

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO CHILD ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Child Project Information

Child Project Title

Guinean Forests Regional Coordination and Learning Project

Region

Regional

GEF Project ID

11147

Country(ies)

Regional

Type of Project

FSP

GEF Agency(ies)

CI

GEF Agency Project ID

Project Executing Entity(s)

BirdLife International

Conservation International

Project Executing Type

CSO

GEF Agency

GEF Focal Area (s)

Multi Focal Area

Submission Date

3/15/2024

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Duration (Months)

60

GEF Project Grant: (a)

6,222,018.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (b)

559,982.00

PPG Amount: (c)

200,000.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (d)

18,000.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

7000000

Total Co-financing

40,658,218.00

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Mixed & Others

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation

Climate Change Adaptation

Biodiversity

Land Degradation

Principal Objective 2

No Contribution 0

Principal Objective 2

No Contribution 0

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, to offer a snapshot of what is being proposed. The summary should include: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? ii) as a child project under a program, explain how the description fits in the broader context of the specific program; (iii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative,

how will this be achieved? and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Amazon, Congo and Critical Forests IP is financed at a height of \$306.5 million from the GEF with \$ 1.7 billion co-financing. The Guinean Forests Integrated Program, through the Regional Child Project (RCP) will coordinate and reinforce the Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP) through technical support and capacity building; learning, knowledge exchange, and dissemination of innovations; Project- and Program-level Monitoring and Evaluation; facilitation of transboundary watershed and forest landscape management; and promoting regional policy dialogue. The RCP will engage governments and stakeholders throughout the region for a biome-wide approach, particularly on policy coherence and innovative financing at scale. To address threats of expanding agriculture, unsustainable resource extraction, and infrastructure development, the RCP will pursue multiple levers of transformation by fostering learning and knowledge sharing; creating an enabling policy environment for sustainable watershed and forest management; leveraging innovative sustainable financing solutions; introducing alternatives to unsustainable land and resource use; support for sustainable livelihoods and nature-friendly enterprises; enhancing gender-inclusive and responsive watershed and forest governance through multi-stakeholder dialogues; and landscape-level coordination for improved planning and decision making. These levers will address barriers including lack of land use planning; lack of sustainable livelihoods; limited capacity for conservation and sustainable management within government agencies; weak policies and legislation relating to forest governance (including tenure and resource rights); limited coordination of transboundary watershed and forest management; gender inequality in natural resource management; and limited private sector engagement in conservation. The RCP will help generate inclusive, gender-equitable socioeconomic benefits for at least 186,267 direct beneficiaries (at least 48% women), and maximize the impact of funding invested towards Global Environmental Benefits by providing technical support and capacity-building and emphasizing regional coordination, cooperation, and cross-project learning. The project is structured around six key components, namely:

Component 1: Learning, Knowledge Management, Capacity Building, and Communication: Enhancing knowledge and capacity among multi-sectoral state and non-state actors for effective governance, with a focus on social inclusion and gender.

Component 2: Governance and Coordination: Strengthening coherence and synergies between Child Projects and regional initiatives to support effective governance.

Component 3: Financing Solutions and Innovation: Enhancing donor and private sector partner coordination for innovative sustainable financing.

Component 4: Support for Regional Policy Coherence: Promoting policy coherence of national forest governance with regional and international goals.

Component 5: Guinean Forests Integrated Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Implementing a gender-responsive M&E framework for the GFIP.

Component 6: Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Implementing an integrated and gender-responsive M&E framework for the RCP

Child Project Description Overview

Project Objective

Project Objective: To enhance and catalyze effective transboundary and biome-wide forest governance through a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing solutions, and innovation.

Project Components

Component 1: Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,498,415.00	10,820,592.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: Enhanced knowledge management and learning and capacity among multi-sectoral state and non-state actors and donors for effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa, including cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion and gender, including a knowledge portal.

Output:

Output 1.1.1: A gender-responsive and inclusive GFIP knowledge management, communications, and branding strategy developed and executed.

Output 1.1.2: A gender-responsive and inclusive regional Guinean Forests knowledge-sharing platform/portal developed and linked with existing knowledge management platforms.

Output 1.1.3: Participatory virtual and in-person learning, regional knowledge exchange, and sharing events/webinars delivered by the Project.

Output 1.1.4: Support provided to Child Projects to create and disseminate country-specific gender-responsive communication materials.

Output 1.1.5: Knowledge products generated with a focus on global public goods provided through improved management of Guinean Forests, including attention to social inclusion and gender.

Output 1.1.6: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the technical capacity of state and non-state stakeholders.

Component 2: Governance and coordination

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,410,533.00	7,852,438.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: Enhanced coherence and synergies between Child Projects and regional initiatives including GEF IPs to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa.

Outcome 2.2: Enhanced governance of the biome through platforms for dialogue and transboundary collaboration between countries on shared forest and watershed management.

Outcome 2.3: Enhanced governance of the biome through platforms for dialogue and transboundary collaboration between countries.

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Coordination and cross-pollination enhanced between the GFIP and other IPs such as the 4 Critical Forests IPs (especially the Congo IP), planetGOLD IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP including on social inclusion and gender topics.

Output 2.2.1: Agenda and schedule prepared for 6-monthly cycle of inter-governmental sessions to discuss enhanced collaborative governance of the Guinean Forest biome

Output 2.2.2: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen technical and institutional capacity on collaborative management of transboundary watersheds.

Component 3: Financing solutions and innovation

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,145,989.00	8,730,639.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1: Enhanced donor and private sector partner coordination at global and regional levels for innovative sustainable financing.

Outcome 3.2: Enhanced technical capacity amongst the Child Projects on innovative sustainable finance approaches.

Output:

Output 3.1.1: Donor roundtable activities organized/supported by the Project.

Output 3.1.2: Partnerships between countries and investors/donors strengthened/built.

Output 3.2.1: Guidance provided to Child Projects on innovative, gender-inclusive and responsive sustainable finance approaches.

Component 4: Support for regional policy coherence

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,119,324.00	5,484,843.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1: Enhanced policy coherence of national forest governance policy goals with regional policy goals/targets.

Outcome 4.2: Strengthened collective voice for Guinean Forest countries in international policy arenas.

Output:

Output 4.1.1: Options analysis for an ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism focused on the conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes, incorporating social inclusion and gender considerations.

Output 4.2.1: Collective and coordinated country participation in international policy platforms facilitated.

Component 5: Guinean Forests Integrated Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
564,810.00	4,517,047.00

Outcome:

Outcome 5.1: A gender-responsive and integrated monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.

Output:

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

Output 5.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.

Component 6: Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
186,661.00	1,219,747.00

Outcome:

Outcome 6.1: An integrated and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Regional Coordination Project.

Output:

Output 6.1.1: Periodic Project M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC.

Output 6.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the regional coordination project.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication	1,498,415.00	10,820,592.00
Component 2: Governance and coordination	1,410,533.00	7,852,438.00
Component 3: Financing solutions and innovation	1,145,989.00	8,730,639.00
Component 4: Support for regional policy coherence	1,119,324.00	5,484,843.00
Component 5: Guinean Forests Integrated Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	564,810.00	4,517,047.00
Component 6: Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	186,661.00	1,219,747.00
Subtotal	5,925,732.00	38,625,306.00
Project Management Cost	296,286.00	2,032,912.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	6,222,018.00	40,658,218.00

Please provide Justification

CHILD PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Since this is a child project under a program, please include an explanation of how the context fits within the specific program agenda. Describe the objective of the project, 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 km², the region includes two sub-regions: the Upper Guinean Forests (starting in Guinea-Bissau and extending eastward to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and part of Benin); and the Lower Guinean Forests extending from southern Nigeria into southwestern Cameroon and including São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea's islands (Carr et al., 2015; see Figure 1).^[1] The Guinean Forests support globally important levels of biodiversity (including high levels of species richness and endemism) and provide valuable ecosystem services to well over 200 million inhabitants of the region. The region is well endowed with natural resources such as water, minerals and forests. Rural communities depend on these natural resources for food, income, bush meat, medicine, charcoal and firewood. Agriculture is the predominant economic activity in the region, including commercial agricultural plantations for commodities such as palm oil and rubber, as well as small-scale subsistence farming. Mineral and oil extraction also shape the landscapes (Carr et al., 2015; IBAT, 2023; Williams et al., 2003).

Figure 1: Guinean Forests of West Africa



The hotspot has several notable geographical features, including mountain ranges (Fouta Djallon Massif, Nimba Mountains, Jos Plateau, Cameroon-Nigeria Mountains), the Niger River (West Africa’s longest and largest river), the Niger Delta swamp forest (the world’s second largest swamp forest) and the Central African Mangroves (Africa’s largest and globally the third largest mangrove ecosystem). Offshore volcanic islands (including São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea’s island of Bioko) contribute to the region’s high levels of species endemism (Carr et al. 2015). The region is home to 15 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 19 Biosphere Reserves and 58 RAMSAR wetlands of international importance (UNESCO 2023; RAMSAR 2023). WWF designated the Western Guinean Lowland Forest ecoregion and two regions of the Lower Guinean forests (Coastal Congolian Forests and Cameroon Highlands forests) as Global 200 priority regions for conservation (Olson and Dinnerstein 2002). The GFB has high levels of both species richness and endemism. The region is home to over 9,000 species of vascular plants, of which more than 1,800 are endemic (Mittermeier et al. 2004). Its over 416 mammal species represent a quarter of all native African species, with approximately 65 species categorized as endemic to the region. Other terrestrial taxa include 917 birds, 107 reptiles and 269 amphibian species, of which 48 birds, 20 reptiles and 118 amphibians are endemic (Carr et al. 2015).

Freshwater ecosystems in the region also have high levels of diversity, with approximately one-third of the freshwater fish species thought to be endemic to the GFB (Paugy et al. 2003). Reflecting high levels of species richness and endemism, 146 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) have been identified in the region, covering roughly 20% of the entire GFB (Table 1 provides a summary of KBAs by country). Nearly 950 of the GFB’s species are globally threatened according to the IUCN Red List. Particular conservation importance is noted with respect to the GFB’s primate species, 92% of which are endemic. Five of these are listed as Critically Endangered and another 21 are categorized as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. (Mittermeier et al. 2004; Oates et al. 2011; IUCN 2023).

Table 1: Distribution of KBAs by Country

Country	KBA Area within Hotspot (km ²)	Number of Terrestrial KBAs	Number of Freshwater KBAs	Total Number of KBAs
Benin	984	1	0	1
Cameroon	13,837	19	2	21
Cote d’Ivoire	14,659	15	1	16
Equatorial Guinea	862	3	0	3
Ghana	5,490	30	0	30
Guinea	3,260	11	0	11
Guinea Bissau ^[2]	-	9	0	9
Liberia	38,677	18	4	22
Nigeria	21,231	12	2	14
Sao Tome & Principe	961	4	1	5
Sierra Leone	6,245	9	2	11
Togo	3,065	2	1	3
Total	109,271	133	13	146

Sources: Carr et al (2015); BirdLife et al. (2023).

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 (Carr et al. 2015). Nigeria has one of the world’s highest deforestation rates and Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire’s primary forest loss rates increased by 60% and 26% respectively

from 2010 to 2020 (Global Forest Watch, 2023). 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. 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 (Carr et al. 2015; IBAT 2023).

Global environmental problems that the project will address

The GFB is confronting a number of key global environmental problems and root causes that the project will directly address. The principal environmental problems to be addressed by the project include:

- *Deforestation and forest degradation and the resulting loss of ecosystem services:* The Guinean Forests provide a wide spectrum of ecosystem services, both global (e.g. carbon storage and climate regulation), and local, including water, food, fibre, fuel, medicine and construction materials, nutrient cycling, and erosion and flood control. These services are particularly important to rural communities, many of which derive much of their livelihoods and sustenance from local ecosystems. However, the region has lost nearly 6.8 million ha of forest between 2000-2020, with some countries, such as Nigeria, experiencing some of the world’s highest deforestation rates (Global Forest Watch 2023). Forest degradation for the same period was also high, with nearly 16 million additional hectares being impacted (See Table 2). As a result, many of the region’s ecosystem services are being compromised or lost entirely, contributing to both biodiversity loss and worsening poverty, particularly in rural areas.

Table 2: Guinean Forests Biome Forest Degradation and Loss, 2000-2020

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%
Guinea-Bissau	1,800,000 ha	251,000 ha	180,000 ha	-7.3%
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-Príncipe	NA	NA	77 ha*	-0.5%
Sierra Leone	3,400,000 ha	1,990,000 ha	545,000 ha	-9%
Togo	1,900,000 ha	104,000 ha	133,000 ha	-5.9%

Source: Global Forest Watch 2023.

- *Biodiversity declines due to habitat loss:* As noted above, the Guinean Forests are one of the world’s most biodiverse regions, including impressive levels of endemism across taxonomic groups, and 137 areas identified as KBAs, covering roughly 18 percent of the GFB’s total area (~621,000 km²). However, forest loss and degradation have resulted in widespread negative impacts and persistent pressure on habitats with a resulting decline in biodiversity; over 950 of the region’s species, many endemic, are considered globally threatened by the IUCN, with at least 135 assessed as Critically Endangered (Carr et al. 2015).
- *Climate change and climate variability:* Given Africa’s dependence on subsistence agriculture and cash crops for export, high levels of poverty, and poor infrastructure, impacts from climate change are a significant threat to both ecosystems and the region’s economic well-being. For the GFB, current and projected impacts from climate change show the region’s coastal areas as particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, and rainfall levels

and extreme climate events (notably floods and droughts) are projected to become less predictable and more intense, placing further pressure on ecosystems, biodiversity and the region's inhabitants.

Underlying drivers of environmental change

Underlying drivers of the aforementioned key global environmental problems 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 exacerbates these threats throughout the region. Root causes include:

- *Poverty and wealth inequality:* As noted above, countries in the Guinean Forests suffer from high levels of poverty and extreme poverty, notably in rural areas. Globally, the region's countries rank towards the bottom of the world's countries in GDP per capita, with some, notably Sierra Leone and Liberia, ranked as two of the 15 poorest countries in the world (World Bank, 2023). Of the 10 countries in the region that are eligible for the GFIP, 6 are classified by the United Nations as LDCs: Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Togo (United Nations, 2023). The region also has marked wealth inequality, with the wealthiest 1% possessing more than the combined wealth of the other 99% (Hallum and Obeng, 2019). Contributing to both high levels of poverty and wealth inequality are relatively high levels of corruption and poor governance (Transparency International, 2022).
- *Pressure for national economic development:* Though rates have come down in recent years, countries in the GFB still have some of the highest population growth rates in the world, with the region averaging an annual growth rate of approximately 2.3% (United Nations, 2023). With a younger, growing population already experiencing high levels of poverty and extreme poverty, increasing pressure is being exerted on national governments to deliver economic growth. As noted above, while West Africa's GDP growth has been fairly robust in the last two decades, growing at a compound annual rate of 4% between 1990 and 2021, the region's rapid population growth means that there has only been around a 1.3% per-capita growth rate (Siaplay and Werker, 2023). National governments under tremendous pressure to foment economic development and suffering from poor levels of governance can enact policies that undermine sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. For example, during Charles Taylor's rule in Liberia, logging concessions were granted that were roughly 2.5 times larger than the entire country's forested areas, with many concessions overlapping one another (Carr et al. 2015).
- *Infrastructure and settlement expansion:* With the region experiencing one of the world's highest population growth rates, governments have expanded infrastructure and settlements, placing additional pressure on habitats and species. A 2018 Brookings Institute study noted that of the 31 fastest-growing cities in the world, 21 are in Africa, with the top 10 fastest-growing cities all located on the continent (Patel, 2018). These include Lagos, Abuja, Abidjan, Douala, and Kumasi, all cities located in the region. Growth in urban areas and settlement expansion in other regions contribute to habitat loss, through direct conversion as well as by driving continued expansion of agricultural frontiers. Moreover, urban growth is accompanied by challenges such as solid waste management, sanitation and wastewater treatment, and energy and water needs, which further erode ecosystem health in the absence of adequate planning and natural resource governance.
- *Outdated/ inequitable systems of land and resource tenure:* Most land and subsurface resources, such as minerals, in the region officially belong to the national governments, which lease temporary use rights to communities or companies, such as for mining, agricultural or forestry activities. These systems pose challenges for conservation, as the prospect of government repossession discourages longer-term investments, such as soil conservation or watershed protection. Lack of tenure clarity also can be a source of conflict, as when governments grant commercial concessions on land to which communities claim customary

or traditional rights that are not legally recognized, or where there are overlapping and conflicting land uses, such as mining and forestry.

- *Large-scale and artisanal-small-scale mining:* The region has many areas that are rich in economically valuable mineral deposits, including gold, diamonds, bauxite and iron ore, which provide an important source of foreign exchange, royalties and taxes for the region’s economies (World Bank 2021). Mineral extraction, notably surface mining, by both large, industrial-scale mining and smaller-scale artisanal mining has had negative impacts across the region, including loss of forest area, important habitats for biodiversity, and loss of ecosystem services, such as those linked to soil, forests and potable water, for local communities (Carr et al. 2015). Artisanal and small-scale gold (ASGM) and diamond mining, much of it unlicensed, is exacerbating the influx of people into vulnerable areas and placing additional pressure on communities and ecosystems, notably between Liberia and Sierra Leone (Carter 2022). Many of the GFB’s critical areas for biodiversity are being impacted by mining activity, including sand mining in Sierra Leone’s Yawri Bay KBA, and large-scale iron ore mining in transboundary Mount Nimba KBA (BirdLife International 2015). In the latter, Guinea reduced the Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve by 1,500 ha to allow for iron ore mining, despite the reserve being a both Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site in Danger (Edwards et al. 2014).
- *Dependence on charcoal and fuelwood:* Populations in all countries in the GFB continue to rely heavily on charcoal and fuelwood as primary sources of energy (for example, 85% of Sierra Leone’s and 95% of Liberia’s populations rely on fuelwood and/or charcoal as primary sources of energy; de Wasseige et al. 2012; World Bank 2020). Widespread and high rates of poverty, increased urbanization, limited economic opportunities and impacts from climate change all contribute to the growing demand for charcoal and fuelwood, leading to additional deforestation and forest degradation.

The above drivers collectively undermine sustainable use and management throughout the region, leading to uncontrolled deforestation and degradation and compromising ecological integrity. As a result of the barriers described below, few actors are motivated to prioritize the maintenance of forests and associated ecosystem services in the face of these drivers, 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. This is reflected in inadequate protection and ineffective management of protected areas and surrounding landscapes throughout the region. Already, about 80% of the region’s original habitat has been transformed into an “agriculture-forest” mosaic, resulting from the expansion of the agricultural frontier for both subsistence and commercial crops (Carr et al. 2015). Therefore, enhanced conservation of intact forest landscapes is a priority for both biodiversity and socioeconomic wellbeing, as well as climate objectives. Absent efforts to catalyze systemic change to ameliorate the features that hamper sustainable forest landscape management, the region will see continued habitat and ecosystem service loss, and loss of natural capital will erode the socio-economic well-being of forest-dependent communities and foreclose sustainable economic development options. Finally, noting that several of the region’s Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) that persist in the region are transboundary landscapes, enhanced conservation critically will depend on regional collaboration and coherence.

Key barriers that the project seeks to address

Essential features of the overarching system that contribute to forest loss and degradation trends include:

- *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 emphasizes the 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 (FFI, 2021).

- 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. 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 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 need 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” (USAID 2020).
- 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. Moreover, weak alignment of national and regional forest policies among the countries that share the biome undermines a collective approach to addressing regionally shared challenges (e.g., equitable and ecologically responsible models for commercial agroforestry concessions; landscape-level land use planning; incentives for sustainable use of forests and other resources). Limited policy alignment also inhibits an effective regional approach to participation in international policy forums, thereby weakening the collective negotiating position with respect to financing opportunities.
- Gender inequality in natural resource management including land tenure:* When women lack access to resources 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 (PES) intervention and shared the payments more equally compared to groups without such a quota (IUCN 2020). Women’s rates of land ownership are very low in the region, and women face structural barriers to full access to 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, notably: the 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). Examples of transboundary protected areas include The Cross River National Park (Nigeria-Cameroon), Bia National Park (Ghana-Togo), Tai National Park and Comoe National Park (Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana). However, international boundaries throughout the region are highly porous to sources of environmental, demographic, and economic pressure such as deforestation and forest degradation, migration, and wildlife trafficking. 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 Zياما-Wonegizi-Wologizi forest complex. In practice, however, such coordination is limited, due to competing priorities and limited capacity and resources (USAID 2020). These policy commitments must be accompanied by activities to address gaps in watershed and forest management and enforcement along the borders between the countries, reinforcing existing governance and advisory structures, and pursuing sustainable financing solutions to maintain joint management efforts.

- 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 official development assistance (ODA), often channelled through environmental NGOs, but sizeable gaps remain, and these flows do not constitute a sustainable long-term financing solution. In Guinea, for example, while Zياما and Nimba have management plans, they do not have long-term financing to support management and conservation. This challenge is compounded by insufficient coordination and collaboration among donors and between funding sources and the actors executing conservation initiatives in the region, leading to sub-optimal distribution of funding and missed opportunities for synergies and cost-efficiencies (at the protected area and landscape levels, as well as at the biome level). Although several initiatives (such as those supported by CEPF or BirdLife, for example) aim to strengthen synergies, state and non-state actors (including international NGOs and academia) exhibit operational overlaps without coordination, in a context of minimal communication.
- Limited public-private partnerships and private sector engagement in conservation:* Across the region, the private sector has only a limited role in conservation despite depending on vital ecosystem services and having a substantial impact on the health of the resource base. Private sector partners offer untapped potential as sources of demand for sustainably produced products, suppliers of technical expertise, access to sustainability-linked credit, and participants in multi-stakeholder planning and management. The barrier of limited engagement and public-private partnerships reflects a dearth of appropriate policies and incentives, and a lack of familiarity with partnership models and opportunities on the part of companies, government, and civil society. Although there are isolated instances of effective partnerships with the private sector, these are not institutionalized in the context of local, national and/or regional coordination.

These features 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 needed to achieve environmental and climate objectives, which necessarily entails multi-stakeholder coordinated efforts to address underlying social and economic challenges. 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.

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.

Project objective and justification

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 practices; support for technical and institutional capacity growth; innovative financing solutions; and facilitation of processes to enhance regional coherence of policies relating to forest ecosystems. In furtherance of the GFIP, **the Objective of the Regional Child Coordination project is to enhance and catalyze effective transboundary and biome-wide forest governance through a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing solutions, and innovation.**

The justification for the proposed project is that for the set of Child Projects under the GFIP to accomplish more than the sum of their parts, there is a need for a regional coordination mechanism to identify and maximize synergies and economies of scope and scale achievable through a collective regional approach. The RCP will engage governments and stakeholders throughout the region to pursue a biome-wide approach, particularly with respect to themes such as regional policy coherence and regional approaches to watershed and forest governance and innovative financing solutions. Examples of areas in which opportunities for synergies are anticipated include:

- Training and capacity building – all the participating countries have expressed a need to address capacity constraints (human, institutional, technical and financial), and this need extends throughout the region. There are efficiencies to be gained through combined training and other capacity-building offerings on topics identified as being of shared importance. Likewise, subject matter-specific technical support can simultaneously serve multiple projects on shared priorities such as innovative financing solutions.
- Sustainable financing strategies – participating countries share the challenge of insufficient financing for conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes and stand to benefit from a collective approach rather than competing for funding. Moreover, a regional approach may be able to access opportunities that require a minimum scale that is not met by individual country projects.
- Policy coherence – country policies relating to the management of intact forest landscapes can benefit from enhanced coherence, in terms of, for example, applying consistent standards throughout shared transboundary landscapes, responding to shared regional threats, or presenting a common front in global dialogues. In addition, enhanced regional policy coherence can strengthen the region’s collective voice in international policy dialogues, which, for example, can enhance access to global flows of funding for conservation and sustainable forest management.
- Knowledge management – a coordinated regional approach to knowledge management offers cost-efficiencies and consistent cross-project learning. In addition, a regional approach can better facilitate exchange between the participating countries and relevant work elsewhere, such as the other Critical Forest Integrated Programs (IPs) and related IPs such as those focused on Ecosystem Restoration; Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration; and reducing mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (GEF planetGOLD). Finally, a regional approach to knowledge management will facilitate sharing with and learning from other countries throughout the biome, reinforcing and expanding the benefits of training and capacity-building noted above.

Thus, the justification of the proposed Regional Coordination Project (RCP) as a delivery mechanism for an Integrated Program rests on 1) the cost-effectiveness of approaching the challenges described above as a regional initiative in the form of the GFIP, and 2) the necessity of approaching several of these challenges from a regional perspective.

Although support could be provided to individual country projects on a one-to-one basis, the fact that participating countries face similar challenges and will benefit from coordinated action means that providing support through an Integrated Program on a collective basis offers considerable synergies and savings. By organizing joint training and capacity-building opportunities; facilitating multi-country collaboration on transboundary forest management; and serving as a centralized mechanism to stimulate learning and exchange among participating country projects as well as with external counterparts, the RCP will generate notable economies of scale and efficiencies relative to a country-by-country approach. Moreover, by serving as the centralized conduit for monitoring and evaluation processes, the RCP offers cost-effectiveness with respect to GEF oversight. Finally, one of the key areas of work for the RCP will be to facilitate progress on ambitiously scaled sustainable financing solutions appropriate to the regional level, which offers prospects that can be far more cost-effective than financing solutions at the national or sub-national levels.

Linkages with GEF-Funded Initiatives (projects under implementation during the life of the Guinean Forests Program):

The project also will build on the current GEF-funded Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR). This \$345 million, seven-year (~2020-2027) global IP (GEF-7) is led by the World Bank, intended to transform food and land use systems to the benefit of human well-being 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 critical learning and prior work both in the field and on policy, including capacity building, greening commodity value chains (esp. palm oil and cocoa), strengthening of community governance and cooperatives, and spatial land use planning. The Global Component of FOLUR has three pillars focused on capacity strengthening, policy and value chain engagement, and knowledge management and communications. The RCP will have analogous elements, and work with countries to align and seek cross-fertilization with relevant FOLUR work.

The GEF-funded Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of Artisanal Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Sector Plus (planetGOLD) program seeks to reduce the use of mercury in the ASGM sector in participating countries by facilitating access to finance for artisanal miners and mining communities to introduce low and non-mercury technologies and techniques, and through the development of sustainable ASGM gold supply chains. Mercury use in the ASGM sector contributes to environmental degradation in the West Africa region. Within the region, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone are participating in the planetGOLD program, seeking to formalize the ASGM sector and stimulate the adoption of improved practices and elimination of mercury use, presenting opportunities for coordination with GFIP through the RCP to avoid duplication of effort and seek synergies in addressing this threat to forest ecosystems. The Project will explore opportunities for Child Projects to participate in planetGOLD learning and dissemination events.

The Strengthening Conservation of Primary Forests through Partnership Enhancement and Coordination of Support project currently under development will be executed by FAO, UNFF, Griffiths University, IUCN and Wild Heritage Foundation with IUCN as GEF Agency, and seek to prevent the loss of tropical primary forests worldwide by strengthening their protection and conservation. This 2-year (2024-2026), USD2 million project will involve knowledge packaging and dissemination and capacity development that will raise the visibility of tropical primary forests among stakeholders, policymakers, and the public, transforming how they are perceived and ensuring their inclusion in forest financing strategies, conservation initiatives, and the global policy agenda. The project also intends to facilitate and stimulate financing for tropical primary forest conservation by establishing robust donor-recipient dialogue and coordination mechanisms and providing information on financing opportunities. The RCP will reach out to this project once it begins to explore synergies in delivery of information and technical support, and possible collaboration on UNFF side events.

The Project will also engage with other GEF-8 IPs involved in closely related work, including the other four **Critical Forest Biome IPs** (Amazon, Congo Basin, Indo-Malaya/PNG, and Mesoamerica, for a total of \$357M), as well as the **Ecosystem Restoration IP** (\$184M), which will run concurrently to the Project. Coordination and collaboration with

the Congo Basin IP will be particularly relevant; for example, the RCP will coordinate with UNEP as IA of the Congo Basin IP to invite the participation of Child Projects in selected webinars and other events and to jointly host a regional learning and exchange event.

Linkages with closed GEF-Funded Initiatives/projects:

The RCP directly will build on the GEF-funded (\$6.3M; \$56.3M co-financing) **Mano River Union (MRU) Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project** (2015-2022). This project involved Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone with IUCN as an Implementing Agency, and 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 RCP will ensure are built upon are Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), Strategic Action Plan (SAP), identification of forest restoration sites, and work on community resource governance and livelihoods.

Linkages with other relevant initiatives (projects under implementation during the life of the Guinean Forests Program):

- **NaturAfrica**, funded by the EU, is a 6-year (2021-2027) €310 million initiative to support biodiversity conservation in Africa by structuring support around landscapes that are crucial for conservation and human development. The Guinean Forests biome is identified as a priority “mega-landscape,” and the regional coordination unit is scheduled to commence in late 2023, with work in the 11 landscapes to begin in 2024. In order to ensure complementarity of efforts, and learn from shared experience, the GFIP RCP will engage on a regular basis with NaturAfrica.
- Building on WABiCC, the **USD49 Million West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED, 2021-2025) program** 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. In addition to utilizing materials developed by WABiCC and WABiLED (e.g. baseline studies, needs assessments, gap analyses, lessons learned, monitoring data and tools), the RCP will reach out to WABiLED once implementation begins to identify areas it can build on further, such as the transboundary collaboration and regional policy harmonization work conducted with ECOWAS and MRU.
- Several projects currently being undertaken by the World Bank are relevant, and the RCP will coordinate closely with these, as sources of co-financing. They include the **Guinea Partnership for Market Implementation (PMI)** readiness support plan on capacity building to support the development of national forest, land use and biomass monitoring system (2023-2025); the **Guinea NRM & Mining** project (P168613; 2021-2027) on the Protected Area network reform process including key studies and databases and on Conservation Trust Fund establishment with private sector support; the IDA-financed **Côte d'Ivoire Forest Investment Project** (P175982; 2022-2029) related to capacity building on large scale reforestation and agroforestry payment for result program south-south exchanges; the **Côte d'Ivoire Tai National Park area emission reductions program** (P170309) on south-south exchanges on forest carbon financing (2021-2025); and contributions from World Bank staff involved in national forest-related lending projects, forest-related advisory services or the World Bank’s **Upper Guinean Forest Global Challenge Program** (GCP). As part of the World Bank’s evolution roadmap, a set of GCPs is being prepared including the “Forest for Development, Climate, and Biodiversity” GCP, which includes the Upper Guinea Forests.

GCP aims to use replicable and scalable approaches to support countries to achieve development results with greater speed and impact while helping to ramp up the response to global challenges. GCPs will leverage the One World Bank approach and combine public and private capital and solutions, as well as co-financing to address targeted global challenges.

Relevant initiatives/projects ending in the Calendar Year 2024:

- **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 RCP will engage this project immediately after its implementation phase begins to identify activities and outputs that the RCP can build on or take over, avoiding duplication and contributing to continuity.
- **The Support Program for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor)**, funded by the EU, 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, which are aligned with landscapes within GFIP's Child Projects. The RCP's support for transboundary work with the MRU will build on PAPFor investments, and immediately upon launching implementation will work with PAPFor to identify how best to do so.
- GIZ is supporting a related initiative entitled "**Better connectivity of forest ecosystems in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia,**" (2017-2024) which seeks to strengthen ecological connectivity in the Taï – Grebo-Krahn – Sapo (TGS) forest complex (the project also benefits from EU support). The project focus is on local work with state, civil society institutions and local communities to enhance the management of protected areas as well as the areas between them. It also supports cross-border cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Activity areas include integrated and participatory planning of land and resource use around protected areas; improved protected area management; sustainable livelihood alternatives; and establishment of residual forest areas outside the protected areas. The RCP will liaise with this initiative to benefit from lessons learned and as an avenue to engage participation from Côte d'Ivoire in the GFIP, emphasizing the role of transboundary landscapes.

Linkages with closed relevant initiatives/projects:

- 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 policymakers 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.

- From 2016-2022, The **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)**, led by CI, directed USD10 million in conservation investments to strengthen civil society, which the program will build upon, leveraging prior relationships with key stakeholders as well as lessons learned from the CEPF grant portfolio. The CEPF investment covered 11 countries in the biome to provide civil society organizations with tools, capacity, and resources to establish and sustain multi-stakeholder partnerships that demonstrate models for sustainable growth and achieve priority conservation outcomes in the biome. This investment was grounded in the Guinean Forests Ecosystem Profile, based on an established approach for developing biome-wide strategies for conservation, local capacity building, and empowerment with participation from government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders to generate local ownership of global conservation priorities. CEPF also generated key knowledge products including a Theory of Change on mainstreaming biodiversity into government and business policy and practice, an updated analysis of the status and threats to Guinean Forests, and an assessment of the status of freshwater conservation. These have informed the design of the GFIP and the RCP.

- 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 (EU)(€47 million, launched under the EU's Regional Indicative Program in West Africa 2014–2020 and still ongoing) 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 GFIP RCP also will seek to build on regionally relevant aspects of existing global coordination and knowledge management platforms. One example is the Global Landscapes Forum, the world's largest knowledge-led platform on sustainable land use. Of particular interest is the forum's work on developing innovative finance mechanisms to invest in sustainable supply chains, land restoration, and addressing insecure tenure, community, and gender rights.

As a coordination project, the primary role of the RCP will be to engage, convene and support a broad set of stakeholders whose priorities and decisions shape the future of the Guinean Forest biome. By engaging a broad set of stakeholders across the region and emphasizing regional coordination, cooperation, and cross-project learning, the RCP will maximize the impact of funding and 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. Table 3 indicates the key stakeholder groups and their roles relevant to the project.

Table 3: Key stakeholder groups and their roles relevant to the project.

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project
Intergovernmental Bodies e.g., AFR100, ECOWAS, MRU, The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These bodies bring together governmental agencies at the regional and national levels and can keep forest conservation high on national agendas and emphasize the importance of regional coordination and policy alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests. Participation in technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen transboundary collaboration Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums Contribution of co-financing Serve as a link between the regional, national, and local levels, to influence governance and decision-making processes at the regional and global levels

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project
<p>Multilateral Institutions (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, FAO, UNEP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These organizations have funded the implementation of regional initiatives that can provide lessons learned and alignment/coordination with programs and financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Contribution of co-financing
<p>Bilateral Agencies (e.g. USAID, EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These organizations have funded the implementation of regional initiatives that can provide lessons learned, alignment/coordination with programs and financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Contribution of co-financing
<p>National Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies are key stakeholders in efforts ranging from direct work on the ground to national policy reform: environmental protection and protected area management agencies, ministries of finance, land authorities, and agencies implicated in infrastructure development (e.g., roads, energy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Participation in technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen transboundary collaboration Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums Contribution of co-financing
<p>CSOs/NGOs (e.g. FF, WCS, IUCN, CI, Birdlife, RSPB, WCF, ICRAF-CIFOR, ProForest, Fairtrade, Climate Chance, Africa, Commonland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with international, national, regional, and local non-government and civil society partners focused on biodiversity conservation and sustainable commodity production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums Contribution of co-financing Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices Serves as a link between the regional, national and local levels, to influence governance and decision-making processes at the regional and global levels
<p>Academia/Research Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support for project activities; opportunities for students, partners, and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Contribution of co-financing Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project
Private sector e.g. Rio Tinto, Socfin, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of concessions and associations/ cooperatives operate in the region, with implications for forest management, economic development opportunities, and local livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Collective participation in international policy forums Participation in multi-stakeholder land-use planning Support for monitoring and evaluation and knowledge exchange Contribution of co-financing Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices
Indigenous Peoples Groups (e.g. IPACC, ICCA Consortium) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are traditional peoples and communities may be represented by regional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums
Disadvantaged/Vulnerable Groups (e.g. JVE, REFACOF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations that represent the interests of youth, women, and other disadvantaged groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums

The RCP will engage institutions implementing other regional initiatives to reflect lessons from and build on/coordinate with recent and ongoing regional/multi-country investments including the USAID-funded West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WABICC) and West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED) programs, the GIZ-supported TGS initiative, the CEPF Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot Investment, the GEF-funded FOLUR investments in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Liberia, and the EU-funded Preservation for Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor). The RCP will also coordinate with and learn from CSOs/NGOs with experience implementing programs in the region, for example, Fauna & Flora (FF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), BirdLife International (BL), IUCN, Conservation International (CI), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), **Climate Chance**, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), and ProForest.

Learning from and 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), and AFR100's Work Programme the RCP will convene policymakers to pursue policy alignment and explore the potential for and working towards a mechanism analogous to the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC). The RCP will help advance the collective goals of Guinean Forest countries as expressed through commitments under the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action Plan, Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, African Convention on Nature and Natural Resources, and AFR100, and sub-regionally through the Mano River Declaration (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone).

Convening stakeholders in 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. 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). While much of the anticipated regional dialogues will relate to inter-governmental exchange, the dialogues will include civil society 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.

The RCP will convene stakeholders to 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 availability of financing at scale is key to creating needed incentives at the community level and sustaining institutions and processes that are central to effective governance. Regional-level financing initiatives can offer the scale needed to optimize the use of public resources to crowd in private-sector investments by reducing the risks for investors, with AFR100's Secretariat Financing Working Group being a potential source of RCP support. In addition to convening multilateral and bilateral institutions, the private sector is essential to the co-development of sustainable financing solutions for forest conservation and management, for example by building incentives into supply chain relationships, exploring potential biodiversity offsets and PES, or developing green bond offerings.

The RCP 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 in key economic sectors (e.g., cocoa and palm oil) in the region's forest areas will be engaged to consolidate commitments to deforestation-free production models, including participation in land use planning processes. The concessionaires involved in commercial agroforestry and agriculture, mining, energy, and infrastructure development sectors among others, 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. 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.

The central stakeholders of the GFIP are Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (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. These activities will primarily be part of GFIP country projects, but the RCP will provide enabling support (coordination, technical assistance, capacity building) for these activities. 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.

Sustainability

The RCP will support sustainability through five principal avenues, intended to consolidate progress achieved by the Child Projects individually and collectively: 1) provision of technical support and capacity-building that will reinforce stakeholder ability to continue their roles in forest management; 2) institutional strengthening to solidify governance and policy coordination; 3) advancing financing solutions, with an emphasis on approaches that benefit from multi-country collaboration and ambitious scale; 4) initiating partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues that will continue after the project; and 5) strategic engagement of key stakeholders to build an enduring constituency with convening power and policy influence:

- **Technical support and capacity-building:** the RCP will organize training exercises open to relevant personnel in government agencies and other stakeholders as appropriate, held for all participating countries. By upgrading the capacity of bodies with key roles in the sustainable management of intact forest landscapes, the RCP will enable these stakeholders to better maintain and build on project results after the project closes. Moreover, by convening stakeholders from all the Child Projects in these training events, the RCP aims to cultivate a community of practice that will provide a source of mutual support and ongoing collaboration after the project and reduce reliance on external consultants.
- **Institutional strengthening:** the RCP will work to enhance the institutional context at two levels. First, the RCP will work with the Child Projects to strengthen the multi-country bodies responsible for the management of transboundary forest landscapes. This can include, for example, refining the definition of roles and responsibilities, technical support for designing and deploying joint governance and management structures, and facilitating joint strategic and annual planning efforts. Second, the RCP will work with the Child Projects and other regional

stakeholders to advance the establishment of a permanent regional policy coordination body, to supplement subregional platforms such as the MRU and regional institutions with broader remits such as AFR100 and ECOWAS. Together, these efforts aim to help sustain project outcomes through lasting institutions that will pursue ongoing coordination of policy and management at landscape and regional levels.

- **Financing solutions:** sustaining the RCP's project outcomes will require long-term financing solutions, which converge with the long-term funding needs of the Child Projects. To this end, the RCP will support Child Projects in the design and deployment of sustainable financing strategies and facilitate joint work on financing solutions between projects. This will include facilitating links between Child Projects and other financing initiatives and potential funding sources such as The GBFF, The CI-led Country package seed fund previously called the Positive Conservation Partnership (PCP); providing guidance on innovative incentive mechanisms for local communities to protect natural resources; and coordinating joint pursuit of financing solutions that benefit from scale, such as the use of green bonds to capitalize regional financing mechanisms for the management of transboundary forest landscapes.
- **Partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues:** maintaining and building on the RCP's outcomes will benefit from partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues initiated during the project that endures after the project is completed. These types of continued stakeholder interaction will contribute to sustainability through ongoing refinement and application of policies at national and regional levels, as well as by continuing to catalyze new flows of funding to support conservation and sustainable management in the biome.
- **Strategic engagement of key stakeholders:** the RCP will engage with key stakeholders among high-level policy circles, to secure high-level buy-in and ownership essential to enforcing policy and effective governance of the biome. This engagement will seek to cultivate an enduring constituency that will contribute to sustainability by exercising their convening power and policy influence to maintain and build on the project's advances at national, regional and global levels.

Lessons Learned

The RCPs structure and operation will draw heavily from the lessons learned from EU (PAPBio/PAPFor) multi-year investments), and from other GEF-funded landscape-scale, multiple-country programs, notably the Amazon Sustainable Landscape Program (ASL). Key lessons compiled 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 GEF-funded 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. The RCP should focus on tailored capacity building designed to strengthen institutions, in order to create lasting impact. Due to these needs, the RCP should operate prior to the start of Child Projects and until each Child Project has closed.
- Many KBAs remain outside of the region's protected area systems and national conservation priorities; in addition, the current mapping of KBAs across the region may be considered incomplete, justifying investment in updated and expanded mapping of biodiversity values. Investments in CSOs and communities have demonstrated success in achieving conservation outcomes that also alleviate poverty and improve natural resource governance. That said, absorptive capacity on the ground may be a limiting factor in some settings, which complicates efforts to match funding at scale to locally specific needs.
- 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. Initiatives in the region have found, for example, that cultural barriers to women's involvement in forest protection can be overcome, and result in superior outcomes. 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. At the same time, tenure and property rights are an area in which addressing gender imbalances is crucial.

- Landscape contexts throughout the region typically are characterized by limited coordination between different government agencies, as well as between different NGOs, despite related and/or overlapping mandates and agendas. This leads to coordination vacuums that result in duplication and inefficiencies, if not outright conflicts, and are confusing to local stakeholders including communities as well as the private sector.
- Although the importance of regional perspectives, collaboration, and approaches generally is acknowledged, concrete and functional ways to act on this recognition are limited. Efforts to rectify this should be informed by analogous experiences elsewhere, such as those reflected by COMIFAC, CAC and CAFI.
- Comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder consultations and engagement present a complex and time-consuming challenge. There are a plethora of stakeholders and stakeholder representative organizations (including the private sector) with varying degrees of relevance and interest to forest management; failure to appropriately include the right actors at the right stage of project and program processes can undermine legitimacy, buy-in and success.

Stakeholder engagement lessons

- The RCP's delivery of the GFIP should ensure that a broad, shared vision and framework are built by including key stakeholders, allowing for both a regional and country-specific focus for the implementation of key activities. It is important to engage institutions with regional influence but operating at the national level in the upper Guinean Forests
- Flexibility and adaptive management need to be core elements of the Program's design and implementation, as each country and the larger region are complex.
- Regular communication, including in-person meetings, should ensure timely exchanges of information and perspectives and allow for appropriate modifications in project management.
- Given the complexity and diversity of the region and the multiplicity of stakeholders at various levels (local, national, regional), outreach and engagement should be broad and focused on developing common interests and goals, building trust and capitalizing on opportunities for synergies.
- Stakeholder engagement should also not be just top-down, but bottom-up, with focal points established with each interest group to facilitate effective communication. Strong, inclusive working relationships need to be established that consider diverse points of view, capacities and perspectives.

Coordination (internal and external) lessons

- Upfront program design and budgeting should carefully consider whether outcomes and activities are realistic given staff capacity, timeframes and available resources. Expectations need to be carefully defined and managed, with staff fully supported to ensure they understand and can deliver program outcomes. Budgets for priority activities should support ambitious, but realistic, goals for staff to achieve.
- Regular internal communication channels should be established and transparent, with management structures defined by clear roles and responsibilities and granting authority for staff to make decisions, take ownership and avoid "micro-management" dynamics which could undermine timely and effective activity implementation.
- External coordination requires high-quality levels of both leadership and facilitation, showing respect for stakeholders,' partners,' and donors' priorities, perspectives and limitations.

Knowledge management lessons

- Knowledge sharing should be founded on a demand-driven process, where the needs of stakeholders, focal countries and regional bodies are given priority, as well as themes and experiences with the best potential for replication and scaling up. Traditional knowledge in the management of natural resources is often overlooked, therefore, knowledge management sharing and capacity building should also draw from diverse sources, including traditional knowledge of local communities.
- The Project should build on and link to existing structures for learning and knowledge management.

- Diverse, easily accessible and culturally and technologically appropriate dissemination mediums in multiple languages (publications, websites, workshops, webinars) should be employed to ensure broad and inclusive access to multiple audiences. Opportunities for collaboration and cost-sharing with other initiatives and existing platforms should be taken when appropriate.
- In-person and virtual knowledge sharing, and exchanges should occur regularly, and have clear objectives and understanding of participants' expectations, with appropriate translation provided. Regularly scheduled consultations should seek to build solid working stakeholder networks, allowing for regular exchanges of knowledge and experiences from multiple sources (local, traditional, customary, scientific, etc.).

Communications lessons

- A communications strategy for the project should include an explicit "entry" component that details how the RCP and its objectives are going to be initially communicated to diverse audiences from the local to regional scale. Project staff should include a dedicated team member tasked with developing and executing the communications strategy over the project's lifetime.
- Information needs to be regularly disseminated in a timely, clear, relevant manner, presented through a diverse, inclusive range of appropriate mediums (web pages, newsletters, press statements, reports, etc.), in the language of the target audiences. Dedicated communications personnel should be core team members, tasked with understanding all the program's activities and nuances of what needs to be communicated and when.
- The establishment of working groups of communication experts from complementary national and regional projects or bodies, such as ECOWAS, could help strengthen the communications component through increased exposure, leveraging expertise and identifying new audiences and means to distribute information.

Monitoring and evaluation lessons

- Sound monitoring and evaluation systems should not collect information to just evaluate project results, but rather to allow for lessons learned and substantive adaptive management throughout the course of project implementation. There should be a dedicated M&E specialist as part of the RCP core team, tasked with both coordinating monitoring activities as well as ensuring stakeholders' needs and expectations are being met. The specialist should also support country-level staff in both building capacity and working collaboratively to aggregate and present program-level results.
- Country-level activities and outcomes should be tracked through a common set of indicators that can be aggregated and harmonized at the program or regional level. Indicators should be both easy to track as well as provide meaningful information to determine project impacts. Use of existing indicators, such as GEF core indicators, can facilitate easier monitoring and allow for a common reporting template that can be aggregated at the program level.

Country Priorities

The RCP seeks to align with country priorities as articulated through the Child Projects participating in the GFIP. Overarchingly, it responds to the country priorities embodied in each nation's commitments under the ECOWAS Environmental Policy and Action Plan and the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa. These commitments reflect core aspects of the GFIP and the RCP, including landscape approaches, prioritizing conservation of large Intact Forest Landscapes, transboundary collaboration, and policy coherence across the region. With respect to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in particular, the RCP responds directly to priorities and commitments under Mano River Union agreements as well as bilateral agreements relating to shared transboundary forest landscapes and adjoining protected areas. At the national level in each participating country, the RCP aligns with policy objectives relating to building and strengthening capacity for effective forest management and conservation, including technical, institutional and financial strengthening. These objectives are situated within wider national priorities regarding rural development and poverty alleviation,

biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation; details on national development plans, NBSAPs, NDCs, and other policy instruments that reflect these priorities are provided in the documentation for each Child Project.

Among the priorities shared throughout the region is the call for increased financing for efforts relating to both biodiversity and climate change. The RCP will work with participating countries both to explore financing options that benefit from larger-scale approaches and to align and harmonize collective efforts to push for increased funding through relevant international forums.

^[1] In 2024, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) will update the Ecosystem Profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot, including an assessment of Guinea-Bissau which was not included in the previous iteration.

^[2] Guinea-Bissau is currently not within the boundaries of CEPF's Guinean Forest Hotspot; however, it falls within two of WWF's Terrestrial Ecoregions (Guinean forest-savanna mosaic and Guinean mangroves) and has nine BirdLife Important Bird Areas (Olson et al. 2001; BirdLife 2023).

B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the Regional Coordination and Learning Project is embedded within the ToC for the GFIP as a whole (see Box 1 below). The GFIP ToC includes an essential role in regional cooperation, knowledge sharing and learning, recognizing that: 1. Several elements of the overall intervention will benefit from a regional approach, and 2. A regional approach will require dedicated capacity to coordinate collaboration and joint efforts between the Child Projects and other regional stakeholders. Therefore, the ToC of the RCP rests on this coordinating role to generate synergies, with emphasis on:

- collective knowledge generation and dissemination, as well as training and capacity-building
- transboundary management of watershed and forest landscapes shared across national borders
- joint efforts on activities that benefit from scale such as innovative sustainable financing solutions; and
- policy alignment to amplify the regional voice in international arenas.

Thus, the RCP will foster a whole-of-biome approach to protecting the integrity of the Guinean Forests, by leveraging partnerships, facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues, and promoting regional integration among governments and other stakeholders in countries throughout the region. The RCP will also support the application of safeguards, including gender mainstreaming, and serve a monitoring & evaluation function at project and program levels.

Box 1: Theory of Change for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program

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 partnerships for scale-up, sustainable financing solutions and gender-responsive policy changes that enhance the enabling environment for conservation and sustainable management of forests, **THEN** improved forest governance and 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.

The Theory of Change for the RCP assumes that:

- 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.
- The GFIP Child Projects will be designed and implemented with explicit provisions for multi-country collaboration and participation in regional IP-level processes.
- Bundling funding needs will result in sufficient scale to enable financing opportunities that are not available as national or sub-national financing solutions.
- Private sector entities have sufficient interest and commitment in sustainable forest management to participate in multi-stakeholder planning, dialogues for inter-sectoral coordination, and partnerships with communities, civil society, and government.
- Communications and outreach activities will promote knowledge management in the region and beyond and enhance strategic global, regional, and national level support efforts.
- With appropriate investment in technical and institutional capacity and sufficient progress in addressing financing needs, relevant government agencies and other stakeholders will have the mandates, ability and commitment to continue collaboration and effective management beyond the life of the project.

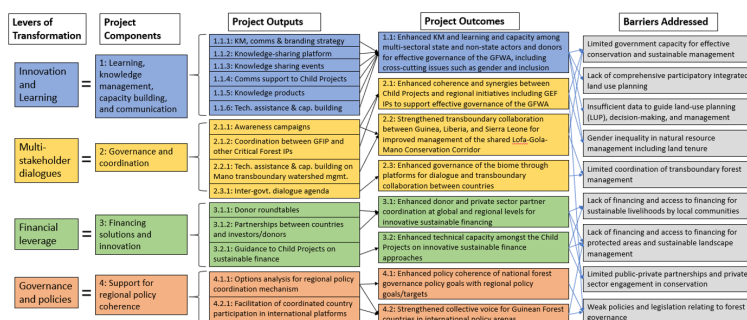
The Theory of Change then is that, **IF** these assumptions hold and the RCP:

- supports gender-inclusive knowledge generation, management and dissemination and delivers training, capacity-building and technical support;
- coordinates Child Project activities to achieve transboundary and regional alignment;
- facilitates joint multi-country efforts to develop sustainable financing solutions at scale;
- advances work on a permanent forum for regional policy harmonization and coherence; and
- leverages partnerships and fosters multi-stakeholder dialogue;

THEN the GFIP will benefit from the effective delivery of Child Projects and achieve enduring transformative impact, through cost-effective, synergistic, whole-of-biome progress on the management and conservation of IFLs (see Figure 2). The four components of the RCP design correspond directly to the principal levers of transformation that underpin the GFIP, namely:

- Innovation and learning: Collection and dissemination of knowledge and best practices (Component 1);
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues: Alignment and collaboration fostered through multi-country dialogue around transboundary forest landscape management and regional forest policy (Component 2);
- Financial leverage: Enhanced ability to secure innovative and sustainable financing at scale, to sustain conservation and sustainable management in the long term (Component 3); and
- Governance and policies: Improved Forest management through regionally coherent policies (Component 4).

Figure 2: Regional Coordination Project Theory of Change



Project Components

The **objective** of the project is to enhance and catalyze effective transboundary and biome-wide forest governance through a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing solutions, and innovation.

Although there are a host of relevant projects being undertaken in countries throughout the region, at present there is no regional program 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 RCP will be an instrumental incremental investment to provide technical support and capacity building, foster regional alignment and coordination, and lay the foundation for replication and scale-up through research, information, networking, and knowledge exchange.

The RCP is one component under the program (see Indicative Program Overview in the PFD), and will have six interrelated and mutually reinforcing sub-components (corresponding to Outcomes under the Theory of Change presented in the PFD):

- Component 1: Knowledge management and communication (Gender-responsive knowledge generation and exchange, including public awareness/communications)
- Component 2: Governance and coordination (coherence and synergies between projects and regional initiatives)
- Component 3: Financing solutions (formulation of sustainable financing strategies supported) and innovation.
- Component 4: Regional Coherence
- Component 5: A functional gender-responsive M&E framework for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program
- Component 6: A functional gender-responsive M&E framework for the regional coordination project

Component 1: Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication

The purpose of Component 1 will be to facilitate learning, knowledge management, increased access to information, and exchange among GFIP Child Projects and project partners; participants in the overall Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes IP; other IPs and the wider global community working on landscape-level forest conservation and sustainable management. This includes targeted capacity-building, as well as efforts to capture and disseminate innovation. The implementation of a gender-responsive and inclusive communication strategy also will inform and educate the general public and decision-makers on issues, challenges, and solutions relating to sustainable forest landscape management. Crucially, the strategy will include measures to engage and involve countries and stakeholders throughout the biome, in addition to those with GFIP Child Projects. Preparation of the communications strategy will include a branding strategy to cultivate a distinct identity for the Program, to be sustained beyond the conclusion of the project. 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 ensure gender and social inclusion. Where appropriate, the project will coordinate learning, knowledge management, capacity-building and communication outlets with regional and international entities, building on existing knowledge management platforms. For example, AFR100 has established frameworks and working groups for topics such as sustainable finance, gender and monitoring and evaluation of country-level restoration commitments, all of which could inform and be integrated with the project's learning, knowledge management, capacity-building and communication mechanisms. Other examples of initiatives that have invested in knowledge management and dissemination relating to conservation and forest management in the region include CEPF, PAPBio, and WABiLED; the RCP will explore opportunities to build on the investments of these and other initiatives.

Outcome 1.1: *Enhanced knowledge and capacity among multi-sectoral state and non-state actors and donors for effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa, including cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion and gender.*

Target 1.1a: At least 600 state and non-state direct beneficiaries (at least 40% women) from the Project's virtual and in-person learning, knowledge exchange events, and technical assistance.

Target 1.1b: At least 75% of direct beneficiaries report having better knowledge/capacity to implement gender-responsive actions in their projects as a result of RCP activities and resources. (450 direct beneficiaries; at least 40% women)

Output 1.1.1: A gender-responsive and inclusive GFIP knowledge management, communications, and branding strategy developed and executed, **including a knowledge portal.**

Within the first year of the project, the Program Management Unit (PMU) will prepare a comprehensive gender-responsive and inclusive knowledge management (KM), communications and branding (KM, Communications & Branding) strategy that will target audiences from the Biome and Region. The central purpose of the strategy will be to convey the added value of the GFIP to countries in the biome and the region by positioning the Program as a demand-driven problem solver and a catalyst for multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing. Overall, it is envisioned that effective communication will play a crucial role in the transboundary management of resources by fostering collaboration, sharing vital information, and building trust among stakeholders in the Biome and Region. Through incorporating lessons from the Amazon Sustainable Landscape Program, the GFIP will achieve effective biome-wide communication by adopting a demand-driven approach, tailoring solutions to the local context and responding to the knowledge and capacity needs of the target audience. Additionally, messages will be tailored to the target audience, in multiple languages for enhanced learning and knowledge sharing. The needs of the audience would be identified through frequent surveys, actively listening to stakeholders and asking probing questions.

The PMU's Communications and Outreach Officer will oversee the preparation of the strategy by a professional consultancy firm, with guidance from CI-GEF and BirdLife communications leads as well as a consultative process with input from Child Projects and regional stakeholders, to ensure complementarity and synergy with previous, existing and planned efforts on the part of other programs and initiatives. They also will work closely with the PMU's Gender and Safeguards Specialist to ensure that the strategy takes into account considerations with respect to the production and consumption of knowledge products and communications material by diverse groups (i.e. women, youth, elderly, and other vulnerable and/or marginalized groups).

The strategy will also address the need to promote knowledge and communication around gender integration and social inclusion and ensure that these cross-cutting themes feature prominently throughout the program. The strategy will include considerations for incorporating traditional knowledge, where appropriate and in accordance with intellectual property rights. The RCP may additionally provide guidance to Child Projects to support activities such as assisting traditional peoples and communities with recording, archiving and managing access to their traditional knowledge, and developing intellectual property policies. Finally, the RCP KM, Comms & Branding Strategy will include provisions for supporting knowledge management and communications efforts at the Child Project level. As noted, the RCP will explore opportunities to build on the KM and Comms investments of initiatives such as AFR100, CEPF, PAPBio and WABiLED; examining ways to do so will be a crucial step in the development of the strategy. In addition, key elements of the strategy will be defined:

- Details of the role of the GFIP Communications Committee;
- The roles of RCP Executing Partners in KM for the GFIP;
- How the RCP will conduct coordination and communication with other GEF IPs, including linkages to leverage the KM platforms deployed by other IPs as well as KM platforms of other Agencies involved in Child Projects;
- RCP communications and outreach to countries in the Guinean Forest Biome that are not implementing GFIP Child Projects, and the wider audience outside the Program;
- RCP activities relating to GFIP communication in global and regional forums; and
- RCP provisions for communications with donors and other potential financing partners.

To execute the KM, Comms & Branding Strategy, the RCP will establish a Guinean Forests knowledge-sharing portal to serve as the basis of a peer-learning platform, and also as a digital channel for information-sharing and the use of social media to reach wider audiences. The RCP will review existing platforms to determine whether the portal could be embedded within an existing platform, or otherwise linked to leverage existing resources and networks. Additionally, the GFIP Platform/Portal will have a section where relevant initiatives will be described and where

applicable, an interface/link to the initiative(s) provided. This will make the GFIP a one-stop shop for accessing information in the Biome, including past, ongoing and planned initiatives.

Active management of the portal will include:

- Development of innovative knowledge products in multiple languages, capturing best practices from Child Projects to facilitate replication by organizations in other countries and contexts.
- Direct outreach that identifies opportunities to 1) disseminate tools, methodologies, and other practitioner-facing project outputs, and 2) amplify messages emerging from Child Projects individually and collectively.
- Communication of results of the IP to audiences within and outside participating target countries.
- Collaboration between the GFIP and other relevant knowledge platforms with aligned objectives, for cross-promotion of knowledge products, learning materials and dissemination events; examples include the Global Landscape Forum, knowledge platforms to be deployed under the other Critical Forest Biome IPs as well as other related GEF-8 IPs, and the KM platform developed under WABiLED. Collaboration with regional-level knowledge platforms, such as those of AFR100, will also be undertaken where appropriate.
- In addition to overall attention to gender-sensitive and inclusive language and gender-balanced images, a space will be dedicated specifically to gender and social inclusion issues. The platform will feature knowledge and experience from communities, women-led organizations and those led by other disadvantaged groups.
- Updating information on initiatives in the Biome (past, ongoing and planned)

The PMU will lead the development of the platform with guidance from CI-GEF, supported by Web Designer(s) and IT Staffing for the actual creation and maintenance of the web platform. The design process will include exploring the interface between the platform and the websites of GEF, the other four Critical Forest IPs, and other IPs such as planetGOLD, and Ecosystem Restoration. The PMU and CI-GEF will explore options for ensuring the functionality of the platform after project closure (e.g. transferring ownership to a university or regional organization). Notably, the development and operationalization of the Website/portal will integrate lessons and best-case practices from other Integrated Programs such as planetGOLD and The Global Wildlife Program.

The KM, Communication & Branding Strategy will include support to communications activities of the Child Projects. Types of support will include: input on planning project-level communications and dissemination strategies; arranging expert review of draft materials; facilitating joint development of knowledge products by multiple projects; assisting with procurement of translation services; and supporting upload of KM products from Child Projects to the Guinean Forests portal. This includes RCP responsibility for oversight and guidance to ensure that each Child Project remains on track with respect to delivery of knowledge products and execution of communications plans, as well as a quality control and consistency check function, and support for ensuring inclusive, gender-responsive communications. Finally, the PMU Communications and Outreach Officer will help link Child Projects to dissemination opportunities. As indicated in the TORs in Annex R, the work will be led by technical partners ECOWAS and MRU, though all executing agencies and executing partners will contribute to dissemination to maximize audience reach. Dissemination of gender-responsive knowledge products and other relevant communications with other regional bodies, such as AFR100, will also be carried out where appropriate.

Proponents of Child Projects have identified general awareness-gaps among stakeholders as a factor that inhibits effective multi-stakeholder planning and management in forest landscapes. Although country contexts may differ in various social, cultural, legal and economic aspects, there also are widely shared topics that will benefit from harmonized regional development and deployment of awareness campaigns within the KM, Communication & Branding Strategy. While prioritization of themes for these awareness campaigns will evolve over the course of IP execution, Child Project discussions to date have identified several areas that can be anticipated as focal topics, including: the role of forests in sustaining ecosystem services; local governance and community-based sustainable resource management; and gender roles in resource use and management. The PMU will conduct annual surveys to identify and sequence priority topics and solicit input on the most effective modes/platforms for undertaking the awareness campaigns. Based on this input, the PMU will facilitate the joint development of awareness campaigns of shared relevance among Child Projects and reinforce these campaigns through the Communications Strategy. This area of work will be a key focus of ECOWAS, with support from other executing partners including GEF agencies.

Finally, the KM, Communication & Branding Strategy will also include a publication plan relating to global public goods generated and/or sustained through improved forest governance and management in the Guinean Forest biome. Themes for these knowledge products will be decided with input from Child Projects and regional and global expertise but can be anticipated to include best practices for transboundary forest protection and management, enhancing connectivity in a fragmented forest biome, and the role of social inclusion and gender considerations in enhanced forest management that contributes to global public goods. The PMU will also work with other GEF IPs to explore the possibility of joint production of KM products.

Output 1.1.2: Participatory virtual and in-person learning, regional knowledge exchange, and sharing events/webinars delivered by the Program.

A core function of the RCP will be to organize regional exchanges among project implementers and partners. Themes and topics for these exchanges will be determined jointly with Child Projects to ensure that they respond to prioritized interests, but are expected to include events focused on:

- incentive-based, community-led forest conservation and sustainable resource management
- success stories related to forest landscape planning and management
- diversity, equity and inclusion in effective watershed and forest landscape management, including a focus on gender issues
- private sector roles in multi-stakeholder sustainable landscape management
- emerging opportunities for sustainable financing of forest landscape management
- addressing the impacts of gold exploitation on critical forests (with a window on mercury use in artisanal small-scale gold mining)

As indicated in the TORs in Annex R, this output will be supported by technical partners ECOWAS and CI's Conservation Stewards Program. The RCP will explore opportunities to deliver exchanges and events in partnership with other donors, GEF Integrated Programs and other aligned initiatives. For example, GFIP Child Projects would benefit from participation in planetGOLD learning and dissemination events, and coordination and collaboration between the GFIP and the Congo Basin IP will be particularly relevant. The RCP will coordinate with UNEP as IA of the Congo Basin IP to invite participation of their Child Projects in each other's webinars and other events and to jointly host a regional learning and exchange event.

Output 1.1.3: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the technical capacity of state and non-state stakeholders.

The RCP also will conduct targeted training and capacity building on topics relevant to the IP whilst responding to the needs of the countries and stakeholders. While exchanges and learning events/webinars (Output 1.1.2) primarily will consist of facilitated interactions between implementers to share lessons and experience, training and capacity building will involve bringing in expert practitioners to provide skill development in specific technical areas requested by the countries. Examples of such areas can include irrecoverable carbon, participatory land use planning tools (such as the 'Serious Game' methodology), KBA identification and monitoring, conflict resolution, innovative financing solutions, donor prospecting and management, monitoring and evaluation tools and reporting, and technology applications in monitoring and enforcement. It may also include supporting the development and implementation of a regular forum on sustainable finance which will bring visibility to the topic and facilitate networking and collaboration.

The program of training topics will be determined with Child Projects as particular shared needs are identified; to this end, the PMU will conduct a capacity needs and gaps assessment in collaboration with the Child Projects to identify priorities, including particular attention to institutional capacity building needs, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender integration, social inclusion and environmental and social safeguards. Over the course of Project implementation, the PMU will also conduct annual surveys of technical and policy gaps in countries of the region, and on the value of capacity building delivered to date, to inform the evolving capacity-building program.

While the Child Projects themselves will include provisions for technical assistance and capacity building, this part of the RCP will involve topics of shared relevance among multiple Child Projects, such that coordinated delivery of training achieves cost efficiencies and cultivates a community of practice with shared knowledge. Since the substantive program of technical assistance and capacity building will be determined over the course of project execution on an ongoing basis, the RCP budget includes a substantial allocation of flexible funding for such activities, the exact disposition of which remains to be determined. This work will be supported by several technical partners, including the executing partners, as well as others to be determined based on the needs identified by Countries participating in the Program.

Component 2: Governance and coordination

A key role of the RCP will be to coordinate efforts of Child Projects, by identifying potential synergies and areas for joint work and facilitating transboundary efforts. Another key role is to ensure that other countries in the region without GFIP Child Projects also are engaged and participate in policy dialogues, learning opportunities, and regional alignment. The principal purpose of Component 2 is to provide such coordination and ensure a whole-of-biome approach and also to ensure that the project contributes to and benefits from being part of the overall Critical Forest Biomes IP. The motivation for this Component rests on barriers relating to coordination and alignment between sustainable watershed and forest management initiatives taking place in individual countries as well as other relevant regional work and missed opportunities to take advantage of potential synergies among these various efforts. Thus, it reflects a conviction that there are significant opportunities for cross-project learning as well as cost efficiencies, and also opportunities to enhance efficacy through coordination. These opportunities are particularly evident in areas such as shared knowledge gaps and capacity-building needs (including those related to gender and inclusion) and in the management of transboundary forest landscapes. Therefore, the RCP will ensure that Child Projects are aligned through the definition of clear priorities and strategies, and by convening lead implementers to identify potential synergies between projects. This will include providing guidance to Child Projects and exchanging lessons learned and best-practices on topics of gender and inclusion. The RCP will also reach out to governments throughout the region to solicit participation in dialogues to enhance biome-wide alignment and coordination. Coordination and cooperation with regional-level bodies, such as the MRU and AFR100, with active country-level projects in areas of mutual interest will also be undertaken where appropriate, notably in areas where project priority areas overlap or are adjacent to one another.

Outcome 2.1: Enhanced coherence and synergies between Child Projects and regional initiatives including GEF IPs to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa

Target 2.1: At least 6 partnerships between GFIP and other regional initiatives.

Output 2.1.1: Coordination and cross-pollination enhanced between the GFIP and other IPs such as the 4 Critical Forests IPs (especially the Congo IP), planetGOLD IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP including on social inclusion and gender topics.

For Output 2.1.1, the RCP will put in place and steward processes to ensure ongoing communications and alignment between the GFIP, its participating Child Projects, and the other Critical Forest Biome IPs as well as the Ecosystem Restoration IP and planetGOLD. These processes will include standing virtual meetings, written updates, and identification of opportunities to organize joint learning and dissemination events. Thus, the RCP will maintain a coherent portfolio of 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. Coordination also will include facilitating the joint development of knowledge products that synthesize experience and learning across the Critical Forest Biome IPs, generating cross-regional insights of global relevance. The importance of appropriately and effectively integrating gender and inclusivity considerations in strategies to enhance forest landscape management is one topic of universal relevance; another is the need to approach sustainable financing solutions at a scale beyond the individual project level (linked to Component 3 below). To support the mainstreaming of gender and inclusion throughout the Program and the Child

Projects, the GFIP has organized a Gender and Safeguards Co-ordination Group, comprised of gender and safeguard experts from the Implementing Agencies of the Child Projects (CI, IUCN, and FAO), and the RCP Executing Agency (BirdLife).

Box 2: Potential areas of collaboration and coordination between planetGOLD and the Guinean Forests Program

1) Knowledge management

- a. The two Integrated Programs would work together to prepare tailored knowledge products and host events on addressing the impacts of gold exploitation on Critical Forests, with a window on eliminating mercury use in Artisanal Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM). This could include either hosting a joint side event in regional/global forums and/or working together to prepare and disseminate knowledge products in these forums such as the CoP CBD, Guinean Forests Forum, AFR100 Forums, GEF Assembly etc.
- b. During regional and global forums/side events: the 2 IPs would support each other to create knowledge products on addressing the impacts of gold exploitation on Critical Forests and disseminate on various platforms including social media
- c. The Website/Portal of the Guinean Forests IP will have an interface/link to the planetGOLD Website and vice versa.
- d. Countries/stakeholders from the Guinean Forests Biome will be invited to participate in knowledge-sharing events organized by planetGOLD and vice versa.
- e. PlanetGOLD Team will share their lessons and best-case practices on developing and managing the planetGOLD Website.

2) Learning (including capacity building and technical support) on the impact of gold exploitation on Critical Forests.

The two Integrated programs will work together to host joint tailored technical sessions on addressing the impacts of gold exploitation on Critical Forests (with a window on eliminating mercury use in ASGM). Child projects from both Integrated Programs will be invited to participate in these technical sessions. This could involve working with experts in this field to conduct the technical sessions. For example:

- a. Jurisdictional Approaches (JAs) (pioneered by CI and also in-built into the planetGOLD Program): The JAs can integrate the mining sector into broader landscape management, ensure implementation is within government administrative boundaries, and promote active participation of all stakeholders across sectors to address mercury use, deforestation, and land degradation. JAs aim to maximize policy-based interventions' impact on the ground and are an innovative tool for landscape management in support of ASGM formalization and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders.
- b. Engage other experts to Lead technical sessions e.g., the World Bank Group that recently published a paper on "*Developing Forest-Smart Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Standards¹¹*".

3) Advocacy and awareness-raising especially in regional and global forums/platforms

Outcome 2.2: *Enhanced governance of the biome through platforms for dialogue and transboundary collaboration between countries on forest and watershed management.*

Target 2.3: At least 10 intergovernmental sessions facilitated by the RCP (2 per year).

Output 2.2.1: Agenda and schedule prepared for the 6-monthly cycle of inter-governmental sessions to discuss enhanced collaborative governance of the Guinean Forest biome.

Outcome 2.2 seeks to promote biome-wide dialogue among the region's countries. The intent is to consider all transboundary areas and IFLs and help advance principles and standards for improved forest governance and forest management that can be adopted across the biome. Fostering such dialogue also will reinforce RCP efforts under Components 3 and 4 below. Recognizing that details of this type of dialogue necessarily will evolve organically over the course of implementation in terms of participation, scope and prioritized themes, including in response to progress made in other aspects of the project, Output 2.2.1 will entail preparation by the PMU of an initial agenda and proposed cycle of twice-yearly sessions for inter-governmental discussions. This agenda will be drafted in year one of

the project and then will be subject to ongoing revision in response to participant input. Based on this evolving agenda, the PMU will facilitate at least 10 sessions over the course of implementation, with the goal of contributing to the foundation for a permanent forum as pursued under Component 4.

Output 2.2.2: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen technical and institutional capacity on collaborative management of transboundary watersheds.

The RCP will provide technical assistance to the three MRU countries participating in the GFIP to enhance their capacity for joint management of their shared transboundary Mano River watershed and associated forest landscape (the fourth MRU member, Côte d'Ivoire, though not part of this watershed, will be invited to regional learning and knowledge-sharing events). As envisioned in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) prepared under the previous GEF-supported International Waters project, the RCP will facilitate the organization of forums through which the countries can deepen collaboration and arrange training and technical support to reinforce the capacity for collaborative joint management. This will include efforts to identify and advance sustainable financing solutions for ongoing collaboration in forest landscape management in the transboundary watershed. The RCP will work with the three countries as they develop their respective Child Projects to ensure alignment with each other with respect to transboundary Lofa-Gola-Mano watershed management and to ensure that Output 2.2.2 strategically supports their collective effort. Each of the three countries will have a common, standalone replica component in their Child Projects that focuses on this watershed; the RCP will provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to the activities agreed upon by the countries in this shared component. Areas of particular concern expressed by the MRU countries are protocols to ease movements through the corridor; enhanced transboundary patrols and enforcement; and technical guidance and tools for transboundary management, with associated capacity building. The RCP will build on the work of WABILED and others with MRU on these topics (but will not provide direct support to law enforcement activities). Climate Chance, through its International Biodiversity Coalition focused on biodiversity corridors, will be a key source of input and potential technical assistance.

The SAP is a regional policy framework that enables member states to work collectively towards basin-wide socioeconomic and environmental outcomes in priority areas. It is currently envisioned as a twenty-year program to be revised every five years, with the first five-year period roughly coinciding with the Program's implementation timeline. Given that the MRU's SAP is explicitly structured to ensure cooperation and maximization of synergies with other efforts of member countries in the basin, coordination between the RCP and MRU's Secretariat will be critical. Specific activities that the RCP will coordinate with the MRU Secretariat through MRU leadership as a technical partner during the Program's implementation include:

- Maintaining open channels of communication to avoid overlap and replication of effort of activities and maximize opportunities for collaboration. This includes opportunities to build the capacity of key stakeholders at the country or basin level on topics of mutual interest and to create synergies with other regional bodies, such as AFR100, that are engaged in restoration efforts in priority areas
- Organizing regular exchanges of knowledge and lessons learned between member countries and with the MRU Secretariat;
- Communication of shared activities and impacts at the country and transboundary levels to diverse audiences to raise awareness of the importance of basin-wide collaboration and secure more support from domestic and international constituencies.
- Where appropriate, sharing country- and basin- level information for use in monitoring impacts of both the SAP and the RCP.
- Providing guidance related to gender and inclusion, such as strategies to target women as recipients of technical assistance and capacity building.

With a significant leadership role for MRU, technical support for this work will be provided by CI's Center for Sustainable Lands and Waters.

Component 3: Financing solutions and innovation

Component 3 will focus on the formulation of sustainable financing strategies, based on the premise that doing so with a regional perspective will enhance the scope for long-term financing solutions at a significant scale. The RCP will pursue donor coordination, support Child Projects in the design and deployment of sustainable financing strategies and facilitate joint work on financing solutions between projects. The RCP will also ensure that considerations of funding for gender activities are incorporated into discussions. Recognizing that sustainable financing is a persistent challenge for projects throughout the region, the RCP will prioritize facilitating collective access to relevant technical expertise for the Child Projects on this theme, as a shared need corresponding to one of the principal levers of transformation. Thus, Component 3 of the RCP will seek to both increase the overall amount of financial support for sustainable management of forest landscapes and to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness through coordination among donors and projects. Regional bodies also engaged in sustainable financing mechanisms, such as AFR100's Secretariat Financing Working Group, will also be included in roundtable activities, capacity-building and partnership development.

Outcome 3.1: *Enhanced donor and private sector partner coordination at global and regional levels for innovative sustainable financing.*

Target 3.1: 2 donors and/or private sector partners engaging with GFIP.

Output 3.1.1: Donor roundtable activities organized/supported by the Project.

The baseline described above includes several recent and current major donor-supported initiatives of relevance to the GFIP (e.g., CEPF, WABiCC/WABiLED, PAPFor, and others). Ensuring continuity, complementarity and coherence of these various regional programs and initiatives is an ongoing challenge. To address this challenge, Output 3.1.1 of the RCP will involve regularly convening donors with overlapping objectives and programs in donor roundtables to share information and coordinate investment, avoid duplication of effort, and identify opportunities for synergies. This work will build on earlier efforts to convene donors under other programs (e.g., WABiLED). The RCP will engage stakeholders from various sectors, including bilateral/multilateral cooperation, foundations and trusts, and the private sector (e.g., the mining industry, agriculture and agro-transformation, and timber). This reflects lessons learned from the GEF-funded Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, emphasizing that donor coordination rests on relationship-building and data sharing. These donor roundtable activities predominantly will take the form of virtual interactions, supplemented by regularly written exchanges and updates. The RCP will also seek to take advantage of donor presence at larger regional gatherings and conferences to convene in-person sessions; for example, these can take the form of side events at the CBD COP, UNFCCC COP, and the like (linked to Output 4.2.1 below). Following the example of the GEF-funded Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, the PMU will conduct an initial stock-take of the donor landscape across the Guinean Forest region, followed by a focused assessment of donor collaboration and coordination to date to identify concrete means for enhancement. This work will be a focus of ECOWAS and CIFOR-ICRAF support for the project, complemented by support from all other executing partners.

Output 3.1.2: Partnerships between countries and investors/donors strengthened/built.

For Output 3.1.2 the Executing Agency and its partners (including specific support from CIFOR-ICRAF) will use their networks and relationships to facilitate links between Child Projects and other financing initiatives (e.g., the CI-lead country package seed fund, the CI-Led Finance Lab for Irrecoverable Carbon), potential financial institutions such as the World Bank, corporate partners, impact investors, and other sources. It will also involve engaging in work on Trust Funds at sub-regional levels, especially in Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, ensuring alignment with existing Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) related activities. The intent of this output is to reinforce country-level efforts to secure sustainable financing solutions, positing that a regional, multi-country approach to doing this may be better able to secure financing at scale. Therefore, the RCP will coordinate joint pursuit of financing solutions (e.g., multi-country efforts to fund management of transboundary forest landscapes, and work towards regional financing mechanisms); this pursuit will engage not only the Child Projects but countries throughout the region, recognizing that financing needs present a challenge shared across the biome. To this end, the PMU will develop and execute an explicit strategy to support sustainable financing and related technical assistance. Among other avenues, this strategy

will explore how the region can most effectively position itself for support from the new Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF).

Outcome 3.2: *Enhanced technical capacity amongst the Child Projects on innovative sustainable finance approaches.*

Target 3.2: At least 2 Child Projects supported with new expertise.

Output 3.2.1: Guidance provided to Child Projects on innovative, gender-inclusive and responsive sustainable finance approaches.

The three GFIP Child Projects have identified limited local capacity with respect to innovative sustainable finance approaches as a limiting factor for improved management of Intact Forest Landscapes. Therefore Output 3.2.1 will consist of guidance to Child Projects on the design and implementation of innovative mechanisms to provide incentives for local communities to protect natural resources. Example mechanisms include Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES, e.g., water funds, restoration grants, climate finance, biodiversity credits) and support for nature-based enterprises in forest-resident communities (e.g., through CSP's Conservation Agreement model or impact investment). The guidance will be grounded in a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility and relevance of tools and practices, ensuring that support for Child Projects is informed by evidence. A key stakeholder group to consider under this Output will be smallholder farmers, and the scope for enhancing their participation in deforestation-free value chains, for instance through partnerships with larger producers in landscapes. Work under this output will benefit from coordination with FSC, WABILED, the World Bank and others with related ongoing programs, to pursue combined efforts where possible. The RCP will emphasize considerations around gender, inclusion and equity when designing and applying these mechanisms, for example providing guidance to Child Projects on opportunities to increase access to sustainable finance by women and disadvantaged groups. Potential areas of technical support may also include:

- Supporting Child projects to develop or update country Forest Investment Plans (FIPs) that identify areas where investment is needed and potential financing sources. The FIPs will identify areas in which investments are needed and would constitute a bankable project on its own to attract private sector investments.
- Facilitating discussions to optimize financial and conservation benefits from carbon credits.
- Supporting assessments and planning to deepen participation in forest carbon markets. Regarding carbon financing, cognizant that some countries in the Biome such as Cote d'Ivoire are advanced whereas others are not, this could be an opportunity to determine the gaps and entry points for creating an enabling environment for countries in the Biome since there is a high potential for removals.
- Exploring potential synergies with impact investments in sustainable commodities and biodiversity-based products, as well as potential certification of these products.
- Exploring and providing technical assistance for innovative financing mechanisms such as debt-for-nature swaps.
- Assisting in the regional integration of sustainable financing approaches, including working on Trust Funds at sub-regional levels.
- Exploring and advancing discussions on other capitalization tools, including earmarked fees and taxes for conservation, payment for ecosystem services (with a particular emphasis on water as a crucial ecosystem service), and biodiversity credits as an emerging financing option.
- Providing support through learning, guidance, benchmarking, and consulting for promoting adapted concession mechanisms in both productive and non-productive landscapes, such as agroforestry.

Component 4: Support for regional policy coherence

The RCP, through the EA and its technical implementing partners and their networks, will support efforts to enhance regional coherence of policies relating to sustainable management of Intact Forest Landscapes. Noting the institutional gap at the regional level with respect to policy alignment mechanisms focused on forest management for the Guinean Forests biome, this Component will explore the development of a regional policy coordination body, whose mandate could also include the overall governance of West African Forests. The process of establishing this regional body will

incorporate lessons learned from analogous institutional development in other regions (e.g., COMIFAC for Central Africa). Such a body would supplement subregional platforms such as the Mano River Union and regional institutions with broader remits such as ECOWAS and AFR100. Doing so will facilitate concrete progress in realizing the vision reflected in the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa and support AFR100 restoration goals. To this end, the RCP will seek to facilitate exchanges involving countries across the region to encourage policy alignment in pursuit of coherence and enhance enabling conditions for effective forest conservation, including conceptualizations and operational models for OECMs in different land management contexts. Additionally, through its technical support to child projects during their design and implementation phases, the RCP will enable them to define the scope for OECMs versus integrated land management. One means by which the RCP will focus such exchanges is to facilitate preparatory regional discussions for and coordinated participation in international forums. The RCP will leverage access to expertise to ensure that best practice and science informs policy work, for example by using the work of the CI MCS Resilience Team to inform spatial prioritization, target setting and alignment, and articulation of policy measures.

Outcome 4.1: *Enhanced policy coherence of national forest governance policy goals with regional policy goals/targets*

Target 4.1: One gender-responsive roadmap for continuous regional efforts to enhance policy coherence for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest biome.

Output 4.1.1: Options analysis for an ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism focused on the conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes, incorporating social inclusion and gender considerations.

The RCP will facilitate exploration by countries in the region of steps towards a permanent forum for regional forest policy coordination and alignment, for the purpose of jointly pursuing enhanced policy coherence. While ECOWAS has provided a framework for important policy commitments such as the Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa, the region would benefit from the establishment of a body with a mandate and requisite capacity to pursue policy convergence and joint action on an ongoing basis. Recognizing that ECOWAS currently is undertaking related efforts (e.g., the Global Forest Transformation for People and Climate Project implemented in collaboration with FAO), they will be the lead executing partner (supported by CI's Center for Global Policy and Government Affairs) to explore design and operationalization options for this mechanism. The eventual body to emerge from this output and the resulting policy coherence is envisioned as critical elements of institutional sustainability of regional outcomes of the GFIP.

To inform the design of the mechanism, the RCP will review previous assessments, including work by WABILED, and commission an analysis of the similarities, gaps and areas of improvement of national policies (including gender and inclusion dimensions), and the degree of alignment with regional policies to the extent that these have been articulated (e.g. by ECOWAS), to identify how national and regional policies are corresponding and areas of improvement and potential entry points. This analysis will guide the preparation of tailored recommendations for national and regional policies, including guidance on the operationalization of OECMs, as well as options analysis for the establishment of a standing policy coordination mechanism. It can also serve as a baseline for assessing the extent to which gaps are addressed over time. The options analysis will consider models used in other regions, e.g. COMIFAC, and whether/how the models might be adapted to the Guinean Forest context. Guided by ECOWAS, the RCP will work with partners to disseminate recommendations in global and regional forums such as COP CBD, and AFR100 forums and across the region through tailored policy products (e.g., briefs, fact sheets etc.) and engagement of policymakers.

Outcome 4.2: *Strengthened collective voice for Guinean Forest countries in international policy arenas*

Target 4.2: At least four multi-country-hosted side events facilitated by GFIP at international policy forums (1 per year, as of year 2 of the project).

Output 4.2.1: Collective and coordinated country participation in international platforms facilitated.

The RCP will support the collective and coordinated participation of Guinean Forest countries in international platforms such as CBD COP, UNFCCC COP, and other international policy convenings, as well as regional platforms, such as AFR100 Forums. These convenings offer important opportunities for Guinean Forest countries to contribute to setting of international policies, standards and targets, notably including those relating to financing for restoration and conservation, and thematic and geographical prioritization for financial and other international support. Recognizing limited bandwidth and resources of stakeholders, the RCP also will work with the region to identify those convenings with the highest added value and significance, so as to prioritize investment of time and resources into preparation and attendance. Particular attention will be devoted to identifying initiatives and events related to empowerment of IPLCs and those related to women's empowerment. Where required (as identified by participating countries), RCP support will include the provision of targeted technical support to inform regional bloc positions in such convenings. The RCP will obtain input from women's organizations on how their voices and needs can be incorporated into international platforms, and facilitate greater representation of women's groups, youth groups, IPLCs and CSOs from the region in international meetings. Output 4.2.1 will amplify the region's voice in these arenas on prioritized topics, and also will illustrate the value of a permanent body for ongoing policy coordination (Output 4.1.1). Led by ECOWAS and CI's Center for Global Policy and Government Affairs, the RCP will facilitate at least 1 pre-conference coordination session per year. Moreover, CI's Moore Center for Science has a strong relationship with the UNCBD Secretariat and is well-placed to support the participation of delegations at the CBD COP.

Component 5: Guinean Forests Integrated Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Outcome 5.1: *A gender-responsive and integrated monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Program.*

Target 5.1: One functional gender-responsive M&E framework in place for the GFIP.

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

The GFIP reporting framework for the RCP will be designed to meet the M&E needs of the Critical Forest Biomes IP with respect to impact measurement as well as aggregation. Output 5.1.1 will entail targeted tracking of key indicators relating to aggregated Child Project impacts, including progress on Core Indicators and performance with respect to safeguards. These elements of the M&E system will be designed and deployed by month six in the first year of the RCP, in close coordination with the Country Child Project Preparation Grant (PPG) processes, so as to establish a clear baseline against which to measure impacts over the course of implementation. (Annex M includes the draft M&E Framework provided in the approved GFIP PFD, to serve as the basis for the GFIP M&E Framework to be further refined by the RCP.) The M&E framework also will contribute to addressing the regional need for enhanced data for forest monitoring. Development of the baseline will include working with all project partners to 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; updating the profile with newly available information; and defining the framework and process for tracking Program impacts with respect to key forest indicators and other data and information layers pertinent to landscape planning. The participation of AFR100 in the project will reinforce the tracking of forest trends, including net change in forest area in the target landscapes, coupled with CI's Irrecoverable Carbon Mapping.

Output 5.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.

CI GEF Agency will arrange the execution of the GFIP Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation, with in-region logistical support from BirdLife as EA. A point of emphasis under this Output will be the preparation of a Program Exit Plan for discussion during the Mid-Term Review in Year 3 and implementation during the second half of the project and post-project in order to ensure the sustainability of the Program outcomes.

Component 6: Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The Monitoring and Evaluation system is vital for both project governance and for substantive project delivery. The M&E system must serve as an accessible depository for data and information, as well as the products developed using that data and information, while reliably tracking and documenting the evolution and execution of product development processes. These functions combine the needs of project delivery and project oversight and will also generate material that will inform adaptive management, learning and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders both in and beyond the region. The M&E system will incorporate (among other considerations) specific gender-related indicators, as well as learn from and build off existing regional and country-level M&E databases and systems. For example, AFR100 has a Monitoring and Gender framework and databases to support country-level restoration projects, and FSC has developed sophisticated M&E systems to ensure its projects are meeting certification standards, and if not, where improvements are needed

Outcome 6.1: *An integrated and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Regional Coordination Project*

Target 6.1: One functional M&E framework in place for the Regional Coordination Project.

Output 6.1.1: Periodic Project M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC.

Timely, high-quality Project reporting is critical for adaptive management, and the ambitious scope and scale of the RCP will undoubtedly require adaptive management over the course of execution. This highlights the importance of both designing appropriate systems and processes and staffing project management with appropriate skills and capacity. The reporting framework for the RCP will be designed to meet the M&E needs of the Critical Forest Biomes IP, with particular attention to levers of transformation operating at the regional level. It also will report on gender mainstreaming activities and indicators in line with the Gender Analysis and Action Plan (Annex H). Project M&E reporting will reflect the implementation of the RCP M&E Plan (Annex L) including project inception workshop, project advisory committee meetings, stakeholder meetings, data collection and reporting on Results Framework indicators, mid-term review, terminal evaluation, quarterly progress reporting, annual reporting and annual work plan development, project supervision field visits and annual audits, and application of safeguards (Annexes L and H).

Output 6.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the Regional Coordination Project.

CI GEF Agency will arrange the execution of the RCP Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation, with in-region logistical support from Birdlife as EA. Preparation of the above-mentioned Program Exit Plan (noted under Output 5.1.2) will be a responsibility of the RCP PMU and a key evaluation point for the RCP.

Global Environmental Benefits

The additionality offered by the RCP with respect to Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) will be to amplify and reinforce the GEBs pursued by the GFIP Child Projects. Noting that the GFIP 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 countries with Child Projects will collectively pursue the following GEBs to help maintain globally significant biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services (to be refined and confirmed with full support of the RCP during their respective PPG phases).

- **Core Indicator 1:** *Protected Areas:* Create 347,875 ha of new PAs; improve management of 814,281 ha of PAs
- **Core Indicator 3:** *Restoration:* Restore 44,433 ha of degraded land
- **Core Indicator 4:** *Area of landscapes under improved practices* (excluding PAs) 478,075 ha
- **Core Indicator 6:** *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated. Absorb* and sequester an estimated 30.9 million Mt CO₂e through improved landscape management and forest protection, climate-smart agriculture, and restoration

- **Core Indicator 11: Direct beneficiaries disaggregated by sex.** Benefit at least 186,267 people (of which 48% will be women) through training, development of new income-generating opportunities, and incentives for sustainable practices and restoration

(Note that the above targets were presented in the original set of Child Project concept notes and are subject to confirmation or adjustment during their respective PPG phases.)

The RCP will contribute to the realization of the Program’s GEBs through enhancing coordination amongst the countries with Child Projects, other countries in the biome and stakeholders in the region and beyond, fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues, capacity building and technical support, knowledge management, exploring innovative financing solutions, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, by strengthening the region’s participation in global policy processes, the RCP will further empower Guinean Forest countries to shape and contribute to the collective global pursuit of environmental benefits. Thus, by applying levers of transformation at the regional level (i.e. innovation and learning; multi-stakeholder dialogue; financial leverage; governance and policies), the RCP will amplify transformative processes achieved through the Child Projects. A concrete focus of this dynamic will be the RCP’s support for joint multi-country management of transboundary river basins and associated forest landscapes through the Mano River Union, where GEBs achieved through a coordinated approach will be greater than the sum of individual country efforts alone as a result of efficiencies, policy coherence, and joint efforts towards institutional and financial sustainability. A summary of incremental benefits of the regional project’s interventions are tabulated below in Table 4.

Table 4:A summary of incremental benefits of the project’s interventions

Business as Usual <i>(without project)</i>	Incremental Benefits <i>(with project – contributions to baseline)</i>
<i>Lack of comprehensive participatory integrated land use planning</i>	The RCP will work with Child Projects to access funding and technical expertise to apply comprehensive participatory land use planning in intact forest landscapes. The RCP will also support the compilation of best practices and lessons learned to facilitate replication and scale up, and work with Child Projects to mainstream land use planning as a tool in their respective land use policy contexts.
<i>Insufficient data to guide land-use planning (LUP), decision-making, and management</i>	Through technical assistance and capacity building, the Project will link Child Projects to expertise and resources to conduct cost-effective, targeted information and data collection necessary for LUP, decision-making and management.
<i>Lack of financing and access to financing for sustainable livelihoods by local communities</i>	Addressing financing challenges is a key area of focus for the Project (Component 3). This will include the provision of training to relevant government agencies and partners with respect to innovative financing solutions, the convening of donor roundtables to enhance targeting and synergy between funding sources, and private sector engagement to cultivate partnerships that will result in financing for community-level investment in sustainable livelihoods, as well as policy alignment that can include policies that improve incentives and opportunities for community access to financing.
<i>Limited government capacity for effective conservation and sustainable management</i>	The RCP will mobilize expertise and resources to provide technical assistance and capacity building (Component 1) to governments, in response to identified needs and priorities that are anticipated to include multiple aspects of conservation and sustainable management. Examples of anticipated areas of focus include technology solutions for conservation, participatory co-management models, and integration of gender and social inclusion into conservation and sustainable management approaches.
<i>Weak policies and legislation relating to forest governance</i>	The RCP will link Child Projects to technical expertise, each other, and the other four Critical Forest Biome IPs to inform efforts to improve policies and legislation relating to forest governance. It will also convene governments to pursue better alignment of national and regional forest policies, to achieve mutual reinforcement (e.g., in transboundary collaboration) and strengthen

Business as Usual <i>(without project)</i>	Incremental Benefits <i>(with project – contributions to baseline)</i>
	regional bloc participation in international policy forums relating to forest management, conservation and sustainable resource management.
<i>Gender inequality in natural resource management including land tenure</i>	The RCP will mainstream gender considerations throughout its activities and support gender mainstreaming within the Child Projects, with explicit targets for reduced gender inequality. A portion of communications, knowledge management, technical assistance, and capacity-building activities of the RCP will be explicitly devoted to gender and social inclusion considerations with specific attention to roles in natural resource management and land tenure.
<i>Limited coordination of transboundary forest management</i>	Under Component 2, Outcome 2.2 of the RCP is dedicated to facilitating biome-wide inter-governmental dialogue in pursuit of enhanced coordination. In addition, Output 2.2.2 will coordinate efforts of the MRU-member Child Projects (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and mobilize technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen transboundary management of the shared Lofa-Gola-Mano Conservation Corridor.
<i>The lack of financing and access to financing for protected areas and sustainable landscape management</i>	Under Component 3 the RCP will address financing challenges. This will include training for government agencies and partners on innovative financing solutions, convening donor roundtables to better coordinate financial support, and cultivating public-private partnerships to unlock new financing sources. The RCP will also work with Child Projects to facilitate joint efforts to develop financing solutions at a regional level, positing that the scope and scale offered by a regional approach can generate new opportunities.
<i>Limited public-private partnerships and private sector engagement in conservation</i>	The RCP will draw on the networks and convening powers of its Executing Partners to foster new partnerships between the private sector and other stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations and local communities. This will include working with Child Projects to encourage private sector participation in multi-stakeholder land use planning; exploring private sector partnerships that can lead to financing; and public-private partnerships to support conservation and sustainable management in forest landscapes. The RCP will focus on cultivating such partnerships with a regional scope, maximizing both direct impact/scope and demonstration effects.

Stakeholders

Table 5: Roles of stakeholders and how they will benefit from the project

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
Intergovernmental Bodies e.g., AFR100, ECOWAS, MRU, The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These bodies bring together governmental agencies at the regional and national levels and can keep forest conservation high on national agendas and emphasize the importance of regional coordination and policy alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests. Participation in technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen transboundary collaboration Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums Contribution of co-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project aligns with the agendas of these bodies, e.g. forest conservation, land-use planning, strengthened transboundary coordination

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serve as a link between the regional, national, and local levels, to influence governance and decision-making processes at the regional and global levels 	
<p>Multilateral Institutions (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, FAO, UNEP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These organizations have funded the implementation of regional initiatives that can provide lessons learned and alignment/coordination with programs and financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests - Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing - Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism - Contribution of co-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds on current and past work programs - Strengthened coordination at the regional level - Opportunities for partnerships, synergies
<p>Bilateral Agencies (e.g. USAID, EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These organizations have funded the implementation of regional initiatives that can provide lessons learned, alignment/coordination with programs and financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests - Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing - Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism - Contribution of co-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds on current and past work programs - Strengthened coordination at the regional level - Opportunities for partnerships, synergies
<p>National Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agencies are key stakeholders in efforts ranging from direct work on the ground to national policy reform: environmental protection and protected area management agencies, ministries of finance, land authorities, and agencies implicated in infrastructure development (e.g., roads, energy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance - Participation in technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen transboundary collaboration - Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism - Collective participation in international policy forums - Contribution of co-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and Conservation of Guinean Forests - Enhanced capacity for conservation, management, and sustainable financing - Strengthened policies and regional alignment - Mechanisms for improved transboundary coordination - Sustainable economic benefits for forested communities
<p>CSOs/NGOs (e.g. FF, WCS, IUCN, CI, Birdlife, RSPB, WCF, ICRAF-CIFOR, ProForest, Fairtrade Africa, Commonland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with international, national, regional, and local non-government and civil society partners focused on biodiversity conservation and sustainable commodity production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests - Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance - Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing - Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism - Collective participation in international policy forums - Contribution of co-financing - Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices - Serves as a link between the regional, national and local levels, to influence governance and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and Conservation of Guinean Forests - Mechanisms for improved transboundary coordination - Sustainable economic benefits for forested communities

Stakeholder	Primary Role(s) Relevant to the Project	Benefit from Project
	processes at the regional and global levels	
Academia/Research Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support for project activities; opportunities for students, partners, and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge exchange and coordination between regional initiatives to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Contribution of co-financing Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New data Research opportunities Platforms for knowledge exchange
Private sector e.g. Rio Tinto, Socfin, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of concessions and associations/ cooperatives operate in the region, with implications for forest management, economic development opportunities, and local livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination/partnerships for innovative sustainable financing Collective participation in international policy forums Participation in multi-stakeholder land-use planning Support for monitoring and evaluation and knowledge exchange Contribution of co-financing Access to/ capacity building on new and innovative technologies, tools and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for partnerships and engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues around sustainability and land use planning. Maintenance of ecosystem services that benefit operations
Indigenous Peoples Groups (e.g. IPACC, ICCA Consortium) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are traditional peoples and communities may be represented by regional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technical assistance and capacity building Opportunities for engagement in multistakeholder dialogues Access to learning and knowledge exchange events
Disadvantaged/Vulnerable Groups (e.g. JVE, REFACOF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations that represent the interests of youth, women, and other disadvantaged groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and contributors to the program's learning, knowledge exchange events and technical assistance Discussions regarding ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism Collective participation in international policy forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technical assistance and capacity building Opportunities for engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues Access to learning and knowledge exchange events

The project will benefit at least 600 state and non-state stakeholders from national/regional levels through technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives, with a target of at least 40% women. The project will maintain a focus on institutional capacity building, in order to increase the likelihood that benefits endure beyond the life of the project. For example, by upgrading the capacity of bodies with key roles in the sustainable management of intact forest landscapes, the RCP will enable these stakeholders to better maintain and build on project results after the project closes. Moreover, by convening stakeholders from the Child Projects in these training events, the RCP aims to cultivate a community of practice that will provide a source of mutual support and ongoing collaboration after the project, and reduce reliance on external consultants. By working with Child Projects to strengthen the multi-country bodies responsible for the management of transboundary forest landscapes and by advancing the establishment of a permanent regional policy coordination body, the Project will help sustain project outcomes through lasting institutions that will pursue ongoing coordination of policy and management at landscape and regional levels.

Policy Coherence

Enhanced policy coherence at a regional level is the purpose of Component 4 of the RCP. Countries of the region already have signalled strong policy commitments relating to biodiversity and climate change objectives (see Annex O), and they have also committed to regional harmonization through the ECOWAS Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa. The RCP will support continued efforts towards greater coherence and convergence by working with countries of the region to undertake an analysis of options for a permanent regional policy coordination mechanism, learning from similar mechanisms in other regions (e.g., COMIFAC). This analysis will inform the design and implementation of a plan to create a permanent platform with a dedicated focus on ongoing policy alignment.

Component 4 will also further regional policy coherence by working with countries in the region to align positions in regional and global forums such as CBD and AFR100 that deal with issues relevant to the management of intact forest landscapes, particularly international biodiversity and climate policies. Examples of candidate focal themes for such policy alignment include access to global funding for conservation, sustainable management, restoration and climate change mitigation/adaptation; definition and operationalization of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), including how OECMs will factor into national, regional and global targets for areas under protection and sustainable management; empowering local communities to lead sustainable management, including recognition of property rights as well as FPIC requirements for other types of development (e.g., commercial agroforestry); and positioning for emerging and evolving markets for biodiversity credits. Finally, in addition to enhanced prospects for regional policy coherence, the RCP will contribute to national policy coherence through related technical support and capacity building provided in response to articulated needs from the Child Projects.

Achieving enhanced policy coherence and project success in general will depend on enhancing human, institutional and technical capacities at national and local levels. The RCP project design includes several activities to this end, involving technical assistance and capacity building for relevant national government institutions as well as local stakeholders, in areas ranging from innovative financing solutions to technology applications for forest monitoring and management to participatory approaches to land use planning and forest management to policy refinement and harmonization. Moreover, coordination with related initiatives in the region will further contribute to enhanced capacities, reflecting a combination of GEF-supported investments and co-finance.

Innovation

The RCP will contribute to innovation on two levels. First, it will work with the Child Projects to promote innovation at the country project level. Second, its whole-of-biome perspective will pursue innovation at the regional level. At the country level, the RCP will link implementers and stakeholders to sources of expertise, technical assistance and capacity building to provide access to innovative approaches in the realms of planning, policies, financing and technology for conservation and sustainable resource management. This will respond to the identified needs and priorities of the Child Projects and draw from related efforts of the other Critical Forest Biome IP regions. At the regional level, the RCP will pursue innovation on two principal fronts: sustainable financing and policy coherence. For sustainable financing, the RCP will explore innovative solutions made possible by the enhanced scale of a regional approach, compared to site, sub-national, and national financing mechanisms. Noting that enhanced scale can help overcome high transaction costs as well as distribute risk, examples of potential solutions include aggregated multi-country portfolios of REDD+ interventions, impact investment, and biodiversity credits.

With respect to policy coherence, innovation will be pursued through the analysis of options for the creation and/or strengthening of a permanent forum for ongoing policy alignment among the countries of the region. Noting that these countries already have signalled strong intent to pursue such alignment, the RCP will draw on lessons from analogous policy forums in other regions (e.g., COMIFAC and others) to help design a path toward the realization of this intent. Thus, these innovations correspond directly to levers of transformation (particularly governance and policies and financial leverage). The levers of transformation are the basis of the Theory of Change, with the 4 Project Components corresponding to the 4 levers. The RCP's Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication

strategy (Component 1), specifically is designed to catalyze scale-up of impacts by 1) coordinating with other regional initiatives to collect and curate learning products relating to key topic areas; 2) Identifying and disseminating innovations with regional relevance (e.g. creative governance arrangements that promote inclusiveness and equity, innovative conservation finance solutions at scale); and 3) contributing 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.

^[1] Hruschka, Felix; Levin-Nally, Estelle; Racionero-Gómez, Blanca; Uribe, Natalia; Connolly-Smith, Chris; Stacey, Jonathan. *Developing Forest-Smart Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) Standards (English)*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099235104252220988/P1722450cd79500c30bca0078f7496c1e66>

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this child project, including framework and mechanisms for coordination, governance, financial management and procurement. This should include consideration for linking with other relevant initiatives at country-level (if a country child project) or regional/global level (for coordination platform child project). If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Project Duration: The project duration is 84 months. 8 months project implementation set up; Actual project execution 68 months, and 8 months Terminal Evaluation and closeout.

GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION STRUCTURE OF THE GUINEAN FORESTS INTEGRATED PROGRAM

The Program will be governed by The Guinean Forests Program Management and The Program Advisory Board. These two bodies will be responsible for 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. The two bodies will be supported by two Working Groups, namely: The Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning Program Working Group and The Gender and Safeguards Coordination Group.

A. The Guinean Forests Program Management (CI-GEF Implementing Agency)

The Guinean Forests Program Management will comprise representatives from the CI-GEF Implementing Agency. CI-GEF Agency in collaboration with the other GEF implementing agencies that are participating in the program, will be responsible for steering the Guinean Forests program in-order to achieve the target results. The Management Team will work with partners to strengthen and support a biome-wide community of practice –including practitioners in policy, scientific, technical, and financing spheres- committed to maintaining the integrity of the Guinean Forest biome's globally important critical tropical forests to maximize multiple global environmental benefits.

As the Lead GEF Implementing Agency of the Guinean Forests Integrated Program, Conservation International will be responsible and accountable for the delivery of the Program and the realization of the target results. In a nutshell, CI will ensure the Program is greater than the parts by devising mechanisms that will amplify and extend the ownership and results of the GFIP beyond the Child Project countries and executing entities/initiatives that are directly involved. The specific tasks of the Program Management Team will include:

- Technical and financial program oversight and supervision
- Foster adaptive management
- Coordination of stakeholders at regional and global levels for enhanced collaboration, visibility, sustainability, and ownership of the program's results.
- Facilitation and organization of multi-stakeholder dialogues at various levels including donor round tables to enhance partnerships, and synergies and leverage sustainable financing from diverse sources.
- Provision of tailored technical assistance and capacity-building support including establishing an entry point on mercury to address the impacts of gold exploitation on critical forests.
- Enhance knowledge management by building on existing knowledge-sharing platforms whilst leveraging partnerships for enhanced visibility of the Program's impact.

- Ensure the Program liaises with ongoing initiatives including the non-GEF funded initiatives and GEF's Integrated Programs such as the Critical Forests IPs, GOLD+ IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP among others.
- Continuously explore additional co-financing from various sources including from financing institutions, the Fund proposed at Libreville for the PCP - now called the country package seed fund,
- Ensuring the Program contributes to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and selected Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- Work with partners to establish entry points that will be the vehicle for the One Forest Summit outcomes.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the Program and Regional Coordination Project
- Ensuring compliance of the program with GEF policies and procedures including M&E, Gender, Stakeholder engagement, and Safeguards.

B. The Guinean Forests Program Advisory Board

Chair: Conservation International

Vice Chair/Secretariat: BirdLife International (The Executing Agency)

Rapporteur: EA (Guinean Forests Regional Project Management Unit)

Frequency of the meeting: Every 1.5 Years (Calendar year)

The Advisory Board will comprise experts from academia, the private sector, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). This Board will meet once or twice a year to assess the program's progress and provide recommendations that will ensure maximum impact of the results. This Board will also serve as a forum in which partners and related initiatives keep each other apprised on relevant matters and identify opportunities for collaboration and synergy. Participants in this advisory Board may include representatives from the following organizations:

- Conservation International (CI)
- Global Environment Facility Secretariat (GEFSEC)
- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- AFR100
- The Mano River Union (MRU)
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- The World Bank
- BirdLife International
- UN Environment (Congo IP Point of contact and GOLD+ IP Point of contact)
- ProForest
- World Agroforestry Centre (CIFOR-ICRAF)
- Rainforest Trust

- EU "NaturAfrica" - West Africa component - permanent Technical Assistance

- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

- The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)

- The Operational Focal Points representing countries from the Guinean Forests Biome

- Rio Tinto (To Be Confirmed)

- University of Cambridge (To Be Confirmed)

C. The Gender and Safeguards Coordination Group

Chair: CI-GEF (Gender and Safeguards Lead)

Vice Chair/Secretariat: BirdLife International (The Executing Agency)

Rapporteur: BirdLife International (Guinean Forests Regional Project Management Unit)

Frequency of the meeting: Annually (Fiscal Year)

This Gender and Safeguards working group will comprise representatives from the Executing Agency (and PMU), and the Gender and Safeguards specialists from the GEF Implementing Agencies with Child Projects in the Guinean Forests Program namely: CI, IUCN, and FAO.

The objective of the Gender and Safeguards Program Coordination Group is to a) holistically assess the extent to which gender and safeguards are integrated and executed at regional and country level projects and b) to provide strategic guidance that will ensure compliance with GEF guidelines on gender, stakeholder engagement, and safeguards.

Recommendations for adaptive management and lessons for future similar projects will be shared with the Program's Advisory Board and presented during the Annual Guinean Forests Regional workshop and /or a Regional Webinar. Progress reports will be posted on the Guinean Forests IP Website and shared with the other Critical Forests Integrated Programs.

D. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Learning Program Working Group

Chair: CI-GEF (M&E Lead)

Vice Chair/Secretariat: BirdLife International (The Executing Agency)

Rapporteur: BirdLife International (Guinean Forests Regional Project Management Unit)

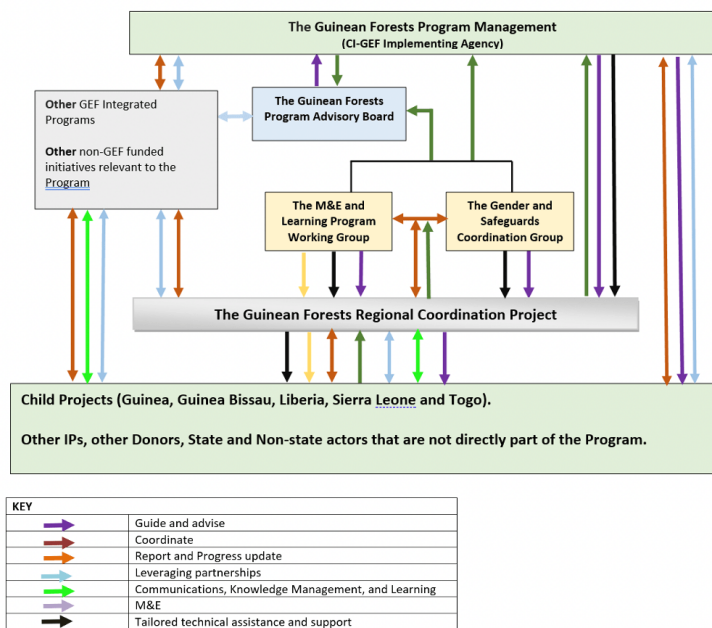
Frequency of the meeting: Annually (Fiscal Year)

The M&E and Learning working group will comprise representatives from the Executing Agency (and PMU), and M&E specialists from the GEF Implementing Agencies with Child Projects in the Guinean Forests Program namely: CI, IUCN, and FAO.

The M&E and Learning Working Group will convene to analyze the data collected annually from the regional coordination project and Child Projects in order to track the progress and the effectiveness of the program's interventions. Findings from this assessment, recommendations for adaptive management, and lessons for future similar projects will be shared with the Program's Advisory Board and presented during the Annual Guinean Forests Regional workshop and/or a regional webinar. Progress reports will be posted on the Guinean Forests IP Website and shared with the other Critical Forests IPs.

The organogram in Figure 3 below summarizes the Guinean Forests program's governance and coordination structure

Figure 3: The program's governance and coordination structure



GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION STRUCTURE OF THE GUINEAN FORESTS REGIONAL PROJECT

The total project duration is **84 months** broken down as follows: 6 months implementation start-up, 70 months execution and 8 months Terminal Evaluation and Closeout. See Annex D for the Project Timeline.

A. The Implementing Agency

Conservation International (CI-GEF) is the GEF Implementing Agency for this project. Overall, the CI-GEF Implementing Agency will be responsible for technical and financial project oversight and supervision, ensuring the regional project complies with the GEF's policies and procedures, including M&E, Gender, stakeholder engagement, and safeguards. CI-GEF Agency will also make recommendations to optimize project performance and ensure the resolution of any execution conflicts. Specifically, CI-GEF will undertake the following tasks:

- Facilitate interactions with the GEF.
- Provide technical and financial oversight to the Executing Agency
- Oversee and monitor implementation of the project including reviewing annual and quarterly technical and financial project reports, undertaking annual project site visits/desk reviews, and monitoring the implementation of and compliance with safeguards.
- Ensure that project management practices (technical, financial, and administration) comply with GEF requirements.
- Monitor the project's implementation and achievement of the project outputs.
- Ensure proper use of GEF funds.
- Review, and approve any changes in budgets or work plans.
- Participate in procurement committees (where needed) and approve procurement packages as defined in the Grant agreement.
- Quality assurance includes ensuring that audits are undertaken by external auditors.
- Oversee the preparation of the annual project implementation report (PIR) for submission to the GEF Secretariat (GEFSEC).
- Commission the project's Mid-Term Review and Terminal evaluation.

B. The Executing Agency

BirdLife International is the Executing Agency (EA) of this project. Under the supervision of the CI-GEF Implementing Agency, the EA's role can be summed as **Coordination, Communications and Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and Reporting.**

The EA will guide and lead the day-to-day execution, administration, and monitoring of the project, facilitate knowledge sharing and meetings, information flow, and coordinate Child Projects, executing partners and stakeholders at all levels. In addition, the EA will be responsible for managing the regional project-related activities directly, managing sub-grants and sub-contracts, project staffing, and the use of project funds.

The EA (through the PMU) will report technically and financially to CI-GEF by preparing and submitting the annual budget and work plan; quarterly financial and technical progress reports, the annual Project Implementation Report (PIR), an annual project and program-level progress report and the Final project and program Project Report. The summarized specific tasks of the EA include:

- CI-GEF will directly grant the Executing Agency based on the level of effort and tasks that have been agreed upon during the PPG Phase.
- With guidance from CI-GEF, the EA will be responsible for the day-to-day project management and overall coordination of the Guinean Forests Regional project.
- The EA will be responsible for the overall project coordination and ensuring that the key entities such as CI executing teams, external-sub-grantees, and service providers deliver efficiently and effectively.
- The EA will support the Guinean Forests Program Management Team (Conservation International) in the overall coordination and monitoring of the program.
- The EA will support the Guinean Forests Program Management Team (Conservation International) to convene The Program's Advisory Board and Working Groups. Additionally, the EA will be the Vice Chair/Secretariat of the following:
 - The Guinean Forests Program Advisory Board
 - The Gender and Safeguards Program Coordination Group.
 - The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Learning Program Working Group
 - Communications Committee
- With support from the project executing entities such as CI executing teams, sub-grantees, and service providers, the EA will support the mobilization of co-financing and report its materialization to CI-GEF.
- With support from the project executing entities, the EA will amplify stakeholder engagement, learning, and knowledge sharing, and work with CI to convene regional and international meetings.
- The EA will ensure timely financial and technical progress reporting to CI-GEF.
- Hire and host the PMU including the provision of technical input across components and guidance on operations.
- If the project sub-grants funds, conduct due diligence in line with the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards on partner institutions.
- Ensure outputs are delivered and management of Consultants' contracts.
- Chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC)
- Guide the preparation of procurement plans.
- Guide the preparation of the Terms of reference and procurement packages.
- Maintenance of records of all project-related documentation
- Guide the preparation and dissemination of knowledge management products.
- Ensure financial auditing of the project is undertaken and the auditors are approved by CI-GEF.

In addition to its detailed responsibilities above, the EA will be responsible for coordinating and ensuring that all the project-executing support entities perform their tasks so that the below are achieved. CI will hold the EA accountable for the delivery of the below.

- Leverage and hold follow-up discussions with countries, entities, and initiatives that are either directly involved in the Program or not directly involved in the program and devise ways of collaborating, leveraging new opportunities, and creating synergies.
- Facilitate and/or action recommendations from the Guinean Forests Program and Project Governance bodies and working groups.
- Foster adaptive management
- 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
- Flowing down gender, stakeholder engagement, and safeguards requirements.
- Frequent communications and coordination with Guinean Forest's Child Project teams
- Work with CI to host regional workshops to bring together stakeholders in the region. This annual meeting could be jointly hosted by UNEP (Congo Basin IP).
- M&E at project and program levels

The Project Management Unit (PMU)

The EA will recruit the PMU and host them. With guidance from the EA, the PMU will be responsible for overall project management, supervising consultants, ensuring project success, and liaising with and reporting to the Executing Agency, which in turn will report to the CI-GEF Agency. The PMU Lead will coordinate directly as needed with CI-GEF but will report to the EA.

The PMU will work closely with executing partners from CI, external sub-grantees, and service providers. Overall, the PMU will monitor progress, and coordinate and support the executing partners as needed to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the project's target results. Details of sub-grantees that have been identified during the PPG Phase are provided in their ToRs (Annex R).

As needed, consultants will be hired to provide technical assistance for specific tasks requiring expertise that cannot be undertaken by the PMU and the identified executing partners. International service providers will be recruited where regional and national capacities are insufficient.

The composition of the **Project Management Unit (PMU)** is outlined below:

- a. Technical Lead
- b. Finance, Administration and Grants Manager
- c. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer
- d. Communications and Knowledge Management Officer
- e. Gender and Safeguards

Generally, the PMU will be responsible for:

- Procurement of all services, goods, and equipment
- Handling and safeguarding of the equipment.
- Financial record-keeping
- Reporting and disbursements (financial)
- Project and program monitoring and reporting (technical)
- Preparation and submission of all technical and financial reports to the CI-GEF Agency
- Monitoring and reporting materialization of co-financing to CI-GEF
- Actively coordinate the flow of inputs, procurement, outputs, and work streams to ensure the project runs smoothly and delivers the specified outputs and overall objectives.
- Organizing and facilitating workshops and travel
- Identification of potential risks to project activities and implementation of mitigation measures to overcome them.
- Knowledge Management

- Setting up, monitoring, and reporting implementation progress of environmental and social safeguards.
- Ensure the smooth running of the project through continuous monitoring, coordination, and communication among partners, consultants, stakeholders, etc.
- Rapporteur of the following:
 - The Project Steering Committee (PSC)
 - The Guinean Forests Program Advisory Board
 - The Gender and Safeguards Coordination Group
 - The M&E and Learning Program Working Group
 - Communications Committee

Project Technical Support Team

The Technical support Team will comprise the following positions:

- a. Regional Technical Expert (part-time) – BirdLife
- b. Environmental and Social Safeguards, Gender and Inclusion (part-time) - BirdLife
- c. Technical Coordinator (Biodiversity conservation, Advocacy and Policy)

C. The Project Steering Committee (PSC)

Chair: BirdLife International (The Executing Agency)

Vice Chair: Executing Partner (rotational)

Rapporteur: Regional PMU

Frequency of the meeting: Annually (Fiscal Year)

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established, and its composition will be defined during the inception phase of project implementation. The PSC will likely comprise representatives from BirdLife, CI, the GEF Agency Leading the Child Projects (FAO, IUCN), The executing partners, and the OFPs from the countries with Child Projects among others.

The PSC will meet (in-person or virtually) with additional ad hoc meetings, if necessary, to discuss key project performance indicators and to provide guidance on project direction. The PSC will be responsible for undertaking management-related and technical decisions for the regional project and providing guidance and direction. Specifically, the PSC will review and approve the Annual Work Plans and Budget as well as the M&E plan for the project. Additionally, the PSC is required to authorize any substantive deviation from the agreed AWP and budget lines to be included in budget revisions submitted to CI-GEF. The PSC will also ensure that necessary resources are committed and will arbitrate any conflicts within the project or negotiate a solution to any problems between the project and external bodies. Specific responsibilities of the PSC are described below.

- Foster adaptive management
- Ensure that project objectives are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.
- Ensure institutional coordination and facilitate an effective communication and decision-making process between governments, execution partners, civil society, CI-GEF, and other key actors.
- Monitor project implementation to ensure consistency with the approved work plans and results framework of the project.

D. A Communications Committee

Chair: BirdLife International (The Executing Agency)

Vice Chair: CI-GEF (emphasis on CI-GEF communications Lead)

Rapporteur: Regional PMU

Frequency of the meeting: TBD

This communications committee will be established and will comprise communications representatives from CI, Lead Agencies of the Child Projects, the key executing partners, and a country representative from the Child Projects. A communications representative from the GEF will participate as needed. The objective of this committee is to amplify the program and project’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.

E. Engagement with the GEF Operational Focal Points at the Program and Project level

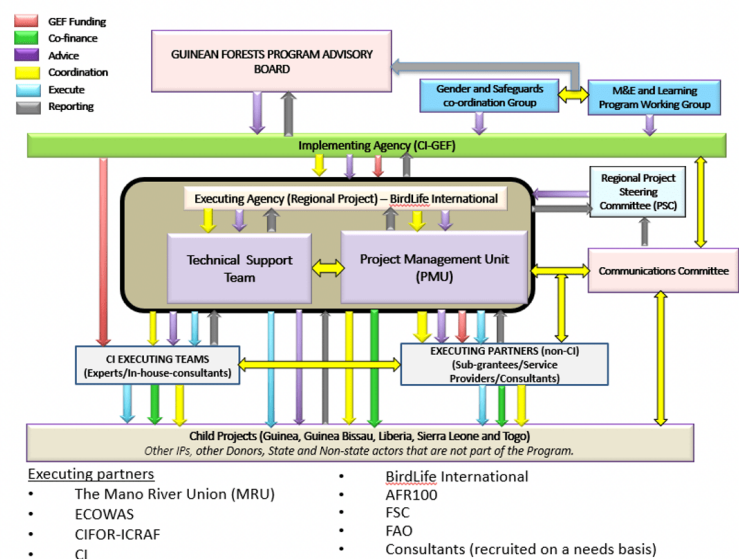
The GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) is the government official who is the principal point of contact for GEF-funded activities in their respective country. The OFP also serves as the country’s main contact point for the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies and stakeholders. Per the GEF guidelines, OFPs need to be informed, involved and consulted throughout the lifecycle of a GEF project including receiving updates on the details of project implementation, results and impacts. The Guinean Forests Program and RCP will coordinate and involve the OFPs as follows:

- CI and BirdLife will inform OFPs from the countries in the Guinean Forests Biome about the status of the Program and RCP.
- OFPs representing countries from the Biome will be invited to join the Program Steering Committee.
- OFPs from countries with Child Projects will be invited to join the Project Steering Committee.
- The OFPs from the countries with Child Projects will be informed and consulted about the planning, execution, and findings of the Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation of the Project and Program. Consulting OFPs representing other countries in the Biome will also be considered
- Program Monitoring and Evaluation reports will be shared with the OFPs representing countries from the Guinean Forests Biome e.g., Program progress reports, Program Mid-Term Evaluation Reports, and Program Terminal Evaluation Report
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation reports will be shared with the OFPs from the countries with Child Projects e.g., PIR, Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report, and Project Terminal Evaluation Report
- The OFPs representing countries from the Biome will be looped in the knowledge management activities of the RCP and requested to support the dissemination of the knowledge products

Project Execution Organizational Chart

The organogram below summarizes the Guinean Forests project’s governance and Coordination structure.

Figure 4: The Regional Coordination Project governance and coordination structure



Potential Executing Partners

Potential Executing partners and their roles are summarized below in Table 6 and are detailed in the Terms of Reference in Annex R. As needed, other executing partners might be added during the implementation phase and their roles defined. The EA and selected Executing Partners shall comply with GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards including the return of unused project funds at the end of the project.

Besides BirdLife International, all the organizations listed in the Table below are deemed potential executing partners and will only be engaged if there is demand for their services by the countries.

Table 6: Roles of Potential Executing Partner

PARTNER	RATIONALE	SPECIFIC ROLE
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	A strong relationship with Governments and academia in the region	The detailed role of ECOWAS is provided in the Terms of Reference. In a nutshell, ECOWAS will be responsible for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the mobilization and engagement with Governments and Academia • Mobilization of co-financing through the identification of initiatives in the region that are relevant to the Program and finding synergies for partnership. • Support the amplification of the Program’s visibility in Regional and International forums. • Regional Policy • Knowledge sharing including liaising with the communications committee as needed
BirdLife International (Grantee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong relationship with non-state actors in the region • Experience working in the Guinean Forests region as the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) regional implementing partner. 	The detailed role of Birdlife is provided in the Terms of Reference. In a nutshell, Birdlife will be responsible for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA functions • Lead the mobilization and engagement with non-state actors. • Mobilization of co-financing through the identification of initiatives in the region that are relevant to the Program and finding synergies for partnership. • Support the amplification of the Program’s visibility in Regional and International forums. • Support the Gender and Safeguards Coordination Group on approaches to Child Projects on gender and safeguards. • Support identification of needs in terms of gender and safeguards that could be addressed through the Regional Coordination Project. • Knowledge sharing including liaising with the communications committee as needed. • Monitoring and Reporting
CI Technical Assistance Unit (Experts/In-house-consultants)	The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has been selected because of its long-established expertise in community-based conservation and facilitating learning activities and networks around this theme. For more than 15 years, CSP has been mentoring	The detailed role of CSP is provided in the Terms of Reference. In sum, CSP will be responsible for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating peer learning events and online webinars on community-based conservation models • Providing target technical assistance and training support on community-based

PARTNER	RATIONALE	SPECIFIC ROLE
	<p>organizations and hosting events and trainings to refine and share best practices for community-based conservation.</p>	<p>conservation in response to identified Child Project needs</p>
	<p>The CI MCS Resilience Team: Cutting-edge expertise in mapping and prioritizing landscapes that require interventions to retain carbon stocks and protect biodiversity. The Moore Center also develops science-based tools to inform policies and actions.</p>	<p>The detailed role of the CI Resilience Team is provided in the Terms of Reference. In a nutshell, this unit will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building on irrecoverable carbon and other innovative conservation tools developed by CI • Using science to inform decision-making, including on policy aspects • Lead/Support the coordination and engagement between the Guinean Forests Program and UNCCD
	<p>The CI Global Policy and Government Affairs unit: experience in policy analysis and working with governments and other stakeholders on developing and refining policy frameworks that support conservation and sustainable resource management.</p>	<p>The detailed role of the CI Global Policy and Government Affairs is provided in the Terms of Reference. In a nutshell, this unit will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze existing regional mechanisms and apply insights to create a sustainable platform for policy alignment in the project countries. • Supporting the PMU in facilitating government-partner work towards policy coherence.
	<p>CI's Center for Sustainable Lands and Waters: expertise with respect to watershed management, including deep familiarity with transboundary watershed management issues, frameworks, and best practices.</p> <p>The Center for Sustainable Lands and Waters works to introduce scalable, sustainable development initiatives that align community, policy and market-based incentives at the global, regional and local levels. Focus areas include implementation of community-based incentives, freshwater conservation and efforts to improve the sustainability of key commodities.</p>	<p>The detailed role of the CI Center for Sustainable Lands and Waters is provided in the Terms of Reference. In a nutshell, this unit will be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance and capacity building in the area of transboundary watershed management. This support will focus on nurturing impactful integrated and collaborative transboundary management of landscapes and water resources by the Mano River Union, to maintain IFLs and resilient watersheds.
<p>World Agroforestry Centre (CIFOR-ICRAF)</p>	<p>CIFOR-ICRAF is a recognized world leader in research on technical, financial, legal, social, environmental and policy issues relating to agroforestry, and is uniquely well-placed to support knowledge generation and dissemination relating to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance and capacity building • Lead the mobilization and engagement with stakeholders in the region. • Mobilization of co-financing through the identification of initiatives in the region that are relevant to the Program and finding synergies for partnership.

PARTNER	RATIONALE	SPECIFIC ROLE
	agriculture-forest-mosaic landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the amplification of the Program's visibility in Regional and International forums. Knowledge sharing including liaising with the communications committee as needed.
The Mano River Union (MRU)	MRU is the multi-governmental entity responsible for coordinating transboundary landscape management between Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the mobilization and engagement with stakeholders in Liberia and Sierra Leone Mobilization of co-financing through the identification of transboundary initiatives in the region that are relevant to the Program and finding synergies for partnership. Support the amplification of the Program's visibility in Regional and International forums. Knowledge sharing including liaising with the communications committee as needed Translation services (especially in workshops)
African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) (Advisory Board)	AFR100 is a country-led effort to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa into restoration by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active restoration projects in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Togo; potential to add <u>Guinea-Bissau</u> Existing capacity and data for child projects from current restoration projects Ability to convene African states including political influence at regional and global levels: convening power of the African Union and ability to work with African Governments to implement Agenda 2063 of the African Union Knowledge generation and dissemination with solid science and database program Advocacy and awareness-raising Coordination at the regional and national level with representatives in child countries A broad base of technical and financial partners with opportunities for sustainable financing and capacity-building support
Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC)	FSC is a sustainable forestry certification body dedicated to protecting healthy and resilient forests, with more than 160 million hectares of forests managed to FSC standards around the world.	Providing guidance on forest management principles for countries participating in the project that adapt to the local context of each country, emphasizing conservation and biodiversity protection. Providing training on sustainable forest management practices. Contributing to impact assessment of forestry practices.
The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	FAO is the developer of the EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT) Suite of Tools that seek to estimate the value of nature's contribution to people in the form of mitigation and avoidance of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and biodiversity preservation.	FAO will provide technical backstopping and capacity-building support to countries on the EX-ACT suite of tools for environmental impact assessment and mitigation benefits quantification in the context of ecosystem restoration activities. This will ensure the program target under core indicator 6 is calculated, monitored, and reported.

PARTNER	RATIONALE	SPECIFIC ROLE
Service providers/Consultants	Website application, development, and management consultant: Guinean Forests Regional Coordination, Learning, and Knowledge sharing platform	A website applications, development and management consultant will be recruited to design, develop, operationalize, and maintain the Guinean Forests Regional Coordination, Learning, and Knowledge sharing platform (website).
	Communications and Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding of the Guinean Forests Programme • Communications strategy and action plan
	Technical Assistance consultancies	On a need-to-basis, consultants will be recruited to undertake capacity building and provide technical support to the program.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this child project? Yes

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

Conservation International was selected by the GEF to lead the GFIP based on its demonstrated technical comparative advantage, experience working in the Biome/region and its extensive Community of Practice in conservation including working in IFLs, cutting-edge conservation science, innovative policies and sustainable financing solutions. CI has therefore identified in-house technical experts who will be responsible for either leading and/or supporting the delivery of specific outputs in the RCP which generally focus on: 1) Capacity building 2) Technical assistance and support; 3) Policy coherence; and 4) Knowledge management. The summarized role of CI's execution tasks is provided in Table 6, explained in Section B under project components and detailed in the ToRs in Annex R. Additionally, cognizant that there will be unforeseen needs and requests from countries during the implementation phase, an ad hoc budget for capacity building and technical support has been set aside for Community of Practice in order to enable CI to accommodate and respond to emerging and unforeseen technical needs from participating countries and pull in in-house experts as needed.

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)

The GFIP RCP represents a pioneering effort in forest conservation and regional knowledge-sharing within the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) hotspot. Central to the GFIP RCP is a commitment to collaboration and synergy. The project's goal is to build upon, complement, and enhance both existing and planned initiatives in the region, ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to forest conservation.

As the EA, BirdLife will utilize its extensive network, including its Partnership with the GFWA, for sharing knowledge and best practices. A fundamental aspect of the GFIP RCP is its catalytic role in monitoring and disseminating successful conservation approaches. This involves close coordination and a harmonized approach with the CEPF and the EU's NaturAfrica program, ensuring that efforts are not duplicated but rather complementary. The GFIP RCP PMU will share location, expertise, staffing, and resources with the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (both implemented through BirdLife). Additionally, ongoing discussions with the NaturAfrica Regional Technical Assistance (Agreco) are focused on identifying relevant synergies, involving similar prospects.

The project also emphasizes the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, engaging with civil society, multilateral agencies, academia, and the private sector. Each sector brings unique strengths and perspectives, contributing to a more holistic and effective strategy. Examples include the collaboration with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), particularly in the framework of the Collective Impact Project "West Africa Nature Transformation initiative" spearheaded by BirdLife and the University of Cambridge, with the involvement of IUCN, WCS, RSPB, and FF, among other implementing partners; the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100); and collaboration with the

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to engage the private forestry sector. The actions promoted by these actors are fully embedded into the GFIP approach, by integrating nature into economies and scaling up restoration efforts, and operational complementarities and synergistic capacities will be leveraged to respond to its overarching goals.

Moreover, the GFIP RCP aligns with global initiatives to be implemented in the region, such as the World Bank’s Forest for Development, Climate, and Biodiversity Global Challenge Program (GCP), which focuses on replicable and scalable approaches to address global challenges recently announced at COP28 in UAE. By actively including relevant representatives, particularly from GEF Agencies (e.g., FAO, IUCN, IFAD) or donors (e.g., Rainforest Trust), in governance platforms (working groups, advisory boards) and facilitating joint events, the GFIP RCP fosters a sense of community and shared purpose among various stakeholders. This collaborative environment is conducive to knowledge sharing and capacity building, further enhancing the project's impact.

The GFIP RCP will stand as a model of integrated and collaborative conservation efforts. By leveraging existing initiatives, fostering multi-sectoral partnerships, and focusing on knowledge sharing and capacity building, the project’s approach is not just about conserving biodiversity but also about creating a synergy that amplifies the collective impact of all involved stakeholders, making it a true catalyst for transformation in the region. This is being materialized by secured co-financing and additional ongoing discussions for active synergies with the GFIP.

Table On Core Indicators

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

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)
0	0	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

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

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

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

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

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

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

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

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

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

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

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	0	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				

Duration of accounting				
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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 ₂ e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (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		240		
Male		360		
Total	0	600	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)

The 600 direct beneficiaries of the RCP were estimated as 150 people country for each of the initial three Child Projects, plus an additional 150 people from elsewhere in the region who participate in knowledge activities. This estimate draws on recent comparable training and capacity-building components of other GEF projects (e.g., the FOLUR Child Project in Liberia and planetGOLD in Sierra Leone). Likewise, the target of 40% women reflects the gender breakdown of participants in training and capacity-building activities in these components.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures

CONTEXT

Climate	Low	<p>Risk: Effects of climate change and variability such as flooding could affect the timing, participation and execution of in-person learning and knowledge exchange events. Additionally, this could also impede internet access hence negatively affecting the participation of stakeholders in virtual events.</p> <p>Mitigation: Weather forecasts will inform the timing and location of in-person and virtual person learning and knowledge exchange events</p>
Environmental and Social	Low	<p>Risk: Low engagement, inclusion and representation of key stakeholders from state and non-state actors across the region in events organized by the RCP. This also entails limited representation of marginalised and vulnerable groups in events organised by the RCP</p> <p>Mitigation: • The RCP has developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Mainstreaming Plan and an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism which will be executed during the implementation and progress of the indicators thoroughly tracked and reported on a quarterly basis. • The RCP will work with countries to identify representatives from marginalised and vulnerable groups who will be sponsored by the RCP to participate in the Program’s learning and knowledge exchange events/activities • All Child Projects will be subject to GEF-related environmental and social safeguards through accredited implementation agencies in each country. 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. • With respect to unintended consequences such as displacing deforestation from project areas to other areas, the key mitigation measures are the promotion of landscape-level planning and management approaches; support for efforts to enhance wider policy coherence and tracking this dynamic within M&E frameworks to trigger/inform adaptive management.</p>
Political and Governance	Moderate	<p>Risk: The program will require political buy-in and goodwill in order to ensure that the countries that fall in the Biome work unanimously to govern the Guinean Forests of West Africa. Notably, activities such as enhancing policy coherence and establishing a regional body to govern the Guinean forests require political support from West African governments as well as international donors. Additionally, all countries in the region have policies that create perverse incentives to use natural resources in an unsustainable manner, while enforcement of laws and regulations that support environmental goals and sustainable resource use is often lacking. The history of conflicts in the region could add additional layers of complexity to the successful implementation of the Program’s transboundary areas. Failure to minimize the impact of detrimental policies and maximize enforcement of existing enabling environmental and natural resource laws and regulations puts the full achievement of the Program’s objectives at risk.</p> <p>Mitigation: The Program will build upon the prior involvement with CEPF- and GEF-related investments that have allowed for strong regional and country-specific networks and alliances with key government officials from the local to the national level, as well as with the private sector, CSOs, and international multi-and bilateral</p>

		<p>stakeholders. The PMU 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. Past and current collaboration on transboundary areas will also be built upon to ensure continued progress forward and minimize the risk of inadequate Child Project implementation. Risk: Several macro-economic factors, such as demand for specific commodities, international food, and mineral prices, increasing levels of international debt, and inflationary pressures, could individually or collectively pose risks for the project, including exacerbating the principal drivers of habitat loss and degradation and undermining the viability of livelihood and enterprise interventions in the project. Mitigation: 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. Commodity market volatility coupled with high barriers to entry for value-added products could result in undermining Program objectives, as developing sustainable alternative livelihoods for local communities is a key strategy for achieving Program objectives. By placing IPLCs at the centre of its strategies, the Program can build off two decades of investment and prior experiences of CEPF- and GEF-related initiatives in sustainable development, promoting best practices to improve productivity and profitability while conducting outreach to potential higher-value markets for more sustainably 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, restoration, and sustainable use, and prevent unauthorized and unsustainable land uses, such as illegal logging, or unregulated bushmeat hunting.</p>
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	<p>Risk: Strategies and Policies - The Guinean Forest region is a large, multi-country region with diverse stakeholders and priorities, posing a challenge to the development and implementation of coherent strategies and policies needed for successful project outcomes. At the Program level, working over such a large and diverse area with multiple languages, cultures, and governance systems and a history of conflict, provides several Program-level risks. At the individual country level, given the pressure to deliver economic growth and revenue, there is a risk of lack of buy-in and ownership by high-level officials and government agencies, notably on the proposed body established by the Program under Outcome 4.1, and the proposed activities to increase coherence of national policies of participating countries. Failure to adequately manage</p>

		these risks, notably in transboundary priority areas and among Child Project country national governments, could impede the Program’s ability to achieve its goals, both at the country and regional levels. Mitigation: To mitigate these risks, the Program will build on over two decades of prior investments by GEF and CEPF, which have created several coordination and collaboration mechanisms that the PMU 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 using technologically appropriate dissemination mechanisms.
Technological		N/A
Financial and Business Model		N/A

EXECUTION

Capacity	Low	<p>Risk: Technical design of project or program - Design elements may not function as intended and/or project/program assumptions could prove to be incorrect, leading to project components or the program as a whole underperforming during implementation. Failure to adequately budget for successful outcomes, or for committed counterpart funding to be delivered, could also result in projects or the program not fully achieving objectives. Inadequate technical design is a risk that all programs and projects face, notably those that involve multiple countries spanning a large geographic region. Failure to put into place strong design elements based on solid assumptions at both the Program and Child Project levels, including for committed counterpart funding levels, runs the risk of undermining Program objectives. Mitigation: To mitigate design-related risks, 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 in the region. 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 and Child Project components, including regular meetings from the local to regional level. 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 (adaptive management). Lessons learned from prior programs and projects will guide the budgeting process, thereby mitigating the risk that budgets are misaligned with objectives and commensurate activities The PMU 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 any budget shortfalls. Risk: Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability - Countries in the region have a number of institutional and technical capacity gaps, some substantial, as well as a lack of funding. There is also weak coordination within national governments, as well as with regional</p>
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		<p>entities, such as AFR100, that implement projects at both the country and regional levels. Given the institutional and technical capacity gaps, funding shortfalls and weak coordination links present in countries across the region, the Program faces substantial risks with key partners, such as IPLCs and national and regional governing bodies being unable to adequately fulfil the roles and responsibilities designated to them with the Program’s design. As a result, Program objectives run the risk of not being fully achieved, notably support for learning, capacity-building and knowledge management needs</p> <p>Mitigation: The Program’s design explicitly recognizes the need for capacity building, fundraising and coordination throughout the region and incorporates strategies and mechanisms to address these gaps. The PMU addresses capacity gaps by promoting region-wide cooperation and knowledge sharing, as well as through targeted technical and fundraising support. Specific Child projects will also identify capacity-building, coordination and resource gaps, and coordinate efforts with the PMU to direct resources and technical expertise where appropriate and strengthen coordination links between Child Projects and local, national and regional stakeholders</p>
Fiduciary	Moderate	<p>Risk: Financial Management and Procurement - National governments across the region often struggle to adequately enact and fund policies that support conservation, as the economic development and revenue needs are substantial. This could result in counterpart support/co-financing not being delivered either fully or in part, undermining Child Project and/or Program goals. Mitigation: To mitigate these risks, 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 PMU, and adaptive management mechanisms will allow for resource reallocation in the event of shortfalls in committed support.</p>
Stakeholder	Low	<p>Risk: Program and Child Project success is contingent upon effective stakeholder engagement and commitment to achieving country- and regional-level goals. Ineffective or incomplete engagement processes could result in a full or partial failure to successfully implement project-level activities. This includes overreliance on virtual engagement platforms, which could be undermined by key stakeholders not having reliable access to the IT infrastructure needed to successfully facilitate dialogue. The role of stakeholders, notably governments (from local to national) and IPLCs, is critical to the Program fully achieving its objectives. Stakeholder willingness to share data and other key information with Child Projects is particularly important, as lack of robust and timely information undermines the Program at various levels. Not fully and effectively engaging key stakeholders to align their interests with the Program’s objectives will likely fail to fully realize anticipated outcomes. Mitigation: To mitigate stakeholder engagement risks, the Program will learn from and build upon prior investments and lessons learned in the region over the last two decades, which resulted in a broad range</p>

		<p>of strong stakeholder relationships and effective engagement mechanisms. The PMU is specifically tasked with building synergies and coherence between projects, making effective stakeholder engagement a key responsibility to achieve these goals. Throughout implementation, the RCU will coordinate closely with Child Projects to ensure key stakeholders are being effectively engaged and able to deliver upon commitments, hold regular meetings through technologically appropriate platforms and forums, disseminate knowledge, and build capacity where needed. Strict data privacy policies will be followed, as will commitments to open-access knowledge and learning sharing from Program databases, websites and other information-sharing mechanisms. Safeguard requirements for Child Projects will include the preparation of stakeholder engagement plans, subject to review per GEF and Lead Agency standards. Risk: A recurrence of the coronavirus pandemic would impede the occurrence of the RCP’s in-person learning and knowledge-sharing events since international and local travel will be restricted hence rendering the target participants unavailable. The effect of the Coronavirus will also result in the delay/halting of execution activities at the country level. Mitigation: 1) The RCP will hold virtual learning and knowledge-sharing events whenever international and local travel is restricted due to the Coronavirus. 2) When hosting in-person learning and knowledge-sharing events: the RCP will comply with health guidelines provided by Global and National health institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministries of Health of the respective country</p>
Other	Low	<p>Risk: A recurrence of the coronavirus pandemic would impede the occurrence of the RCP’s in-person learning and knowledge-sharing events since international and local travel will be restricted hence rendering the target participants unavailable. The effect of the Coronavirus will also result in the delay/halting of execution activities at the country level. Mitigation: 1) The RCP will hold virtual learning and knowledge-sharing events whenever international and local travel is restricted due to the Coronavirus. 2) When hosting in-person learning and knowledge-sharing events: the RCP will comply with health guidelines provided by Global and National health institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministries of Health of the respective country</p>
Overall Risk Rating	Low	<p>In conclusion, 71% of the identified risks are rated low because, overall, the RCP activities will have no or minimal adverse environmental and social impacts. Furthermore, the 29% of risks that are rated moderate are related to fiduciary aspects, politics, and governance. Robust mitigation measures have been proposed to address these moderate risks, ensuring that the RCP leverages partnerships and secures political goodwill and buy-in from state and non-state actors.</p>

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

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies, including the specific integrated program priorities, and country and regional priorities, Describe how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements, such as through NDCs, NBSAPs, etc.

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

(max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The purpose of the proposed Regional Coordination Project is to deliver the GFIP, which has as its 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*. 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 RCP will help GFIP Child Projects pursue systemic transformation in how the region addresses shared forest management challenges.

The RCP 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. The RCP will provide policy-level support to enhance national and regional coherence and capacity, helping the region's countries collectively move towards more sustainable, resilient economies that are better able to respond to priorities for addressing climate change and biodiversity (NDCs, NBSAPs, NAPs, etc). With respect to GEF-8 Focal Area strategies defined in the GEF-8 Programming Directions, the GFIP 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 RCP components and their alignment with GEF-8 programming strategies and regional objectives include:

- **Regional cooperation and learning:** The program will support multi-stakeholder engagement and regional cooperation and learning through the RCP. The RCP 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 RCP 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.

- **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.
- **Sustainable finance:** The program will build on GEF’s longstanding commitment to ensure sufficient and predictable financial resources for protected area systems. Specifically, the RCP will build on prior investments, strategies and experiences with innovative financing mechanisms in the region, such as the REDD+ project in Sierra Leone’s Gola Rainforest National Park, and strengthen capacity in the three (and potentially five) Child Projects to develop and implement new, sustainable mechanisms, including support from the private sector. These measures align with GEF-8’s focal area strategy objective of mobilizing increased domestic resources for biodiversity conservation, including the use of blended finance and private sector investments to increase in-country resources and build technical capacity. The measures also align with the Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program’s objective of developing financial incentives for forest protection.

Thus, the RCP will directly contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by advancing Goals A, B and D (relating to conservation, sustainable use and adequate implementation, respectively), and several GBF targets, specifically: Targets 1 (spatial planning), 2 (30% restoration), 3 (biodiversity conservation, including 30x30 for PAs-OECMs), 4 (extinctions avoided), 5 (use, harvest, trade of wild species), 8 (climate change), 9 (management of wild species), 10 (sustainable aquaculture, agriculture, forestry), 11 (ecosystem services), 14 (policy and planning), 18 (reduce harmful incentives), 19 (financing), 20 (capacity building), 21 (knowledge sharing), 22 (IPLCs), and 23 (gender).

Consistency and Alignment with CI Institutional Priorities

The RCP seeks to “enhance and catalyze effective transboundary forest governance and watershed management through a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing solutions, and innovation.” The RCP will support and aid the Child Projects to achieve their respective indicator Core Indicator targets outlined below. The core indicators were defined during the concept note phase (see Table 8) and will likely be updated during the PPG Phase of the Child Projects.

Table 8: Child Project Core Indicators

Core Indicators	Guinea (Conakry) (IUCN)	Liberia (CI)	Sierra Leone (CI)	Togo (FAO)	Guinea Bissau (IUCN)	Regional Project direct beneficiaries	TOTAL	
1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (Hectares)	264,539	445,850	71,000	275,000	105,767	0	1,162,156	
3 Area of land restored (Hectares)	7,000	0	17,433	5,000	15,000	0	44,433	
4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas)(Hectares)	113,134	89,174	55,000	100,000	110,767	0	478,075	
6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO2e)	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	11,029,004	16,322,409	0	30,851,413	
11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment								% (Male and Female)
Women	5,000	14,000	23,290	20,000	26,000	240	88,530	48
Men	5,000	16,000	22,377	30,000	24,000	360	97,737	52
TOTAL	10,000	30,000	45,667	50,000	50,000	600	186,267	100

In summary, the RCP will undertake the below to enable the Child Projects to achieve their target core indicators:

- Coordinate the Child Projects, countries in the biome, and state and non-state actors at various levels in order to enhance multi-stakeholder dialogues, catalyze additional investments in the biome, and foster learning, and knowledge sharing.
- Enhance learning and knowledge sharing.
- Provide tailored capacity-building support to Child Projects.
- Provide tailored technical assistance to Child Projects
- Explore innovative sustainable finance solutions.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the Program and Regional project

The aggregated Core Indicator targets of the Guinean Forests Child Projects translate to the GEF's Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) under the Biodiversity Conservation, Land Degradation, and Climate Change thematic areas which correspond to CI's focus areas namely: a) Nature for Climate, b) Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes, c) Innovation in Science and Finance. A detailed description of this alignment is provided below.

NATURE FOR CLIMATE:

CI is working towards supporting the world to *"avoid 5+ gigatonnes (Gt) CO₂ emissions per year by preventing the loss of high-carbon ecosystems, with zero loss of all irrecoverable carbon by 2030"*. The Guinean Forest Biome is a high-carbon ecosystem hence this CI-Led Program will enhance its effective conservation and governance and prevent its destruction resulting in zero loss of its irrecoverable carbon.

CI also seeks *"to mitigate 5+ Gt CO₂ per year through restoration and sustainable management of natural ecosystems by 2030"*. Through the support of the CI-led Regional Project, the participating countries (Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo) will cumulatively mitigate **at least 30.9 million CO₂e by 2029**, restore approximately 44,433 Hectares of land; ensure at least 478,075 Hectares of land (excluding protected areas) are under improved practices.

Notably, CI through the Moore Center for Science (MSC), Global Policy Division, Conservation Stewards Program (CSP), and the CI-Africa Restoration Expert are directly involved in the execution of the Regional project and will provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to the Child Projects and stakeholders in areas that will result in the reduction of agricultural drivers of deforestation; foster restoration; secure irrecoverable carbon in this high-carbon Biome; and support regional policy coherence which could potentially ensure the West African tropical forest country Nationally Determined Contributions reflect at least 50% of national mitigation potential for natural climate solutions and at least 5 countries in the biome have coherent policies that maximize natural climate solution potential; enhance technical capacity amongst the Child Projects on innovative sustainable finance approaches.

SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES

Under this focus area, CI seeks to protect essential ecosystems and unlock sustainable financing. The Guinean Forests of West Africa are a globally recognized critical ecosystem by virtue of being an Intact Forest Landscape hence CI's involvement in its conservation and governance is imperative and feeds into the objective of this focus area. Additionally, under this focus area, CI seeks to support countries to unlock financing to ensure integrated conservation is sustainable over time and can adapt to changing demands and pressures. The regional project will pursue innovative sustainable financing solutions at global and regional levels by coordinating donors and the private sector and will build the technical capacity of the countries on innovative sustainable finance approaches. Lastly, all the program's core indicators tabulated above are directly aligned with this focus area.

INNOVATION IN SCIENCE AND FINANCE

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

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; **Yes**

Co-financier; **Yes**

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; **Yes**

Executor or co-executor; **Yes**

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the Child project?

Yes

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

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed child project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Low		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided. This includes budget for linking with and participation in knowledge exchange activities organized through the coordination platform.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

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

The objective of the GFIP is to protect and improve the effective governance of the Guinean Forests in order to maximize global environmental benefits (GEBs), contribute to the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. By protecting biodiversity and priority forest ecosystems, the Child Projects will contribute to climate change resilience and food and water security. In addition, the Child Projects will benefit at least 85,667 people through training, development of new income-generating opportunities, and incentives for sustainable practices and restoration.

The RCP will help the Child Projects achieve these results and put in place enduring solutions to maintain GEBs beyond the life of the GFIP by helping them to mobilize additional resources (in the form of both co-finance and additional partners to reinforce implementation and long-term financing solutions). It also will strengthen the regional policy foundation to buttress institutional strengthening and policy enhancement in each of the participating countries. Moreover, by strengthening the region's participation in global policy processes, the RCP will further empower Guinean Forest countries to shape and contribute to the collective global pursuit of environmental benefits. Thus, through cost effective, synergistic, whole-of-biome progress on management and conservation of Intact Forest Landscapes, the RCP will amplify and reinforce the human well-being benefits from the Child Projects. Finally, RCP activities under Component 1 will directly result in at least 600 state and non-state direct beneficiaries (at least 40% women) from the Program's virtual and in-person learning, knowledge exchange events, and technical assistance.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
CI	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	Grant	2,973,248.00	267,592.00	3,240,840.00
CI	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	Grant	991,083.00	89,198.00	1,080,281.00
CI	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	Grant	1,585,733.00	142,716.00	1,728,449.00
CI	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	Grant	671,954.00	60,476.00	732,430.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						6,222,018.00	559,982.00	6,782,000.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested? true

PPG Amount (\$) 200000

PPG Agency Fee (\$) 18000

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
CI	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	95,572.00	8,602.00	104,174.00

CI	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	31,857.00	2,867.00	34,724.00
CI	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	50,972.00	4,587.00	55,559.00
CI	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	21,599.00	1,944.00	23,543.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					200,000.00	18,000.00	218,000.00

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
Total GEF Resources					0.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
CFB Guinean Forests IP	GET	6,222,018.00	40658218
Total Project Cost		6,222,018.00	40,658,218.00

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	Conservation International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	937036
GEF Agency	The World Bank	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1600000
Recipient Country Government	Mano River Union	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	440112
Others	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) – AFR100	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	600000

GEF Agency	The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2600000
Civil Society Organization	African Wildlife Foundation	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	900000
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International	Grant	Investment mobilized	184990
Others	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)	Grant	Investment mobilized	10250000
Civil Society Organization	Rainforest Trust	Grant	Investment mobilized	12103233
Civil Society Organization	World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	956829
Civil Society Organization	Forest Stewardship Council	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100000
Civil Society Organization	ProForest	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	990000
Others	University of Cambridge	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3644800
Others	TetraTech ARD-USAID West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED) Program	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4851218
Total Co-financing				40,658,218.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

CI recognizes "Investment Mobilized" funding from grants, as these are typically time-bound, possess a specific scope of work, and are not part of a recurrent budget. The investment mobilized, defined as co-financing that excludes recurrent expenditures, is derived from two primary sources:

- a. Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF): This fund is allocated to support the CEPF Regional Implementation Team for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot. It focuses on knowledge management, capacity building, communication, coordination, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning at the regional level. Grants will be directed to civil society organizations to showcase innovative financing and conservation solutions in and around protected areas in the Guinean Forests, particularly in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This co-financing aligns with the CEPF Long-Term Vision, which aims to connect and sustainably manage the Guinean Forests, supporting biodiversity conservation, community livelihoods, and resilience to climate change. It is fully aligned with the GFIP overarching goals and will contribute to achieving the project results as a new investment. This involves

engaging Civil Society Organizations, ranging from International NGOs to local groups and vulnerable communities, ensuring that interventions are harmonized and complementary to the GFIP intervention.

b. BirdLife International: This organization will contribute USD 143,194 as co-financing, covering partial payments for staff roles in Communications, Knowledge Management, and Outreach; Safeguards. These positions are co-funded by other BirdLife-led projects and BirdLife core budgets, focusing on small granting mechanisms in and around the GFIP landscape. The staff, to be recruited by Year 2 of GFIP RCP implementation, will be in full-time positions, sharing tasks between this project and others. The percentage charged to the GEF corresponds to the estimated workload necessary to provide the expertise required for achieving the expected results in this project. Additionally, a minimum of USD 41,796 will be allocated for operational expenses related to Regional Workshops and Meetings, and Stewardship missions in the Hotspot. These contributions are significant as they enhance capacities in the Project Management Unit and increase stakeholder engagement for the conservation of the Guinean Forests, thereby contributing to the project results as new investment.

c. Rainforest Trust: \$12,103,233 in grant from eight projects in West Africa representing; Liberia (\$7,483,915) , Ghana (\$692,130), Guinea (\$3,206,248), and Nigeria (\$720,940).

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENT

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Coordinator	Date	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator		Orissa Samaroo		osamaroo@conservation.org
Project Coordinator		Charity Nalyanya		cnalyanya@conservation.org

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

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document. For the Integrated Programs' global/regional coordination child project, please include the program-wide results framework, inclusive of results specific to the coordination child project. For any country child project, please ensure that relevant program level indicators are included.

Objective:	To enhance and catalyze effective transboundary and biome-wide forest governance through a coordinated programmatic approach that entails learning and knowledge sharing, capacity building, leveraging partnerships, regional policy coherence, sustainable financing solutions, and innovation.
Indicator(s):	Percentage of survey respondents rating the project's technical assistance, learning, and knowledge-sharing tools, and resources as useful or above (Target: 90%)

		Percentage of survey respondents rating coordination and support services as satisfactory or above (Target: 90%)	
Expected Outcomes and Indicators	Project Baseline	End of Project Target	Expected Outputs and Indicators
Component 1: Learning, knowledge management, capacity building, and communication			
<p>Outcome 1.1: Enhanced knowledge and capacity among multi-sectoral state and non-state actors and donors for effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa, including cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion and gender.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1a:</i> Number of state and non-state direct beneficiaries from the Project's virtual and in-person learning, knowledge exchange events, and technical assistance (disaggregated by gender).</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1b:</i> Percentage of beneficiaries who report having better knowledge/capacity to implement gender-responsive actions in their projects as a result of RCP activities and resources.</p>	<p>Baseline 1.1a: No GFIP beneficiaries.</p> <p>Baseline 1.1b: 0%</p>	<p>Target 1.1a: At least 600 state and non-state direct beneficiaries (at least 40% women) from the Project's virtual and in-person learning, knowledge exchange events, and technical assistance.</p> <p>Target 1.1b: At least 75% of direct beneficiaries report having better knowledge/capacity to implement gender-responsive actions in their projects as a result of RCP activities and resources. (450 direct beneficiaries; at least 40% women)</p>	<p>Output 1.1.1: A gender-responsive and inclusive GFIP knowledge management, communications, and branding strategy developed and executed, including a knowledge portal.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive and inclusive communications and branding strategies developed and executed, including a knowledge portal.</p> <p>Target 1.1.1: One gender-responsive and inclusive strategy, including a knowledge portal.</p> <p>Output 1.1.2: Participatory virtual and in-person learning, regional knowledge exchange, and sharing events/webinars delivered by the Project.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1.2:</i> Number of events/webinars delivered per year.</p> <p>Target 1.1.2: At least 10 events/webinars executed by the end of the project (2 events/webinars per year), with at least 2 addressing social inclusion and gender.</p> <p>Output 1.1.3: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the technical capacity of state and non-state stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Indicator 1.1.3:</i> Number of state and non-state stakeholders from national/regional levels who have benefitted from the program's technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives (disaggregated by gender)</p>

			Target 1.1.3: 600 beneficiaries (at least 40% women)
Component 2: Governance and coordination			
<p>Outcome 2.1: Enhanced coherence and synergies between Child Projects and regional initiatives including GEF IPs to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.1:</i> Number of partnerships built/strengthened to support effective governance of the Guinean Forests of West Africa.</p>	<p>Baseline 2.1: No partnerships between GFIP and other initiatives.</p>	<p>Target 2.1: At least 6 partnerships between GFIP and other regional initiatives.</p>	<p>Output 2.1.1: Coordination and cross-pollination enhanced between the GFIP and other IPs such as the 4 Critical Forests IPs (especially the Congo IP), planetGOLD IP, and Ecosystem Restoration IP including on social inclusion and gender topics.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.1.1:</i> Number of coordination and knowledge exchange sessions conducted with other IPs.</p> <p>Target 2.1.1: At least 3 coordination and knowledge exchange sessions with other IPs, with at least one dedicated to gender and inclusion.</p>
<p>Outcome 2.2: Enhanced governance of the biome through platforms for dialogue and transboundary collaboration between countries on forest and watershed management.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.2:</i> Number of inter-governmental sessions facilitated by the RCP to discuss enhanced collaborative governance of the Guinean Forest biome.</p>	<p>Baseline 2.2: No inter-governmental sessions on enhanced collaborative governance of the Guinean Forest biome.</p>	<p>Target 2.2: At least 10 intergovernmental sessions facilitated by the RCP (2 per year).</p>	<p>Output 2.2.1: Agenda and schedule prepared for 6-monthly cycle of inter-governmental sessions to discuss enhanced collaborative governance of the Guinean Forest biome.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.2.1:</i> Number of agenda and schedule packages prepared in year 1 of the project.</p> <p>Target 2.2.1: One agenda and schedule package prepared in year 1 of the project.</p> <p>Output 2.2.2: Tailored technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen technical and institutional capacity on collaborative management of transboundary watersheds.</p> <p><i>Indicator 2.2.2:</i> Number of tailored capacity building / technical assistance events on collaborative management of transboundary watersheds.</p> <p>Target 2.2.2: At least 2 capacity building / technical assistance events by the end of the project; at least 40% of participants are women.</p>

Component 3: Financing solutions and innovation			
<p>Outcome 3.1: Enhanced donor and private sector partner coordination at global and regional levels for innovative sustainable financing.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1:</i> Number of donors and private sector partners supporting and engaging with the Guinean Forests Program (Regional Coordination Project).</p>	<p>Baseline 3.1: 0 donors or private sector partners engaging with GFIP.</p>	<p>Target 3.1: 2 donors and/or private sector partners engaging with GFIP.</p>	<p>Output 3.1.1: Donor roundtable activities organized/supported by the Project.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1.1:</i> Number of donor roundtable activities organized/supported by the Project.</p> <p>Target 3.1.1: At least 5 donor roundtable activities (1 per year).</p> <p>Output 3.1.2: Partnerships between countries and investors/donors strengthened/built.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1.2:</i> Number of partnerships built/strengthened between countries and investors/donors.</p> <p>Target 3.1.2: At least two partnerships between countries and investors/donors built/strengthened by the end of the project.</p>
<p>Outcome 3.2: Enhanced technical capacity amongst the Child Projects on innovative sustainable finance approaches.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.2:</i> Number of Child Projects supported with new sustainable finance expertise.</p>	<p>Baseline 3.2: 0 Child Projects supported with new expertise.</p>	<p>Target 3.2: At least 2 Child Projects supported with new expertise.</p>	<p>Output 3.2.1: Guidance provided to Child Projects on innovative, gender-inclusive and responsive sustainable finance approaches.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.2.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive training and technical support events provided to Child Projects.</p> <p>Target 3.2.1: At least 5 gender-inclusive and responsive training and technical support events provided by the end of the project.</p>
Component 4: Support for regional policy coherence			
<p>Outcome 4.1: Enhanced policy coherence of national forest governance policy goals with regional and international policy goals/targets.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive roadmaps for continuous regional efforts to enhance policy coherence for</p>	<p>Baseline 4.1: Limited guidance on continuous regional efforts to enhance policy coherence for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest biome.</p>	<p>Target 4.1: One gender-responsive roadmap for continuous regional efforts to enhance policy coherence for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest biome.</p>	<p>Output 4.1.1: Options analysis for an ongoing regional policy coordination mechanism focused on the conservation and sustainable management of forest landscapes, incorporating social inclusion and gender considerations.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.1.1:</i> Number of analyses completed (disaggregated by those that</p>

<p>protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the Guinean Forest biome.</p>			<p>incorporated gender and inclusion considerations).</p> <p>Target 4.1.1: 1 Options analysis for a regional policy coordination mechanism, which incorporates gender and inclusion considerations.</p>
<p>Outcome 4.2: Strengthened collective voice for Guinean Forest countries in international policy arenas.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.2:</i> Number of multi-country-hosted side events facilitated by GFIP at international policy forums.</p>	<p>Baseline 4.2: Zero multi-country-hosted side events facilitated by GFIP at international policy forums.</p>	<p>Target 4.2: At least four multi-country-hosted side events facilitated by GFIP at international policy forums (1 per year, as of year 2 of the project).</p>	<p>Output 4.2.1: Collective and coordinated country participation in international platforms facilitated.</p> <p><i>Indicator 4.2.1:</i> Number of pre-conference coordination sessions facilitated by the RCP.</p> <p>Target 4.2.1: At least 4 pre-conference coordination sessions facilitated (1 per year, as of year 2 of the project).</p>
Component 5: Guinean Forests Integrated Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)			
<p>Outcome 5.1: A gender-responsive and integrated monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.</p> <p><i>Indicator 5.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive M&E frameworks for the GFIP.</p>	<p>Baseline 5.1: No M&E framework for the GFIP.</p>	<p>Target 5.1: One functional gender-responsive M&E framework in place for the GFIP.</p>	<p>Output 5.1.1: Periodic Program M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency/GEFSEC.</p> <p><i>Indicator 5.1.1:</i> Number of Annual program progress reports submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC.</p> <p>Target: 6 program progress reports submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC (1 per year of operation of the GFIP).</p> <p>Output 5.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.</p> <p><i>Indicator 5.1.2:</i> Number of Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluations commissioned by CI-GEF.</p> <p>Target: One Mid-Term Review and One Terminal Evaluation commissioned by CI-GEF.</p>
Component 6: Regional Coordination Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)			

<p>Outcome 6.1: An integrated and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework implemented for the Regional Coordination Project.</p> <p><i>Indicator 6.1:</i> Number of gender-responsive M&E frameworks for the Regional Coordination Project.</p>	<p>Baseline 6.1: No M&E framework for the Regional Coordination Project.</p>	<p>Target 6.1: One functional gender-responsive M&E framework in place for the Regional Coordination Project.</p>	<p>Output 6.1.1: Periodic Project M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC.</p> <p><i>Indicator 6.1.1:</i> Number of Annual project Progress Implementation Reports (PIRs) submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC.</p> <p>Target: 6 PIRs submitted to CI-GEF/GEFSEC (1 per year).</p> <p>Output 6.1.2: Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation conducted for the regional coordination project.</p> <p><i>Indicator 6.1.2:</i> Number of Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluations commissioned by CI-GEF.</p> <p>Target: One Mid-Term Review and One Terminal Evaluation commissioned by CI-GEF.</p>
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ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

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

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Consultant for CEO Endorsement Package	58,888.00	54,888.00	4,000.00
Personnel for Project Design and Coordination -(Personnel time for Stakeholder consultation, Validation Workshop, Technical review of the CEO Endorsement package)	105,150.00	59,099.56	46,050.00
Travel and Workshops	35,962.00	32,154.80	3,807.20
Total	200,000.00	146,142.36	53,857.20

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

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

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS DOCUMENTS INCLUDING RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

20240306 CI_GEF GFB IP Regional Second ESS Screening Report
 20240306 GFIP RCP Secondary Safeguard Screening Form-clean
 Accountability & Grievance Mechanism (AGM)
 GENDER MAINSTREAMING PLAN (GMP)
 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDeq.)											Responsible Entity	
		Component 1	Component 2		Component 3		Component 4		Component 5		M&E ^a			Total (USDeq.)
		Outcome 1.1	Outcome 2.1	Outcome 2.2	Outcome 3.1	Outcome 3.2	Outcome 4.1	Outcome 4.2	(O5.1)	Sub-Total	Component 6 (O6.1)	PMC		
Personnel and Professional Services	Birdlife Executing Staff-Technical Lead	\$ 89,035	\$ 89,035	\$ 81,615	\$ 89,035	\$ 89,035	\$ 89,035	\$ 81,615	\$ 81,615	\$ 690,020	\$ -	\$ 51,937	\$ 741,957	BirdLife International
	Birdlife Executing Staff-Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	\$ 23,273	\$ 11,637	\$ 11,637	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 292,681	\$ 339,228	\$ 45,751	\$ -	\$ 384,979	BirdLife International
	Birdlife Executing Staff-Finance, Administration and Grants Management	\$ 45,582	\$ 30,276	\$ 30,276	\$ 30,276	\$ 30,276	\$ 30,276	\$ 30,276	\$ 33,304	\$ 260,542	\$ -	\$ 72,830	\$ 333,372	BirdLife International
	Birdlife Executing Staff-Environmental and	\$ 55,887	\$ 33,532	\$ 22,355	\$ 22,355	\$ 22,355	\$ 22,355	\$ 22,355	\$ 22,355	\$ 223,549	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 223,549	BirdLife International

	Social Safeguards, Gender and Inclusion													
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Communications and Knowledge Management Officer	\$ 148,828	\$ 103,077	\$ -	\$ 45,751	\$ 30,501	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 328,157	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 328,157	BirdLife International
	Birdlife Executing Staff- Forest technical, Ecosystems Services, Spatial planning in-house experts	\$ 34,685	\$ 26,070	\$ 9,442	\$ 62,267	\$ 41,020	\$ 46,235	\$ 34,384	\$ -	\$ 254,103	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 254,103	BirdLife International
	Service Provider- Annual Project Audit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,680	\$ 40,680	BirdLife International
	Service provider - Online sharing platform (Website licensing, maintenance, IT support)	\$ 113,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 113,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 113,000	BirdLife International
	Service Provider - Communications design and editing	\$ 50,565	\$ 44,748	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 95,313	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 95,313	BirdLife International
	Service provider - Branding, communications strategy	\$ -	\$ 113,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 113,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 113,000	BirdLife International
	Service provider - Biodiversity Mainstreaming & Finance, Policy	\$ 16,198	\$ 71,187	\$ 92,547	\$ 56,364	\$ 59,766	\$ 82,262	\$ 82,964	\$ 22,355	\$ 483,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 483,643	BirdLife International
	International Consultant - Mid-term Review	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 85,000	BirdLife International
	International Consultant - Final Evaluation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 85,000	BirdLife International
1	CI Community of Practice	\$ 281,981	\$ 62,050	\$ 95,892	\$ 70,388	\$ 69,178	\$ 82,143	\$ 71,253	\$ -	\$ 732,885	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 732,885	Conservation International
	Service Provider - Annual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	Conservation International

	Project Audit (CI)													
	CI Executing Staff - Community Based Conservation	\$ 151,055	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 151,055	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 151,055	Conservation International
	CI Executing Staff - Resilience Capacity Building.	\$ 78,864	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78,424	\$ -	\$ 157,288	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 157,288	Conservation International
	CI Executing Staff - Policy and Government Affairs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 44,404	\$ 44,592	\$ -	\$ 88,996	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 88,996	Conservation International
3	CI Executing Staff - Transboundary Watershed Management	\$ 36,375	\$ -	\$ 41,587	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 77,962	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 77,962	Conservation International
	CI Executing Staff - Restoration	\$ -	\$ 14,927	\$ 16,215	\$ 15,070	\$ 15,695	\$ 15,790	\$ 15,872	\$ -	\$ 93,569	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 93,569	Conservation International
	CI Executing Staff - CI Finance Lead	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,465	\$ 35,465	Conservation International
	Travel-Stewardship, donor engagement (public, private)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,222	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,222	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,222	BirdLife International
	Travel budget for project lead. Participation in Global events (x 1 staff) and events for other IP's for lessons sharing	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 24,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,000	BirdLife International
	Steering Committee Meetings	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	BirdLife International
	Coordinate and Facilitate participation in political and technical engagement events and meetings at regional level for common policy positions	\$ 16,302	\$ -	\$ 16,302	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 98,566	\$ -	\$ 131,170	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,170	BirdLife International
Travel, Meetings and Workshops														

Grants and Agreements	2	Inception workshop (60 participants) ²	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,916	\$ -	\$ 14,916	BirdLife International	
		Facilitate participation (5pp) of marginalized groups (CSO, IPLC, women groups, Youth groups) to Annual Meetings, Regional Forum, and Closeout workshops	\$ -	\$ 42,375	\$ 42,375	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 84,750	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 84,750	BirdLife International
		Closeout workshop/ Final Regional Forum (60 participants)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,994	\$ -	\$ 55,994	BirdLife International
	6	Workshop - Organization of the Regional Guinean Forests Forum (150 participants)	\$ 52,460	\$ 52,460	\$ -	\$ 52,460	\$ -	\$ 52,460	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 209,840	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 209,840	
		Capacity Building Trainings and Workshops x2	\$ 31,431	\$ -	\$ 31,431	\$ -	\$ 31,431	\$ -	\$ 31,431	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,724	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,724	BirdLife International
		Sub-grant - Agroforestry Knowledge & Best Practice Dissemination	\$ 225,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 45,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	
		Sub-grant - Transboundary Watershed Management, Collaboration, Coordination, and Cooperation	\$ 35,394	\$ 27,720	\$ 170,765	\$ 5,544	\$ -	\$ 11,088	\$ 5,544	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 256,055	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 256,055	
		Sub-grant - Coordination & Synergies for Enhanced Forest Governance and Protection	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	

	through Private Sector Engagement & Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management Practices													
	Sug-grant - Tools Promotion, Training & Facilitation for Carbon Assessments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	
Equipment	Project staff laptops (5)						\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,544	\$ 14,544	BirdLife International
	Project camera, microphone, printer, scanner									\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,160	\$ 4,160	BirdLife International
	Specific equipment - Drone for aerial photos and videos	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000	BirdLife International
Other Operating Cost	5 Office expenses, internet, IT, utilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,432	\$ 22,432	BirdLife International
	Consumables (Printing, etc)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,738	\$ 1,738	BirdLife International
Grand Total		1,498,415	747,594	662,939	576,232	569,757	521,548	597,776	564,810	5,739,071	186,661	296,286	6,222,018	

Footnotes:

- The Community of Practice enables CI, as the lead implementing agency for the Regional IP, to respond to emerging and unforeseen technical needs of participating countries by drawing on additional in-house expertise as requested by the EA. It also supports capacity building among stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.
- As a regional coordination project, the majority of the work will happen once the Child Projects have started implementation. An in-person inception workshop in Year 1 will be supported mostly by co-financing, otherwise will be held virtually.
- CI was selected to lead the GFIP based a multitude of factors including on its demonstrated technical comparative advantage. These in-house experts have been identified to support the delivery of specific outputs and their ToRs can be found in Annex R of the ProDoc.
- The project has two monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components: Component 5 at programme level and Component 6 at regional child coordination level. It includes both mid-term and final evaluations. As a result, the M&E costs for this project exceed the percentage targets set by GEF policy for standard projects. To accommodate this, the budget lines for M&E activities have been split between these two components. Office expenses and supplies refer to the costs incurred in running a physical office, such as utilities (like electricity and water), office supplies (such as paper, pens, and other materials). These expenses support the general functioning of the country office and its projects. They are not directly tied to any one project but benefit the overall portfolio of projects. To fairly distribute these costs across different projects, a consistent methodology is used, ensuring that the costs are allocated equitably to the different donors. A portion of these expenses is charged to the Project Management Costs (PMC), while the remainder is distributed across project components, as they contribute to supporting project activities in the field.
- sub-regional event for political and technical engagement including all stakeholders from national and local governments, NGOs, IPLCs, Womens Groups, Youth groups, and forest sector private sector actors for coherent vision for conservation Guinean Forests of West Africa

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.

Section	GEF Council Comments	Responses <i>(how and where the comment has been addressed)</i>
Germany	<p>Germany approves the following PIF in the work program but asks that the following comments are taken into account.</p> <p>Germany welcomes this proposal, as it focusses on an important forest area, which does not always get the attention it deserves. At the same time, Germany has the following comments that it suggests being addressed in the next phase of finalizing the program proposal.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvements to be made during the drafting of the final program proposal:</p> <p>Germany appreciates that the program is working on forest governance, having different approaches for forests inside and outside of protected areas while working on improved livelihoods for the local population.</p> <p>Germany suggests reconsidering if there are parts of the program that can be downsized without compromising the targeted positive effects on forests and livelihoods in order to match ambition and the potential impact.</p> <p>Furthermore, the success of the program relies on underfunded governmental forest and protected area management agencies. Therefore, more emphasis should be put on capacity building and investments to enhance the infrastructure and equipment of those agencies.</p> <p>The European Union’s PAPF and Germany’s TGS program seem to have similar objectives. Germany</p>	<p>2) CI GEF Agency and Executing Agency BirdLife have worked extensively with Executing Partners to rightsize activities and budgets to match ambition.</p> <p>3) Using a demand-driven approach, the RCP will provide technical assistance and capacity-building support on needs identified by the Child Projects. This is expected to include specific investments in enhancing the capacity of government forest and protected area</p>

	<p>suggests coordinating intensively with those programs.</p>	<p>management agencies. Capacity building and technical assistance will be delivered through outputs 1.1.5, 2.2.1, and 3.2.1. Component 3 of the regional child project focuses on finding sustainable financing solutions</p> <p>4) The Project design has been guided by lessons from the EU Funded programs such as The Preservation of Biodiversity and Fragile Ecosystems, Governance and Climate Change in West Africa (PAPBio) (2014-2018), The Support Program for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor) (2019-2024)(among others, including the GIZ-supported Tai – Grebo-Krahn – Sapo (TGS) program). During the implementation phase, we will build on the results of these Programs and others including the ongoing EU Funded NaturAfrica Program (2021-2027) to maximize cross-fertilization and learning and to coordinate the programming of technical assistance and capacity building. This is noted in the baseline (<i>Linkages with other relevant Initiatives/projects</i>); description of stakeholders and roles (Table 3) and remarks after Table 3; planned activities to convene donor roundtables (Output 3.1.1); coordination of knowledge management and dissemination (p. 72).</p>
Canada		
	<p>Deforestation/Small-Scale Farming/Soil (MSF):</p> <p>Recommend including a new indicator that shows the net impact of the Programs in halting and reversing ecosystem loss, in particular deforestation, in particular for the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program and the Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator Program.</p> <p>The current core indicators can show only the positive impacts of the Programs (e.g. CI3, CI4, CI5 ad CI6) but fail to consider any negative change such as deforestation leakage (i.e. improved protection/conservation in one area leading to more deforestation in other or new areas), which may be directly or indirectly related to policy reforms, a whole-of-government strategy, integrated approaches or others that the GEF Programs try to achieve.</p> <p>GEF should consider including a new core indicator for the two Programs, or at least a project level-indicator for the projects that aim to halt and reverse deforestation:</p>	<p>1) The RCP will work with Child Projects to ensure that their M&E frameworks capture this consideration including linking them with AFR100. The participation of AFR100 in the regional project (and possibly country projects) will further reinforce the tracking of deforestation trends. Captured in the description of Output 5.1.1 and reflected in the ToRs of AFR100 (Annex R)</p> <p>2) The RCP will leverage access to technical expertise (e.g., CI’s MCS Resilience Team) to help Child Projects factor this consideration through irrecoverable carbon mapping and in their respective M&E frameworks. The ProDoc explicitly recognizes this as an environmental risk (Table 7) and notes mitigation measures.</p>

a net change in forest area (considering both forest gain and loss) in the target landscapes, or

a change in area affected by deforestation in the target landscapes.

Supporting smallholder farmers through the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program (CFB IP):

We want to underscore that supporting smallholder farmers is critical for halting deforestation and inclusive transition toward deforestation-free supply chains. And, this Program must ensure that smallholder farmers in deforestation-risk commodity chains receive as much attention as other local community groups receive through this IP. In particular for the private sector engagement, we recommend the projects under this IP reinforce technical, financial and legal support for smallholder farmers within deforestation-risk commodity chains in order to help them adopt innovative, low-cost biodiversity-friendly practices and secure their legal rights (ToC 3).

3) Landscape-level trends in forest area (net change) will be captured in the Child Project M&E Frameworks, noting the emphasis of the Program on Intact Forest Landscapes. As signalled above, the involvement of AFR100 as an executing partner will reinforce the tracking of deforestation trends coupled with CI's Irrecoverable Carbon Mapping. Captured in the description of Output 5.1.1. Potential collaboration between AFR100 and the Child Projects is being explored by Child Projects in their PPG Phases.

This is an area to be addressed in Child Projects; the RCP anticipates providing technical support (in response to expressed needs by the Child Projects) on this topic, under the rubrics of sustainable financing solutions and private sector partnerships. Component 3 has an outcome of enhancing technical capacity amongst the Child Projects on innovative sustainable finance approaches. These approaches will include guidance on work on commodity chains, as described in Output 3.2.1; in the description of private sector engagement: "... Multinationals and national companies in key economic sectors (e.g., cocoa and palm oil) in the region's forest areas will be engaged to consolidate commitments to deforestation-free production models, including participation in land use planning processes. Private sector certification standards, such as FSC's, will support the project in building capacity to develop environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable products with access to certified international markets, allowing communities to benefit from more sustainable management practices. The concessionaires involved in commercial agroforestry and agriculture, mining, energy, and infrastructure development sectors among others, 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. 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),

		<p>such as credit arrangements linked to zero deforestation commitments.”</p> <p>The participation of ProForest (in the RCP and possibly at the Child Project level), as well as ICRAF as executing partners, ensure that best practices and leading expertise will be applied to these ends.</p>
c. Switzerland		
	<p>The IP remains relevant, has a high potential to generate GEB, to be scaled up and replicated, contribute to sustainable development, the theory of change is comprehensible and plausible, The levels co-financing seems adequate. It is coherent and in compliance with GEF safeguards.</p> <p>However, regarding the institutional set up we suggest to make the link to the Forest Steward Council (FSC)</p>	<p>The Regional Child Project has made links with FSC, which will be one of the Executing Partners of the Project with a focus on forest management standards and supporting policies, and as a source of co-financing. Annex R provides FSC’s ToRs for participating in the RCP. Potential collaboration between FSC and the Child Projects is being explored by Child Projects in their PPG Phases.</p>
d. United States		
	<p>We appreciate the draft Work Programmes' focus on our planet's most critical forest ecosystems which must be conserved to meet global climate and biodiversity goals. Given that the largest driver of tropical deforestation is land clearance for commodity production we would expect GEF projects to clearly define that problem and orient their work programs towards addressing it. We would appreciate greater emphasis on sustainable forest management that recognizes the need for alternative livelihoods to conserve global forest ecosystems. We would strongly advocate for GEF projects to clearly orient their projects around helping countries decouple commodity production from deforestation.</p>	<p>Agreed. See the response to Canada.</p>

ANNEX Q: PFD - Responses to comments from STAP

Section	STAP Comments	Responses <i>(how and where the comment has been addressed)</i>
Summary of STAP’s views of the project		
Minor - STAP has identified some scientific and technical points	<p>This proposal presented noticeable weaknesses in a number of areas, which in some cases were quite significant. Whilst it is STAP’s assessment that the cumulative impact of these weaknesses would not be enough to affect the delivery of</p>	<p>These areas have been clarified and strengthened, as described in responses below.</p>

<p>to be addressed in project design</p> <p>Major - STAP has identified significant concerns to be addressed in project design</p>	<p>program activities and actual results, which would otherwise warrant assigning a “major” scoring, there are still a number of areas that need attention and will need clarifying and strengthening in the next phase of program development. The issues identified include: the descriptions of the project objective and some of the components, a lack of coherence between the description of some of the outcomes and the activities related to them, and some weaknesses affecting different elements of the theory of change ToC. Further details about the issues that were identified and suggested recommendations to address these are noted below.</p>	
<p>Project rationale, and project description – are they sound?</p>		
	<p>The project description was quite broad and in some places used rather generic language and phrases taken from the GEF programming document, but without providing a clear explanation of how the proposed targets, objectives and goals will be achieved in practice (<i>e.g. country projects will apply multiple levers of transformation, including an enhanced enabling environment for sustainable forest management through supportive government policy and sustainable financing solutions</i>).</p> <p>The program objective was clear but it did not appear to match the proposed activities and environmental benefits described in the same section. The description and analysis of barriers were clear and convincing with a good understanding of the interlinkages between the barriers and how a systems approach is required to address them.</p>	<p>The project description for the Regional Child Project (RCP) includes a description of how specific levers of transformation relate to the project components and the theory of change (Figure 2 and accompanying text), as well as detailed descriptions of the project components, outcomes, and outputs.</p> <p>The interventions of the Guinean Forests child projects are anchored on the Program’s components/activities which, cumulatively, will result in the Program’s target GEBs. The regional project’s coordination, learning and monitoring function will enable the child projects to actualise their target environmental benefits that cumulatively feed into the Program’s GEBs and Objectives. Additionally, the regional project will explore the establishment of a regional policy coordination body which would be responsible for forest governance in West Africa which is aligned with the Program’s objective. Lastly, through its coordination, learning and knowledge-sharing function, the Regional project will build strategic partnerships and enhance multi-stakeholder dialogues that will maximise synergies and avoid overlaps hence ensuring child projects, non-child projects, state and non-state actors across the biome work</p>

	<p>One of the two stated program priorities was quite vague and did not provide sufficient details on how it will be achieved (<i>e.g. facilitate work by the countries of the region towards a permanent body for ongoing alignment and harmonization of forest management policies</i>). The proposal provided a reasonable baseline of activities and projects that the current program plans to build upon in order to deliver its outcomes and goal. This included a good mix of international donor funded interventions, regional initiatives and GEF-funded projects.</p> <p>The proposal also included a short section on key lessons learned from current and past investments. This provided an acceptable description of some of the key issues, needs and things that have worked well, but could have arguably included a more detailed analysis of why issues arise and why different types of measures and interventions worked or did not work. This would provide a better understanding of the context and how the</p>	<p>together to realize the Program’s objective: <i>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.</i></p> <p>Component 4 of the RCP will explore the establishment of a regional policy coordination body, whose mandate could also include the overall governance of West African forests. The process of establishing this regional body will incorporate lessons learned from analogous institutional development in other regions (e.g., COMIFAC for Central Africa). Such a body would supplement subregional platforms such as the Mano River Union and regional institutions with broader remits such as ECOWAS and AFR100.</p> <p>In addition to Component 4, we have now reinforced through the new <i>FIP</i></p> <p>The “Lessons Learned” section of the ProDoc for the Regional Child Project has been further developed and expanded to convey experiences in previous initiatives that have informed the project design.</p> <p>The ToC diagram (Figure 2) and explanation for the Regional Child Project have been prepared with these comments in mind – a simplified diagram, and a more elaborated narrative description.</p>
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program is designed to overcome obstacles experienced in previous initiatives.

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** section presented a number of weaknesses in areas such as the assumptions, which in a number of cases are given facts and do not cover underlying assumptions that affect the intended outcomes. The ToC diagram is very dense and difficult to read and presents some inconsistencies and gaps in the logical flow between stages (i.e. lack of outputs and a stage named “desired situation”, which was unclear and did not fit the overall logical flow). The narrative description of the ToC is somewhat disjointed and appears to describe different types of interventions without drawing the logical connections or boundaries between them, or attempting to explain how these will be implemented as part of a coherent framework.

The description of the **program components** varies in strength and clarity. Components 4, 5 and 6 are quite clear and describe in enough detail the activities that will be implemented, as well as how these will be implemented and what outputs, results and outcomes they will generate. On the other hand, the descriptions for components 1, 2 and 3 are weak, as they lack clarity and specificity on most of the aforementioned aspects. For example, component 1 does not provide enough detail about the activities that will be implemented; component 2 -and especially outcome 2.1- is overall quite weak and should be revised and clarified. More specifically we found that the labelling for outcome 2.1 (i.e. Expanded coverage of protected areas and OECMs) was somewhat misleading and did not match the description provided, it also did not provide any details on how the proposed targets will be achieved, i.e. how PAs and OECMs will be established. It is also not clear whether OECMs are envisaged only for areas outside PAs but where there are no production activities, or whether some of the SLM initiatives could also serve as OECMs, particularly where there is intact forest. The description for component 3 is quite broad and somewhat vague and does not provide enough details on what the program or projects will actually do and how. The description provided focuses entirely on describing what is needed and why, rather than what should happen and which partners would

Project components of the Regional Child Project have been described in further detail; the points on lack of specificity for Components 1, 2 and 3 are well-taken, and the RCP design and description have been streamlined to make clear that the RCP’s role will be to provide technical support in response to needs prioritized by the Child Projects, and that details pertaining to the specific outcomes referred to here under components 1, 2, 3 will be addressed in the Child Projects, with guidance from RCP Team/CI and BirdLife International.

	<p>be relevant/important to achieve specific results. Along similar lines, the description for outcome 3.3 (i.e. Strengthened inclusive community forest governance) is quite broad and the activities proposed seem to be somewhat removed from front-line delivery (i.e. inform the development of mechanisms that will empower communities to deliver NMR processes and governance...), which is not ideal, as it does not match the proposed scope of the outcome.</p>	
<p>Specific points to be addressed, and suggestions</p>		
	<p>The ToC should be revised and improved. The areas that need attention include: the assumptions, which need to be revised and rewritten to exclude given facts; the outputs which are currently missing; the “desired situation”, which should be better explained and contextualized, as it is not currently clear how this fitted into the wider context of the ToC; and the ToC diagram, which should be revised to include outputs and address the aforementioned issues.</p> <p>The description of the components should be revised and improved to address the issues highlighted above in section 2 of this document.</p> <p>The description provided for cross-cutting programmatic areas such as multi-stakeholder engagement, knowledge management and learning and innovation should be revised to provide further clarity about the activities that will be implemented to deliver the intended outputs (i.e. provide additional details about the ‘what’ and the ‘how’).</p> <p>The overall style and language of further program/project documents should be considered carefully and should be focused on providing more detailed and convincing descriptions of the activities and results that the these will deliver and how. The language and style used in this proposal for the description of the country child projects</p>	<p>The ToC section for the Regional Child Project (p. 23) has been prepared with these suggestions in mind: clarified refined assumptions, added outputs, linkages to levers of transformation, and improved graphics.</p> <p>The description of components (starting on p. 25) has been improved. These points will also be addressed in the Child Project Documents.</p> <p>The relevant areas of the ProDoc for the Regional Child Project have been developed accordingly, in descriptions of project components, outcomes and outputs, in the Knowledge Management section (p. 70), and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan prepared for the project.</p> <p>Language and style have been reviewed and edited bearing this input in mind. The description of the project is now fully developed to describe the activities and how they will deliver results.</p>

	<p>was much clearer and should be used as a template for future documents.</p> <p>In the development of the regional and country-level child projects, it would be helpful to provide greater clarity on the proposed scope for OECMs versus integrated land management. As noted in the proposal, OECMs are an evolving concept and the program could play an important role in exploring additional conceptualizations and operational models for OECMs in different land management contexts.</p>	<p>As described in Component 4, the RCP will provide support for regional policy harmonization. This will include analysis of the similarities, gaps and areas of improvement of national policies and the degree of alignment with regional policies. Alignment on definitions/models of OECMs is noted under Component 4 of the RCP. Additionally, through its technical support to child projects during their design and implementation phases, the RCP will enable them to define the scope for OECMs versus integrated land management.</p>
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