensive participatory integrated land use planning: Sustainable landscapes require coordination among stakeholders based on a shared

vision for land and resource use. A 2021 analysis of the Upper Guinean Forest Transboundary Landscape states that there is a need to bring landscape actors together to develop a shared understanding of the impacts of different land uses and that there are few if any, formal mechanisms in place to foster sectoral or cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration in this landscape.

Insufficient data to guide land-use planning (LUP), decision-making, and management: Effective LUP and other policy- and decision-making require reliable data and information to understand interactions and trade-offs within social-ecological-economic systems. Throughout the region, much of the available data and information is outdated, incomplete, and/or unreliable. For example, FFI (2021) states that "there is a paucity of data on which to base conservation planning for connectivity across the landscape" and that biodiversity data outside protected areas are particularly scarce. The CEPF Ecosystem Profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot[8] is the most comprehensive source of data for the region, but was published in 2015, and requires updating.

Lack of financing and access to financing for sustainable livelihoods by local communities: Rural communities throughout the region depend on agriculture supplemented by a range of timber and non-timber forest products, including charcoal and firewood. Given current prevailing land- and resource-use practices, efforts to increase income through these activities are linked to deforestation and forest degradation. Altering this dynamic will require overcoming limited knowledge of and access to competitive, sustainable income-generating alternatives; addressing this barrier also will require identifying means by which to overcome limited financing for investment in sustainable livelihoods, including attention to the impact of gender on access to finance.

Limited government capacity for effective conservation and sustainable management: Conservation and sustainable management of land and resources require a set of technical capacities that are in short supply throughout the region. Examples range from understanding ecosystem service dynamics to planning processes (land use, spatial, resource management) to innovative conservation management technology to best practices for agriculture and other resource use. A 2020 USAID report regarding the Gola Transboundary Forest Landscape noted under-resourced government departments as a significant barrier to effective conservation. The report states that "the NPAA in Sierra Leone and the FDA in Liberia are under-staffed and under-resourced and lack capacity for many aspects of conservation work."

Weak policies and legislation relating to forest governance: Policy and legislative work in the region have not kept pace with the growing pressure on the region's forests. Although higher-level policy commitments to biodiversity and climate goals have been articulated by most governments, there is a dearth of policies and legislation to actualize these commitments on the ground. Relevant areas relate to land tenure and resource rights, mandated multi-stakeholder land use planning, and shared governance arrangements over protected areas and other forest areas.

Gender inequality in natural resource management including land tenure: When women lack access and are not represented in decision-making, an opportunity is lost to strengthen natural resource management through women's unique contributions (e.g., knowledge, values, and strengths). For example, research on forest user groups found that groups with a quota in place for gender-balanced membership conserved more trees in a Payment for Ecosystem Services intervention and shared the payments more equally compared to groups without a quota. Women's rates of land ownership are very low in the region, and women face structural barriers to full enjoyment of their land tenure rights, due to cultural norms and customary practices. Women are largely absent from decision-making positions regarding forest management, and traditional socio-cultural norms discourage women's participation in

governing bodies.

Limited coordination of transboundary forest management: Several landscapes important to biodiversity and ecosystem services in the region span national boundaries. Transboundary coordination is recognized as a need by relevant government agencies, as evidenced by high-level agreements. For example, in 2011, the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest, amended in 2020 reaffirming the commitment to joint forest management and biodiversity protection of their two adjoining PAs as the Gola Forest Peace Park. In 2019, the Governments of Liberia and Guinea signed a bilateral agreement for collaboration in the management of the Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex. In practice, however, such coordination is limited, due to competing priorities and limited capacity and resources. These policy commitments must be accompanied by activities to address gaps in the watershed and forest management and enforcement along the borders between the countries, reinforcing existing governance and advisory structures (such as the Transboundary Committee) and establishing new technical subcommittees, and pursuing sustainable financing solutions to maintain joint management efforts.

The lack of financing and access to financing for protected areas and sustainable landscape management: Governments throughout the region struggle to provide adequate budgets for protected areas and sustainable management of the wider landscapes in which they are located. Some of the resulting shortfall is met through philanthropic funding and ODA, often channeled through environmental NGOs, but sizeable gaps remain and these flows do not constitute a sustainable long-term financing solution. In Guinea, for example, while Ziama and Nimba have management plans, they do not have long-term financing to support management and conservation. A combination of policy and work on financing mechanisms is needed to overcome this barrier.

These barriers reflect an interlinked set of factors at the system level context that collectively hamper efforts to prevent or reverse the ecological deterioration of the Guinean Forests biome. Therefore, transformative change is called for in order to achieve environmental and climate objectives, which necessarily entails multi-stakeholder efforts to address underlying social and economic matters. The overarching challenge relates to governance at all levels from the local to landscape to national to regional spheres, and the barriers point to related obstacles to achieving effective forest governance: gaps in knowledge, information, and technical capacity; constrained participation (e.g., by women); and a subsidiary role for conservation and sustainable management in the overall policy and legislative context. Consequently, few actors are motivated to prioritize the maintenance of forests and associated ecosystem services in the face of other demands, as reflected in the limited degree to which political commitment to transboundary management has translated into concrete joint action, or the limited extent to which land use planning has been integrated as a standard part of land management and governance, despite considerable investment in both areas. This suggests that system-level transformation requires further investment at the regional level, to advance mutually reinforcing responses to the various barriers that result in lasting transformative change. A critical enabling factor is the availability of financing at scale: to create needed incentives at the community level and to sustain institutions and processes that are central to effective governance, particularly bodies for ongoing multi-stakeholder coordination and alignment at landscape and regional levels. Therefore two priorities for the GFIP will be to 1) facilitate work by the countries of the region towards a permanent body for ongoing alignment and harmonization of forest management policies, and 2) advance innovative financing solutions (e.g., Project Finance for Permanence, aggregated carbon transactions, biodiversity certificates, and others) that benefit from consideration at a regional, biome-wide scale.

The program approach is well suited to addressing drivers of environmental degradation given the prevalence of transboundary dynamics for the region's remaining large Intact Forest Landscapes; the ubiquitous role of key economic sectors (e.g., cocoa and palm oil) in the region's forest areas; and shared

regional needs with respect to capacity building, policy reform, and conservation finance. By emphasizing regional coordination, cooperation, and cross-project learning, the program approach can maximize the impact of funding invested per these themes. This also will contribute to enduring outcomes by generating a regional community of practice with a shared basis of capacity and knowledge, grounded in aligned policies and policy objectives.

As signaled above, the central stakeholders are IPLCs living in and around forest landscapes, as their daily decisions on land- and resource-use directly impact the future of these landscapes. Local communities will be project partners and beneficiaries, as a combination of institutional capacity building, sustainable livelihoods, and enhanced tenure and resource rights strengthens their ability and incentives for sustainable forest management. This will include support for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) dedicated to implementing projects that contribute to sustainable economic development while achieving priority conservation outcomes in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot. The success of the IP also will depend on the participation of the private sector as a key stakeholder in forest landscapes, principally as concessionaires involved in commercial agroforestry and agriculture, mining, energy, and infrastructure development sectors among others. They will be key participants in LUP processes, engaged to secure commitment to deforestation-free supply chains, and involved in work to enhance local community participation in these supply chains. To ensure a conducive enabling environment for this body of work, a range of government agencies are key stakeholders in efforts ranging from direct work on the ground to policy reform at the national level, notably environmental protection and protected area management agencies, but also ministries of finance, land authorities, and agencies implicated in infrastructure development and their contractors (e.g., roads, energy). Finally, a set of regional stakeholders includes regional initiatives and other policy forums such as the Mano River Union, AFR100, and others that can contribute to coordination and exchange.

The GFIP builds on prior and current regional investments, including funding for direct biodiversity conservation as well as larger thematic investments with conservation benefits, such as initiatives to address climate change, safeguard ecosystem service delivery, and improve management practices at the corridor and landscape scale. Relevant recent investments in the region include:

The West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WABiCC) program was a USD53.75 million initiative funded by USAID (2015-2021). The goal of the program was 'to improve conservation and climate-resilient, low-emissions growth across West Africa'. WABiCC focused on targeted landscapes across the region to work with policy makers and practitioners to improve governance, policy, and practice through three components: Combatting Wildlife Trafficking; Increasing Coastal Resilience to Climate Change, and; Reducing Deforestation, Forest Degradation, and Biodiversity Loss. This has been followed by the USD49 Million West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED, 2021-2025) program, which also works with partners to strengthen the capacity of national and regional networks and institutions to enforce and prosecute wildlife trafficking laws across the region; implement regional and transboundary cooperation and biodiversity conservation strategies in the key forested countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and improve capacity for economic planning and development of low emissions development strategies to reduce West Africa's greenhouse gas emissions, thus contributing to national and global climate commitments. The three core objectives include: 1) Support combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) and great ape conservation through improved regional coordination and operationalization of national and regional policies, laws, and regulations. 2) Reduce deforestation, forest degradation, and biodiversity loss in key forests through technical and knowledge management support. 3) Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase carbon sequestration from land use.

From 2016-2022, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) directed USD10 million in conservation investments to strengthen civil society throughout the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot, which the program will build upon, leveraging prior relationships with key stakeholders as well as lessons learned from previous experiences.

The Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate Project has been funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

and implemented by FAO in collaboration with ECOWAS. This USD8.25 million, 5-year project (2019-2024) is intended to help roll out the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, which aims to mobilize political, institutional, financial, and technical support to address transboundary forest issues across ECOWAS's 15 member states. The project's objective is to strengthen decision-making on forests and land management across West Africa by improving knowledge of forest dynamics, supporting legal reform, and demonstrating and sharing best community-based forest practices across the region.

The support Program for the Preservation of Biodiversity and Fragile Ecosystems, Governance and Climate Change in West Africa (PAPBIO) is funded by the European Union with the overall objective of promoting endogenous, sustainable, and inclusive economic development that meets the challenges of climate change. In consultation with ECOWAS, the program has been designed to advance integrated protection of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems and enhanced resilience to climate change through improved regional governance of transboundary protected areas and biodiversity. One component of the program is to support a set of protected areas throughout the region, with implementation led and coordinated by IUCN.

The Support Program for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor), funded by the European Union, is a 5-year (2019-2024), €20 million program that seeks to effectively and efficiently protect biodiversity and priority forest ecosystems in West Africa, contributing to climate change resilience and food and water security. It is focused on six transboundary forest landscapes in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria.

The GEF-funded ($6.3M; $56.3M co-financing) Mano River Union (MRU) Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (2015-2022), involving Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone with IUCN as Implementing Agency, promoted holistic approaches to integrated ecosystem management and participatory community-based strategies for conservation and sustainable use of soil, water, and biota. The project relates to 10 transboundary river basins shared by the countries, which also are ecologically critical parts of the Guinean Forests biome. Among the project outputs that the GFIP will build on are Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), Strategic Action Plan (SAP), identification of forest restoration sites, and work on community resource governance and livelihoods.

The GEF-funded Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Sector Plus (GOLD+) project relates directly to one of the threats to parts of the Guinean Forests hotspot, as informal ASGM operators are present in several important forest landscapes. Within the region, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone are participating in the GOLD+ project, seeking to formalize the sector and stimulate the adoption of improved practices, including the elimination of mercury use.

The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR) is a $345 million, seven-year (~2020-2027) global GEF IP led by the World Bank, intended to transform food and land use systems to the benefit of human wellbeing and biodiversity and other ecosystem services. FOLUR works in 27 countries; in West Africa, these include Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Liberia, providing a relevant foundation of learning and prior work both in the field and on policy, including capacity building, greening commodity value chains (esp. palm oil and cocoa), and strengthening of community governance and cooperatives, and spatial land use planning.

The Executing Agency for the Regional Child Coordination Project under the GFIP will be responsible for ongoing consultation and coordination with these related regional initiatives, supported by CI GEF Agency's Director for Project Management and Technical Oversight in Africa. During the PPG phase for the Regional Child Coordination Project, related regional initiatives will be engaged through direct outreach in the form of consultative interviews as well as workshops, building on initial engagements conducted while preparing the PFD. Engagement objectives will be to agree on modalities for ongoing alignment during implementation, identify ways to coordinate knowledge management and explore opportunities for co-financing and coordinated investments. Critical areas for strategic alignment will include support for a permanent regional policy coordination mechanism, and work on sustainable financing solutions at scale. Additionally, during the implementation phase, The Program Steering Committee (PSC) will continually provide guidance on how the IP

platform should align and engage with these opportunities to leverage them for transformative change. The sustainability of the proposed coordination platform will be reviewed during the project preparation grant phase.

Key lessons learned from current and past investments in the region include:

Distribution of funding for conservation across the region is uneven, with many KBAs and priority corridors receiving little or no funding.

Despite support from programs like the UNDP-GEF Strategic Program for West Africa to support national government capacity to manage protected area systems, there is a persistent shortage of investment and capacity needed to ensure effective management throughout the region. Moreover, many KBAs remain outside of the region's protected area systems and national conservation priorities.

Investments in CSOs and communities have proven to be effective in achieving conservation outcomes that also alleviate poverty and improve natural resource governance.

Mainstreaming gender considerations in project design is a critical means to both promote gender equity and enhance the effectiveness of interventions relating to natural resource use and management.

Legal recognition of collective title, community forests, and other forms of tenure and property rights are important enabling factors for sustainable resource management that would benefit from additional investment throughout the region.

As shown in **Table 2**, the GFIP aligns with several Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) goals and targets. The GFIP directly will contribute to the KMGBF by advancing Goals A and B (relating to conservation and sustainable use, respectively), as well as: Targets 1-3 (spatial planning, biodiversity conservation, and management, including the 30x30 target); 8 (climate change); 10-11 (sustainable use and management of biodiversity and ecosystem services); 14 (policy and planning); 18 (perverse incentives); 19 (finance); 20 (capacity-building); 21 (data availability); 22 (IPLCs), and; 23 (gender mainstreaming).

In addition, the GFIP also supports the objectives of key MEAs, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through increased mitigation and resilience measures related to spatial planning and ecosystem protection and restoration. Likewise, by emphasizing protection and restoration, the GFIP contributes to the strategic objectives and expected impacts of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Through improved land-use planning, better enforcement, and supporting sustainable economic alternatives at the landscape scale, the GFIP also aligns with the goals of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, notably in the areas of artisanal and small-scale gold mining, mercury use reduction, and restoration of former mining sites (See **Table 3**). Seven eligible countries in the region have ratified the convention (Liberia has signed but not yet ratified), and four have developed national action plans (see **Table 4**). The GFIP will facilitate country child project coordination with the GEF GOLD/GOLD+ program where relevant. Finally, the GFIP also helps advance the regional AFR100 aim to restore 100 million ha of land in Africa by 2030. Collectively, countries in the region have committed to restoring 26.7 million ha to both AFR100 and the Bonn Challenge, and the GFIP will contribute to this goal through its cumulative restoration target of 24,433 ha (see **Table 5**). Where appropriate, the GFIP will also coordinate with the Ecosystem Restoration IP to explore potential synergies in the implementation of field activities as well as policy engagement.

Table 2: Programmatic Components' Links to GEF Core Indicators and KMGBF Goals and Targets

Program Components	Program Outcomes	KMGBF Goals	KMGBF Targets (measured at output level) *All GEF8 Integrated Programs are contributing to Targets 20, 21, 22 and 23*
Component 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis	Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available Outcome 1.2: Integrated participatory land-use and spatial plans developed	Goal B: Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued maintained, and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050	Target 1 Target 2 Target 3 Target 8 Target 10 Target 11 Target 21
Component 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs	Outcome 2.1: Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas and OECMs	Goal A: The integrity connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050	Target 1 Target 3 Target 8 Target 10 Target 11 Target 21
Component 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas	Outcome 3.1: Improved sustainability of productive sectors in forest landscapes Outcome 3.2: Improved inclusive and equitable access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises Outcome 3.3: Strengthened inclusive community forest governance	Goal B: Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued maintained, and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050	Target 1 Target 2 Target 3 Target 8 Target 10 Target 11
Component 4: P	Outcome 4.1: Improved policy f	Goal D: Adequate means of imple	Target 1

olicy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management	ramework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g., incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies	mentation including financial resources, capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the KMGBF are secured and equitable accessible to all Parties, especially developing countries and small island developing states, as well as countries in economic transition, progressively closing the biodiversity financing gap of $700 billion per year and aligning financial flows with the KMGBF and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity	Target 14 Target 18 Target 22
Component 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning	Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications Outcome 5.2: Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated. Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization	Goal D: Adequate means of implementation including financial resources, capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the KMGBF are secured and equitable accessible to all Parties, especially developing countries and small island developing states, as well as countries in economic transition, progressively closing the biodiversity financing gap of $700 billion per year and aligning financial flows with the KMGBF and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity	Target 19 Target 20 Target 21

Table 3: Mapping of Program Components to Go Relevant MEA Objectives

Program Components	UNFCCC	UNCCD	Minamata
Component 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis	The GFIP contributes to Target 8 under the GBF (minimizing the impact of climate change and increasing resilience), and thus aligns with the climate mitigation objectives of the UNFCCC.	Strategic objective 1; Expected impacts 1.1 and 1.3	Article 7 (Artisanal and Small-scale mining)
Component 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs		Strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3; Expected impacts 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2	Article 7 (Artisanal and Small-scale mining)
Component 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas		Strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3; Expected impacts 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1 and 3.2	Article 7 (Artisanal and Small-scale mining); Article 12 (Contaminated sites)
Component 4: Policy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management		Strategic objectives 1, 2, 4, 5; Expected impacts 1.3, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1	Article 7 (Artisanal and Small-scale mining); Article 12 (Contaminated sites); Article 13 (Financial resources and mechanism)
Component 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning		Strategic objectives 1, 2, 4, 5; Expected impacts 1.4, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3	Article 7 (Artisanal and Small-scale mining); Article 13 (Financial resources and mechanism)

Table 4: Status of Minamata Convention on Mercury of GFIP eligible Countries

Country	Signature Date	Status	Ratification Date	National Action Plans
Cameroon	24/09/2014	Ratification	10/3/2021	
Cote d'Ivoire	10/10/2013	Ratification	1/10/2019	
Ghana	24/09/2014	Ratification	23/03/2017	link
Guinea	24/09/2014	Ratification	22/10/2018	link
Liberia	24/09/2014	Signature		
Nigeria	10/10/2013	Ratification	1/2/2018	link
Sao Tome and Principe		Accession	30/08/2018	
Sierra Leone	12/8/2014	Ratification	1/11/2016	link

Table 5: AFR100–Bonn Challenge Commitments/GFIP Child Project Restoration Targets

Country	AFR100–Bonn Challenge Commitment	GFIP Restoration Targets
Guinea	2 million ha	7,000 ha
Liberia	1 million ha	
Sierra Leone	700,000 ha	17,433 ha
Total:	*3.7 million ha*	*24,433 ha*

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the program as a whole. The program 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 PFD guidance document. (Approximately 10-15 pages) see guidance here

Program Description

The Theory of Change for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP) holds that **IF** the area of forest under improved management in existing and new protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) is expanded, and **IF** areas outside PAs and OECMs in forest landscapes are under improved sustainable management and governance, and **IF** these changes are reinforced by supportive policy changes that enhance the enabling environment for conservation and sustainable management of forests, **THEN** improved forest landscape management will reduce forest loss and degradation and the accompanying loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity decline due to habitat loss and overexploitation of natural resources, and help mitigate climate change. Achieving this transformation will require investment in: expanding the data and information base to guide management planning and activities; technical and institutional capacity of governments for effective forest management; sustainable livelihood alternatives and nature-friendly enterprise development that provide positive incentives for sustainable forest management to communities (ensuring that women have access to opportunities); and policy reform and coordination to reinforce positive incentives for forest conservation, management and restoration, and reduce negative incentives that drive unsustainable behavior. The coordination role of the GFIP Regional Child Project will generate synergies between Country Child Projects, with emphasis on transboundary management of forest landscapes shared across national borders; joint efforts on activities that benefit from scale such as sustainable financing solutions; and policy alignment to amplify the regional voice in international arenas. Beyond this coordinating role, the larger added value of the GFIP Regional Child Project will be to foster a whole-of-biome approach to protecting the integrity of the Guinean Forests, by promoting regional integration among governments and other stakeholders in countries throughout the region. Finally, noting the central roles of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs)[22] in the use and management of forest and other natural resources, and the importance of gender dynamics in shaping this use and management, the design of these interventions must reflect equity and inclusivity, prioritizing participation, Free Prior and Informed

Consent (FPIC) and gender mainstreaming.

The Theory of Change reflects the following assumptions:
  The key drivers of forest loss and degradation are agricultural encroachment and unmanaged extraction of timber and non-timber forest resources, spurred by subsistence needs and pressure for economic development.
  Given additional knowledge and technical capacity, the economic context provides opportunities to generate income from alternative, sustainable uses of the natural resource base.
  Sustainable land use outside protected areas can contribute to the integrity of the biome through reduced impact on habitat, enhanced habitat connectivity, and maintenance of ecosystem services.
  Community-level governance mechanisms, given adequate support, can embrace forest management roles, and government agency counterparts in protected area management can accommodate community participation in co-management.
  The social and cultural context is amenable to enhanced participation and decision-making by women and marginalized groups with respect to the use and management of land and natural resources.
  Private sector entities operating in forest landscapes have sufficient interest and commitment in sustainable management to play constructive roles in multi-stakeholder planning, dialogues for inter-sectoral coordination, and partnerships with communities, civil society, and government.
  Governments of the region share the political will and policy commitments needed to align regionally for a whole-of-biome approach to forest governance and coordinate management of transboundary conservation areas and forest landscapes.
  Improved sustainable forest management demonstrably can generate social, environmental, and financial benefits that unlock a diverse set of sustainable financing solutions.
  Government policy- and decision-makers are prepared to recognize the need to reinforce the enabling environment for strengthened IP&LC forest management, including co-management models for PAs, tenure and resource rights as a basis for OECMs and sustainable land use, and incentives for restoration, conservation, and sustainable forest management.
  Ecologically, targeted forest landscapes are sufficiently robust such that with improved conservation and management, reinforced by restoration where needed, interventions contribute to resilience such that the investment will not be overwhelmed by the negative impacts of climate change.

The principal transformation levers targeted by the project are:
  Innovation and learning: Collection and dissemination of knowledge and best practices, informing gender-responsive land use/spatial planning, design of governance arrangements, support for alternative livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprise, and policy reform and alignment
  Financial leverage: Enhanced ability to secure innovative and sustainable financing, in terms of both technical capacity and regional policy alignment, to sustain conservation and sustainable management in the long term
  Governance and policies: Improved incentive-environment through income generation and supportive policies that reinforce social, economic, and environmental drivers of sustained, positive behavior change
  Multi-stakeholder dialogues: Alignment and collaboration fostered through processes ranging from community-level participatory land use planning and protected area co-management to multi-stakeholder spatial planning at the landscape scale to multi-country dialogue around transboundary forest

landscape management.

Figure 1: The Guinean Forests IP Theory of Change

Environmental Problems

Root Causes

Barriers

Components

Outcomes

BAU/Barriers Changed

Desired Situation (GEF GEB Targets)

Environmental Problems
- Deforestation and forest degradation and resulting loss of ecosystem services
- Biodiversity decline due to habitat loss
- Climate change & climate variability

Root Causes
- Pressure for national economic development
- Poverty and wealth inequality
- Infrastructure and settlement expansion
- Outdated/ inequitable systems of land and resource tenure
- Overexploitation of natural resources

Barriers
- Lack of comprehensive participatory integrated land use planning
- Insufficient data to guide land-use planning decision-making and management
- Lack of access to sustainable & climate resilient livelihoods
- Limited government capacity for effective conservation and sustainable management
- Weak policies and legislation relating to forest governance
- Gender inequality in natural resource management including land tenure
- Limited coordination of transboundary forest management
- Limited financing for protected areas and sustainable landscape management

Components
- *Component 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis*
- *Component 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs*
- *Component 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas*
- *Component 4: Policy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management*
- *Component 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning*
- *Component 6: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework*

Outcomes
- ★ Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available
- ★ Outcome 1.2: Integrated, participatory land-use and spatial plan developed
- ★ Outcome 2.1: Expanded coverage of PAs and OECMs
- ★ Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing PAs and OECMs
- ★ Outcome 3.1: Improved sustainability of productive sectors in forest landscapes
- ★ Outcome 3.2: Improved inclusive and equitable access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises
- ★ Outcome 3.3: Strengthened inclusive community forest governance
- ★ Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning
- ★ Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g. incentives for conservation, and reduction of perverse subsidies
- ★ Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange (incl. public awareness/communications)
- ★ Outcome 5.2: Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives
- ★ Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated
- ★ Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization
- ★ Outcome 6.1: A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework in place

BAU/Barriers Changed
- Land use plans developed
- Data available for land-use planning, decision-making and management
- New income-generation opportunities
- Enhanced government capacity for effective conservation and sustainable management
- Enhanced community forest governance capacity
- Strengthened legislation and national policy
- Financing available for PAs, sustainable landscape management, restoration

Desired Situation (GEF GEB Targets)
- Maintain globally significant biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services through 258,804 ha of new PAs; improved management on 1,386,713 ha of current PAs; and sustainable management on 470,800 ha outside PAs
- Restore 27,443 ha of degraded land
- Absorb and sequester an estimated 24 million tCO2e through improved landscape management and forest protection, climate smart agriculture, and restoration
- Benefit at least 70,000 people through capacity building, development of new income-generating opportunities, and incentives for sustainable practices and restoration

GOAL: Effective governance of Guinean Forests to sustain the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being

Levers of Transformation
- ★ Innovation and learning
- ★ Financial leverage
- ★ Governance and policies
- ★ Multi-stakeholder dialogues

The objective of the Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP), part of the overall GEF-8 Amazon Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP is *to protect and improve the effective governance of the Guinean Forests in-order to maximize global environmental benefits, contribute to the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being.* Noting previous and ongoing commitments and initiatives (e.g., the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa and the Libreville Roadmap that emerged from the One Forest Summit in March 2023), the GFIP will pursue systemic transformation in how the region addresses shared forest management challenges. This transformation will be of significant global importance given the ecological value of the Guinean Forests of West Africa as a global biodiversity hotspot that is threatened by pressing environmental and development challenges.

The programmatic approach of the GFIP will take into account the similar and transboundary nature of many of the challenges facing forests throughout the region: several of the forest blocks and forest landscapes across the region cover multiple countries (e.g., Lofa-Gola-Mano Complex [Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone]; Mount Nimba Complex [Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia]; Cestos-Sapo-Grebo-Taï-Cavally Corridor [Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire]; Forest Reserves of Southeastern Côte d'Ivoire and Southwestern Ghana; and Korupmba-Obachap [Cameroon, Nigeria]), whose boundaries are highly porous to sources of environmental, demographic, and economic pressure such as deforestation and forest degradation, migration, and wildlife trafficking.

Economic empowerment of communities through investment in nature-based local livelihoods and enterprises coupled with participatory land use planning, strengthening community governance of natural resources including expansion of OECMs, and overall, mainstreaming gender in the proposed program interventions will entice local communities to protect and manage the forest hence deter further encroachment and destruction.

Therefore, the GFIP will complement nationally-delimited approaches by developing capacities and mechanisms to ensure that investments in sustainable forest landscape management reflect a region-wide perspective to maximize impact and cost-effectiveness, build on and contribute to regional and global knowledge of best practices in inclusive, equitable, climate resilient forest management, and apply effective monitoring and adaptive management at the regional level that, among other concerns, addresses the risk of transboundary leakages of impacts. An example of this type of regional perspective as well as coordination with other initiatives is the artisanal and small gold mining (ASGM) sector, where policy reform and other interventions in one landscape or country could drive this source of pressure to a different geography; the GFIP will coordinate with and learn from the GOLD+ program to foster effective multi-country strategies to respond to ASGM in ways that mitigate such leakage risk. Another example is the potential that policy reform relating to commercial agroforestry in one country could drive unsustainable palm oil development at the expense of forest health in another country; the GFIP will draw on the FOLUR program to inform efforts towards regional policy alignment relating to deforestation-free agroforestry supply chains seeking to preempt this type of leakage.

Regional work under the GFIP will reinforce key features of the country child projects. These include innovative, integrated approaches featuring coordination and collaboration between multiple sectors to address trade-offs and promote synergies; comprehensive landscape-wide planning and decision-making that incorporates multiple social and environmental variables; integrated consideration of enabling conditions for landscape sustainability including governance, access, and tenure rights; and transboundary collaboration on management and conservation. The program will focus on removing the barriers currently preventing sustainable forest management from being scaled up to the landscape, national and regional levels; to maximize sustainability and scale of impact, a country-driven capacity enhancement approach will be applied at programmatic and individual child project levels to maximize country ownership, commitment, and mutual accountability for results. By developing this body of capacity enhancement as a regional effort, the

GFIP will maximize learning and knowledge exchange among countries, enhance cost effectiveness through joint multi-country capacity-building investments, cultivate a community of practice, and strengthen the foundation for policy alignment efforts among countries.

The GFIP will apply Levers of Transformation to effect enduring change at a regional level:

Multi-stakeholder dialogues: Multi-stakeholder dialogues will operate at all levels of the program, ranging from alignment and collaboration fostered through processes ranging from community-level participatory land use planning and protected area co-management to multi-stakeholder spatial planning at the landscape scale. Regional-level dialogues will be critical on several fronts, from the multi-country dialogue around transboundary forest landscape management to region-wide deliberations to align domestic policies and interventions as well as collective participation in international policy forums. While much of anticipated regional dialogues will relate to inter-governmental exchange, it also will be important to ensure a civil society voice as well as private sector representation, given the prevalence of social and economic factors affecting Guinean Forests that countries throughout the region have in common. These factors include issues surrounding community tenure and resource rights, access to finance that enables sustainable management, the prominence of commercial agroforestry in rural development planning, and challenges in managing social and environmental risks that attend infrastructure development, among others.

Innovation and learning: The countries in the Guinean Forests region offer a wide diversity of experience with past and current initiatives seeking to address various challenges relating to sustainable forest management. Therefore capturing and disseminating knowledge and learning to inform replication, scale-up, and the propagation of successful innovation will maximize impact by adopting a regional approach. The GFIP will engage other regional initiatives to collect and curate learning products relating to key topic areas such as land use/spatial planning, design of governance arrangements, support for alternative livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprise, policy reform, and alignment, as well as gender mainstreaming. It also will prioritize the identification and dissemination of innovations with regional relevance, ranging from locally-adapted technological solutions for conservation management (e.g., GIS-based participatory planning methods or GPS-based forest ranger tools) to creative governance arrangements that promote inclusiveness and equity to innovative conservation finance solutions at scale.

Governance and policies: Although countries throughout the Guinean Forest region have articulated high-level policy commitments that support the conservation and sustainable management of forests (e.g, in their NBSAPs and NDCs, and their support for the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework), translating these commitments to positive change on the ground remains a challenge. Doing so entails putting in place concrete governance arrangements and regulatory provisions, supported by specific policies that shape how stakeholders relate to the natural resource base. Countries already have recognized the value of considering policies collectively as a region and pursuing alignment and harmonization among policies, through their support for the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa. However, the region does not yet benefit from a standing regional mechanism that focuses on policy alignment for forest management, a role played elsewhere by the Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC) for example. Building on initiatives such as the Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate Project (funded by Sida and implemented by FAO in collaboration with ECOWAS), the GFIP will seek to convene policy makers from the region's countries to pursue policy alignment and explore the potential for and working towards a mechanism analogous to COMIFAC.

Financial leverage: A barrier common to all Guinean Forest countries is: the lack of financing and access to financing both for protected area

management and sustainable livelihoods, multi-stakeholder forest governance mechanisms, and effective monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations in forest landscapes. While countries are pursuing potential financing solutions based on locally relevant needs and opportunities, the GFIP also will approach this challenge with a regional lens. One obstacle to some types of innovative financing solutions is a mismatch in scale between on-the-ground needs and the size of investment needed to justify transaction costs; regional approaches may permit aggregation of needs to overcome this mismatch. Risk, whether real or perceived, poses another obstacle to return-seeking sources of finance; a regional strategy may permit diversification and spread of risk in a portfolio approach that can reassure potential investors. Leveraging finances for protected area management and sustainable livelihoods is critical for positioning the Guinean Forests IP as a potential vehicle for deep transformation of primary forest conservation, including with the support of future Positive Conservation Partnerships (PCP), Project Finance for Permanence (PFP), or Forest Landscape Investment Packages, currently discussed with strategic donors (Libreville agenda). A regional approach to climate finance may also benefit from this type of risk management, as well as the scope for addressing international leakage. Thus, an ambitious push to address financing needs can benefit in multiple ways from the regional nature of the GFIP, drawing on (among other initiatives) recent advances achieved in the One Forest Summit and its Libreville Roadmap. Moreover, this lever of transformation intersects in important ways with those relating to innovation and learning, governance and policies, and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

As seen in Kehrer (2020), transformational processes may not lend themselves readily to measurable indicators. Assessing transformational change in complex systems may be better captured through qualitative questions that guide periodic analysis of whether and how project design is contributing to transformational change. In addition, some of the planned program outcomes also are indicative of incremental contributions to transformational systems change. Table 6 below applies the Kehrer (2020) framework to capturing the transformational levers described above.

Table 6: Measuring Levers of Transformation

Lever	Questions for periodic system analysis	Related project M&E indicators
Multi-stakeholder dialogues	What dialogues relating to multi-stakeholder planning and management of forests are taking place at the landscape, national and regional levels? Indicator TL1: # of multi-stakeholder dialogues held with a focus on sustainable forest management in the region	Outcome 1.2: Integrated participatory land-use and spatial plans developed # of completed land-use/spatial plans
Innovation and learning	What kinds of cross-project learning are taking place between regional initiatives? Indicator TL2.1: # of regional cross-project learning events conducted to share innovations Indicator TL2.2: # of digital knowledge management platforms to share information about innovations Indicator TL2.3: # of collaborations with other relevant knowledge platforms	Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/ communications # of knowledge exchange events conducted
Governance and policies	How are governments in the region working together to align and harmonize forest management policies? Indicator TL3: # of government-to-government interactions conducted that result in closer alignment of forest management policy	Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning # of policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to land-use planning officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization # of sessions held to align country participation in regional/global policy arenas # of draft proposals for permanent regional policy alignment mechanism

		...olicy alignment mechanism
Financial leverage	What policy and financial engagements are being done to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management? Indicator TL4.1: # of regional engagement events held with a focus on enabling conditions for sustainable forest management	Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g., incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies # of new policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to economic enabling conditions for improved forest management officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies
	What sustainable financing solutions are being pursued at the regional level? Indicator TL4.2: # of multi-country financing initiatives launched to support sustainable forest management	Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated # of sustainable finance strategies prepared and implemented

To ensure that these levers of transformation ultimately advance sustainability and scale, the GFIP will pursue system-wide, country-driven, and gender-responsive capacity development across people, organizations, institutions, and policies. Insufficiency of human and institutional capacities has been identified as an obstacle to the conservation and sustainable management of Guinean Forests. This includes inadequacies with respect to institutional integration and coordination among sectors and stakeholders; harmonization of regional and national, skills and knowledge; as well as participatory governance, particularly at the forest landscape level. The GFIP will maximize ownership and commitment by applying a country-driven approach to capacity development that empowers people, enhances gender equity, strengthens organizations and institutions, and enhances the enabling policy and governance environment.

A gender-responsive human and institutional capacity development strategy and action plan will be developed at both the programmatic level and for the individual child country projects. Methodological steps include a participatory capacity assessment with a baseline definition, contextualizing appropriate capacity development interventions, and tracking results while capturing lessons learned. Anticipated results of the GFIP include enhanced integration and coordination among sectors and stakeholders, improved multi-stakeholder governance through inclusive participatory processes, and application of strengthened skills and expanded knowledge for improved sustainable management of forests in protected areas as well as wider forest landscapes.

The Program Framework Document (PFD) reflects the overall framework for the design and implementation of participating country child projects as well as the ways in which the other countries of the Guinean Forests region will be engaged. The regional coordination child project is thus critical for ensuring that the program addresses the biome as a whole, by engaging and convening stakeholders throughout the biome, especially government stakeholders in pursuit of regional policy alignment. The PFD represents the sum of the child projects, including the regional coordination child project that will ensure a regional whole-of-biome approach, but the child projects have determined the balance of PFD elements to respond to their specific circumstances, within

the constraints of the overall framework. The PFD has been formulated in such a way as to ensure that:

Each of the child projects conforms to and contributes to the overall GFIP objective.

The structure and approaches of the child projects are aligned and coordinated such that they collectively comprise a coherent regional multi-country programmatic initiative.

Individual child projects include provisions for how they will contribute to the programmatic scale-up of impacts.

Each child project has the flexibility needed to tailor its design to the country's particular needs and priorities.

The country child projects as well as the regional child project will be formulated through a process of co-design within the overall GFIP framework set out in the PFD, and subsequently implemented with GFIP support to ensure regional coherence. Key steps following Council approval of the PFD and child project concepts will be as follows:

I. Detailed project design phase:

1) Establishment of inter-agency coordination and governance structure to oversee the process of co-designed formulation of the child projects, including the regional coordination child project, to ensure that project design responds to the need for inter-country harmonization and regional coherence. This structure will be funded through the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) requested for the formulation of the regional child coordination project. The core of this structure is anticipated to take the form of a multi-stakeholder Project Design Steering Committee.

2) Preparation of the CEO Endorsement Request package for the regional child coordination project, under the oversight of the inter-agency coordination and governance structure.

3) Preparation of country child projects using PPG funding allocated to each project, again under the overall oversight of CI GEF Agency; CI GEF Agency will also be responsible for reporting on country child project design processes to the inter-agency coordination and governance structure.

II. Implementation phase:

4) Initiate implementation of the regional coordination child project: at this juncture, CI GEF Agency will continue to be responsible for oversight, while technical support and day-to-day follow-up with the country child projects will become the responsibility of the Executing Agency (to be identified during the regional coordination child project PPG phase).

5) Following the start of implementation, the inter-agency coordination and governance structure will evolve into the Program Steering Committee, with responsibilities beyond the oversight of project design, as will be defined during the regional coordination child project PPG phase.

6) Initiate implementation of the country child projects.

III. Consolidation and scale-up phase:

7) Lessons and experiences will be documented and prepared for dissemination to multi-stakeholder audiences throughout the regional and country child projects. The regional coordination child project will prepare and execute a communications strategy and a stakeholder engagement strategy that together will include a focus on key audiences throughout the region to prepare a foundation for replication and scale-up, including policymakers, community rights and development organizations, and funding sources.

The regional coordination child project will contribute to the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the GFIP as a whole. It will increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the country child projects through technical support and capacity-building; facilitation of policy harmonization; knowledge exchange and dissemination including knowledge inputs from external sources; and programmatic M&E. These aspects of the regional coordination child project will also contribute to scale-up of models and impacts at the regional level, including by laying the groundwork for a permanent regional policy coordination mechanism.

Program Components

Component 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis: Land use planning (LUP) is expected to result in better coordination between stakeholders, increased synergies among different interventions and investments in landscapes, and reduced conflicts with respect to land and resource use. Spatial planning will inform other efforts of the program, including siting of PAs and OECMs, restoration work, and efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and agroforestry. Doing so will require convening civil society, the private sector, and government; multi-stakeholder dialogues; and provisions to ensure that perspectives of women, youth and elderly, and marginalized groups are incorporated. The GFIP will compile lessons learned from different LUP experiences in the region to identify tools, models, and processes that lend themselves well to the Guinean Forests context, as a basis for encouraging wider application.

Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available: The program will support applied scientific research to continue building the evidence base that reinforces the motivation for transformational change, as well as the body of best practices that makes such change possible. The regional coordination child project will take stock of existing data layers relative to the data and information that informed the CEPF Ecosystem Profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa biodiversity hotspot, and update this profile with newly available information. Thus, updated regional data and information will be available as input to land use planning and spatial analysis to be conducted for individual project geographies.

Outcome 1.2: Integrated, participatory land-use, and spatial plans developed: LUP will be executed at multiple levels, from local to regional, including community lands and forest landscapes, based on participatory and inclusive multi-stakeholder processes. The process will be supported by the data and information layers made available under Outcome 1.1. The program will leverage CI's high-resolution maps of irrecoverable carbon in Earth's ecosystems to prioritize sites within the region whose protection is essential for global climate security, incorporating this new science within the KBA+ methodology. Guidance to country child project design will draw on the regional process and include key activities to ensure irrecoverable carbon reserves remain in place long-term, such as inclusive project design, climate change adaptation planning, long-term finance mechanisms for irrecoverable carbon, and technological capacity building to use remote sensing to monitor and rapidly respond to threats.

Component 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs: PAs and OECMs will be established and/or expanded as anchors for sustainable management within forest landscapes. These serve as core interventions to reverse deforestation and forest degradation trends and will require investment in management capacity and institutional arrangements to accommodate co-management, apply social and environmental safeguards, and formulate benefit-sharing arrangements. With the increased emphasis on OECMs under the 2022 Kunming-Montreal GBF, one area of work of the GFIP will be to facilitate regional multi-country efforts to align on definitions, measurement, and deployment of OECMs, converging with efforts to promote community-led conservation efforts.

Outcome 2.1: Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs: Analysis conducted for Outcome 1.2 will inform the prioritization of additional areas for protection, including contextualization within regional priorities for the Guinean Forests biome as a whole. Community engagement and community-led forest governance elements in all projects may include the identification of other opportunities to apply OECMs.

Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas and OECMs: The program will enhance the management of PAs and OECMs through supporting activities related to sustainable financing, legal compliance, fire control, threat reduction measures (hunting, illegal logging, etc.), development of land use planning instruments, creation/updating of management plans, implementation of ecological and socio-economic monitoring systems, and incorporation of inclusivity, equity and representation principles in governance and management arrangements. GFIP's principal role in this regard will be to compile lessons and best practices from across the region and facilitate access to knowledge products and capacity building. GFIP also will cultivate a community of practice to sustain ongoing mutual exchange and learning throughout the region, with protected area management authorities and community-level natural resource governance bodies as key constituents. To improve the sustainable management of PAs, the program will support the capacity building of government institutions and local communities in areas including co-management of PAs, enforcement and monitoring, and governance.

Component 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas: Local communities are the de facto managers of much of the Guinean Forests in wider landscapes outside PAs and OECMs. Sustainable management of these forests, therefore, will require reinforcing community governance systems for forest management, and investment in sustainable livelihoods and enterprises that are compatible with the maintenance of healthy intact forests. Moreover, investment in livelihoods and enterprises must ensure that women also share in access to new opportunities. In some areas, larger private sector actors such as commercial agroforestry operations (e.g., in palm oil, cocoa, or coffee sectors) may be important project partners for work on sustainable (deforestation-free) commodity supply chains. These activities reflect the conviction that sustainable land use outside protected areas can contribute to the integrity of the biome through reduced impact on habitat by deterring encroachment and unsustainable exploitation of forest resources, enhanced habitat connectivity, and maintenance of ecosystem services.

Outcome 3.1: Improved sustainability of productive sectors in forest landscapes: The program will support partnerships with the private sector to mainstream sustainability considerations into production systems and business processes. To do so, GFIP will leverage the networks of CI and other partners to link project implementers with companies that demonstrate openness to such collaboration. GFIP also will link implementers to other projects that have shown success in such partnerships (e.g., under FOLUR or the Good Growth Partnership[24]), to open avenues of knowledge sharing and networking. The set of country child projects will include financial and technical assistance to communities to improve the sustainability of productive practices such as agriculture and agroforestry, ensuring that women, youth, and those from disadvantaged groups can access and benefit equitably from this financial and technical

assistance; GFIP will serve as a conduit to expertise in the region and beyond to inform these types of investment. Addressing unsustainable agricultural practices will reduce pressure on buffer zones of PAs and support the restoration of degraded forest landscapes to build connectivity and maintain the flow of ecosystem functions and services.

Outcome 3.2: Improved inclusive and equitable access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises: Through the country child projects, the program will establish and strengthen the protection of key forest biodiversity areas through incentives for community-based conservation, such as providing gender-responsive technical and financial assistance to support the development of conservation-compatible, climate-smart livelihoods and enterprises, with all activities designed to incorporate gender considerations. Building on land use planning under Component 1, this provides an opportunity to improve ecosystem connectivity through spatial targeting of nature-friendly practices. Through livelihood diversification and value chain development, communities, including women, youth, and those from disadvantaged groups, will be agents of change in ensuring fair and effective protection and restoration of these critical forest areas. Activities may include targeted restoration of degraded forest patches, enhancement of nature-based solutions to development challenges in broad buffer zone areas surrounding protected areas (i.e. gender-responsive capacity development of IP&LCs, smallholder producers, SMEs, and producer groups); support for community-based forest management plans; IP&LC livelihood strategies; strengthened sustainable forest-based and agroforestry value chains (NTFPs, ecotourism); and partnerships to leverage green investments and apply monitoring/traceability for green products. Although these interventions necessarily will be quite localized and site-specific, and important role for the program will be to ensure that both capturing learning from and applying learning to these activities are conducted within a regional perspective, given the comparable circumstances and needs facing forest-dwelling communities throughout the Guinean Forests.

Outcome 3.3: Strengthened inclusive community forest governance: The program will use spatial planning conducted through activities in Component 1 to support multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms. Other initiatives such as FOLUR and the Good Growth Partnership have demonstrated the value (and challenges) of cultivating such mechanisms, including examples that are geographically focused (e.g., diverse stakeholders in a landscape) and sector-focused (e.g., a palm oil platform to keep stakeholders throughout the supply chain along with government agencies). The GFIP will draw from examples throughout the region and elsewhere (e.g., southern Africa offers a variety of models) to inform participatory stakeholder/coalition-led development of mechanisms, with an emphasis on empowering communities in community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) processes and governance. GFIP will work with country child projects to ensure that land use plans developed with communities adjacent to PAs will support enhanced IP&LC participation in conservation (e.g., in Community Forests) and strengthen community-based resource management. Communities will be supported by training and capacity building for sustainable forest management and monitoring, as well as techniques to address governance challenges such as elite capture, gender and minority inequality, limited accountability, and obstacles to participation and representation. Lessons learned from these activities will feed into regional policy engagement under Components 4 and 5.

Component 4: Policy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management: The lack of financing and access to financing both for protected area management and sustainable livelihoods is the main driver justifying this Component's policy engagement to improve incentive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management. This is critical for positioning the Guinean Forests as a potential vehicle for deep transformation of primary forest conservation, including with the support of future Positive Conservation Partnerships, Project Finance for Permanence, or Forest Landscape Investment Packages, currently discussed with strategic donors (Libreville agenda).

Mandating Land Use Planning (LUP), gazetting additional areas as PAs and recognizing OECMs, and applying legislative and regulatory frameworks that promote sustainable use of productive lands require a set of supporting policies. The program will support child projects that seek to enhance the policy environment, particularly with respect to land tenure and resource rights, incorporating LUP into government processes, creating incentives for restoration, conservation, and sustainable use, and reducing perverse incentives that encourage unsustainable land and resource use. To do so, the GFIP will draw on documentation of best practices from throughout the region, with an eye toward policy harmonization. Thus, while part of this work is focused on supporting country-specific work on national policies, there is a strong link between this part of the program and efforts to foster regional policy harmonization under the regional coordination child project captured under Component 5. To do so, the GFIP will build on previous regional policy analysis conducted, for example, under the Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate Project (Sida-funded, implemented by FAO in collaboration with ECOWAS).

Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning: Policy and legislative work in the region have not kept pace with growing pressure on the region's forests. Although higher-level policy commitments to biodiversity and climate goals have been articulated by most governments, there is a dearth of policies and legislation to actualize these commitments on the ground. The program will include activities to support policies for inclusive forest conservation, restoration, and management. One example is the facilitation of steps toward improved, gender-responsive land tenure rights and policies, others include developing and updating land management policies and establishing or supporting landscape-level and national coordination mechanisms focused on forest conservation and management. Capacity building for key government and non-government stakeholders will help mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector planning, including, for example, the dissemination of land tenure codes.

Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g. incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies: Projects under GFIP will include deployment of financing mechanisms that provide incentives and sustain enduring policy and behavior change in favor of conservation on the part of communities, businesses, and governments. This may include support for revenue generation (e.g. via ecotourism or green bonds) and advocating for a portion of REDD+ funds to be channeled directly into biodiversity conservation. The program will also support the identification of policies that create perverse incentives which may fuel deforestation and forest degradation, and the formulation of strategies to reform such policies. Work on strengthening positive incentives and reforming perverse incentives is closely tied to enhancing policy coherence, which again will benefit from ongoing analytical work under the aforementioned FAO-implemented project. As with other outcomes, the role of the regional program will be to facilitate knowledge sharing, linkages to expertise, and access to training and capacity building to empower implementers and key stakeholders to identify and respond to needs and opportunities with respect to improving the enabling environment.

Component 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning: Efforts to advance the outcomes from Components 1-4 will benefit from synergies derived from a regional approach. This includes coordination on transboundary work, replication and scale-up of demonstrated models and interventions, and joint efforts with respect to innovative financing mechanisms. Realizing these benefits will require dedicated investment in gender-sensitive collection, curation, and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned, supported by a program-level M&E framework designed to support and feed into knowledge management. Among the potentially most impactful elements of regional cooperation relates to regional policy alignment or harmonization. The GFIP will engage the Guinean Forest countries and ECOWAS to explore ways to formalize ongoing inter-ministerial dialogue on policy issues related to forest governance, including work towards common positions on policies in global forums on forest management and conservation, such as the recent One Forest Summit. Efforts to this end would benefit from a permanent standing body with the explicit and focused purpose of facilitating regional coordination and policy alignment with respect to sustainable forest management (inspired, for instance, by the COMIFAC example). Other areas that would benefit from

institutionalized regional multi-stakeholder cooperation include work on innovative financing, addressing cross-border threats, and avoiding the risk of leakage.

Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications: Participating countries, project partners, and other stakeholders will increasingly share, access and apply knowledge. Governments, stakeholders, and the general public will have a shared and deeper understanding of issues surrounding forest conservation and management. The objective of this outcome will be learning, knowledge management, increased access to information, capacity building, and exchange among GFIP country child projects and project partners; participants in the overall Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP; and the wider global community working on landscape-level forest conservation and sustainable management. This also includes an emphasis on the dissemination of innovations in technology applications, institutional arrangements, and market participation. The implementation of a communications strategy also will inform and educate the general public and decision-makers on issues, challenges, and solutions relating to sustainable forest landscape management. Noting that forest- and natural resource-use involves distinct gender considerations, activities relating to knowledge generation and collation of lessons learned as well as dissemination of knowledge products will be designed to capture gender dynamics and reach specific audiences. Activities in furtherance of this outcome will include the following:

Develop a communications strategy within the first year of the project, with input from key stakeholders. The strategy will include a digital knowledge management platform and the use of social media to reach wider audiences.
Develop innovative knowledge products in multiple languages, capturing best practices from country child projects to facilitate replication by organizations in other countries and contexts.
Conduct direct outreach based on the communications plan that identifies opportunities to 1) disseminate tools, methodologies, and other practitioner-facing project outputs, and 2) amplify messages emerging from country child projects individually and collectively.
Organize regional exchanges among project implementers and partners, including annual learning events focused on incentive-based, community-led forest conservation and sustainable resource management, as well as an exchange among government stakeholders on success stories related to forest landscape management; the annual regional workshops will be conducted jointly with the Congo Basin IP in collaboration with UNEP.
Conduct targeted training on topics relevant to the IP, such as community-based conservation and innovative financing solution.
Communicate results of the IP to audiences within and outside participating target countries.
Support country child projects to create locally developed materials for communications and outreach.
Explore collaboration between the GFIP and other relevant knowledge platforms with aligned objectives such as the Global Landscape Forum.

Outcome 5.2: Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives: Country child projects will benefit from efficiencies and increased impact as a result of synergies amongst each other and with other relevant work taking place in the region. The transboundary collaboration will become more deeply institutionalized in participating countries. A key role of the regional child project will be to coordinate efforts of country child projects, by identifying potential synergies and areas for joint work and facilitating transboundary efforts. The regional child project will:
Align country child projects, through the definition of clear priorities and strategies, and by convening lead implementers to identify potential synergies between projects
Establish and facilitate processes for ongoing coordination of transboundary components of country child projects
Establish structures to develop and maintain a coherent portfolio of country child projects that are coordinated with each other and well aligned with

investments by GEF and other donors, guided by the Ecosystem Profile and PFD and regular interaction between national GEF focal points and implementing and executing agencies

Establish an advisory body with representation from related regional programs and stakeholders to guide alignment and coordination among related initiatives

Promote coordination between initiatives that maximize synergies and cross-project learning, for example through regional collaboration or joint production of learning products by thematically related projects

Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated: The regional child project will pursue donor coordination, support country child projects in the design and deployment of sustainable financing strategies, and facilitate joint work on financing solutions between projects. To enhance efficiencies and cost-effectiveness, the regional child project will seek to facilitate coordination among donors and projects by convening implementers and funding sources with overlapping agendas and investments. Country child projects also will benefit from access to expertise on sustainable financing solutions, and joint work on such solutions will enable work towards sustainable financing on a more ambitious scale, including climate finance. Recognizing that sustainable financing is a persistent challenge for projects throughout the region, the regional child project will prioritize facilitating collective access to relevant technical expertise for the country child projects on this theme. The regional child project also will work with governments and partners throughout the region to explore the potential for applying the Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) approach, building on growing experience with this approach under the aegis of the Enduring Earth partnership. To achieve this Outcome, the regional child project will:

Convene donors with overlapping objectives in donor round tables to share information and coordinate investment, help avoid duplication of effort, and identify opportunities for synergies.

Link country child projects to other financing initiatives (e.g., the Finance Lab for Irrecoverable Carbon), potential corporate partners, impact investors, and other sources, as well as ongoing work by CI's Conservation Finance Division on innovative financing solutions

Provide guidance to country child project development of innovative incentive mechanisms for local communities to protect natural resources, such as PES (e.g., water funds, restoration grants, or climate finance) or support for nature-based enterprises in forest-resident communities (e.g., through CSP's Conservation Agreement model or CI Ventures impact investment)

Coordinate joint pursuit of financing solutions (e.g., multi-country efforts to fund management of transboundary forest landscapes, work on regional financing mechanisms)

Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization: Country child projects will include policy work to enhance enabling conditions for effective forest conservation. The regional child project will link projects to expertise in CI and other institutions in CI's network to support efforts on this front and to facilitate exchanges between project countries to encourage policy alignment at a regional level. Noting the institutional gap at the regional level with respect to policy alignment mechanisms focused on forest management that is specific to the biome, this Outcome also relates to exploring the development of a regional policy coordination body, to supplement subregional platforms such as the Mano River Union and regional institutions with broader remits such as ECOWAS; in doing so, the GFIP will help advance the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa. Under this Outcome, the regional child project will:

Convene members from technical as well as policy-making levels within relevant government institutions from each country child project to formulate and pursue aligned policy goals, agendas, and approaches.

Provide support to collective and coordinated participation in international platforms

Facilitate exploration by countries in the region of possible steps towards an ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism focused on the conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes

Component 6: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Outcome 6.1: A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework in place: Outcome 6.1 will ensure monitoring and evaluation of the GFIP as a whole. This is in addition to M&E which will be performed by each country child project. The regional child project will design its M&E framework to feed into knowledge generation, impact assessment, and adaptive management for the program, including explicit attention to the levers of transformation. The GFIP M&E framework will be applied to ensure compliance with the GEF policies and guidance while striving to maximize the use of existing M&E reporting tools and systems to minimize the additional burden on countries. The M&E framework will include verification of appropriate development and application of safeguards plans, including the inclusion of gender-specific indicators. Under this sub-component, the regional child project will:

- Capture and track progress on the program's results, adherence to the results framework, application of safeguards plans, materialization of co-financing, program functioning as an integrated effort, and how well country child projects are working and complementing each other. This includes periodic forward-looking assessments of implementation against project-level Theories of Change, as well as periodic analysis of progress with respect to the levers of transformation.
- Use standard GEF monitoring tools, such as the Biodiversity Tracking Tool/Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), as well as bespoke tracking tools on subjects such as gender mainstreaming and civil society institutional capacity.
- Regularly convene M&E point persons from the country child projects as a technical working group to foster alignment and harmonization.
- Aggregate M&E data from country child projects into overall IP-level data, complemented by additional program-level data from regional child project activities.
- Prepare quarterly and annual technical and financial reports, and facilitate the program's Mid-term Review and Terminal Evaluation.
- Prepare and execute an explicit learning strategy and plan to maximize the value of project reporting and inform replication and scale-up.
- Inform GEF and other Implementing Agencies on program implementation issues and the need for realignment and adjustment of the original results framework.

GFIP and the Private Sector

The platform will engage the private sector at multiple levels to develop systematic solutions, promote and strengthen sustainability standards and practices, and pursue partnerships at landscape, country, and regional levels to enhance the enabling context for sustainable management of forest landscapes. Multinationals and national companies will be engaged to consolidate commitments to deforestation-free production models, including participation in land use planning processes. Private sector counterparts also will be engaged to co-develop sustainable financing solutions for forest conservation and management, for example by building incentives into supply chain relationships, exploring potential biodiversity offsets and payments for ecosystem services, or developing green bond offerings. Finally, the financial sector will be engaged to develop financial services and products that enable stakeholders in forest landscapes to make sustainable choices (e.g., in terms of livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises), such as credit arrangements linked to zero deforestation commitments.

Investments by child projects will include gender-responsive programming to strengthen local community capacity to participate in sustainable value chains (with attention to, for example, post-harvest care, processing, packaging, marketing, and business management, noting different gender roles within rural production systems). This also entails working with community-level and small/medium-scale private sector producers and producer associations that may be involved in the development of sustainable products and better practices. Improved sustainable management of production areas outside of protected areas in forest landscapes includes technologies and practices for sustainable intensification (e.g., improving land and water management); improved use of agricultural inputs in climate-smart production systems (e.g., organic fertilizer practices, efficient irrigation practices); and reducing loss and waste (e.g., efficient storage and packaging). Doing so with a regional perspective can allow the GFIP to address issues relating to scope and scale that can hamper relationships between community-level producers and larger private-sector actors. Regional-level financing initiatives also can offer the scale needed to optimize the use of public resources to crowd in private-sector investments by reducing the risks for investors.

GFIP support for policy reform and regional policy harmonization will include facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue between governments and the private sector to identify policy options to remove market barriers or other distortions, for example, those related to perverse incentives that encourage forest clearing; inadequate implementation of existing regulations; risks of investing in sustainable land management; and capacity limitations of small-holders.

Knowledge Management

The GFIP will generate knowledge by documenting results and lessons learned from implementation on the ground, and through facilitated exchange among project implementers to capture experiences and reflections. Knowledge generation and exchange will be guided by a publication plan with support from CI's scientific research capacity and a dissemination plan with support from CI's science communications capacity, seeking opportunities to disseminate tools, methodologies, and other practitioner-facing project outputs. To this end, early in the implementation phase, the Regional Child Project will convene project implementers to identify key learning themes and questions to focus initial knowledge generation efforts. Responsibilities of the Regional Child Project also will include coordination of the program's knowledge management activities with those of other projects, including related initiatives in the region (e.g., PAPFor, WABiLED, and the FAO-ECOWAS Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate Project), as well as Country level projects under the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP to align global knowledge management efforts. Concrete arrangements for such coordination will be pursued during the PPG phase for the Regional Child Project, but are anticipated to include cross-posting of knowledge products, joint production of syntheses of related experiences, and participation in joint learning events.

The Lead Agency and multiple supporting units within CI offer extensive track records in developing knowledge products to capture best practices from portfolio investments to facilitate replication by organizations in other countries and contexts. CI also has a track record of organizing exchanges among implementers and stakeholders at the regional (biome/hotspot) level, with a strong emphasis on south-south exchange. Regular (annual) learning events to be conducted over the course of the program will include dedicated time to compile and prepare knowledge products and plan joint development of additional knowledge products over the subsequent implementation period.

Knowledge generation activities will include an emphasis on capturing voices from diverse stakeholders on the ground, particularly local community members. This effort will ensure that different gender perspectives are represented in knowledge products; knowledge dissemination likewise will devote attention to gender considerations to ensure that products reach diverse audiences. This also will require allocating time and resources for preparing

knowledge-sharing products in formats and languages accessible to different audiences. Gender-sensitive communication & publication principles that will be applied include:

    Use of both male and female authors and reviewers for the diversity of perspectives
    Use of gender-sensitive language and gender-balanced images (with positive depictions of women as agents of change)
    Use of gender analysis to shape context and content (use gender arguments based on reliable sources and qualitative and quantitative data including sex-disaggregated data)
    Reference to relevant international and national policy frameworks, policies, strategies, and plans relating to gender equity and mainstreaming

The Regional Child Project will prepare a regional communications strategy within the first year of the project. The purpose of the strategy will be to leverage knowledge products to communicate the results of the IP to audiences within and outside participating target countries and will include: supporting communications and public awareness strategies to be developed by each Country Child Project; production and dissemination of high-quality knowledge products synthesizing regional results, lessons learned, and emerging best practices; design and deployment of a digital platform for information sharing with a knowledge management portal; and use of social media to reach wider audiences.

Country Child Project Alignment and Contributions

Guinea

The government of Guinea established an objective of 25% of its land under protection by 2025 in its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2016). The actual rate of land coverage by PAs in the country is currently 15%. National policies and strategies that support the protection of the environment, the conservation of biodiversity, the preservation of the integrity of forests, and the restoration of land include (i) The National Environmental Action Plan (PNAE) of 1994; and (ii) the Guinea National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, adopted in 2015. While actions are being put in place to conserve these landscapes, more capacity is needed to halt the drivers of degradation and deforestation in the region.

This project will contribute to the conservation of intact forests and their biodiversity while restoring the forest ecosystem of the Bossou corridor in the southern tip of Guinea, focusing on the Mount Nimba (Bossou) Biosphere Reserve (MNBR) and the Ziama Forest Biosphere Reserve (ZFBR). The project will respond to drivers of degradation by strengthening community-based resource management, capacity building of key institutions at the national and local levels for enforcement and monitoring of the reserves, increasing awareness of the importance of these reserves, and working with communities to ensure sustainable smallholder agricultural practices in buffer zones and adjacent areas. The project will enhance protected area management and OECMs management of MNBR and ZFBR using international IUCN Standards (IUCN Green List) and benchmark effectiveness and provide associated guidance on, sustainable financing, legal compliance, fire control, development of land use planning instruments and implementation of an ecological and socio-economic monitoring system. The IUCN Green List Standard is for effective area-based conservation, including OECM. The Standard describes good governance, sound design and planning, effective management, and measuring conservation outcomes. The Standard can be used to benchmark METT assessments, but also OECM recognition using tools and guidance linked to CBD Decision 14/8. The OECMs will be identified and mapped using participatory and digital mapping tools at the village and communal levels in order to integrate their governance and management into communal and national policy. The exact areas of this type of OECM will be recognized and will benefit from actions that will allow them to be better conserved to the

benefit of the local population. Local communities will be involved and participate in the conservation of intact forests. Endangered conservation flagship species such as chimpanzees and elephants will benefit from a protection plan at local and transboundary levels. The OECMs will be mapped using participatory and digital mapping tools at the village and communal levels in order to integrate their management into communal and national policy. The project will restore ecosystem connectivity between Mount Nimba Biosphere Reserve and the chimpanzee corridor to maintain the flow of ecosystem functions and services. The project will reduce pressure on protected area buffer zones by enhancing investment in sustainable practices, land use planning and management, developing sustainable agriculture and NTFP value chains, diversifying agricultural practices and livelihoods, and building the capacity of communities.

Liberia

The Government of Liberia (GoL) made a bold commitment to forest protection by enacting the 30% target in its National Forestry Reform law of 2006. In addition, the Community Rights Law (2009) codified communities' conditional use of forest resources, including provisions enabling small-scale contracts for harvesting timber and non-timber forest products. It also provided the basis for the designation of Community Forests. Liberia's Land Rights Law (2018) provides the framework for customary land ownership and management, and the basis for protection from land grabs. Together, these laws empower local communities to assert roles in land use planning and management that affects their lands, including agroforestry concessions as well as protected areas, and the establishment of co-management committees to include local communities in PA management. GoL's national development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), 2018-2023, includes actions to reduce forest degradation and deforestation, and its National Determined Contributions (NDC) have been revised to target a 50% reduction in the deforestation rate. GoL also continues to work with partners to advance protected area establishment, develop models for community co-management, and seek long-term PA financing. In 2011 (and amended in 2020), the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest. In 2019, the Governments of Liberia and Guinea signed a bilateral agreement for collaboration in the management of the Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex. Together, these national commitments reflect close alignment with the GFIP goal of achieving forest landscape-level impacts and transformational change for Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs).

The Liberia child project approach corresponds closely to the GFIP Theory of Change, by furthering effective management of new and existing PAs, working with communities outside PAs on livelihoods, investing in multi-stakeholder forest management capacity inside and outside of PAs, and consolidating and strengthening transboundary management of the Gola forest landscape. The project seeks to create and update management plans through inclusive participatory processes consistent with co-management that involves collaboration between protected area management authorities and neighboring communities. The project will enhance income generation in local communities adjacent to PAs through the promotion of climate-resilient and conservation-friendly livelihoods and enterprises. Activities will include developing and implementing land use plans with local communities adjacent to PAs, providing training and technical support for climate-smart, sustainable agriculture, supporting the development of climate resilient and conservation-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and linking SMEs, producer associations and producers to financial services that enable sustainable production. As detailed in the concept note, work on transboundary management of forest landscapes with Guinea and Sierra Leone will include installing multi-country technical committees to coordinate management, enforcement, and community development activities, as well as joint efforts to pursue sustainable financing to support continued transboundary collaboration.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has enacted several policies to address forest loss and degradation. The legal basis for national forest management is the Forestry Act (1988), and the government currently is in the process of aligning forest policies with the Framework for Effective Management of Natural Resources in its national Poverty Reduction Strategy. The framework emphasizes sustainable forest management to prevent loss and degradation while reducing poverty. In 2010, the Forestry Division adopted policies supporting collaboration with communities and landowners to protect and restore forests. In August 2022, Parliament passed the Customary Land Rights and National Land Commission Acts, banning industrial development (like large-scale agribusiness) in ecologically important areas. In 2011 (and amended in 2020), the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest.

The Sierra Leone Child project will build on prior investments in Sierra Leone and the wider Guinean Forests region by strengthening government and local community capacity to protect the standing forest and restore degraded and deforested areas, while simultaneously promoting climate-resilient sustainable livelihoods through secure land tenure arrangements and increased capacity to sustainably manage natural resources. The project will strengthen multi-stakeholder co-management of existing protected areas and OECMs in the Gola Forest landscape through strategic spatial planning that integrates conservation with local/national development mechanisms developed through prior investments. Activities will include strengthening existing forest co-management committees at national and local levels, capacity building of the conservation governance and coordination structures, and developing and updating comprehensive landscape planning. The project will establish and strengthen the protection of key forest biodiversity areas and other ecologically sensitive zones through incentives for community-based conservation, centered on climate-smart livelihood interventions. Incentives such as support for livelihood strengthening will be linked to conservation commitments in community-led management and action plans and may be aligned with efforts to formalize land tenure rights. The project will mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use into policies and decision-making, allowing for improved planning, management, and selection of priority areas. Capacity-building will improve the management capacity of the protected area management authority.

Guinea-Liberia-Sierra Leone Transboundary collaboration for the improved management of the shared Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation Corridor

The three country child projects also include work on strengthening collaboration and coordination in the transboundary watershed and forest landscapes in the Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation Corridor shared by Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The Mano River basin is the third-most biodiverse sub-regional watershed in the world after the Amazon and Congo basins. Eighty percent (80%) of the water resources that feed West Africa derive from this region, making maintenance of the watershed essential for ecosystem function and the region's socioeconomic well-being. In 2011, the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve the transboundary Gola Forest, amended in 2020 reaffirming commitment to joint forest management and biodiversity protection of their two adjoining PAs as the Gola Forest Peace Park. In 2019, the Governments of Liberia and Guinea signed a bilateral agreement for collaboration in the management of the Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex. The project will build on the policy commitments in these MoUs to further consolidate transboundary collaboration under the aegis of the Mano River Union (MRU), also building on the GEF-funded Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project. As indicated in the three-country child project concepts, Activities will include addressing gaps in the watershed and forest management and enforcement along the borders between the countries, reinforcing

existing governance and advisory structures (such as the Transboundary Committee) and establishing new technical subcommittees, and pursuing sustainable financing solutions to maintain joint management efforts beyond the GFIP.

All three country child projects also include a focus on strengthening coordination and collaboration at local, national, and regional levels through learning and knowledge sharing. Specifically, the projects will undertake knowledge management, sharing of lessons learned, and best practices through south-south exchanges and participation in national, regional, and international platforms/forums. The projects will liaise with the GFIP regional coordination project for technical support and assistance as needed.

In addition to the incremental contributions of each of the country child projects, the GFIP as a regional program will amplify these contributions to achieve further additionality with respect to generating multiple GEBs (i.e., areas under effective and sustainable management and restoration, generating ecosystem services including forest-based carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change). Although there are a host of relevant projects being undertaken in countries throughout the region, there are only a few regional initiatives focused on addressing forest loss and degradation in Intact Forest Landscapes in this critical forest biome. The GFIP presents an opportunity to consolidate a regional approach, and the regional child project will be an instrumental incremental investment to provide technical support, foster regional alignment and coordination, and lay the foundation for replication and scale-up through research, information, networking, and knowledge exchange. These roles also demonstrate how the GFIP will be transformative and achieve collective impact above and beyond the set of individual country child projects. Thus, scale and additionality will be achieved through each of the five sub-components of the GFIP regional child project (corresponding to Outcomes under the Theory of Change presented above):

Project sub-component 1: Knowledge management and communication (*Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications*): The incremental contribution of the program will be a cross-project, synthesizing regional perspective in the production of knowledge products and broad regional dissemination reach, reflecting clear additionality to existing work and to the collection of individual child projects.

Project sub-component 2: Coordination (*Coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives*): A key role for the regional child project will be to coordinate efforts of country child projects, by identifying potential synergies and areas for joint work, and facilitating transboundary efforts. Synergies that enhance cost-effectiveness, increase enduring impact, and amplify outreach and communications reflect clear additionality.

Project sub-component 3: Financing solutions (*Formulation of sustainable financing strategies supported*): Donor coordination and joint work on financing solutions between projects constitute key incremental contributions to increase the availability of effective, efficient, and sustained funding, which will become increasingly important as other related regional initiatives conclude.

Project sub-component 4: Policy (*Regional policy harmonization*): Additionality under this part of the regional child project will be achieved by linking projects to expertise in CI and other institutions in CI's network; an important incremental contribution will be to enhance policy alignment at a regional level, in furtherance of the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of the Forest Ecosystems in West Africa.

Project sub-component 5: Regional project monitoring and evaluation (*Gender-sensitive M&E framework in place*): GFIP additionality of M&E under the regional child project will be based on contributions to regional-level knowledge generation as well as consistent implementation and impact tracking

across the country child projects to further reinforce the case for replication and scale-up.

Project sub-component 6: Program-level monitoring and evaluation (*Functional gender-sensitive M&E framework for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program):* The incremental contribution of sub-component 6 will be to test the hypothesis that the regional integrated approach of the GFIP delivers an impact that is greater than the sum of its country child project parts. Demonstrating that this is the case will serve as a strong argument in favor of continued regional coordination and alignment for a whole-of-biome approach by the Guinean Forest countries.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the approach to program-level Monitoring and Evaluation, including ways to ensure coherence across Child Projects and to allow for adapting to changing conditions, consistent with GEF policies. In addition, please list results indicators that will track the Program Objective, beyond Core Indicators. (Max 1-2 pages).

DRAFT MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) FRAMEWORK

Component 6 of the GFIP seeks to establish and operationalize a gender-sensitive M&E framework which will be actualized through a three-layered M&E approach described below:

The Program-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will be actualized through Sub-component 5 of the Regional Coordination project. The objective of Sub-component 5 (Program-level M&E) is to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the GFIP as a whole. Under this sub-component, the regional child project will:
> Conduct Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation for the entire Program.
> Compile and disseminate findings, lessons learnt, and best-case practices from the Program's MTR and Terminal Evaluation.
> Inform the GEF and other Implementing Agencies on program implementation issues and if there is a need to realign and adjust the original theory of change and results framework.

Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will be undertaken. Through Sub-Component 6, the Regional Coordination child project will design its M&E framework to feed into knowledge generation, impact assessment, and adaptive management for the program. The M&E framework will include verification of appropriate development and application of safeguards plans, including the appropriate inclusion of gender-specific indicators.

Country Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will be handled by each project's GEF Implementing Agency. Each GEF Agency will apply its internal M&E requirements and allocate a sufficient M&E budget per the GEF guidelines.

Monitoring and Evaluatiom roles and responsibilities

Program Level

The Guinean Forests Program Management will comprise representatives from the CIGEF Implementing Agency. The overall role of the CI-GEF Implementing Agency will include technical and financial project oversight and supervision, assuring compliance of the program with GEF policies and procedures as well as monitoring and evaluation at the program and regional levels. Finally, CI-GEF will make recommendations to optimize project performance and will arbitrate and ensure the resolution of any execution conflicts.

The Program Steering Committee (PSC) will comprise representatives from CI, The GEF, The Regional project's Executing Agency (EA), The Lead Agencies of the Child Projects, and other core program partners (TBD at the PPG Phase). Examples of its tasks will include Tracking the overall progress of the program, fostering adaptive management, promoting collaboration, etc.

Child Project Level

The Child Project Management Unit on the ground will be responsible for initiating and organizing key monitoring and evaluation tasks. This includes the project inception workshop and report, quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting, documentation of lessons learned, and support for and cooperation with the independent external evaluation exercises.

The project Executing Agencies will be responsible for ensuring the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as the independent evaluation exercises.

Key project executing partners will be responsible for providing any and all required information and data necessary for timely and comprehensive project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary and appropriate.

The Child Project Steering Committee will play a key oversight role for the project, with regular meetings to receive updates on project implementation progress and approve annual workplans. The Project Steering Committee will also provide continuous ad-hoc oversight and feedback on project activities, responding to inquiries or requests for approval from the Project Management Unit or Executing Agency.

Examples of M&E Tools:

Inception workshop

Project Results Monitoring Plan (Objective, Outcomes, and Outputs)

A Project Results Monitoring Plan will be developed by the GEF Agency, which will include objective, outcome and output indicators, metrics to be collected for each indicator, methodology for data collection and analysis, baseline information, location of data gathering, frequency of data collection, responsible parties, and indicative resources needed to complete the plan.

GEF Core Indicator Worksheet

The relevant section of the GEF Core Indicator Worksheet has been filled as Concept stage and will be updated for the CEO endorsement submission. This worksheet will also be updated i) prior to mid-term review, and ii) prior to the terminal evaluation.

Project Steering Committee Meetings

Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings will be held annually, semi-annually, or quarterly, as appropriate. Meetings shall be held to review and

approve the project's annual budget and work plans, discuss implementation issues and identify solutions, and increase coordination and communication between key project partners. The meetings held by the PSC will be monitored and results adequately reported.

GEF Agency Field Supervision Missions

The GEF Agency will conduct visits to the project country and potentially to project field sites based on the agreed schedule in the project's Inception Report/Annual Work Plan to assess first-hand project progress.

Quarterly Progress Reporting

The Executing Agency will submit quarterly progress reports to the GEF Agency, including a budget follow-up and requests for disbursement to cover expected quarterly expenditures.

Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR)

The Executing Agency will prepare an annual PIR to monitor progress made since the project started and in particular for the reporting period (July 1st to June 30th). The PIR will summarize the annual project result and progress. A summary of the report will be shared with the Project Steering Committee.

Independent External Mid-term Review

The Mid-term Review will determine progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes and will identify course corrections if needed. The Mid-term Review will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation, and management. Findings and recommendations of the Mid-term Review will be incorporated to secure maximum project results and sustainability during the second half of project implementation.

Independent Terminal Evaluation

An independent Terminal Evaluation will focus on the delivery of the project's results as initially planned (and as corrected after the mid-term evaluation if any such correction took place).

Financial Statements Audit

The draft Program M&E Framework is tabulated below.

Table 7: Draft Program M&E Framework

Program Objective: To protect and improve the effective governance of the Guinean Forests in-order to maximize global environmental benefits, contribute to the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being.

Core Indicator 1	#Hectares of Terrestrial Protected Areas (PAs) created or under improved management	Overall Target: 781,389 Has Target:
Core Indicator 3	#Hectares of land and ecosystems under restoration	Target: 24,433 Has
Core Indicator 4	#Hectares of landscapes under improved practices	Target: 257,308 Has
Core Indicator 6	#Metric tons of CO2e of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated	Target: 3.5million mtCO2e
Core Indicator 11	#People benefiting from GEF-financed investments (disaggregated by sex)	Target: 85,667 (42,290 women, 43,377 men)

Component/Outcome	Draft Indicators	Draft Targets
Component 1: Land use planning and spatial analysis		
Outcome 1.1: Updated and expanded data and information base available	# of databases functional and accessible to stakeholders	1 per landscape in the project portfolio
Outcome 1.2: Integrated, participatory land-use, and spatial plans developed	# of completed land-use/spatial plans	1 per landscape in the project portfolio
Component 2: Expand and improve management of forests in protected areas and OECMs		
Outcome 2.1: Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs	Area under new/expanded PAs (hectares) Areas under new/expanded OECMs (hectares)	To be aggregated from CCPs To be aggregated from CCPs
Outcome 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of existing protected areas and OECMs	# of PAs with improved METT scores # of OECMs with improved METT scores[34]	To be aggregated from CCPs[35] To be aggregated from CCPs
Component 3: Sustainable land use linked to improved participatory and equitable forest management outside protected areas		
Outcome 3.1: Improved sustainability of productive sectors in forest landscapes	# of private sector partners adopting new sustainability practices	To be aggregated from CCPs
Outcome 3.2: Improved inclusive and	# of people (disaggregated by sex) inv	To be aggregated from CCPs

equitable access to local livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises	olved in new sustainable alternative livelihoods, including women, youth, and those from disadvantaged groups. # of nature-friendly enterprises (including those led/owned by women, youth, and/or IPs, or with gender transformative potential) accessing new sources of financial/technical support	To be aggregated from CCPs
Outcome 3.3: Strengthened inclusive community forest governance	# of communities with improved scores on the community forest governance capacity tracking tool[36]	To be aggregated from CCPs[37]

Component 4: Policy engagement to improve inclusive, equitable enabling comditions for forest conservation and management

Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning	# of policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to land-use planning officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies	At least 1 per country
Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g. incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies	# of new policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to economic enabling conditions for improved forest management officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies	At least 1 per country

Component 5: Regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and learning

Outcome 5.1: Gender- sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/ communications	# of knowledge exchange events conducted # of public awareness/communications strategies prepared and implemented	At least 1 per year At least 1 per country, and 1 for the region
Outcome 5.2: Enhanced coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives	# of program coordination sessions conducted with all participating countries	2 per year
Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated	# of sustainable finance strategies prepared and implemented # of donor coordination meetings convened	At least 1 per landscape At least 1 per country per year
Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization	# of sessions held to align country participation in regional/global policy are	At least 1 per year 1 draft proposal

...ional policy harmonization	...ticipation in regional, global policy arenas # of draft proposals for permanent regional policy alignment mechanism	...draft proposal
Component 6: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework		
Outcome 6.1: A functional gender-sensitive M&E framework in place	# of M&E frameworks developed and implemented # of satisfactory M&E reports submitted	1 regional framework and 1 framework per country 1 PIR per year, 1 MTR, and 1 TE per country, and for the Regional Program
Environmental and Social Safeguards		
(To be completed during PPG phase on basis of completed safeguard plans)		

In addition to tracking the indicators in the table above, the project will follow the guidance in Kehrer (2020) to assess progress with respect to levers of transformation. This will take the form of periodic analysis of whether and how project design is contributing to transformational change (informed also by incremental contributions to transformational systems change reflected in Outcome indicators). The guiding questions for analysis to be conducted at minimum at project inception, mid-point, and conclusion are as follows:

Table 8: Measuring Levers of Transformation

Lever	Questions for periodic system analysis	Related project M&E indicators
Multi-stakeholder dialogues	What dialogues relating to multi-stakeholder planning and management of forests are taking place at the landscape, national and regional levels?	Outcome 1.2: Integrated participatory land-use and spatial plans developed # of completed land-use/spatial plans
Innovation and learning	What kinds of cross-project learning are taking place between regional initiatives?	Outcome 5.1: Gender-sensitive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/ communications # of knowledge exchange events conducted
Governance and policies	How are governments in the region working together to align and harmonize forest management policies?	Outcome 4.1: Improved policy framework for inclusive, participatory land-use planning # of policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to land-use planning officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies Outcome 5.4: Enhanced basis for regional policy harmonization # of sessions held to align country participation in regional/global policy arenas # of draft proposals for permanent regional policy alignment mechanism
Financial leverage	What policy and financial engagements are being done to improve inclusive, equitable enabling conditions for forest conservation and management	Outcome 4.2: Improved policies to foster an inclusive economic environment conducive to forest conservation, e.g., incentives, reduction of perverse subsidies # of new policy instruments (updated or developed) relating to economic enabling conditions for improved forest management officially adopted/endorsed by relevant government agencies
	What sustainable financing solutions are being pursued at the regional level?	Outcome 5.3: Sustainable financing strategies formulated # of sustainable finance strategies prepared and implemented

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs.

Is the GEF Agency being asked to play an execution role on this program? Yes

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 (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION OF THE GUINEAN FORESTS PROGRAM

The Program will be governed by The Guinean Forests Program Management, two (2) committees, and one Regional Coordination and Technical Project Unit - with distinct roles that complement each other. The 2 committees will be embedded in the regional coordination project's implementation structure and will be led by CI (supported by the Executing Agency) to undertake their functions. These governing bodies will be responsible for a) the strategic technical and operational oversight of the program, including decision-making for the realization of the program's near-term and long-term objectives, and b) ensuring the Program is greater than the parts by extending ownership of the GFIP beyond the child project countries and entities, and initiatives that are directly involved. The latter will be achieved as follows:

·   The Program Steering Committee (PSC) and the Regional Communications Committee will amplify the visibility of the program on regional and international platforms and in the process attract and identify countries, entities, and initiatives that are not directly involved in the Program.

·   The Advisory Group comprising experts in the field from universities, the private sector, CSOs, and NGOs will be pertinent in identifying countries, entities, and ongoing or upcoming initiatives that could benefit from the program and add value to the program - and recommend opportunities for collaboration and synergy.

·   Overall, The Guinean Forests Program Management with support from the Regional Coordination and Technical Project Unit will be responsible for leveraging and holding follow-up discussions with "non-program" Countries and entities identified above to devise ways of collaborating, leverage new opportunities, and create synergies.

·   During the PPG Phase, CI will explore additional co-financing from various sources including from the Fund proposed at Libreville for the Positive Conservation Partnership (PCP).

The program's governance and coordination structure is described below and diagrammatically presented in Figure 2:

A.   **The Guinean Forests Program Management** will comprise representatives from the CIGEF Implementing Agency. The overall role of the CI-GEF Implementing Agency will include technical and financial project oversight and supervision, assuring compliance of the program with GEF policies and procedures as well as monitoring and evaluation at the program and regional levels. Finally, CI-GEF will make recommendations to optimize project performance and will arbitrate and ensure the resolution of any execution conflicts.

B.   **The Program Steering Committee (PSC)** will comprise representatives from CI, The GEF, The Regional project's Executing Agency (EA)[1], The Lead Agencies of the Child Projects, and other core program partners (TBD at the PPG Phase). The envisioned role of the PSC is outlined below:

-    Tracking the overall progress of the program
-    Foster adaptive management
-    Lead the formulation of sustainable financing strategies through pursuing donor coordination and supporting country child projects in the design and deployment of sustainable financing strategies
-    Amplifying coordination with other GEF-financed and other donor-financed initiatives relevant to the Program
-    Providing guidance that will ensure the program directly contributes to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and selected MEAs; finding entry points that will be the vehicle for the One Forest Summit outcomes. The committee will ensure an action plan for this activity is developed and executed by the

program.
- Amplifying the visibility of the program on regional and international platforms
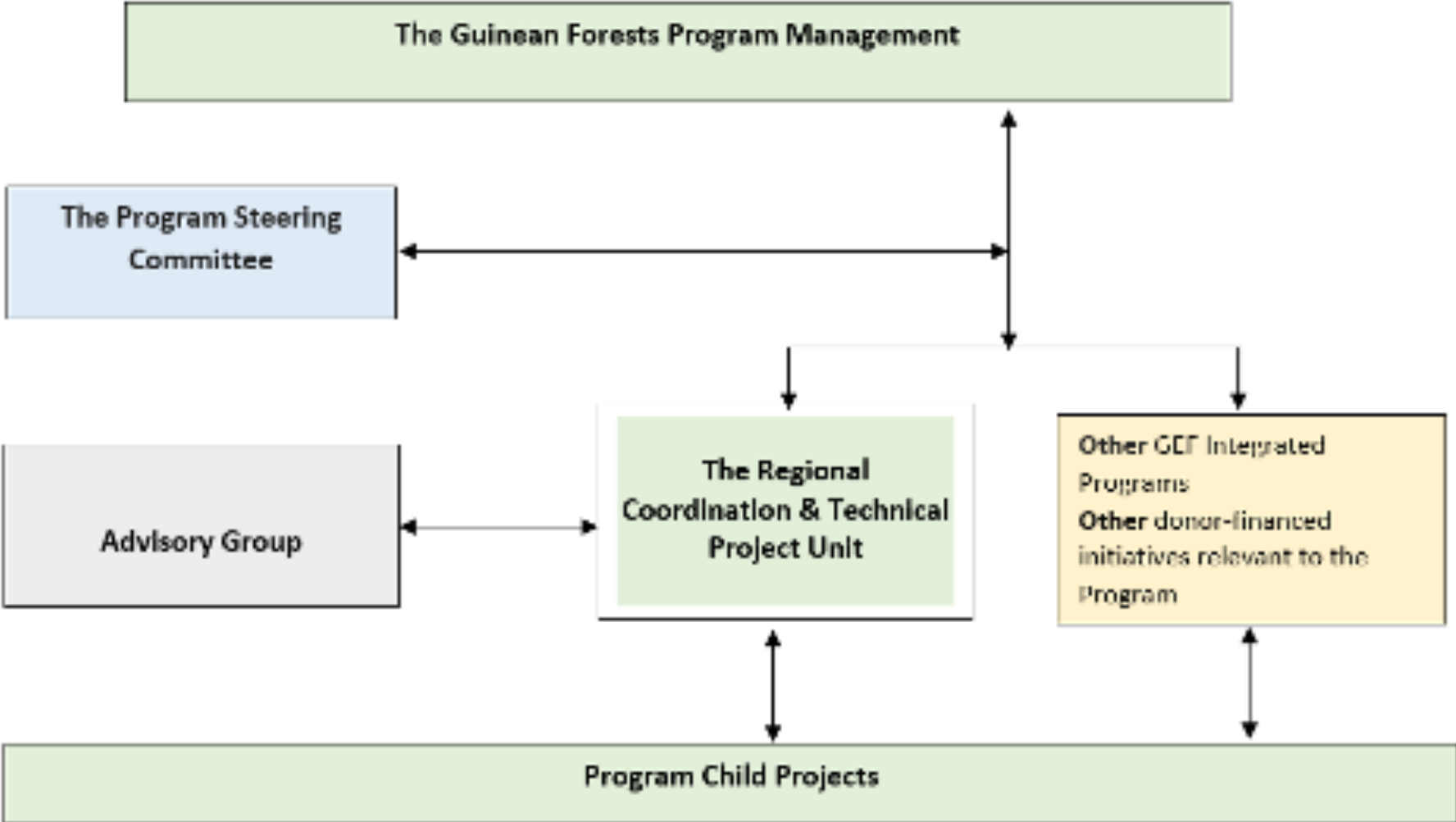
C. **The Regional Coordination and Technical Project Unit** is part of the Regional Coordination project and will comprise representatives from CI, The Executing Agency (TBD at PPG Phase), and other key executing Agencies (TBD at the PPG Phase). The envisioned role of this Unit is outlined below:
- Leverage and hold follow-up discussions with countries, entities, and initiatives that are either directly involved in the Program or not involved in the program and devise ways of collaborating, leveraging new opportunities, and creating synergies
- Action recommendations from the Guinean Forests Program Management, PSC, and the Advisory Group
- Foster adaptive management
- Program coordination
- Mobilize co-financing from various sources including from the Fund proposed at Libreville for the Positive Conservation Partnership
- Enhancing knowledge sharing, collaboration, and learning at regional and country levels
- Providing tailored technical assistance and quality assurance including on gender mainstreaming and safeguards
- Frequent communications and coordination with Guinean Forest's national project teams
- Host an annual workshop to bring together the PSC, national project teams, and other key stakeholders in the region. This annual meeting will be jointly hosted by UNEP (Congo Basin IP) and CI (Guinean Forests IP)
- M&E at regional and program levels
-
A Regional Communications Committee will be established under this unit and will comprise communications representatives from CI, GEF, Lead Agencies of the Child Projects, The Regional Coordination Project's Executing Agency, a country representative from the Child Projects, and other key executing Agencies (TBD at the PPG Phase). The objective of this committee is to amplify the program's visibility on various platforms at regional and international levels and support the generation and dissemination of knowledge management products. The communications committee will also be key in the drafting and dissemination of the Program's Annual progress report.
D. **An Advisory Group comprising experts** in the field from universities, the private sector, and NGOs will meet once or twice a year to provide recommendations for the program. The purpose of this group will be to serve as a forum in which partners and related initiatives keep each other apprised of developments and identify opportunities for collaboration and synergy on an ongoing basis. To facilitate coordination and cooperation with ongoing initiatives, anticipated participants in this advisory group also will include ECOWAS, MRU, CEMAC, and UN agencies, among others.

Figure *2*: **The Program's governance and coordination structure**

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│            The Guinean Forests Program Management                     │
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│      Committee        │                      │
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│                  │   │   The Regional   │   │ Other GEF Integrated │
│                  │◄─►│  Coordination &  │   │ Programs             │
│  Advisory Group  │   │ Technical        │   │ Other donor-financed │
│                  │   │ Project Unit     │   │ initiatives relevant │
│                  │   │                  │   │ to the Program       │
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│                    Program Child Projects                            │
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Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
781,389.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
347,875.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
			347,875.00			

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
433,514.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
			433,514.00						

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)
24433.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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	3,500.00			

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)
20,933.00			

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)
257308.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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)
257,308.00			

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)

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 (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	3500000	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	3500000	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)	3,500,000			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	3,500,000			
Anticipated start year of accounting				
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	42,290			
Male	43,377			
Total	85667	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)
Entries for Core Indicator targets are the aggregates of targets provided in the country child project concepts; for details, please see explanations provided in those concepts and in the M&E Framework. Note that figures remain subject to ongoing review and refinement. Rough estimates of greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (Core Indicator 6) were produced for a 20-year period, beginning in 2025. Improved estimates will be computed during the PPG phase using the Ex-Ante Carbon-Balance Tool (EX-ACT) Tier Standard Edition, developed by FAO.

Risks to Achieving Program Outcomes that might emerge from preparation and implementation phases of child projects under the program, and what are the mitigation strategies the child project preparation process will undertake to address these (e.g. what alternatives may be considered during child project preparation–such as in terms of consultations, role and choice of counterparts, delivery mechanisms, locations in country, flexible design elements, etc.). Identify any of the risks listed below that would call in question the viability of the child project during its implementation. Please describe any possible mitigation measures needed.

The risk rating should reflect the overall risk to program outcomes considering the global context and ambition of the program. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.

Risk Categories	Rating	Comments
Climate	Low	The Program will ensure all child projects are closely aligned with country-level commitments on climate change and support related strategies and action plans. Prior and future analysis will continue to identify and refine areas that will be most impacted by climate change (such as KBAs or priority watersheds), with project design and implementation incorporating appropriate strategies for climate resilience and mitigation. Anticipated climate change impacts will be a key factor in land use planning and spatial planning to inform decision-making.
Environment and Social	High	All child projects will be subject to GEF-related environmental and social safeguards through accredited implementation agencies in each country. The Regional Level Platform will also assess child project-related environmental and social risks during both design and implementation phases, using data gathered from prior and current GEF- and CEPF-related investments. Child projects will be required to prepare relevant safeguard plans, including at minimum gender mainstreaming and stakeholder engagement plans, and grievance accountability and redress mechanisms.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Prior involvement with CEPF-and GEF-related investments has allowed for strong regional and country-specific networks and alliances with key government officials from the local to the national level, as well as with the private sector, CSOs, and international multi-and bilateral stakeholders. The Regional Level Platform will utilize these networks and alliances to ensure Program and child project-specific goals are supported, as well as identify where detrimental policies or non-compliance with complementary policies are undermining successful implementation. Particular attention will be given to identifying existing or new policies that create perverse incentives that undermine the larger environmental goals of the Program, and opportunities to incorporate policy reform into Child Project design.

Macro-economic	Modera te	Economies of the Guinean Forest region are heavily dependent on commodities such as cacao which can be subject to large price swings, adding a degree of complexity to long-term planning for sustainable investments, such as certified products. While growing, markets for certified products are often difficult for producers to access, as capacity-building, capital, and marketing are required. By placing IPLCs at the center of its strategies, the Program can build off of two decades of investment and experiences in sustainable development, promoting best practices to improve productivity and profitability while conducting outreach to potential higher-value markets for more sustainable produced commodities. Securing land and natural resource tenure and supporting capacity building and enforcement will also enable IPLCs to more effectively manage, and benefit from, areas for conservation and restoration, and prevent unauthorized land uses, such as illegal logging or unregulated bushmeat hunting.
Strategies and Policies	Low	Over two decades of prior investments by GEF and CEPF have demonstrated a number of coordination and collaboration mechanisms that the Program's Regional Level Platform will adopt to ensure strategic and policy coherence among key stakeholders. This will include regular country- and regional-level meetings, exchanges and capacity-building workshops, and regular information sharing and updates from the Program's monitoring and evaluation component.
Technical design of project or program	Low	Both the Program technical design as well as the design of the child projects will be based on over two decades of prior experiences and lessons learned from GEF and CEPF investments. Programmatically, all components are well aligned with national policies and commitments, as well as with GEF strategies and objectives. Communication and coordination with key stakeholders will be core elements of all Program components, including regular meetings from the local to regional levels. The knowledge management component includes a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that will guide adaptive management, allowing for design corrections should conditions and priorities change during implementation. Lessons learned from prior programs and projects will guide the budgeting process, thereby mitigating the risk that budgets are misaligned with objectives. The Regional Level Platform will be utilized to ensure that committed counterpart resources are delivered as promised, as well as engage in efforts to leverage additional funding from new sources, thereby helping to mitigate shortfalls.
Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability	Substa ntial	The Program's design explicitly recognizes the need for capacity building throughout the region and incorporates strategies to address gaps. The Regional Level Platform addresses capacity gaps by promoting region-wide cooperation and knowledge sharing, as well as through targeted technical support Specific child projects will also identify capacity-building gaps and incorporate project elements to address these gaps and will coordinate efforts with the Regional Level Platform to direct resources and technical expertise where appropriate.
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement	Modera te	Country-level commitments for both the Program and child projects are explicit in signed letters of endorsement that detail levels of co-financing/counterpart support. Regular communication and coordination with government stakeholders will support the timely delivery of committed resources. Identifying additional sources of support will also be a priority for the Regional Level Platform, and adaptive management mechanisms will allow for resource re-allocation in the event of shortfalls in committed support.

Stakeholder Engagement	Low	Prior investments and lessons learned in the region over the last two decades have resulted in a broad range of strong stakeholder relationships and effective engagement mechanisms that the program will build upon. The Regional Level Platform is specifically tasked with building synergies and coherence between projects, making effective stakeholder engagement a key responsibility to achieve these goals. Throughout implementation, the Regional Level Platform will coordinate closely with child projects to ensure key stakeholders are being effectively engaged and able to deliver upon commitments, hold regular meetings, disseminate knowledge, and build capacity where needed. Safeguard requirements for child projects will include the preparation of stakeholder engagement plans, subject to review per GEF and Lead Agency standards.
Other		
Financial Risks for NGI projects		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	

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 that any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified.

(approximately 2-3 pages)

The program corresponds to the objectives of the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program. The program will support local communities and CSOs as a central strategy for achieving the larger regional goal of protecting and maintaining intact forest landscapes. The program's focus on the corridor and landscape-level interventions also expand and improves the management of intact forest landscapes, centered on protected areas and KBAs identified through the GEF-supported CEPF portfolio (which will be updated based on information and analysis produced since the preparation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile). The program also will channel investments in sustainable land use outside of protected areas, thereby improving connectivity, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and ensuring better delivery of ecosystem services; transboundary corridors will be a particular priority. Finally, the program will build on innovative financial mechanisms that have proven successful, including the REDD+ project in Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park and Conservation Agreements that have been negotiated with communities and private sector entities, notably in Liberia; work on sustainable financing also will draw on the momentum generated at the Libreville One Forest Summit in March 2023.

The program components are well-aligned with GEF-8 programming strategies, building on over two decades of investment and lessons learned from prior and current regional GEF investments, including the GEF-7 FOLUR IP and the CEPF project portfolio in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot. Addressing key drivers of forest loss and degradation and protecting and restoring critical ecosystem services and habitats are integral to the program's strategy. Complementing these strategies will be policy-level support to enhance national and regional coherence and capacity, helping the region's countries move towards more sustainable, resilient economies that are better able to respond to priorities for addressing climate change (NDCs, NBSAPs, NAPs, etc).

With respect to GEF-8 Focal Area strategies defined in the GEF-8 Programming Directions, the program is closely aligned with Objective 1 under the Biodiversity Focal Area *(To improve conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of natural ecosystems).* This includes work on financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of PAs, as well as biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors, including local applications with demonstrated practical relevance (e.g., land use planning). Under the Climate Change Focal Area, the program's investment in expanding and strengthening PAs as well as forest management and restoration outside PAs correspond to Pillar I, Objective 1.4 relating to Nature-based Solutions. This area of work also is relevant to Objectives 1 and 2 of the Land Degradation Focal Area, through the promotion of regenerative/climate-smart agriculture (guided by spatial planning) and restoration of degraded productive lands, including strengthening of community-based natural resource management as well as tenure rights recognition and safeguards. The GFIP also converges with the Ecosystem Restoration IP, given the importance of restoration of productive lands as well as fragmented and degraded forests to enhance the health of Guinean Forest landscapes. The GFIP also aligns closely with the GEF-8 Wildlife Conservation for Development IP given its focus on securing wildlife populations and key landscapes, and ensuring that countries and communities derive socioeconomic benefits from wildlife as a natural asset; shared themes include habitat protection, sustainable wildlife use, ecotourism, and human-wildlife conflict. Finally, with respect to the International Waters Focal Area, transboundary work under the program (e.g., along the Mano River shared by Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) will further Objective 3 (*Enhance water security in freshwater ecosystems*). Specific program components and their alignment with GEF-8

programming strategies and regional objectives include:

Land use planning: This component will focus on generating the information necessary to develop integrated land-use plans, and then utilize that information to improve natural resource management through the participatory multi-stakeholder landscape- and local-level land use planning. This Component will generate the basic knowledge base and planning foundation for the pursuit of GEF-8 programming strategies.

Expanding and improving the management of protected areas: This component directly aligns with GEF-8's programming strategies to protect major global environmental assets and address drivers of habitat loss and degradation. The component will also support the empowerment of IPLCs that live in and around target PAs, using lessons learned from CEPF's prior experiences catalyzing conservation by civil society. A concerted effort will seek to incorporate KBAs currently not under formal protection into the region's protected area system, informed by spatial planning results from Component 1.

Sustainable land use outside protected areas: Land use planning outputs will provide spatial guidance for efforts relating to restoration and improved land use practices. Central to this process will be support for strengthened land tenure and resource rights for IPCLs in priority corridors. Lessons learned from innovative financing mechanisms used in past projects, such as Conservation Agreements, REDD+, private sector engagement, and "green" certification schemes will inform new investments in areas outside of protected areas. These will collectively support more sustainable land use, while simultaneously bolstering key ecosystem services such as those derived from healthy watersheds. This component aligns with several GEF-8 programming strategies, including addressing drivers of deforestation, promoting "greener" and more sustainable economic systems, and employing innovation mechanisms to achieve conservation and sustainable development objectives.

Policy engagement: The program will build on prior and current investments in policy engagement initiatives by supporting strategic national-level policies that will impact regional conservation and restoration, including those relating to: climate change mitigation and adaptation, land-use planning, conservation finance, and more secure land and natural resource tenure. It will also support policies that create positive incentives for conservation, restoration, and sustainable development while working to address perverse incentives that drive habitat loss and degradation. These measures align with GEF-8's strategies to develop enabling conditions to mobilize finance and improve incentives for forest protection while eliminating perverse incentives and will empower IPLCs and communities seeking more secure land and natural resource tenure. It also will help participating countries better respond to several climate-related priorities, including the development and strengthening of NDCs, NBSAPs, NAPs, and other key commitments.

Regional cooperation and learning: The program will support multi-stakeholder engagement and regional cooperation and learning by deploying a Regional Level Platform, which will be based on CEPF's proven Regional Implementation Team (RIT) model. Under the RIT model, a team of experts works directly with grantees to build capacity and ensure coherence and promote synergies at the regional scale. The Regional Level Platform for the program will focus on 1) knowledge generation and exchange; 2) building coherence and synergies between projects; 3) supporting regional-level initiatives (including support for transboundary projects); 4) mobilization of finance; and 5) monitoring and evaluation of results, from the project to the regional level. While the Regional Level Platform most directly aligns with GEF-8's programming strategy of regional cooperation (including the development of transboundary corridors), it also supports the development of enabling conditions and resource mobilization through catalyzing financing opportunities.

Criteria for the selection of child projects center on ensuring that investments help maintain the integrity of the GFB's globally important critical forests and

maximize multiple GEBs. Factors considered in the assessment of Expressions of Interest submitted for the IP were the degree to which proposed child projects reflect:

i. Coverage of Guinean Forest Biome
ii. Landscape connectivity
iii. Demonstration of ambitious policies to prioritize the maintenance of forest integrity
iv. Demonstration of ambitious policies for halting deforestation
v. Demonstration of ambitious policies for the restoration of degraded areas
vi. Proposed strategies and policies consider carbon stocks
vii. Proposed strategies and policies consider biodiversity
viii. Potential to target intact forest landscapes across national borders
ix. Evidence of policies that recognize land tenure access and resource rights
x. Transparent co-management strategies with Indigenous People and Local Communities.
xi. Potential and opportunities for transformational change at large scale

Child projects also are required to demonstrate strong baselines and co-financing opportunities, contributions to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and contributions to the IP goals including transboundary/regional connectivity. Policy alignment for each country is reflected as follows:

Guinea: The Government of Guinea has demonstrated commitment to forest protection at different levels, from engaging communities in capacity-building activities for sustainable land management to equipping and funding park rangers and anti-poaching programs. Reforestation campaigns and restoration actions have been rolled out through a Presidential Initiative. Further work has recognized the rights of private forest owners and updated legal texts of various codes (forest code, wildlife code, and hunting regulations, environmental code, water code, livestock code) whose sanctions against offenders were previously very weak. National policies and strategies that support the protection of the environment, the conservation of biodiversity, the preservation of the integrity of forests, and the restoration of land include the National Environmental Action Plan (PNAE) of 1994 and the Guinea National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy adopted in 2015.

Liberia: The Government of Liberia has made a bold commitment to forest protection by enacting the 30% target in its 2006 National Forestry Reform Law, and by setting an NDC target of reducing the national deforestation rate by 50%. They have ratified national legislation such as the Environment Protection Management Law, the National Wildlife and Conservation Protected Area Management Law, and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) to strengthen the framework for forest and biodiversity conservation. Regionally, the GOL has also signed on to initiatives that will support the harmonization of transboundary conservation efforts through the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action and the Mano River Declaration. With its partners, the GOL continues to prioritize Protected Area establishment governance and co-management, including gender integration, and private sector involvement while seeking long-term financing.

Sierra Leone: The Government of Sierra Leone has helped pioneer ambitious efforts to use REDD+ opportunities to finance the management of protected areas and community forests in the Gola landscape. Recently passed legislation prioritizes forest integrity and halting deforestation by barring destructive

development in ecologically important areas. The 2010 Forestry Policy adopted by the Forestry Division articulates a clear set of ambitious policies to work with communities and landowners to maintain forests and reforest degraded areas. The government recently at COP 26 made a commitment to planting 25 million trees over 960,000 ha by 2030. Regional commitments include African Convention on Nature and Natural Resources and the Mano River Declaration. The Gola Rain Forest National Park (GFNP) is Sierra Leone's largest remaining area of intact lowland rainforest; in 2011, Liberia and Sierra Leone signed an MoU to conserve Gola Forest, amended in February 2020 reaffirming commitment to joint forest management and biodiversity protection.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during PFD preparation phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

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

March 21-23, 2023: Guinean Forests IP PFD Design Workshop (Liberia). The Guinean Forests PFD design Workshop Report has been uploaded (including the list of participants)

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

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the program?

Yes

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

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed 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
High or Substantial			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Program 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	GEF Program Financing($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing($)
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	2,233,224	200,990	2,434,214.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	893,290	80,395	973,685.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	446,645	40,198	486,843.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	744,408	66,996	811,404.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	297,763	26,798	324,561.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	148,882	13,399	162,281.00

CI	GET	Sierra Leone	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	786,094	70,749	856,843.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	875,139	78,762	953,901.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	437,569	39,381	476,950.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	437,569	39,381	476,950.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	291,713	26,254	317,967.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	145,856	13,127	158,983.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	145,856	13,127	158,983.00
CI	GET	Liberia	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	770,121	69,311	839,432.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,337,576	120,382	1,457,958.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	445,859	40,127	485,986.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,783,433	160,509	1,943,942.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	445,859	40,127	485,986.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	148,619	13,376	161,995.00

IUCN	GET	Guinea	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	594,477	53,503	647,980.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	445,858	40,127	485,985.00
CI	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	2,973,248	267,592	3,240,840.00
CI	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	991,083	89,198	1,080,281.00
CI	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	1,585,733	142,716	1,728,449.00
CI	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	671,954	60,476	732,430.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**20,077,828.00**	**1,807,001.00**	**21,884,829.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	60,354	5,432	**65,786.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	24,142	2,173	**26,315.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	12,071	1,086	**13,157.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	20,117	1,811	**21,928.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	8,047	723	**8,770.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	4,023	362	**4,385.00**
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	21,245	1,912	**23,157.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	42,293	3,806	**46,099.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	21,147	1,903	**23,050.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	21,147	1,903	**23,050.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	14,097	1,268	**15,365.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	7,049	634	**7,683.00**
CI	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	7,049	634	**7,683.00**

CI	GET	Liberia	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	37,218	3,350	**40,568.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	38,571	3,471	**42,042.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	12,857	1,157	**14,014.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	51,429	4,629	**56,058.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	12,857	1,157	**14,014.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	4,285	385	**4,670.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	17,143	1,543	**18,686.00**
IUCN	GET	Guinea	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	12,857	1,157	**14,014.00**
CI	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	95,572	8,602	**104,174.00**
CI	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	31,857	2,867	**34,724.00**
CI	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	50,972	4,587	**55,559.00**
CI	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	21,599	1,944	**23,543.00**
				Total PPG Amount	**649,998.00**	**58,496.00**	**708,494.00**

Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Source of Funds	Total($)
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,500,000.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
CI	GET	Sierra Leone	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	500,000.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000.00
CI	GET	Liberia	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	500,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	1,500,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	2,000,000.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**10,000,000.00**

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
CFB Guinean Forests IP	GET	5,550,306.00	16,413,685.00
CFB Guinean Forests IP	GET	3,103,823.00	27,013,685.00
CFB Guinean Forests IP	GET	5,201,681.00	15,300,000.00
CFB Guinean Forests IP	GET	6,222,018.00	937,036.00
Total Project Cost ($)		**20,077,828.00**	**59,664,406.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Environment Protection Agency	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Donor Agency	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)[Agricultural Value-Chain Development Project (AVDP)]	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	National Protected Areas Authority: The Gola REDD project	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	413,685.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	413,685.00
Recipient Country Government	Environmental Protection Agency	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Forestry Development Authority	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,600,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Mines and Energy	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Liberia Land Authority	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Other Ministries (agriculture, Cooperation, etc.)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	937,036.00

Total Co-financing($) **59,664,406.00**

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Orissa Samaroo	4/12/2023			osamaroo@conservation.org

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

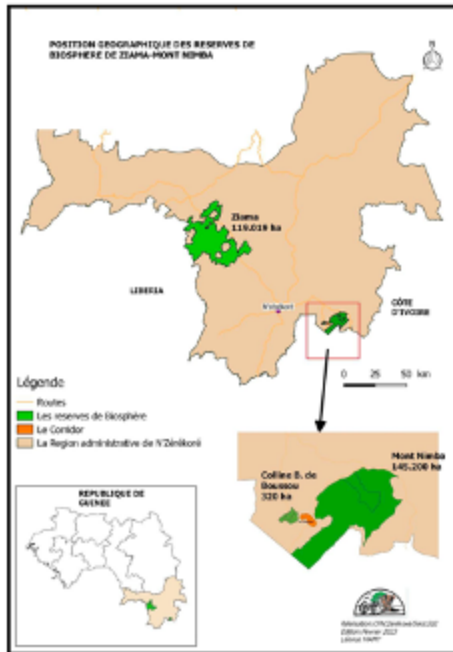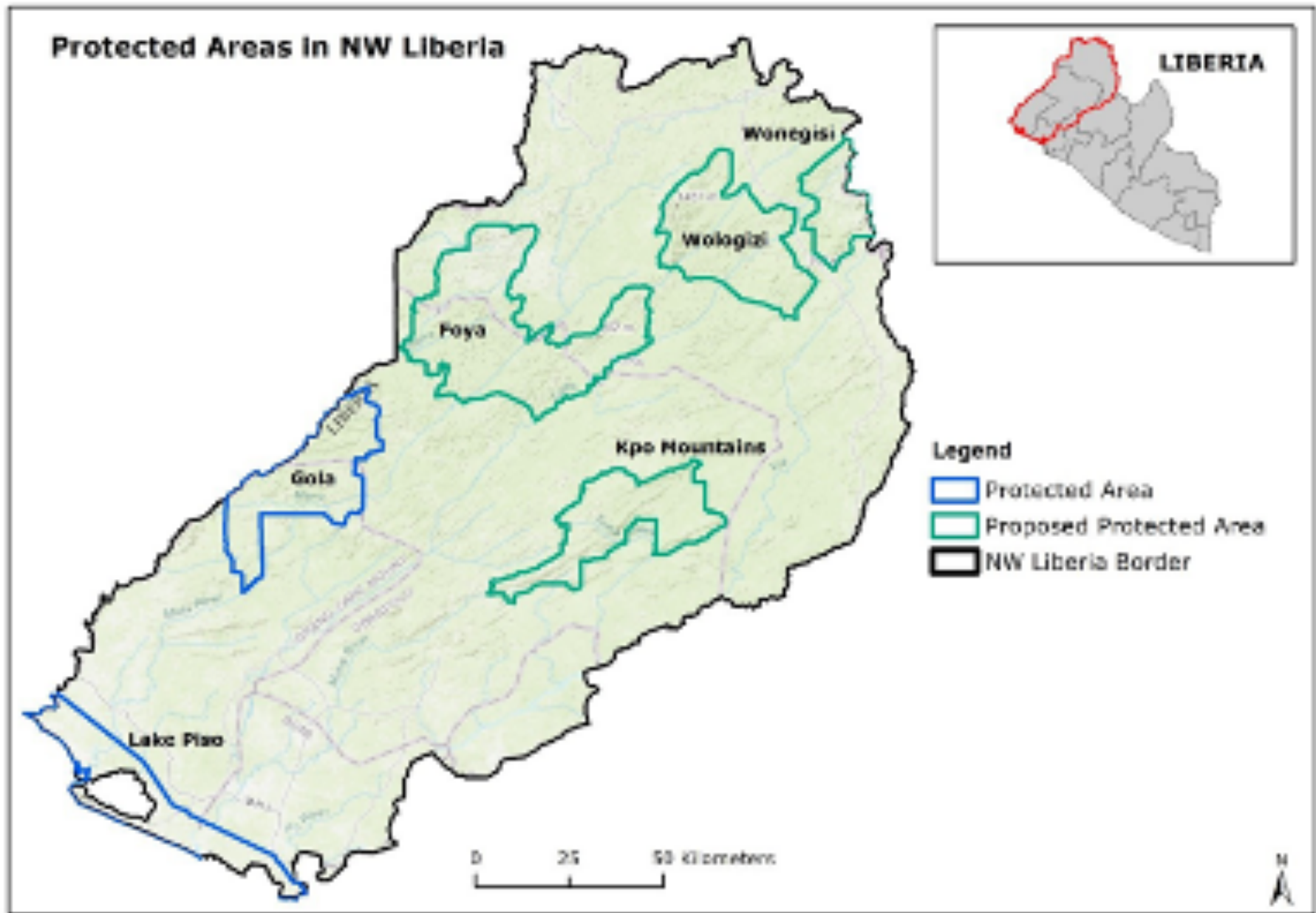| Name	Position	Ministry	Date	
Mr. Fode Toure	General Director of Environment and Natural Capital Fund	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Guinea)	4/6/2023	📄
Professor Wilson K. Tarpeh	Executive Director and CEO, Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia	Environmental Protection Agency (Liberia)	4/5/2023	📄

ANNEX C: PROGRAM LOCATION

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

Project Sites	Latitude	Longitude
Guinea		
Ziama Reserve	N 8° 0' 0"	W 9° 35' 0"
Mont Nimba Biosphere Reserve	N 7° 38' 0"	W 8° 26' 0"
Liberia		
Kpo Mountains Proposed Protected Area	N 7° 21' 41"	W 10° 5' 6"
Wologizi Nature Reserve	N 8° 6' 36"	W 9° 55' 40"
Foya Proposed Protected Area	N 8° 22' 13"	W 10° 13' 11"
Gola Forest National Park	N 7° 30' 0"	W 10° 55' 0"
Sierra Leone		
Gola Rainforest National Park	N 7° 31' 1"	W 10° 58' 8"

Guinea Project Sites

Liberia Project Sites

Protected Areas in NW Liberia

LIBERIA

Wonegisi

Wologizi

Foya

Kpo Mountains

Gola

Legend
Protected Area
Proposed Protected Area
NW Liberia Border

Lake Piso

0   25   50 Kilometers

N

Sierra Leone Project Sites

SIERRA LEONE PROJECT DISTRICTS

Kailahun

Kenema

Pujehun

Land Use Land Cover

- Tree Cover Areas
- Shrubs Cover Areas
- Grassland
- Cropland
- Wetland
- Bare Areas
- Built Up Areas
- Open Water
- Project Districts
- Protected Areas
- County Boundary
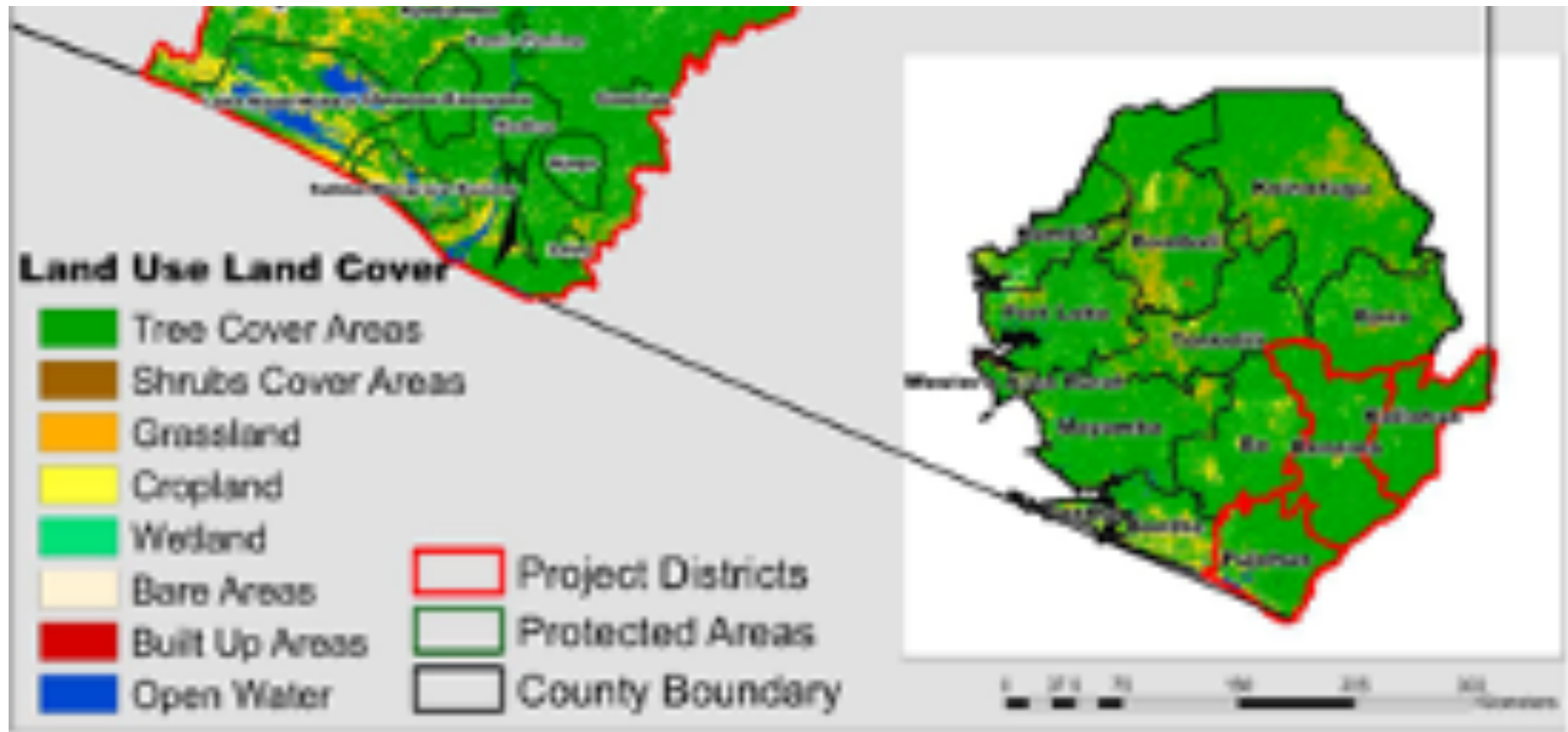
ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

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

Title
ESS for Regional Child Project ONLY (ANNEX D)

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Desertification
Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Please see attached PFD.

ANNEX H: CHILD PROJECT INFORMATION

Title

ANNEX H_ Child Project Information 05.09.2023	📄
ANNEX H_ Child Project Information	📄

Child Projects under the Program						
Country	Project Title	GEF Agency	GEF Amount($) PROJECT FINANCING	Agency Fee($)	Total($)	
	FSPs					
Sierra Leone	Strengthening conservation and effective governance of Sierra Leone's critical forests in the Gola Forest Landscape	CI	5,550,306.00	499,525.00	6,049,831.00	👁
Liberia	Strengthening conservation and effective governance of Liberia's critical forests in the Northwest Liberia Landscape	CI	3,103,823.00	279,343.00	3,383,166.00	👁
Nigeria	CANCELLED	FAO	0	0	0.00	👁

Guinea	Strengthening restoration and conservation of the ecological corridor of Mount Nimba (Bossou) and Ziama National Park in Guinea	IUCN	5,201,681.00	468,151.00	5,669,832.00	👁
Regional	Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project	CI	6,222,018.00	559,982.00	6,782,000.00	👁
	Subtotal ($)		20,077,828.00	1,807,001.00		
	MSPs					
	Subtotal ($)		0.00	0.00		
	Grant Total ($)		20,077,828.00	1,807,001.00	21,884,829.00	