Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 495)

MID-TERM EVALUATION DRAFT REPORT

Submitted to

MANO RIVER UNION SECRETARIAT
Freetown, Sierra Leone

By

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is our pleasure to have conducted this Mid-Term-Evaluation of this GEF Project, "**Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 495)",** and to contribute to its implementation.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to IUCN (implementing Agency), Dominique ENDAMANA, Task manager, and the MRU/SG (Executing Agency) for selecting me to conduct this consultancy and for providing me with all the facilities required to undertake the evaluation.

Special thanks to the Project Management Unit Team, particularly Mr Abdoulaye Doumbia (Regional project coordinator), Patrick MASUBA (Regional Project Monitoring & Evaluation) and Leonardo Wilson (Financial and Accountant Officer), to the teams of the National Executing Agencies (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), for their support and availability to assist us and facilitate meetings and field visits. We are also thankful to the driver, Mr Thomas, who took care of me during the field trip and drove me all along the bad roads throughout the project areas.

We also would like to thank the many people we met on the field and at the regional workshop organized in NZerekore, Guinea, from 11 to 12 June 2022. I learned more from each of them, particularly from the presentations and discussions during the meeting.

The evaluation has taken much time due to several unforeseen issues that delayed this final report.

May God lead the project implementation to the expected successful end and bless the Mano River Union Secretariat to continue its notable action toward the Mano River sustainable conservation for the good of the communities.

PROJECT SUMMARY

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

Project Contacts	

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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

OMVS	Office de Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal;
PAAS	Project Appraisal and Approval System;
PACO	West and Central Africa Program;
PCMS	Project Complaints Management System;
PGS	Project Guidelines and Standards;
PIF	Project Identification Form;
PNECI	National Water Partnership in Côte d'Ivoire;
PPG	Project Preparation Grant;
PRE	Ecosystems Restoration Project;
PTF	Funding and Technical Partners;
RA	Rainforest Alliance;
RBA	Rights-based approach;
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation;
RICCE	Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment;
RPMU	Regional Project Management Unit;
SAP	Strategic Action Plan;
SL	Sierra Leone;
SLBCP	Sierra Leone Biodiversity Conservation Project;
SODECI	Water Supply Company of Côte d'Ivoire;
SODEFOR	Forest Development Company (CI);
STEWARD	Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development;
TDA	Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis;
ToR	Terms of references;
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program;
USAID	United States Agency for International Development;
WA-BICC	West Africa – Biodiversity and Climate Change;
WB	World Bank;
WCF	Wildlife Conservation Fund;
WRCU	Water Resources Coordination Unit;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

1. Introduction

This report is about the MTE of the GEF funded project "**Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953"** to support Mano River Union Counties (implemented by IUCN as the international implementing agency and executed by the MRU/SG countries (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire). The project was approved for 48 months and declared operational in January 2017 with a closing date as of end date initially on December 31st, 2020, then extended at no additional cost for two more years, until June 2023.

As a full-size project with a budget for more than USD 1 million and in accordance with the rules and procedures of GEF project financing and implementation mechanisms, the project was subject to a Mid-term evaluation after the first half of the implementation period. Following the Inception and methodology report on April 30th, 2022, the I.C. conducted an independent MTE, from 01-19 June 2022, to (i) Assess the project achievements and output progress, (ii) Interview the stakeholders, including beneficiary communities, and (iii) Participate at IUCN/MRU/SG Regional workshop in NZerekore, Guinea, from 11-12 June 2022.

This Mid-Term-Evaluation has been conducted in a participatory inclusive approach that complies with GEF Agency project evaluation principles and guidelines, under the overall supervision of the IUCN (Regional Implementing Agency-RIA) and the Secretariat General of the MRU (Regional Project Executing Agency-REA). We also worked in close collaboration with the National Project Executing Agencies (NEA) in each of the four participating countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone).

The evaluation consisted in conducting systematic and objective assessment of the project (i) Design result framework, (ii) Implementation performance, (iii) Achievements and output progress made, and (iv) Enabling factors and constraints, using the recommended evaluation criteria: (i) relevance, (ii) efficiency, (iii) Effectiveness, (iv) Sustainability, and (v) Impacts, including conclusion, lessons, and relevant recommendations to guide the completion of the remaining period.

B. Project relevance

1. Project baseline

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

2. Project intervention sites

The project site selection criteria are consistent with the vision of the government of the 4 countries and GEF strategic objective 1 and Multi-focal Areas, as well as the international donors and NGOs involved the Mano River **Trans-boundary forest landscapes** restoration and T**rans-boundary Basin** water resource management. ***The I.C assessed the selected project intervention sites as relevant (R: 2/2)***

3. GEF and IUCN focal areas

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

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

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

4. Project rationale and objectives

i. Project objectives and expected outputs are consistent with the overall Mano River Union share vision and objectives to strengthen the management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits and improved livelihoods of adjacent communities:

ii. **Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management**: targeting sustainable forest management and targeting forest landscape restoration in addressing the various threats and impacts pertaining climatic change, environment and forest degradation in Upper Guinea mountains across the four Trans-boundary landscapes involving Guinea, Coted-D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

iii. **Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters**: focused on the integrated management of international waters shared by the four member countries of the Union.

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

5. Project result indicator framework

Despite the relevance of the result framework design, the assessment of the project outputs highlighted (i) the indicators are not conform to SAMRT1 criteria (too ambitious output 1.1.a - 88,400 ha of forests and other land cover in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests, and output 1.1.b - 93,400 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests, and not achievable in the project timeframe of 48/56 months, thus not time bound, and over the stakeholder and beneficiary capacities). indeed, in such hostile ecosystem areas prone to climate change threats and impacts with vulnerable communities, sustainable management of degraded forest landscape areas is a big challenge, particularly in a short run (5 years of the project implementation), and when applying unappropriated restoration techniques/practices limited to natural forest regeneration, agroforestry practices, uncontrolled reforestation through tree enrichment planting techniques, etc.).

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

C. Project effectiveness

[1] *SMART: Strategic, measurable, achievable, and timebound.*

1. Project implementation strategy

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

2. Implementation and Management

At the project inception workshop in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 11-12 July 2017, the RPMU/SG-MRU and NEA were instructed to develop the first project implementation Work Plan and Budget for 2017, were not, unfortunately fully respected by the NEAs, due to many gaps and lack of proactiveness at the country levels, thus long delay in submitting their first Work plan and budget by January-February 2018.

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

The inclusive participatory project implementation organization scheme set-up is assessed by the MTE mission as highly satisfactory (HS: 6/6).

However, the project overall implementation and execution technical support, field activity supervision and monitoring provided by IUCN, MRU/SG/PMU and NEA teams are assessed by the I.C as satisfactory (S:5/6).

The project Regional Steering Committee fulfilled a satisfactory (S:5/6) supervising which help guiding the work plan and budget implementation and providing relevant advice for the smooth execution of the project

The community engagement and participation in the project implementation are assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

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

Management, monitoring-evaluation and reporting provided by the MRU/SG-PMU team, despite some weaknesses identified in the NEA performances and activity monitoring-evaluation gaps, are assessed by the I.C Highly Satisfactory (S: 6/6).

3. Partner performance

The project implementation partners and communities fulfilled responsively their commitments and results, despite, some weaknesses identified in their approaches and technical capacities pertaining forest landscape restoration and which questioned about the appropriateness of the techniques applied, not consistent with *required sylviculture and forest management techniques*, as they are not fully consistent with the threats

and challenges of the transboundary area sustainable management. ***Their contribution in the project execution is assessed by the I.C as Satisfactory (S:5/6).***

4. Project achievements

Add output achievement ratio

Due to many constraints and challenges faced, particularly at the NEA level, the delivery in some outcomes is under the performance expected from the project outputs under Component 1 and particularly Component 2 with less than 50% of the targets achieved (TDA and SAP design). Indeed, at the time of this MTE most of the activities pertaining the SAP design are still pending.

Furthermore, the effectiveness and functionality of the project's monitoring-evaluation activities at the NEA levels have been of low performances compared to what was expected from the project execution, as well as data collection, in-depth assessment and detailed mapping (forest landscape resources, land cover, degradation patterns within and along the river basin and tributaries), and analysis of outputs against indicators defined in the project's logical framework and highlighting the progress made toward quality changes of the basin areas, as well as for the community livelihoods.

The project execution being highly gender sensitive, the NEA in all the four participating countries focused gender difference mainstreaming and relevant participation of the vulnerable groups in the project areas.

The overall project execution by MRU/SG/PMU is assessed by the I.C as Satisfactory (MS:5/6).

5. Effectiveness of the project output achieved and deliveries

The project deliveries demonstrated high input through capacity building trainings that contributed to raise valuable awareness towards the populations and partners on the relevance of forest resource management and degraded forest landscapes and ecosystems and mainstreaming the project outcomes and potentially help sustainability of the outcomes. ***Therefore, the I.C. assessed the overall project capacity strengthening as highly Satisfactory (HS: 6/6)***.

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

6. Project efficiency

As highlighted in the section of financial resources management, the achievements indicated 61% (3,865,627.77USD) of the project budget were spent, meaning a balance of 39% (2,470,736.23 USD). This low budget absorption within 5 years of the project implementation forces us to believe that the funds disbursement grouping might have been an inefficient factor inducing important delays of the execution of the annual work plan. Indeed, as acknowledged by the MRU/SG/PMU team, the funds are disbursed quarterly, and all the 4 National Executing Agencies (NEAs) must submit their requests together. Consecutively, this collective submission of funds has made it difficult for some NEAs to accelerate the execution of their work plan at their own pace since they must wait for the slow ones to submit financial requests, thus causing important delay and prejudices on the activity progress towards the project expected

outputs. This explains the fact that the project still has a total amount of 2,470,736.23 USD (39%) of the total budget to spend from August 2021 to June 2023.

Add output achievement ratio

The assessment highlighted inconsistencies between the financial resource use and the project activity outputs, therefore, the I.C assessed project efficiency as Moderately Satisfactory (MS: 4/6). MASUBA: Can you bring out instances please to buttress this statement???

7. Project sustainability

In summary, as indicated above, 61% (3,865,627.77USD) of the project budget were spent, meaning a balance of 39% (2,470,736.23 USD). The consultant noted a low budget delivery after 5 years of the project implementation, due to important delays in adopting the annual work plan (no field activity was undertaken The I.C. assessed, the project achievements to be far below the expected outputs, as apart from the capacity building, there seems to be little signs contributing to the overall achievement of sustainability. Indeed, there is no evidence of the overall situation change, at environmental point of view, forest landscape restoration, community livelihood improvement as consequence of the project achievement. Therefore, the I.C assessed the project result sustainability as Moderately unlikely (MU: 2) with:

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

8. Project impacts

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

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

D. Project conclusion:

i. As stated in this report, the project is relevant to the country medium- and long-term vision and policies to meet their engagement towards the "United Nations Determined Conditions" to ensure sustainable environment/land management, climate change and biodiversity conservation.

ii. It's unfortunate, the field visits were limited to few visits, due to limited time (2-3 days, including travel) allocated in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and focused on nurseries and agroforestry cash fruit tree lines or as orchards planted in the buffer zones and inside the dense forests. However, they are not representative of the various plantations, as we couldn't visit some trees planted for restoration of the forest landscapes. However, the I.C. is aware his assessment may not be representative of all activities related to land restoration tree plantations achieved inside the buffer zones and forest landscapes restoration areas in the context of component 1. Therefore, the I.C. further consulted with the communities and reviewed NEAs reports to validate or not his assessment of the project output effectiveness with regard the improvement of the baseline situation described at the project design (threats, roots causes, and barriers, etc.) in 2016/2017.

iii. The assessment of the output findings in many sites revealed well managed nurseries by dedicated communities, particularly women, thriving to produce good various seedlings (< 2 acres) for the establishment of small orchards for the household ash generation and consumption and forest landscape restoration and land degradation control purpose. Their contribution towards changes of the previous situation, as result of the project interventions or magnitude, seem to be still very unsignifying, after almost 5 years of the project implementation, as the areas visited remain somehow unchanged or with little change as before, due to limited activities undertaken and the community poor knowledge and capacities despite important the workshops organized by the NEAs, and particularly inadequate agroforestry system practiced within dense forest areas.

iv. The achievements visited were dominated by agroforestry activities very much appreciated by women and considered as key technology that can drive substantial benefits to improve their livelihood while protecting the forest and the river basin against heavy socio/economic pressure and environmental impacts. Indeed, promoting the project true outputs throughout the basin could have been an inspiring way to build sustainability. In various areas including healthy dense forest cover one can question about the sustainability of such interventions promoted by the NEA.

v. Although they are very much appreciated by the populations, these activities cover small areas, thus with limited impacts on the socioeconomic and income generation. Furthermore, most of the sites we visited are still at their seedling stage, as the plantations are of 2-3 years. Therefore, their effectiveness is still insignificant, and need to be better and further nurtured by the communities or owners.

vi. Because of focus to agroforestry interventions, it's sad to note that almost after five years of nurturing the agroforestry plantations, the project achievements and outputs did not enable to overcome the major environmental threats inherent from climate change and correlated socioeconomic pressure from the people living in the forest edge and depending on fragile natural ecosystem and degradation land resources, despite important sensitization and trainings activities carried out to raise aware of the importance of protecting and conserving the forest reserves close to their settlements within the targeted project area of the four Member States of the MRU.

vii. Indeed, what could have been considered as the project achievement flag sheet- landscape restoration and sustainable farming practices in the buffer zones, was not tackled enough to illustrate the effectiveness of the forest landscape restoration and integrated water resource conservation feasibility by the country NEA team works and to demonstrate a salvatory way

towards community to reach sustainable on-farm income generation and self-sufficiency food security. Therefore, apart from the capacity building and knowledge improvement, the project achievements resulted to limited impacts and which may probably impact the forests and community livelihood in a long-term perspective (10-15 years), as the project component 1 objective and outcomes effectiveness was not demonstrated yet and boost any effective change in the forest resource degradation and biodiversity conservation.

viii. In most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration have not been adequately taken to address complexity of the forest vegetation patterns in introducing various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers.

ix. All above considerations call for questions about the appropriateness of the techniques applied, as basic sylviculture knowledges and techniques seem to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities. Indeed, there are many gaps in the forest landscape restoration and sylvicultural management knowledge and techniques used to overcome land degradation and build stakeholder capacities to ensure viable tree planting inside the forest and sustainability of the management of the restored forest lands within the degraded areas. It was also noted a lack of focus in the introduction of the tree seedlings inside the forest as it was noted during our field visits. Such introduction should first answer the question “to which extent a project activity should be undertaken, for which purpose, and which proven techniques and for how long”?

x. Discussions and interviews with the stakeholders, provided relevant achievements highlighted relevant results and commitment of the population to pursue the project activities and improving their capacities and skills to establish nurseries and plantations, the monitoring process seemed to be left aside in second priority, while this could lead to effective achievements that could build change in the environment and people behaviour in the forest land use planning and conservation.

xi. Considering the harshness of the region weather and climate change conditions, socioeconomic vulnerability of the landscapes and basin areas, the political instability which put at risk most of the achievements related to environment and natural resource management, the project teams achieved tremendous works, even though the outputs did not result to substantial change on the forest landscape improvement and community vulnerability and poverty reduction.;

xii. Involvement of partners and communities: It happens that many activities are compromised at the site level, particularly those related to component 1, are very fragile and unable to decide on any decision to restore and preserve forest resources, either upstream or downstream to allow engagement. However, the contracts signed between the project NEAs and the national consultants in November 2018 to support the field activities are evident signs of the community and populations.

E. Difficulties

The project implementation faced several constraints, such as:

Delay to start-up

i. **Implementation start-up delay**: The project implementation inception workshop was launched on 11-12 July 20217 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, while the execution at the country levels has

stared in January March, that's 7–9-month delay. These delays were due to lack of preparedness of the country executing institution to allocate appropriate office and basic equipment to the project, appointed the national staff;

ii. **Lack of proven staff and partner skills:** this involves some routine activities, and with low delivery (implementation below 20% of the target, in some NEA).

iii. **Funds mobilization**: Important delay in fund allocation and disbursement from MRU/SG to the NEA, and that delay many field activities. The funds disbursement system put in place by the MRU/SG/PMU, consisting in grouping and addressing the requests from the NEAs, has created a low fund mobilization and difficulties for some NEAs to accelerate the implementation of their work plan activities at their own pace since they must wait for the slow ones to submit financial requests.

iv. **In some NEA**, there has been withdrawal of potential foreseen partners identified during the start-up process of the project such as FFI and Rain Forest Alliance and which constituted a major handicap in the implementation of the activities.

v. **Delay in the recruitment of experts** at the regional level to coordinate field activities also constitutes a major handicap in the implementation of activities, especially for start-up of the project execution.

F. Lesson learned

The MTE learned several lessons to us, that are:

i. Ambitious objectives with lack of focus and appropriated demonstrative approach when dealing in natural resource management in harsh and climate change prone environment:

   In turn, it looks like despite all efforts and activities achieved by this GEF Project, the outcomes reach, more less, same results as for previous projects implemented or supported by precedent donors and the governments, and which were unable to address the degradation situation of the same transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management at regional level.

ii. Reversing environmental and land degradation under severe and unpredictable climate change threats, and vulnerable population striving for their survival, required long term commitment at both financial and skills staff engaged in transformation vision to make change happen, particularly in the Shared River basin, such as the Mano River Union region. Mainstreaming the basis of forest management, sustainable land use planning and management at farm level, and climate change resilience and adaptation to improve crop yield an overall agricultural production to sustain food security and on farm generation

iii. It must be clearly understood by all practitioners, that Agroforestry differs to many extents from forestry: Agroforestry usually applies in agricultural lands to improve the soil fertility, protect the farm against erosion (water or wind), and provide goods (products, fruits, leaves, etc.), while Forestry relies on sylvicultural practices to educate and expand forest plantations and woodlots in a dedicated land for wood or timber production, or for any other use, on a state owned land or private or community land, but at a larger scale.

iv. Based on the achievements of this GEF project and of the previous project call for in-depth baseline study by knowledgeable and experienced experts/practitioners to design and propose execution strategies and subordinate the project implementation by the commitment in cash from the government and existence of compelling legislation frameworks.

v. This project has hinged the path and direction of previous or ongoing forest and biodiversity management focusing the "promotion of cooperation through transboundary water resource

management", with same rhetoric of TDA and SAP, which in most of the cases are not implemented in the life span of the project, but just studies and developing strategies without any solid foundation.

vi. Improving management of water related sectors: as water is among the primary needs for our life, focused must be put on its conservation and sustainable use, whatever is the size and quality of the water. However, it requires sound integrated strategic plan framework which considers water resources as of same importance with land resources and soil resources.

vii. Difficulties encountered by Cote-D'Ivoire NEA: During the year 2019 which highlighted the importance of respecting commitments made with the local populations: At Mount Nimba forest landscape the collaboration with communities was satisfactory with cordial relations with the populations, while with the communities of the Taï forest landscape the NEA team couldn't build trust with the communities. It is therefore suggested to set a permanent motivation for the stakeholders to participate to ensure achievement maintenance agreement prior to implement the project activity execution.

viii. Establishing a lasting collaboration with other organizations and institutions present in the field for a better synergy of actions as started initiated with some stakeholders, such as WABiCC, FFI and the European Union, to avoid disparities in approach, operation, and duplication of actions around the intervention areas (Ziama reserve, etc.).

G. Recommendation

Being less than one year until the project completion and considering the important weaknesses and gaps in outputs, the following recommendations are made to improve expected outputs that could lighten the project effectiveness:

1. Consolidation of 2017-2022 achievements

Only consolidation. No new activities beyond those underway at to December 31st, 2022, should be planned and undertaken.

2. Awareness raising and capacity building:

i. No new activities beyond those underway at to December 31st, 2022, should be planned and undertaken.
ii. Organizing a meeting at the level of forest landscapes with all the partners involved, in order to identify synergies, complementarities in order to maximize the use of resources and determine the gaps that will provide the elements for the mobilization of additional resources (National Implementing Agency Managers, National Coordination);
iii. Continuing advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national and international levels, particularly at the national level through the inclusion of the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State officials, MRU Secretariat and IUCN).
iv. Streamlining the establishment of Platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of sustaining the achievements resulting from the implementation of the project.
v. Encouraging Regional Executing Agencies (MRUs) and National Executing Agencies to engage in in-depth consultation process with the project implementation partners to involve them in the implementation of the project activities.

vi. Continuous Awareness raising for farmers and local communities on the importance of landscape restoration and within their vicinity.

1. Developing Forest landscape characterization and monitoring framework

i. Consolidate existing activities, that means no new activity should be planned and implemented , thus focusing efforts on identified weaknesses and filling community knowledge gaps to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the outputs at the end of the project phase.
ii. Conducting characterization and detailed mapping: land cover, vegetation map, forest density, landscape map with degradation index (1:100,000 to 1:250,000) for the four-basin transboundary forest landscapes. This should take advantage of the ROAM research findings, but in focusing on what is relevant for the project area and not translating results from the other countries included in the study.

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

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

3. **Developing a Web-based Land survey and land cover mapping and database**
i. Land characterization.
ii. Land feature description.
iii. Soil survey,
iv. Land cover, classification and mapping at large scale (1:10,000-250,000); Land and soil evaluation, Soil physical and chemical properties characterization.
v. Assessment of Soil suitability and aptitudes; soil database, etc.

4. Sustainable agroforestry land use system framework, including:
i. Land use planning and management, Land preparation, Land fertility improvement.
ii. Land and soil conservation.
iii. Erosion control on upland landscape restoration and costal protection, etc.
iv. Agroforestry system and practices: alley cropping, cover cropping, windbreak, nitrogen fixing trees, crop rotation, mixed tree establishment (fruit tree, leguminous, etc.).

5. **Agricultural land rehabilitation framework**:
i. Develop agricultural land rehabilitation framework.
ii. Develop forest landscape restoration scheme and practices framework for upland protection.

6. **Develop Biodiversity conservation tools**
i. Priority Terrestrial protected areas.
ii. Management of transboundary basin areas.
iii. Control of invasive species, etc.

Table of Contents

1. Evaluation background and context

1.1. Introduction

The present report highlights the findings of the MTE conducted by the International Consultant of the GEF-IUCN/MRU funded regional project to support the implementation of the "**Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953"**. The project is financed by the Global Environment Facility with support from IUCN as the international implementing agency, with contributions from the four Member countries of the Mano River Union, including Sierra Leone (SL), Guinea (Gui), Liberia (LB) and Côte d'Ivoire (CI).

This project was approved for 48 months and declared operational in January 2017 and end date initially on December 31st, 2020. However, because of the delay in staring up due to several shortfalls, GEF & IUCN agreed with the MRU Secretariat on behalf of the member countries to extend ~~it~~ it at no additional cost for two more years, until June 2023.

As a full-size project with a budget for more than USD 1 million, this Mid-term evaluation is being conducted from April 22nd to June 23rd, 2022, in accordance with the TORs and the GEF project implementation procedures and financing mechanisms, that's 5 years later since the inception workshop. It aims to evaluate the progress made from July 2017 to June 2022), inform how the results achieved have contributed towards the project targets and the Mano River ecosystem changes, and drawing lessons learned, relevant recommendations to ensure the intended outcomes at its completion.

This Draft Final Report is the I.C second delivery and describes and assesses the overall project assessment findings (i) Relevance of the project context, objectives and conceptual result framework, (ii) the implementation arrangements, quality and reliable data collected, as well as stakeholder engagement and performance interview, (iii) the achievement outputs using the evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impacts), and (iv) conclusion, lessons learned and recommendations for the remaining period of the period completion.

1.2. Brief presentation of the project background

The subregional project "**Mano River Union Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project (GEF ID: 4953"** was designed to assist the four countries of West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) to address forest landscape restoration and conservation of the rich biodiversity key areas with conservation stakes in their upstream catchments and large protected areas. The project area includes more than 10 narrow-shape transboundary river basins (22,000 km² of 320 km-long on average), flowing from North-East to South-West.

Indeed, the proposed GEF-funded "Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project" strategy aims to mainstream "conservation and sustainable use of the transboundary water basins and their biodiversity resources through landscape restoration, within the Mano River Union member states". Furthermore, the project also aims to support local communities in the development of alternative means of income generation, to increase locally and globally the forest cover and associated benefits (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks). It is in line with the GEF 5 Focal Area Strategies for Biodiversity (DB), Land Degradation (TD) and International Waters (IS), in that it contributes to the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through the sustainable management of transboundary river basins. The project essentially consists of two vital components, namely: (i) Integrated Forest Resources Management; (ii) Management of international water resources while aiming to strengthen institutional, policy and technical capacities for local and regional management of natural

ecosystems and transboundary waters. The benefits of collaboration on the transboundary basin and the adoption by the states involved of a transboundary water resources management approach contribute to improving the livelihoods of the communities, targeted in component 1 of the project and to addressing environmental issues. The project also contributes to strengthening regional coordination among countries with a particular focus on selected ecosystems, which also contributes to strengthening the regional regulatory framework on the management of transboundary natural resources under the auspices of the Mano River Union.

1.3. Project objectives

The project overall objectives are aligned with GEF 5 focal area strategies for biodiversity (BD), Land degradation (LD), and International waters (IW), aiming "to conserve, sustainably use and manage biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources globally, considering the anticipated impact of climate".

Therefore, the project is designed to play a transformational role in forest cover and its associated benefits both locally and globally (ecosystem services, biodiversity, carbon sinks) and supporting local communities in the development of forest related alternative means for income generation in the four participating countries. It targets the conservation and sustainable use of the transboundary water basins and their biodiversity resources within the Mano River Union member states, in the Upper Guinea forest covering Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.

Its long-term objective aims to provide benefits to the global environment through strengthening the management of transboundary natural resources, increasing ecological benefits, and improving forest livelihoods of neighboring communities as well as maintaining the integrity of transboundary ecosystems, including protected areas and their surrounding areas where integrated water resources management and management strategies are implemented.

The Project is structured into two technical and one management components:

- Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management: focused on sustainable forest management and targeting forest landscape restoration to combat the various threats and causes pertaining climatic change, environment and forest degradation in Upper Guinea, such as logging, poor traditional agricultural practices (slash and burn, shifting cultivation, monocropping, etc.), mining activities, fuelwood and charcoal production, poaching protected areas and hunting using bush fires. The activities cover four Trans-boundary landscapes involving Guinea, Coted-D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone[2]
- Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters: focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Union, facing water quality and quantity issues. They form the main biodiversity key components with potentials for conservation in their upstream catchments and large protected areas that they cover in three Trans-boundary Basin involving Moa / Makona River Basin, the Trans-boundary Basin of Cavally River Basin and the Trans-boundary Basin of Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins[3].

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

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

- Component 3: Project Management Costs

1.4. Project financing arrangements

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

i. **GEF Financing (Grant): USD6,970,000**
ii. **Co-financing:**
    i. WA-BiCC / USAID project (in kind): USD10,000,000 {confirmed}
    ii. ROAM-CI/IUCN-UNEP-DFID (in kind): USD307,772 {confirmed}
    iii. Co-funding pledge, Liberia, and Guinea (in kind): USD45,686,290 {confirmed}
    iv. BRIDGE / IUCN (in kind): 290,000 USD
    v. MRU / Secretariat (in kind): 106,580 {confirmed}
    vi. Sub-total co-financing: USD56,390,642
iii. **Total (A+C): USD63,360,642**

As indicated in section C, from the total amount is USD 63,360,642 fund only 6,970,000 is directly supporting the project implementation cost, that's 10.716 % of cash. We understand the co-financing is part of the GEF project financing mechanisms, but usually leads to an oversized big project with ambitious objectives and outputs which in turn become unachievable. Therefore, it is evident that this amount cannot meet the need of the management of the 4 transboundary river basins (Cavalla, Moa/Makona, Kaba & Kolente (or little&great scarcies) and the transboundary watersheds, including protected areas and biodiversity conservation within the area covered by the four Member States of the Mano River Union, particularly in their upstream catchments and large outlet areas.

1.5. Mid-Term evaluation

1.5.1. Purpose of the MTE

The main purpose of this evaluation is to (i) Assess~~ing~~ the overall project achievements after 5 years of the project implementation, (ii) Drawing key lessons from the project implementation, such as strengths, weaknesses, unforeseen events and threats, etc., (iii) Addressing cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environment and adaptation to climate change, and socio-economy issues as well as harmonizing criteria to enhance effectiveness are also to be addressed, (iv) Making relevant recommendations to guide and improve ongoing project approach, and completing remaining actions to achieve the expected results at the end of the project. It will measure the level at which the activities are in lime with project outputs and will also create a comprehensive and reliable base of evaluation evidence that is used to support the remaining period of the implementation, management, country stakeholders and policy-decision making officials, and inclusive public reporting. The findings of the evaluation helped to understand how best to strengthen the management of trans-boundary natural resources for sustainable ecological benefits of the ecosystems and improved biodiversity, livelihoods for adjacent forest communities, as well as empowering the Mano River Union Secretariat project management capacities.

As per the TORs, the MTE has been carried out on selected sites of the 4 transboundary block sites and the 3 transboundary basins of the project implementation. The International Consultant assessed (i) the consistency of the conceptual design of the result log frame (indicators, targets, means of verification, etc.)

with GEF Results-Based Management (RBM) system (indicators, baseline, targets, means of verification, etc.), (ii) findings of the implementation and achievement performance, particularly its evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impacts), and cross-cutting issues (gender and youth), (iii) conclusion, lessons learned and recommendations. The MTE also aims to answer the questions the quadripartite constituents, partners and stakeholders want the consultant addressed in relation to the above evaluation criteria.

Furthermore, the International Consultant also assessed the implementation timeline, planning and performance, including institutional setup, budget management and stakeholder engagement and contributions. He also assessed the extent to which the project had contributed to improve current environmental and biodiversity situation, and degraded landscape recovery in the project sites, generate an added value for the community livelihoods, as well as the theory of environmental change, following the 5 years of the implementation.

The field visits and interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries helped the International Consultant capturing the lessons learnt from the start-up to date and making subsequent recommendations to mainstream the implementation of the remaining period to deliver the targeted results of the project implementation, while providing strategic direction and inputs for any foreseen future project.

1.5.2. Scope of the Mid-term evaluation

Based on the objective of the TORs (annex 6.1), the Consultant is expected to submit to the Secretariat General of the MRU the following deliveries:
followings:

i. Inception report including Methodical approach,

ii. Aide- memoire: Presenting key findings, lessons learned and general recommendations of the evaluation mission of the project implementation, including the level of achievements of the set project objectives and outcomes with particular emphasis on what worked well and what did not work, and future actions for the remaining phase of the project implementation workplan.

iii. Draft and Final Evaluation Reports, including: (i) Project implementation performances, (ii) Achievements towards the project outcomes, (iii) Project achievement relevance, (iv) Project achievement effectiveness, (v) Project achievement efficiency, (vi) Project achievement sustainability, (vii) Project achievement impacts, (viii) Level of achievements and gaps towards expected results, (ix) Assessment of favorable circumstance, constraints, unforeseen risks, solution envisaged, etc., (x) Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation completion during the remaining period, including experience sharing for future actions at national and regional levels, (xi) List of documents revised/ consulted, (xii) Reference of Document rreviewed, (xiii) Itinerary of the field missions and list of sites visited, (xiv) Lists of meetings held, (xv) List of participants met/interviewed (with their contacts if any), Summary report of field visits, etc.

These two evaluations finding reports will be shared with the General Secretariat of the MRU before finalisation to ensure that they address the objectives and outcomes of the MTE, including all issues and questions raised in the TORs and take into consideration stakeholder opinions made during the evaluation consultations.

The Final Evaluation Report will be the corrected draft final report incorporating comments and suggestions made by the Mano River Union Secretariat, IUCN, Project management team, stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries, including relevant annexes.

The final version of the Draft Report and Final Report will be submitted in soft copy (MS word) in French and English to the Mano River Union Secretariat, no later than two weeks after the end of the mission.

1.5.3. Evaluation Methodology

The Mid-Term-Evaluation was conducted in a participatory inclusive approach that complies with GEF Agency project evaluation principles and guidelines, under the overall supervision of the IUCN (Regional Implementing Agency-RIA) and the Secretariat General of the MRU (Regional Project Executing Agency-REA). We also worked in close collaboration with the National Project Executing Agency (NEA) in each country the four participating countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

This evaluation consisted in (i) Conducting systematic and objective assessment of an on-going project, design, implementation, and results; (ii) Determined the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, and efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of work achieved. Figure 1 below summarizes the methodology used to conduct the evaluation and intends to answer all the questions raised in the ToRs through specific components, to assess the objectives and outputs achieved from 2017 to December 2021. It targeted the three objectives: (i) Reviewing the progress made in achieving the STEWARD III objectives; (ii) Identifying critical mid-course program changes necessary to ensure sustainability of the program; and (iii) Assessing extent to which the constraints of time and budget has been overcome, including lessons learned for consideration in future programming. As an independent activity of the project execution, the consultant undertook the work in a free mindset and professional spirit to assess the performances of the project execution achievements, including internal and external bottlenecks/challenges encountered. The consultant also undertook (i) document and literature review, (ii) data collection using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including (iii) involvements of beneficiaries, as well as concerned central ministerial departments, related ongoing projects, Civil-Society partners, etc.), and project execution achievements (managements, monitoring-evaluation, supervisions, etc.).

The Consultant visited selected sites in the 4 transboundary block areas and the 3 transboundary basins, including some selected forestlands adjacent communities of the project areas. The work consisted in (i) Document review, (ii) Interviews with key stakeholders, (iii) Field visits and data collection to assess the project's achievements and implementation impacts. The field visits, stakeholder interviews and site description were conducted in accordance with the mission detailed methodology and plan (annex.2). All specific areas visited were described and located by their respective geographical (GPS coordinates) to inform the MRU Secretariat and IUCN (the implementing agency). The stakeholder semi-structured interview with informants, communities, and beneficiaries (direct and indirect) The interview was conducted using interview and survey questionnaires, through (i) individuals and focus Group (farmers, fishermen, gender, and youth considerations) discussions, involved or related to the project implementation highlighted significant effect/impact of the project at the site, national, sub-regional, and regional levels (list of stakeholders consulted/interviewed in Annex ??). We understand although this evaluator is independent and we are free to discuss issues concerning its tasks with authorities that are related to the project, we are not authorised to undertake any engagement on the name of IUCN and or the Mano River Union Secretariat.

A kick-off virtual meeting was held upon the submission of the Inception report with the Regional Project Management Unit Team to discuss and agree on the appropriate logistic arrangements and interview sites of the beneficiary communities, organization of site visits, description, and data collection, etc. These allowed the Consultant to also assess the impacts of the project results on the communities. The discussions

identified the following important points: (i) Need for clarification of the involvement and responsivities of the stakeholders in the MTE, (ii) Need to highlight the key issues and constraints identified by the REA and NEA staff in the implementation of the project activities and pinpointing realistic easy way to involve key stakeholders and particularly grassroot beneficiaries to drive the project implementation outputs and propose recommendations for sustainable protection of the Mano River resources and biodiversity.

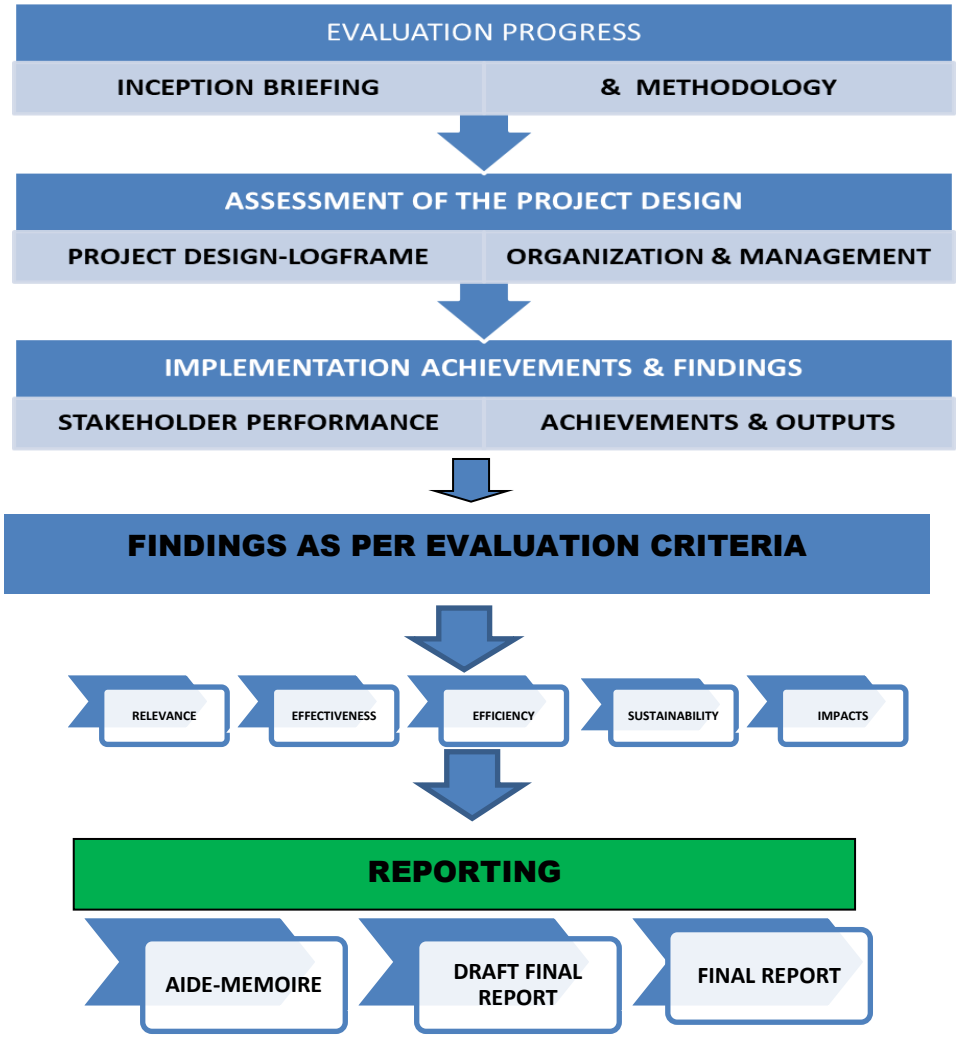

Figure 1: Project Mid Term Evaluation process evolvement and finding Analysis and reporting

2. Assessment Findings

2.1. Project relevance

2.1.1. Project baseline context

The MTR report should describe the objective of the project, the expected results and the development context. Much of this information is available from the Project Identification Form (PIF), and the Project Document.

This section should include:
 Development Context: how the project objectives align with the executing agency/implementing partners' strategies and priorities and UNDP programming priorities
 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted
 The project description and strategy: objective, outcomes, and expected results, description of field sites (if applicable)
 Project implementation arrangements: short descriptions of management arrangements, Project Team and/or management unit, Project Board, implementing partner arrangements, etc.
 Significant socio-economic and environmental changes since the beginning of project implementation and any other major external contributing factors
 Key partners and stakeholders involved in project implementation.
Our assessment highlights that the project is relevant and in line with:

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

Although the baseline context assessment highlighted in the last past decades a long period of severe climate change risks and threats experienced by the populations of the four countries and undermining their efforts towards sustainable integrated environmental and natural resource management, including the socioeconomic development and community livelihood, however, the project framework designed and implemented did not adequately target in its framework an "integrated climate change resilience and adaptation" as a key implementation strategy to properly address and mainstream transboundary basin management issues, without which under current climate and environmental disruption era, there is no sustainable forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and water stream flows from upstream to downstream.

Indeed, such a strategy is relevant to the scope of the project and could have guided the interventions on the landscape restoration and sustainable water management along the river basins and streamlining control of poor land resource planning use and management, improve resilient and agricultural adaptation and food security, thus improving livelihood of millions of people in the four countries4.

The project design addressed the Global concerns, such as particularly (i) environment protection, (ii) conservation of rich biodiversity areas, (iii) overcoming increased rates of critical forest loss and hotspot area of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem, and critical issues affecting the Upper Guinea Forest (deforestation5, forestland conversion into agricultural land, mining activities, etc.).

The strategy recommended for GEF project implementation, usually adopted as a "standard social and environmental responsibility approach in addressing transboundary river basins was amply followed by the NEA team in their respective areas on interventions, although they have been supportive from the NWRMA

[4]: *Sierra Leone (8.13 million in 2021 and 8.29 million in 2022 and with an annual rate of 2.21 %); Liberia (5.18 million persons in 2021 with an average annual rate of 2.62%); Guinea (13.43 million by the end of 2021 and around 13.77 million in 2022 with an annual rate of 2.73%); and Côte d'Ivoire (26.4 million people in 2020 and 27,742,301 with an annual increase rate of an increase of 2.40 %).*
[5]*: The remaining portion of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem is currently estimated at 93,047 km2, which represents approximately 15% of its original coverage (estimation done in 2001, Olson et al. 2001). The deforestation rate is estimated at 300 km2 per year.*

and NPAA. This raises the challenges faced in streamlining the overall achievement of planned activities. Indeed, it is always difficult without sound preparation of methodological approach of the teams at both national and regional levels to build a compelling approach that could enable overcoming issues pertaining transboundary environmental and water resource integrated management, including harmonization of policies and strategies at both reginal and country levels.

The mission assessed the baseline situation consideration as moderately satisfactory (MS:4/6).

2.1.2. Project intervention sites

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

The selection criteria of these areas are also consistent with the vision that all the efforts of the 4 countries national authorities, as well as international donors and NGOs are combined to conserve the last remaining biodiversity hotspots while at the same time to develop sustainable land use systems in the surrounding cultivated zones. Furthermore, each of these forest blocks embraces several protected areas, which constitute the core areas of highest conservation worthiness, and which are linked between each other by corridors or buffer zones (Prodoc, 2017).

The selected sites are the project selected intervention sites:

1. Under the component 1, the project implementation objective is to manage, restore and protect in the four transboundary areas, the followings:

i. Site 1: 88,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest, covering the "Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland" in Guinea and Cote-D'ivoire, and the "Protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké + National Park of the East Nimba with) Libera.
ii. Site 2: 93,400 hectares in the Trans-boundary block of forest: (i) Guinea: National Forest Protected Area Complex, including the *National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam*, (ii) Liberia: National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam.
iii. Site 3: Trans-boundary block and corridor: Guinea: Diecke ??National Forest Liberia: National Forest of Gola (LB), West Nimba National Forest (WNNF), Sierra: protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL);
iv. Site 4: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor: CI: National Park of Tai (CI); Liberia: National Park Protected Area Complex; National Park of Sapo (LB), the Grebo National Forest (Liberia)

2. Component 2 interventions targeted the 3 Trans-boundary Basin with focus on target 1.

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

These targeted areas include nearly 3,000,000 million people leaving in various communities directly and indirectly from the forest resources, confronted with severe climate change threats and impacts and

increasing vulnerability. As indicated above, the intervention sites are too big and complex with unrealistic and not achievable targets to be effectively managed within the project timeframe (5 years).

The I.C assessed the project intervention selected sites as relevant (R=1)

2.1.3. Project result framework Project Description & Background Context

2.1.3.1. Project objectives

i. The project objectives and targets are consistent with GEF 5 core Focal areas for biodiversity (DB), land degradation (TD) and international waters (IS), as well as its implementation strategy which is likely to address threats and challenges pertaining (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge, to overcoming existing barriers of the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins. The project targeted objectives and outputs are in line with the *GEF strategic objectives 1-Conserve, sustainably use and manage biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources globally*, considering the anticipated impacts of climate change, and with *"Multi-focal areas (Biodiversity, Land degradation, and international waters"*). The overall objective is to strengthen the management of transboundary natural resources for sustained ecological benefits and improved livelihoods for the forest adjacent communities. The GEF – Mano project is aligned with GEF 5 focal area strategies for biodiversity (BD), land degradation (LD), and international waters (IW). The project outcomes and outputs are presented in the table below:

ii. It is also consistent with IUCN programme priority (i) *Valuing and conserving nature,* and (ii) *Effective and equitable governance of nature's use*.

iii. The environmental policies, climate change resilience and adaptation frameworks and development priorities for the four participating countries (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Indeed, since the early 70s the intervention areas are being seriously affected by climate change hazards and threats, causing devastating environmental damages (storms, floods, etc.), land resource degradation impacts, agricultural and food production decline and political instability problems, thus undermining country's efforts for sustainable socio-economic development and livelihood of the vulnerable communities in the region. To this regard, this GEF project implementation is seen as to be a raising hope project for a bright future in playing a transformational role for the communities living in the project forest landscape areas and along the water basins and who will be benefiting from the ecosystem management while not threatening it.

The Project is structured into two technical and one management components:

Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management: this component is focused on sustainable forest management and targeting forest landscape restoration to combat the various threats and causes pertaining climatic change, environment and forest degradation in Upper Guinea, such as logging, poor traditional agricultural practices (slash and burn, shifting cultivation, monocropping, etc.), mining activities, fuelwood and charcoal production, poaching protected areas and hunting using bush fires. The activities cover four Trans-boundary landscapes involving Guinea, Coted-D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone[6]

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

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters: focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Union, facing water quality and quantity issues. They form the main biodiversity key components with potentials for conservation in their upstream catchments and large protected areas that they cover in three Trans-boundary Basin involving Moa / Makona River Basin, the Trans-boundary Basin of Cavally River Basin and the Trans-boundary Basin of Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins[7].

Component 3: Project Management Costs; focused on the project technical, operational, and financial management, monitoring and capacity building

The project objectives and results are very relevant to the needs of the MRU countries, as well as to the expected outputs of end users, as the information is foreseen to influence the sustainability of the forest landscape restoration and the basin waters. In the long term, it will help the MRU member countries building effective capacities to solve current gaps of knowledge and weaknesses, and to enable at both countries and regional levels (i) the establishment of open-field learning/production plots to support and strengthen capacities of the various partners involved in tree planting and agroforestry system promotion, (ii) training sessions for key stakeholders, (iii) empowering Local Advisory and Learning Committees, including cross-border platforms to support governance in resource management at local, national and regional level; (iv) promoting in situ technical assistance and monitoring to ensure the sustainability and impacts of the results, (iv) setting up a transboundary committee in the river basin areas.

2.1.3.2. Result Framework

Although the result framework is consistent with the GEF project design with relevant and coherent outputs in line with the project objectives and expected deliveries, the indicators follow, to some extent, did not obey the principle of SAMRT8 criteria. Indeed, while some indicators are quite SMART, most of them are (i) either too ambitious, unrealistic and not time-bound, thus unachievable during the project implementation timeframe because beyond the capacity of the NEAs, the executing partners and communities to achieve, (ii) or not have measurable aspects making them possible to assess whether they were achieved or not have any reference quantitative target values, making the project achievement monitoring somehow difficult. Indeed, considering the existing capacities at both national and regional levels, the I.C, by experience, casted serious doubt upon the authenticity of the claim of the 78% of outputs achieved and claimed being restored by the project teams (output 1.1.a with 88,400 hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests, an the output 1.1.b: targeting +93,400 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests), through various practices of natural forest regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry practices, afforestation and forest enrichment planting techniques.

This demonstrated serious professional experience gaps from the project designers to think how in such harsh conditions of degraded forest landscapes areas subject to climate change and heavy community socioeconomic pressure and required intervention capacities out of the scope of the vulnerable populations to effectively initiate and demonstrate successful landscape restoration activities at a large scale and fostering their livelihoods in the short run. In addition, such big areas will require important and frequent

***Site 3**: Trans-boundary block and corridor (including the protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL) and the National Forest of Gola (LB)); **Site 4**: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor (including the National Park Protected Area Complex of Sapo (LB), the National Forest of Grebo (LB) and the National Park of Tai (CI));*

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

[8] *SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.*

monitoring efforts and thorough attention to assess qualitative activity achievements. Proven experience of the basin sustainable forest resource management and natural ecosystem restoration should have alerted and guided the design team in limiting their ambitious vision to match the scope of works with the country concerned institutions and the community capacities.

The question one should have asked, is what justifies the idea bringing the project developers to imagining that within 5 years period the project could have sustainably restored such big forestland area and overcome the harsh environment impacts and degraded forest landscape restoration, and mainstreaming sustainable protection of sloping basin water courses, and at the same time improving water quality for human uses. We wish to conclude that such indicators are not in line with SMART criteria, as there is no rationale justification. While the restoration purpose is relevant, there is no evidence justifying any success of reversing land degradation in the areas in such short period of 5 years.

As per above finding narrative and despite weaknesses noticed in the project design, we confirm the relevance of the project objectives and outcomes and result framework and their consistency with the regional GEF and MRU country context and the project design approach and strategy, environmental and biodiversity policies, and as well as IUCN and MRU/SG supporting strategies. The project promoted a regional and national shared vision and priority actions to be demonstrated at the long term for (i) mainstreaming climate change resilience and adaptation, (ii) ensuring sustainable environmental protection, international integrated transboundary water resource management (IWRM), including sustainable management of ecosystems, conservation and valuation of rich biodiversity, landscape restoration and sustainable community livelihood.

Truly, considering current level of environment and forest degradation state and achievements of the stakeholders[9] to assure sustainable sylviculture and forest management at both national and regional levels, it is obvious to understand that these indicators are out of the scope of the team possibility, thus cannot be achieved sustainably in 4/5 years. *Therefore, thorough assessment of the environment threats and the human pressure over the forest and land resources could have guided the designing team to propose achievable, realistic and time-bound outputs and supported by laying down a strategic result-oriented project framework that could emphasize demonstrative environmental protection feasibility with focus on future sustainable land use planning and forest landscape restoration*.

Therefore, the overall design of the project is assessed Moderately Satisfactory (MS:4/6).

2.1.3.3. Assessment of Result indicators against country capacities

i. Regional context

Before this GEF project, several similar projects were initiated at both national and regional levels and which targets were very relevant to biodiversity conservation and land degradation events in the four countries, with focused on the Upper Guinean Forest and on downstream ecosystems (coastal mangrove zones for instance), resulting to limited results. Although the project activities and expected outputs are consistent with previous projects initiated in the areas with same objectives and implemented in the same areas, and which are directly relevant to the GEF and other on-going projects goals and vision, more focus could have been pushed forward to efficiently address forest ecosystem conservation and to sustainably manage adjacent protected areas, as well as overcoming issues enhancing severe Land Degradation Dynamic in fragile ecosystems, associated to Coffee and Cocoa production inside the forest. Unfortunately, despite the severe degradation, communities are still cutting down trees or practicing "slashing & burn"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ii. At country levels,

The objectives and outputs of the project are over ambitious considering the context of its baseline design and implementation challenges at national levels, particularly (i) Lack of realism in relation to current weak capacities of the institutions (inadequate forest codes and laws, poor land use management and agricultural strategies, limited capacities of the concerned department in charge of the environment in terms of number of specialized personnel, etc.), (ii) Limited logistics and inadequate financial resources, (iii) Weak enforcement of existing environment and forest land use regulatory framework (mining code and environmental code, community code and water management code, etc.), (iv) Low level of cooperation between countries for the sustainable management of the transboundary natural resources, including disparity of laws and regulations within the participating countries, etc.

Indeed, all the above issues are true constraints and difficulties that the project implementation is confronted with, that had undermined in the past the country efforts to safeguard and sustainably manage the forest landscapes and protect the river basins.

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Côte-D'Ivoire

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

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

Guinea

The project objectives and outcomes/outputs design are consistent with (i) the Guinea's legal environmental code (1987), stipulating in its article 9 "that the people have the right to the preservation of their heritage, culture and environment", including water code (1994), wildlife protection code and hunting regulations (2017), forestry code (2017), as well as a new mining code adopted in 2011. In addition, its institutional and policy framework for environmental management at the national level shares the same vision with the project and which tends to promote the responsibility of local actors and populations vis-à-vis the management of their own terroirs and calls all Guineans to properly manage the natural heritage for present and future generations. To this context, the project objectives are fully in line with and complementary to PNDES intermediate objectives 6.1, 6.2 and 8.1 aiming to (i) preserving and restoring terrestrial ecosystems; (ii) conserving and sustainably use water resources, (iii) addressing climate change events and impacts at the continental level as highlighted in conjunction with the "African Union's Agenda 206310" which also constitutes the foundation of PNDES.

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

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

Liberia

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

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

Furthermore, its interventions at the community level, target to address the main social-economic threats are poverty, stereotype, lack of income, while focusing environmental and climate change threats, lost of biodiversity, culture and physical infrastructure. These threats have been specifically targeted with high sense of improving local population livelihood.

Sierra Leone

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

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

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

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

The result indicators does not meet the GEF project SMART criteria, therefore, the MTE assessed the indicators as moderately satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

As for the overall project design, despite some of the result indicators are not SMART, the MET mission assessed the overall project relevance as highly satisfactory (HS: 5/6).

2.2. Project effectiveness

The assessment of the activities carried out and discussions with the communities interviewed on the intervention sites highlighted interesting achievements of the project outcomes and outputs, including responsible commitments of the population in the implementation of the project activities. The stakeholders acknowledged knowledge and capacities gained from their participation in the project activities enabling them to establish nurseries to production seedlings, and planting orchards with cash crop trees and fruit trees in their own or community lands. They have been also trained on the project achievement monitoring, such as seedling production and plantation, landscape restoration activities. All these skills gained from the project staff improved their skills and fostered their performance in handling forestry activities.

2.2.1. Project implementation strategy

This section presents the assessment of the project institutional arrangements, annual workplan and budget, including related drivers and attributes, the budget cost-sharing and financial execution records and reporting guidelines and period.

The project implementation involves four categories of institutional structures:

i. Implementation Agency: IUCN
ii. Regional Execution Agency: MRU Secretariat General/RPMU
iii. National Execution Agencies: one in each country, that's 4 agencies: Côte-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone
iv. Regional Project Steering Committee

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

The project implementation was launched at a regional workshop held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from – July 2017, jointly by IUCN and the MRU/SG, The Agency (IUCN), in its capacity of the project implementation agency, provided full information about the project design, recalling particularly (i) the rationale, objectives, and outputs, as well as the institutional sept-up, execution, management, and monitoring-evaluation, etc.).

The workshop also discussed the financing context and management mechanisms to finance the project activities. IUCN also recalled the SG/MRU and the NEA the obligation to adhere to and GEF administrative and the financial accounting procedures, and procurement guidelines, including disbursements, control/audit, into force at the UFM Secretariat. The forms used at each level for travel, missions, workshops, and procurement had been presented and widely explained.

The technical support provided at both regional and national levels proved, to some extent, the effectiveness ensured consistent implementation of activities and achieved the expected results?

At the regional level, the SG/RPMU has fulfilled professionally its commitment with determination and immense mindset responsibility to motivate the NEA teams and stakeholder engagement to build staff and other and local key partners to get them actively involved in the project execution process, through frequent field visits, workshops, meetings, and reporting on activities achieved, and follow-up.

The NEA in all the four participating countries focused gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities However, arises the question whether this is sustainability with regard the fact forestlands belong to state and women have a limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses.

The NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL who are also in charge of Climate change coordination, programs and GEF activities are also very supportive of the implementation process.

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

The technical support provided at both regional and national levels proved, to some extent, the effectiveness to ensure the project technic consistency applied to achieve the activities and expected results.

2.2.2. Implementation organization setup

Figure 2 below highlights the project implementation organization set-up involving three categories of actors: Implementation agency (IUCN), Regional Executing Agency (The Manu River Union Secretariat), National Execution Agencies.

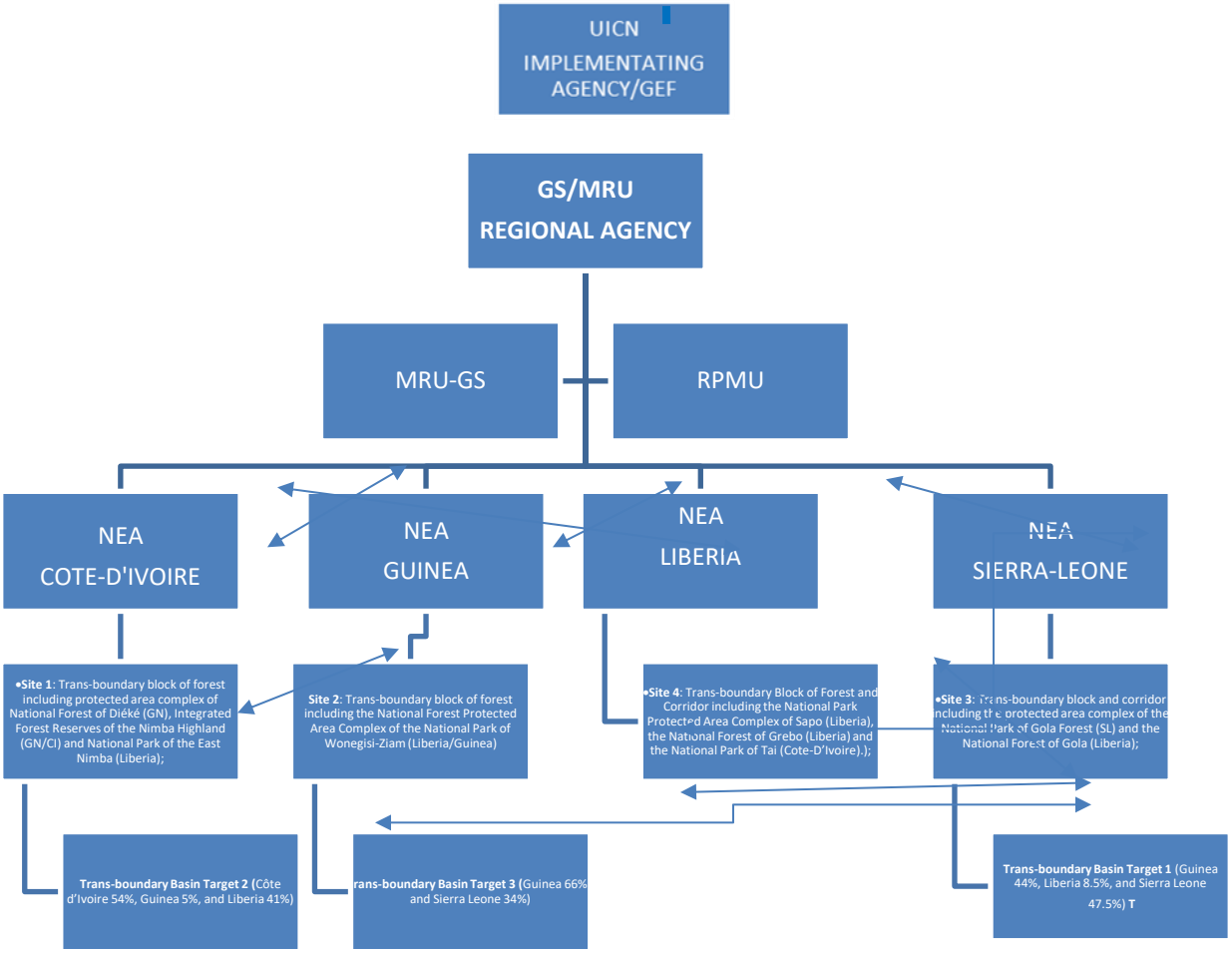

Figure 2: Project implementation Scheme (Arrows link the Transboundary & Basins to countries).

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

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

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

were brought to the knowledge of the staff and partners for their better understanding and mastering the principles and operational procedures.

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

The project implementation organization scheme set-up is assessed by the MTE mission as highly satisfactory (HS: 6/6)

2.2.3. Institutional implementation adherence

At the project inception workshop, on July 12-13, 2017, Sierra Leone, the Implementing Agency (IUCN) team provided full information about the project design (rationale, objectives, and outputs, institutional sept-up, execution, management, and monitoring-evaluation, etc.). It was also recalled the adherence requirements to:

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

All the team under the MRU/Sg and at the NEA, abide the Codes of ethics in force for the implementation of GEF/IUCN projects, to avoid fraud and corruption, and encouraging and fostering diligence, requests for funds and transfers, budget management, financial reporting of GEF funds and Co-Financing, including audit and archiving of IUCN and GEF, and how to motivate and streamline financial documentation. Adherence to these guidelines and regulation in place enabled responsible stakeholder participation to better understand the principles and procedures to be followed in the implementation of the SRM/GEF Project.

To this regard, one can wonder "how with such gaps of capacities of the stakeholders and low commitments one can ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the project achievements. Furthermore, the effectiveness and sustainability of the achievements can also be asked, since the forestlands belong in most of the cases to state lands and women don't have land or a very limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses.

All the project organ interventions are consistent with the core values and intervention vision of GEF project ethic and implementation, management and monitoring-evaluation guidelines, therefore the mission assessed the overall implementation effectiveness as satisfactory (S: 5/6).

2.2.4. Stakeholder performances

In all the four countries, the NEA had responsibly involved their key partners in the execution of the project (table 5, annexe-). The partners involved in the project execution conducted their works as per their contracts with the NEA in the four counties. They included various categories of actors: government ministry's technical departments, private companies, national and international NGO, local authorities and communities, etc.). They have been actively involved in all issues pertaining their roles and responsibilities (as per the agreement signed with the NEA) in the project work plan execution and monitoring-evaluating of the activities, and reporting. They played effective roles related their respective activities and had fulfilled their overall expectations with satisfactory performance.

Their contributions have been highly positive and effective to the outputs achieved, particularly in the following key sectors:

- ✓ Training on governance and transboundary cooperation of shared resources, for Mano basin/BRIDGE management bodies
- ✓ Developing with support by UNOPS and FFI the Guinea-Liberia bipartite agreement on Ziama-Wenegizi cross-border management and the Ziama development plan;
- ✓ Providing donation of the intervention sites by the village communities.
- ✓ Signing of deeds of donation of the apprenticeship plots by the local administrative and Community authorities

In Sierra Leone, the NEA has particularly and actively involved in the project implementation various partners and communities of various areas benefiting form the project contributions, such as (i) *Gola rainforest Alliance Conservation Ltd*, promoting Conservation of natural ecosystems and community sustainable livelihoods through transformative land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour, etc.), (ii) stakeholders specialized in capacity building through training and technical assistance in sustainable forestry practices, community-based enterprises, indigenous communities and smallholder farmer empowerment, (iii) involved in Biodiversity protection and documenting all Reptile and Amphibian Species of Sierra Leone (RAP-SL) and also promoting the Protection, Conservation and Management of Sierra Leone's Natural Resources for Sustainable Development), (iv) Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) for Education and public awareness, providing information and data based resource center for conservation and environmental protection activities, including biological research and site-based action for species sites and habitats, (v) Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB-NGO (Management of Gola rainforest NP in S.L, Monitoring and analysis, Identifying changes and problems facing wild birds, wildlife and the environment, etc.), (vi) Other NGOs like Green Life, Mohapewa and others have been very much involved in the implementation process; as well as Njala University engaged in training material and Training of Trainers in Agroforestry; National Protected Area Authority, Ministry of Agricultural Forestry and Food Security; National Coordination Unit and a Multisectoral Technical Committee, etc.

Unfortunately, due to the withdrawal of the qualified targeted partners, many activities planned were not achieved, thus undermining the project expected outputs:

i. Development of a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins.
ii. Determining and developing training programme needs for transboundary, national, and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process.
iii. Producing initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, including ground survey needs, and reporting on findings.
iv. Developing integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups;
v. Undertaking investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest landscape restoration practices, such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment

planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices, such as traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems.

vi. Reviewing and producing legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures.
vii. Gathering information on socio-economic change dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources.
viii. Setting-up a complete regional database and information about shared basin waters and biodiversity, including a regional Transboundary Diagnostic-Analysis.
ix. Establishing training course programs and to be promoted via media towards the target groups like farmers and land use planners.
x. Identifying and establishing on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse tree plantations in existing agricultural farms.
xi. Delivering in situ technical assistance and monitoring progress over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the outputs.
xii. Producing guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities in the use of tree-based systems, to be disseminated during awareness raising campaigns held in collaboration with the main stakeholders through workshops of land use improvement, as well as protected areas.

The contributions of executing partners like Gola rainforest Conservation Ltd, *Guarantee and Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH)*, have been very positive and effective to ensure sustainability as both partners have long term presence and programs in the Gola. The involvement of Gola is particularly important for the communities to support the conservation outcomes of the project. Other NGOs like Green Life, Mohapewa and others have been very involved in the implementation process. Njala University was also engaged for training material and training of Trainers for Agroforestry implementation.

All above considerations call for a questioning about the appropriateness of the agroforestry and sylviculture and management techniques applied to ensure healthy and continuous forest growth and natural regeneration, which seem to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities. Indeed, we have noted important gaps in sylviculture and forest management knowledge to ensure sustainability ecosystems and the new areas of restoration plantations, as well as the extent to which the project achievements have been integrated into the landscape restoration and biological diversity conservation and forest product valuation for community livelihood.

2.2.4.1. Project implementing Agency (IUCN)

At the regional the MRU/SG and IUCN co-organized with SG/MRU, the project Inception Workshop. implementation launching was held in Freetown from 3 to 7 July 2017, that's six months later than the official January 2017 starting date. They brought together staff form IUCN (Implementing Agency), the Mano River Union Secretariat (MRU/SG & PMU) and the National Executing Agencies (NEA), including the regional organizations, partners, civil society organizations, etc.

The two workshops addressed the orientations and guidance of the project implementation:

i. institutional arrangements and procedures defined for the project implementation.
ii. validation of the terms of reference of the national Execution Agencies and the project staff.
iii. review and validate the regional and national workplan and budget for the 4 years timeframe of he project.
iv. adoption of the project monitoring-evaluation and reporting milestone.
v. budget allocations and disbursement modalities between the NEAs and the Regional Agency.
vi. collaboration arrangements between IUCN and the Mano River Union Secretariat, as well as regional collaborating partners.
vii. adoption of collaboration modalities between IUCN and the Secretariat of the Mano River Union.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the guidelines and commitments adopted during this project Inception Workshop were not immediately followed by an effective implementation, thus causing delays in the project activities start up at four country levels.

IUCN, in its capacity of implementing agency conducted several supervision missions at regional level and monitoring-evaluation of the project implementation, as well as providing advice and guidance to the MRU Project management Unit. It participated at several regional consultations and organized several technical workshops.

The implementation supervision and monitoring by IUCN is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

2.2.4.2. Project Execution Agencies

1. **Regional** executing Agency (**Mano River Union Secretariat)**

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

The Mano River Union General Secretariat in its role of executing agency of the project, committed itself to actively gear the project implementation with focus on result-management approach and satisfactory deliveries of the targeted outputs. Indeed, to this regard the SG/MRU and the RPMU supported the NEA team and partners tireless technical and operational supports, including in-country field visits to monitoring activities from 2017 to 2021.

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

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

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

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

The project execution technical support, field activity supervision and monitoring by MRU/PMU is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

2. National Execution Agency of Cote-D'Ivoire

Located at the margins of the Mano River basin, the Côte d'Ivoire interventions are mainly focused on component 2 and (IWRM) and are mainly engaged in the implementation of regional actions of the transboundary basin protection. However, some activities are also related to the Ivorian side in component 1. The NEA with support from the SG/PMU organized its inception workshop on--, in Abidjan, following the launch of the regional workshop of the project held from 03 to 07 July 2017 Sierra Leone. The meeting was attended by the authorities of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and all national and regional actors, including those of the technical departments of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and Environment, representatives of development assistance, subregional and international development assistance organizations and civil society organizations.

The workshop discussed and adopted the 2017 workplan developed by the NEA with input from various partners and the regional PMU. Its implementation was due to start immediately with the setup of the NEA premises and staff. Activities pertaining the component 1 (Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management) were assessed not relevant for Cote-D'Ivoire, thus no activity was carried out. Therefore, the activities conducted by the NEA, from 2017 to 2021, were focused on component 2 "Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters" (Activities 2.4; 2.5; 2.8; 2.9; 2.10), as well as Component 3 related to Project Management (Activities 3.1 and 3.2). Unfortunately, activities engaged in component 2 and which results are expected at the end of the project, have been lagging in its implementation, because of the delay in adopting the workplan and budget and lack of allocation of the financial provision on due time.

As stated above, the constraints and shortfalls in PWB, delayed with serious prejudices the implementation and completion of planned tasks and with serious impacts of the targeted outcomes and outputs, ranging between 0-100%, as of December 2021 (Ref. table 1, Annex 3.2.1).
Despite the delays and lack of a consistent budget, the project implementation faced inter alia following constraints:

i. Late implementation and non-respect of the WPB of 2021, again validated with six-month delay, in July 2021, to deploy all activities;
ii. Local weaknesses in many sites:
iii. Limited actions to promote holistic approach in the project site to integrate ecosystem management within farmers farming agendas.
iv. Inadequacy of the design of participatory and community-based strategies that would lead to in situ conservation and sustainable management of soils and water resources, including biodiversity in upper Guinea's forest ecosystems.
v. Weak knowledge of forest sylviculture and management by stakeholders toward forest land restoration and management approach and integrated water resources governance, including ensuring multipurpose product and benefit-sharing, and promoting exchange of experiences among them during the development of integrated water resources management.

vi. Constraints and difficulties encountered (i) administrative burden in the procedures for disbursing funds to implement new activities; (ii) Failure to comply with consultation deadlines due to administrative burdens; (iii) Non-functioning of the Taï Forest Landscape CDC, whose stakeholders had been identified as key participators in August 2018, due to lack of funding and which resulted in a lack of information and knowledge in the management of forest landscapes to the detriment of stakeholders, and thus their inefficiency during cross-border meetings; (iv) Difficulties in the functioning of the NEA in relation to motivate stakeholder participation in the project area; (v) lack of clarity of the indicators relating to the financial support of the activities.

The project execution by Cote-D'Ivoire NEA is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

3. National Execution Agency of Guinea

The project implementation was launched by an inception workshop following the establishment on 25 July 2017 of the National Executing Agency (NEA) by Order No. A/2017/3278/MEEF/CAB/SGG of the Minister of the Environment, Water and Forests, domiciliated within the Nzerekore Forest Centre (CFZ). That's 06 months after the official starting date of the project regional inception workshop held in Freetown from 3 to 7 July 2017. The national kick-off workshop for the project activities was launched in Conakry, Guinea on 14 -15 March 2018 with the technical support of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Mano River Union (MFU), that's about 09 months after the launch of the project at the regional level in Freetown from 3 to 7 July 2017. Due to the above circumstance, the project effective implementation started at the national level with the inception workshop, organized from 12 to 13 March 2018 in Conakry (that's 09 months after the ministerial order).

Thanks to the combined efforts of the National Executing Agency, the National Coordination and the Technical Assistants, the level of implementation of activities in the field has been raised, despite the delay in the start-up. As instructed by the ministerial decree defining the mission of NEA aiming to implement and supervise activities under the supervision of the directorate of the Environment and Water and Forests, the NAE, under the leadership and general supervision of the Directorate of Water Resources Management and Protection, geared the project implementation in the selected sites to deliver the project outputs. Indeed, the National Execution Agency implemented its first annual plan of activities in accordance with the regional adopted workplan. Subsequently, the implementation of the project faced several delays, particularly at the start in 2017, among others, (i) operating resources at the level of the National Project Coordination Unit, logistical means to facilitate the follow-up of certain files at the central level in Conakry, (ii) equipment (generator, computer equipment, equipment and adequate office supplies, etc., (iii) internet connection, etc.

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Unfortunately, as highlighted above, the long delay faced in the implementation of the project activities (more than 15 months of delay after regional inception workshop), due to (i) slow administrative proactivity and financial constraints, (ii) late appointment of the essential staff and selection of the intervention sites on the ground caused undermined the progress of the activities, (iii) lack of equipment and materials, including vehicles and office equipment, as well as the withdrawal of some key partners, encountered by the NEA in the project implementation and the recruitment of Technical Assistants which was only became effective in December 2018, that is, at the end of the second year. However, from 2017 to 2021, taking profit of the staff valuable technical skills and demonstrated experience, the NEA could effectively achieve almost 75% of the 3 components output targets, after 4 full years of implementation (Ref. table 2, Annex 3.2.1).

The project execution by Guinea NEA is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

4. National Execution Agency of Liberia

The project implementation was launched on April 2-3, 2018, in Liberia and attended by 47 participants and speakers, including the Deputy Secretary General of the MRU, the IUCN representatives, representatives of FDA, representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations, MTC members, and government officials.

The inception workshop presented the project context, and formally introduced the specific objectives of the "Ecosystem Conservation International Water Resource Management (IWRM) project", supported by the GEF/IUCN, under the auspices of the MRU. It also acknowledged the kind cooperation and collaboration of the financing parties and various executing institutions and national authorities for having joined their efforts to contribute to the management of forest and water resources in Liberia. The NEA further inform the participants about the expected results of the project implementation, and formally strategized an action plan to be taken in the next 12 months (FY1, 2018) of the project for its effectiveness.

The goals of the inception workshop were to:

- **i.** Sharing information on the project implementation guidelines and requirements recommended by GEF and IUCN, responsive and proactive attitude of the stakeholders (Ministerial Departments, Agencies, National and International NGOs, Communities, and other partners).
- **ii.** Providing valuable information consistent with the result framework design.
- **iii.** Complying with the requirements of the project management and monitoring-evaluation process, the workplan and budget allocations.
- **iv.** Strategy of collaboration between the NEA with the various country partners11; however, they have been several discrepancies between countries, as some of them did not fulfill their commitments or dropped out.
- **v.** Provide platform for a transboundary cooperation and to establish wildlife corridors

[11]: The MTC/Steering Committee meeting was attended by nine (9) delegates officially representing ministries/agencies/NGOs including the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME), The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Ministry of Internal of Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), The Liberian Maritime Authority (LMA), Liberia Institute of Strategic Geo-information System (LISGIS), The Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the University of Liberia (Student Observer) . The lead agency, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), known as the National Executing Agency (NEA) responsible for the implementation of the project, was represented by eighteen (18) personnel including the Managing Director, four Technical Managers, The National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU), the National Focal Point (NFP) and a host of employees amounting to a total of 27 persons.

vi. Ensure biodiversity conservation and participatory sustainable management of natural resources from ecosystem of TGS, considering the well-being of local communities
vii. Promote and encourage transboundary cooperation to achieve the objectives leading to the global vision (Biodiversity conservation & participatory sustainable management of natural resources)
viii. Promote coordination/synergies for partners interventions, and
ix. Agree on cross border strategy plans, etc.

Following the inception workshop, the National Executing Agency (NEA) conducted several identification and planning missions to the project sites to assess and establish local consultative committees and transboundary platforms to create transboundary linkages. To this regard, the identification mission team visited (i) Lofa County Wonegizi, and Nimba Counties, (ii) East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) and (iii) West Nimba, adjacent to the Guinean Diecke National Forest.

The project staff recruitment was conducted in July 2018 and identified 1 Technical Assistant (TA) and 3 Junior Technical Assistants to assist the NPC in implementing the IWRM project (Activity 1.1). The team is composed of TAs, ROAM consultants, partners (Face-Greenlife-Forest Cry Partnership) to implement Activities 1.2, 1.9, 1.14, and 1.17 under component 1 (Integrated Ecosystem Management) respectively, etc.) and consultant to implement Activities 2.4/2.5 under Component 2 (Transboundary water Management). However, the contracts of the service providers were deferred until January 2019, causing a long delay to start the effective implementation of the project activities.

It appears that most of the difficulties encountered by the Liberia NEA are due to their big intervention sites covering 4 selected landscapes and they had to manage with the same budget instead of one Landscape for Sierra Leone, or r three for Guinea.

Despite the extension of the project duration until 2023, the implementation progress has not been as satisfactory as expected, due to several gaps and slow consolidation of the weaknesses of the work plan and budget to speed up the achievement of the activities in 2020 and 2021. Under the new plan, Component 1 earmarked seventeen (17) activities, while Component 2 earmarked six (6) activities for 2021. Of the seventeen (17) activities (Component 1) earmarked for 2021, seven (7) were completed, while 10 are on going and are expected to be completed by February 2022. Of the six (6) activities earmarked for Component 2 for 2021, two (2) activities were completed and four (4) are expected to be completed by February 2022.

Indeed, the team has been confronted with several constraints and weaknesses of various nature:

- political transition resulting to a slow pace of the project implementation
- Stringent procurement process has also delayed the supplies of transport and IT equipment
- Institutional bureaucracy at the national level has also delayed some of the project's activities.

The project execution by Liberia NEA is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

5. National Execution Agency of Sierra Leone

The project inception workshop was officially launched by the National Executing Agency in Kenema on the 15th and 16th February 2018, gathering all concerned ministerial departments, local authorities, NGO, technical and financial partners, and local stakeholders involved in the management of Forest and water resources were.

The general objective of the launching workshop is to inform national stakeholders about the project and the expected results of the project implementation plan and to review and engage national partners identified during the project's development, and to establish officially MTC. The Multisectoral Technical committee

was set up by law and their mandate was adopted and approved by the committee members adding women representation and paramount chiefs to the list of members. The MTC held their first meeting in March 2018 and reviewed and validated the Annual Work plan and Budget of the year 2018.

In addition to the forest landscape restoration, Sustainable Transboundary Water Management and community livelihood improvement, the team interventions focused the rich biodiversity conservation of the Gola Rainforest areas to ensuring that globally important habitats, biodiversity, environmental services and wider landscape of GRNP are preserved and neighbouring communities are active environmental and natural resource base stewardship to guide and enhance their livelihoods

The participants have the following vision and engagements:

i. Sharing information on the project implementation guidelines and requirements recommended by GEF and IUCN, and responsive and proactive attitude of the stakeholders (Ministerial Departments, Agencies, National and International NGOs, Communities, and other partners).
ii. Providing valuable information consistent with the result framework design.
iii. Complying with the requirements of the project management and monitoring-evaluation process, the workplan and budget allocations.
iv. Strategy of collaboration between the NEA with the various country partners12; however, they have been several discrepancies between countries, as some of them did not fulfill their commitments or dropped out.

Furthermore, the team encouraged and enforced policy and advocacy driven activities to support selected sites, including communication partnerships and linkages with other environmental conservation organizations and agencies).

The project implementation was confronted with several constraints and difficulties:

i. Delays in starting the field activities.
ii. Ambitious programme.
iii. Administrative workloads and complex finance management and disbursements
iv. Traditional farming systems are still dominated by slash and burn inside the forestlands;
v. Weak knowledge of forest sylviculture and management by stakeholders toward forest land restoration and management approach and integrated water resources governance, including ensuring multipurpose product and benefit-sharing, and promoting exchange of experiences among them during the development of integrated water resources management.

Table 4 (Annex 3.2.1) highlighted activities carried out in the country intervention sites and expected outputs achieved contributing to the improvement and restoration of the forest landscapes, integrated water management, as well conservation of biodiversity and the overall natural resource.

The project execution by Sierra Leone NEA is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

[12]: The MTC/Steering Committee meeting was attended by nine (9) delegates officially representing ministries/agencies/NGOs including the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME), The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Ministry of Internal of Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), The Liberian Martim Authority (LMA), Liberia Institute of Strategic Geo-information System (LISGIS), The Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the University of Liberia (Student Observer) . The lead agency, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), known as the National Executing Agency (NEA) responsible for the implementation of the project, was represented by eighteen (18) personnel including the Managing Director, four Technical Managers, The National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU), the National Focal Point (NFP) and a host of employees amounting to a total of 27 persons.

2.2.4.3. Regional Project Steering Committee

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

The First Session of the Regional Steering Committee (PRSC) of the Project was held on 7 July 2017 at the BINTUMANI Hotel in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone. This inception session recorded the effective presence of the Statutory Members of the Regional Steering Committee except for major partner projects such as West African Biodiversity and Climate Change (WABiCC) to review and adopt documents13 prepared by the implementing entities of the project (MRU/Secretariat and Member States representatives). The meeting assed documents presented and made observations on (i) the typical composition of the National Coordination Unit and the Multisectoral Technical Committee, their roles and responsibilities in the execution of the Project; (ii) the mechanisms provided to ensure effective synergy between the Regional Management Unit and the National Project Coordination Units; (iii) the exclusion of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of Component 1 of the Project, on the Conservation of Ecosystems; (iv) insufficient budget allocated to the project coordination units; (v) the delay in the establishment of the Regional Project Management Unit and the National Coordination Unit of Cote d'Ivoire. In addition, the mechanisms provided for in the framework of the Institutional Arrangements and the Project Implementation Procedures, as proposed by the Conakry Regional Validation Workshop (12-13 May 2017) are approved and adopted by the Regional Steering Committee. These are: (i) the alignment of the Project with ongoing initiatives at the forest basin/landscape level; (ii) the coherence of interventions between the regional and national levels; (iii) the practical modalities of Monitoring and Evaluation; (iv) the functioning of the Regional Steering Committee.

The Regional Steering Committee recommends the following:

i. Set up before 31 July 2017 the Regional Project Management Unit and the National Coordination Unit of Côte d'Ivoire (Head SG/MRU);
ii. Effectively set up national Multisectoral Technical Committees (Head of National Implementing Agencies);
iii. Proceeding to the signing of a contract between IUCN and SG/MRU, (SG/MRU Managers, IUCN-PACO);
iv. Proceeding to the signing of contracts between SG/MRU and the National Coordination Units (SG MRU Managers, National Implementing Agencies, National Coordinators);
v. Organize a meeting at the forest landscape level with all the partners involved, in order to identify synergies, complementarities in order to maximize the use of resources and, determine the gaps that will provide the elements for the mobilization of additional resources (Heads of National Implementing Agencies, National Coordinators);
vi. Continue advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national and international levels, particularly at the national level by including the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State Officials, UFM Secretariat et UICN) ;

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

vii. Stimulate and encourage the establishment of Platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of perpetuating the achievements that will result from the implementation of the Project (Head of National Implementing Agencies National Coordination);
viii. Encourage regional and national implementing agencies (MRUs) to start a process of concrete discussion with the partners mentioned in the Project Document with a view to involving them concretely in the implementation of the project activities;
ix. Prepare the report of the Project Launch and Planning Workshop and circulate to the participants, to collect their comments, amendments and comments and then integrate them into this report before its transmission to the GEF through IUCN-PACO (SG UFM Officer).

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

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

2.2.4.4. Community engagement and participations

As beneficiaries of the project interventions, communities were effectively engaged in the project execution and particularly involved in capacity building conducted at country level by the NEAs through formal training workshops and on field with support from the MEU/SG/RPMU. Their participation was highly appreciated and focused on (i) seed collection and handling, (ii) nursery activities and (iii) seedling planting inside the forest landscapes using agroforestry practices (ref. photos, Annex-).

Indeed, the NEA focused female farmers trained alongside their male counterparts in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in the establishment of agroforestry systems in the buffer zones of the forest landscapes, that most of them felted very proud to be associated with men in the project activities and as owners of their farms especially cocoa and coffee farms.

Furthermore, they also took demonstrate particularisation at the World Environment Day (WED) Day in June 2021, which witnessed their active participation in tree planting activities in the project sites. The communities also benefit from the GEF project, in collaboration with the BRIDGE project, valuable support through the Ministry of Water and Forests and the local administrative and traditional authorities to establish 5,000 tree plantations (200 people, 40% women), including the Cavally and the Nuon rivers protection initiatives through sensitization programmes (19% women out of 48 participants.

For instance, in Guinea, 14 students (36% female) in the Junior Secondary School of Irié, participated in the World Environmental Day and demonstrated sound knowledge on environmental issues in answering to questions asked during the quiz completion that was organized.

The community engagement and participation in the project implementation are assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

2.2.5. Capacity building

Important focus was given to training workshops to build and strengthening capacities of the stakeholders (NEA staff, partners, as well as individuals, and beneficiary communities at ground level, etc.) to master landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and improvement of socioeconomic livelihood of the smallholders. The capacity building was done through formal training workshops and on field and focused

on (i) seed collection and handling, (ii) nursery activities and (iii) seedling planting inside the forest landscapes using agroforestry practices.

Indeed, most of the training sessions aimed to empower project staff, partners and communities (men and women) with sound practices of landscape restoration, basins protection against erosion and water course siltation, tree plantation technics and natural resource and environmental protection in the project implementation areas. Specific trainings were conducts to empower the project staff with: (i) models and procedures required for GEF project implementation, planning and budget, monitoring-evaluation and reporting; including (ii) required principles and procedures and general conditions for procurement in accordance with IUCN and GEF procedures (tenders, level of expenses allowed, etc.).

To foster synergy of actions with partners in other projects in joint intervention or similar, the national implementing agencies have established contacts to exchange data and experience and/or carry out joint actions. The main objective of this synergy of actions is to avoid disparities in approaches in the common areas of intervention of the various partners and to cultivate a common sense of integration of the various development actions promoted by the various projects taking place in each area. To this end, it was recommended that coordination committees be set up as soon as possible to ease consultation, meetings for sharing information collected by activity and between all partners operating in concerned areas, particularly in Guinea (Ziama site) and Sierra Leone (Golan Forest zone).

Agroforestry systems promoted by the project in various good and healthy dense forests adopted by the project encourage farmers to grow crops and cash fruits may lead to important of encroachments in the forest rather than guaranteeing the existing forest sustainability. Thus, appropriate mitigation and management of environmental and social risks should have been encouraged as a prerequisite of agroforestry system adoption in the dense forests in relation with GEF project environmental and social prerequisite procedures.

All above considerations call for a questioning about the appropriateness of the techniques applied as appropriate and sound sylviculture techniques seems to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities. There are important gaps of knowledge to ensure the sustainability of the plantations established and the extent to which the project development goals have been integrated into the landscape restoration and biological diversity conservation monitoring in the forest.

The project stakeholder's capacity building by IUCN, MRU/PMU and NEAs are assessed by the mission as satisfactory (S:5/6).

2.2.6. Management, monitoring-evaluation, and reporting

Assessment of the functionality of the project's monitoring and evaluation systems, in particular the collection and analysis of information/data against indicators in the project's logical framework matrices and advise highlighted the regularity and quality of the work down by the communities as demonstrated by the content of mandatory reports especially semestrial and annual reports. The NEA in all the four participating countries focused gender difference mainstreaming and participation of relevant vulnerable groups in the project activities However, the question whether this is sustainable with regard the fact forestlands belong to state and women have a limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses.

At the project inception workshop, on July 12-13, 2017, Sierra Leone, the Implementing Agency (IUCN) team provided full information about the project design (rationale, objectives, and outputs, institutional

sept-up, execution, management, and monitoring-evaluation, etc.). It was also recalled the adherence requirements to:

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

All the team under the MRU/Sg and at the NEA, abide the Codes of ethics in force for the implementation of GEF/IUCN projects, to avoid fraud and corruption, and encouraging and fostering diligence, requests for funds and transfers, budget management, financial reporting of GEF funds and Co-Financing, including audit and archiving of IUCN and GEF, and how to motivate and streamline financial documentation. Adherence to these guidelines and regulation in place enabled responsible stakeholder participation to better understand the principles and procedures to be followed in the implementation of the SRM/GEF Project.

The project targets being consistent with GEF 5 Focal area for biodiversity (DB), land degradation (TD) and international waters (IS), the implementation strategy is likely to effectively addressing threats and challenges pertaining (i) climate change, (ii) forest landscape degradation, (iii) protection of the shared rivers and tributaries, (iv) environmental threats, and (v) improving stakeholder knowledge, to overcoming existing barriers of the conservation of Upper Guinea's forest ecosystem through participatory and sustainable management of transboundary river basins.

In most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration have not been adequately taken to address complexity of the forest vegetation patterns in introducing various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers.

Discussions and interviews with the stakeholders, provided relevant achievements highlighted relevant results and commitment of the population to pursue the project activities and improving their capacities and skills to establish nurseries and plantations, the monitoring process seemed to be left aside in second priority, while this could lead to effective achievements that could build change in the environment and people behaviour in the forest land use planning and conservation.

However, in most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative, and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration have not been adequately taken to address complexity of the forest vegetation patterns in introducing various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers.

The NEA staff conducted regular monitoring-evaluation missions on the field to follow up and assessing activity progress and encouraging the partners and beneficiary communities, as well as identifying and addressing the constraints and difficulties encountered in their activities (nurseries, tree plantations, land restoration, biodiversity conservation, socioeconomic income generation issues, etc.). IUCN and the MRU General Secretariat also provided regular support to the NEA to ensure the project implementation is in line with the workplan and the activity's guidelines. Some NEA, such as Guinea, have established field monitoring and learning plots in selected areas, but mainly focused on Cacao, Coffee and fruit tree nurseries for community and individual orchard establishment.

While the nursery activities seem to be well conducted and successful in some locations and monitored with satisfactory, the seedlings transplanted in most of the sites we visited in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia (table 3) at community levels with a strong commitment of women and men, are well maintained and very successful (> 80% of seedlings), the demonstration plantations erected are too small and not significant enough to raise hope of livelihood change and not reflecting the funds mobilized (photos). However, the nursery activities can be substantially improved through regular maintenance and control of nursery and planting technics by key voluntary well trained pilot farmers designated by the communities, including well trained women and youth to ensure strong commitment of well-maintained and frequent monitoring of the nurseries and plantations are maintained for more satisfactory results. To overcome the poor skill of tree nurturing and management capacities all the NEAs could have paid special attention on learning process in demonstration plots like "Farmer's field school" level. However, we were informed that only Gola Rainforest Company Limited by Guarantee established "Farmer's field school" for project participants, but we don't have any idea about its effectiveness. It is important to recall that the withdrawal of some key experienced executing partners contracted at the project initiation had serious undermining impacts on the success on the achievements of planned activities. Indeed, their involvements could have been efficient assets to support establishment of "Farmer's Field School Plot" to effectively mainstreaming the activities and enabling a good working relationship within the communities through training of the community youth (girls and boys) members of the different local organizations of the communities.

In the process of motivating the communities and to ensure that the project is implemented smoothly and carefully towards the expected outputs, the NEA of Guinea focused mainly socio-economic and improving livelihood of the communities as key entry strategy to convince the farmers to understand and embrace the project activities, including mitigating environmental threats and other external factors observed in the project intervention areas that could be affecting the project activities. The NEA with support from the SG/MRU staff and IUCN team helped managing key threats, such as (i) Conflicts of interest between some members of the Board of the Gbaah Local Advisory Committee in Nimba, (ii) Insufficient participation of women in meetings outside their villages, (iii) Land conflict between a father and his son for the installation of the learning plot, (iv) The appearance of caterpillars and termites in the Kpoda nursery, (v) Drying up of rivers and wells in project areas. Furthermore, they undertook frequent (i) consultations with the communities, (ii) awareness-raising and application of the association's internal regulations, (iii) relocating meetings from sub-prefectures to villages to ensure a broad participation of women, (iv) Awareness-raising, and (v) establishing learning plot to appropriate sites selected by the community members in areas graciously offered by village chieves.

As instructed at the regional launching workshop The project implementation teams at all level abided to the obligation of reporting timely on their respective achievements and submitting the following reports adopted at the inception workshop by the executing bodies:

i. Report on the Project Launch workshop.
ii. Quarterly Progress Report (TOR).
iii. Annual Project Report (RPA) / Project Implementation Review.

iv. Report of the tripartite review (Steering Committee).
v. Independent external evaluation report at mid-term and at the end of the project.
vi. Budget review report.

The reporting system follows the configuration suggested by IUCN during the project inception workshop indicating the frequency (quarterly, semestrial and annual) of reports to be produced by the SG/MRU and the NEA, as well as contractual partners per each year from 2017 to 2023. Emphasis was placed on the quality and rigorous respect of the frameworks and dates of submission of reports. As such, the reports must be succinct and clearly prepared (not too long, straight to the point, etc.). However, at NEA levels most of the reports reviewed lack substance and focus with many descriptive irrelevant details and not capturing or presenting the targeted results, undermining constraints, solutions applied to overcome difficulties, progress towards achievements as per indicators, key lessons learned, etc. As for the SG/MRU and IUCN the reports are well and clearly presented with activity achieved, results accomplished and progress made towards the project completion, as well as problems faced and recommended solutions.

As for the reporting transmission the channel is consistent with the project implementation reporting strategy instructions provided by IUCN at the project inception workshop. At the national level, information is transmitted by the NEA in charge of the execution of the activities to the National Coordination Unit for approval and onward submission to the Regional Executing Unit (SG/MRU), thus to the Implementing Agency (IUCN). The final approved report is submitted by IUCN to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The implementation strategy has proved its effectiveness to likely enhance the restoration of degraded landscapes, enhance conservation efforts, restore livelihood of communities, and reduce the threats to the natural resources. The project has also raised the awareness of communities and partners on the project outcomes and potentially can help sustainability of the outcomes. However, the achieved results do not prove the effectiveness of the project implementation targets.

The technical support provided at both regional and national levels proved, to some extent, the effectiveness ensured consistent implementation of activities and achieved the expected results?

The commitment and contribution from the SG/RPMU have been immense and she has been very actively involved in the process through field visits, meetings and general inputs and follow-up. The NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL who are also in charge of Climate change coordination, programs and GEF activities are also very supportive of the implementation process.

To this regard, one can wonder "how with such gaps of capacities of the stakeholders and low commitments one can ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the project achievements. Furthermore, the effectiveness and sustainability of the achievements can also be asked, since the forestlands belong in most of the cases to state lands and women don't have land or a very limited access right to lands, particularly forestlands, apart from collecting dead wood for domestic uses.

Despite weaknesses in the project organ performances and activity monitoring-evaluation gaps, the mission assessed the overall implementation and execution bodies as satisfactory (S: 5/6).

2.2.6.1. Project output achievement progress towards project completion

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

At regional level:

1. **Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management:**

Activities undertaken under this component 1 aim to ensure sustainable forest landscape management and restoration to overcome environmental threats, climatic change and land and biodiversity degradation in in Upper Guinea areas. Indeed, with population increase and people livelihood vulnerability increase, land resources have been subject to increasing demand by the population due to soil fertility and productivity decline, valuable tree logging, agricultural farm expanding through Slash and Burn practices, unsustainable practices, mining, fuelwood and charcoal production, game hunting and wildlife trade, resulting to increase socioeconomic vulnerability and food insecurity.

Under outcome 1.1 78.25%/73.40% (141,964 ha/193,400 ha) of forest landscape and ecosystems were restored in the four transboundary project priority sites, composed of degraded forest ecosystems considered as mosaic of the merely intact forest vegetation that continue to offer sufficient habitat for the remaining wildlife through agroforestry-friendly practices, natural regeneration, etc.). Nearly 36,964 ha/88,400 ha under outcome 1 (Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. Under outcome 2 (Forests and other cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks classified forests) indicator 1.1.a targeting 105,000 ha/93,400 Ha targeted of: indicator 1.1.b).

The restoration practices involved various forms of tree-based systems. However, due to lack of sufficient knowledge of agroforestry systems and establishment of agreements on nature compliant mining practices, the forest resources are still under threat, as the project interventions have yet not succeeded to change the course of business to induce efficient transformation mindset to more sustainable forms, which could improve nature conservation while offering profitable business opportunities and ensuring sustainable community livelihood.

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

Under output 1.1.a: S/L report: 20, 914 ha & 49.4 ha, LIB: 8 ha, that's Total: 21,271.4 ha, over 88,400 ha (project target, under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting in the 73,200 ha in the buffer zones of Gola forests (57,400ha in SL and 15,800 ha in LB) and under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting; + (ii) 15,200 ha in the buffer zones of Sapo-Grebo forests in LB under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation). At this mid-term evaluation, the

situation has not improved much in such way one can claim victory over forest landscape resource degradation factors/threats and climate change mitigation. Indeed, little changes could be observed throughout the four sites in (i) Site 1: Diecke National forest in Guinea, Mt. Nimba Integrated Forest Reserves in Guinea, Cote-D'Ivoire & Liberia & guinea, (ii) Site 2: Wonegisi-Ziama National forests in Liberia and Guinea; (iii) Site 3: Gola Rainforest National Park (SL & LB); (iv) Site 4 - Sapo National Park (LB) 14. Under output 1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting, etc.): Diecké**:** 61020 ha restored over 1.1.b: +93,400 ha:(i) 49,600 ha in the buffer zones of Diecké-Nimba West Protected Forests (34,500 ha in GN and 15,100 ha in LB) different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation.

Furthermore, the project NEA teams developed under (i) output 1.1.1, site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems, (ii) output 1.1.2. several training workshops organized for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs, (iii) output 1.1.3. develop ed improved management of agriculture activity practices within the vicinity of protected areas and buffer zones, (iv) output 1.1.4 - Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions.

Under outcome 1.2, focused was on monitoring and evaluating, but with limited outputs as the system is still new for most of the stakeholders. However, on output 1.2.1 project progress were done towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders, including environmental and social impact audit. According to PIR (2021), as of June 2021, the achievements of outcome indicators are becoming apparent as most field activities have been launched and are on-going. Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia are involved in the development of agroforestry systems. In Guinea, the 612 farmers (51% women) that were registered and trained used the knowledge gained from the training to establish the nurseries. These farmers, using the knowledge acquired from the trainings have already planted the seedlings supplied to them. On Ziama landscape using the knowledge gained from the training, they have planted on 97 hectares. In Diecké and Nimba they planted on 48.5 hectares each. They developed and validated 4 guides on pepper, cocoa, coffee and oil palm for the management of agricultural and agroforestry systems. They also developed a floristic inventory protocol for supported natural regeneration plots. A maintenance guide for supported regeneration plots was also developed during this period. All these guides serve as supporting documents to the farmers The field staff and farmers continue regular monitoring of the crops in their farms.

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, the nurseries that were established only served as transit points for the seedlings that were sourced in the communities and supplied to the farmers. The project partners provided training on sites to farmers who planted the seedlings supplied to them using the knowledge gained from the trainings. Each of the 800 farmers (20% females) in Sierra Leone was given 450 cocoa seedlings; 50 pineapple suckers; 50 plantain/ banana suckers, 3 guavas, 3 oranges that they have already planted on 1 acre per farmer. During this reporting period, farmers did regular monitoring of the seedlings that they had planted. They were encouraged to do mix cropping because the harvest from some crops with shorter

*[14]: Site 1 - Diecke National forest (GN), the Mt.Nimba Integrated Forest Reserves (GN/CI) and the East Nimba National Park (LB) : (i) Surface of the protected area [ha] (GN: 15100 ha; LN: 24500 ha); (ii) Surface of the intervention in the 5 km buffer zone [ha) GN: 34500; LN: 15100**;** Site 2 - Wonegisi-Ziama National forests (LB/GN): (i) Surface of the protected area [ha]: (GN: 93400; LN:140400; (ii): Surface of the intervention in the 5 km buffer zone [ha]: GN: 27400; LN: 16400; Site 3: Gola Rainforest National Park (SL) and the Gola National Forest (LB); (i) Surface of the protected area [ha]: LB: 99600; CI: 72300; (ii) Surface of the intervention in the 5 km buffer zone [ha]: LB: 15800; SL: 57400; Site 4: Site 4 - Sapo National Park (LB), the Grebo National Forest (LB) (without Tai NP): (i) Surface of the protected area [ha] : LB: 254600; (ii) Surface of the intervention in the 5 km buffer zone [ha] LB: 15200*

duration can support the farmers while waiting for the main crops like cocoa or oil palm to start bearing fruits. In Liberia, the partner that was hired supplied 5, 000 cocoa seedlings to each of the 3 landscapes (Gola, Wonegizi and Nimba). The 150 farmers identified on the 3 landscapes were also involved in the maintenance of the seedlings supplied to them using the knowledge they acquired from the trainings. Farmers were identified for the day-to-day monitoring and upkeep of each nursery. The selected farmers in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone utilized the skills they acquired from the trainings on how to maintain the established nursery/demonstration plots and the agroforestry systems and took care of the crops during this period. 700 additional farmers were identified and registered in Sierra Leone.

The teams trained many farmers who are currently utilizing the knowledge acquired from the workshops organized to establish nurseries and planting seedlings at 3x3m spacing between trees. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone NEA organized trainings on the concept of certification and also showed the importance of certification in the process of production and in the processing of agricultural products for commercial purposes. Guinea succeeded to train 40% of farmers in organizing farmers into committees for the certification of agricultural products in the country. During this reporting period, indicators under this objective were rated 40%

2. Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

This component 2 (Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters) focuses on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Mano Union River basins in the upstream catchments and large protected areas that they cover. The activities were focused on the management of international waters shared by the member countries of the Union, facing water quality and quantity issues. They form the main biodiversity key components with potentials for conservation in their upstream catchments and large protected areas that they cover in three Trans-boundary Basin involving Moa / Makona River Basin, the Cavally River Basin and the Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins15.

The component achievements is estimate to 100% of planned activities and outputs, including (i) targeted number of basins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures (indicator 2.1.a) under outcome 2.1 (Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs) and (ii) targeted Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management (2.2.a) under outcome 2.2 (Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management).

As indicated in the Prodoc, the component 2 achievement seeks to build a strategic consensus on transboundary issues to ensure sustainable related natural resources, including international waters, to mainstream "Integrated Water Resources Management" approach at the regional level. However, at this stage of MTR, only the TDA is being addressed and is still under its final adoption and the SAP not being started, it is too early to elaborate on its the effectiveness to contributing to the harmonization of the national policies and the development of a regional strategy for the management of these transboundary natural resources.

We wish to recall that the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis approach consisted of to identify, quantify, and set priorities for environmental problems of the 3 transboundary basins and was conducted through highly collaborative process that involved all keys stakeholders of the transboundary basins and has proven to be a major strategic planning tool for GEF International Waters Projects implementation to gear

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

sustainable shared water resources management. It may have provided the factual basis needed for the formulation of SAP and facilitate of engagement and consultation between all the key stakeholders.

Under Outcome 2.1, it expected that water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs, of which 90% achieved of "Regional water resources management under the aegis of transboundary institutional bodies-Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1: Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1)"; 80% achieved of the Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial committees established and operational) with activities: 2-20%; 100% achieved of the Output 2.1.2. (Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity), which activities under (i) output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministry committees established and operational), (ii) output 2.1.2. Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity were slightly touched mainly for TDA and which report is still under finalization.

Under Outcome 2.2, it expected 16.25 % achieved of the "Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2)"; 20% of the Output 2.2.1 (Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented); 5% (100%) of the Output 2.2.2 (The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared; 40% achieved of the Output 2.2.3 (IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders); 0% Output 2.2.4 (Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented). Most of these targets have not yet achieved as the TDA which is supposed to guide the SAP is still under finalization. At the time of this MTE, the MRU/SG/RPMU was still under TORs validation and in the process of identifying suitable consultants. As such, all outputs expected for this outcome 2.2 (Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened), (i) output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented, (ii) Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared, (iii0 Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders, (iv) Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented are not yet launched, meaning result being achieved.

Under Outcome 2.3, it expected it is expected: 70.5% achieved is monitored and evaluated); 72% achieved for output 2.3.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders) with activities achieved at 7-30%; 695 achieved for output 2.3.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out) with Activities achieved at 2-18%. Due to the delay in finalizing the TDA no progress is achieved towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders. All the expected outputs are still awaited

As for water management component and objectives, the NEA conducted completed Transboundary-Diagnostic Analysis which was validated at each NEA and at regional level. However, the outcome 2 was not yet completed and international consultant is being recruited to conduct the design of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP). As it has not yet started, obviously the consultancy and the adoption of the SAP will not achieve a full-fledged document and effective findings to mainstream integrated water management in the basin. However, as benefit of the TDA, stakeholders at various levels, have been extensively involved and extensively consulted during the TDA studies and their voices and advice were heard and taken into account. Indeed, all the stakeholders provided the project preparation team with ideas, needs and

expectations about the project, during the bilateral meetings, the two regional workshops and the social impact assessment field mission.

Although achievement under this component 2 (Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters), 91% of outcome 2.1 activities were executed with important focus on staff and community capacity building or/and strengthening without any or limited concreted actions after almost 5 years on water resources management at the regional and national levels by the concerned specialized technical institutional organs, including the many qualified partners involved in the TDA and who are not at their first experience of water governance process. The outcome 2.2 aiming to "Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management" resulted to 45% of achievement, but only limited activities related to water resource management, the SAP development being still under preliminary stage of development at this MTE period. In addition to their location in transboundary river basins, the four proposed project sites have been identified because of their historic remoteness in the MRU sub-region. They all hold significant areas of intact and secondary forest, including wildlife populations. The exceptional conservation potential for these last portions of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem earned in the last decades attention from all kinds of nature conservation organisms active at the international, regional, national, and local level.

It is sad to note that past efforts and investments provided by GEF and other donors (UNDP, USAID, European Union, etc.) and on-going GEF project planned objectives addressing transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management and water management basins, resulting to some disillusion, as to some extent, to same conclusion "achievement have not been able to reverse the continuous trends of land degradation and community vulnerability" (GEF/MRU Prodoc., 2017)

However, with regards to the wide intervention area of the project implementation and amount of works done and despite the many weaknesses in the project design harshness of the project areas, the operational weaknesses and strategy shortfalls of the executing entities, the project achievements and results achieved are very relevant to the reason of its development. However, the outputs are not likely to bring the expected change of the original situation justifying its design and implementation.

3. Component 3: Project Management Costs

This component aims to "Strengthen government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management". Various tools (6) were developed (banner, roll-up and newsletter, Facebook, Youtube, and websites) to raise awareness and promote integrated water management within and across the basin. Furthermore, 3 tools (posters on farming, fishing and mining) were developed and used under the BRIDGE project, In June 2021, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone celebrated the World Environment Day. The thematic issue was restoration of forest ecosystem, as well as awareness day on water pollution in the Little & Great Scarcies, Moa/Makona, Mano and Cavally basins (Total of 10days), including. several Press releases have been sent to PACO NEWS for publication. Some have been broadcast by national or local radio, national TV, and on social media: Youtube: Mano River Union, Facebook: @GefIUCNManoproject, and twetter. 8 newsletters developed and published on the 5 websites (www.mru.int, www.cfzguinee.org, www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr, www.dgre-minef.ci, www.mru.npaa-sl.org) of the project, highlighting these activities; under indicator 2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano Basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management, 20,000 (5,000 per pays)/0, In the project document, the target was 20,000 (5,000 per country). Due to awareness raising activities undertaken by BRIDGE and the WABICC program which targeted the same project participants, it was deemed necessary to increase the target population from 20,000 to 300,000.

In 2020, 46 persons, including 8 women took part to a training session about water diplomacy, benefit sharing on transboundary basins and transboundary cooperation. During the establishment of the regional

Moa Makona water user platform, 39 participants were sensitized on water management. Radio Kamboi and SLBC, in Kenema, broadcast a report on water management. Kenema has an estimated population of 609,891 in 2015 (Ref Communication Specialist). The national television SLBC TV (the country's most popular channel. Sierra Leone inhabitants 7,650 million (2018)) covered the workshop to establish the national consultative platform in Sierra Leone. During the workshop, participants received training on water resources management. The establishment of the kolente-great scarcies / kaba-little scarcies transboundary committee was covered by the Guinee National Television (RTG). It is estimated that prior to this reporting period, 50,000 people have been sensitized on water quality and riparian ecosystem management with the support of BRDIGE Project, financing partner. 2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level And 2.2.e: Number of preliminary: NA; 5 2.2.g: Number of websites created and 8 2.2.h: Number of newsletters published on websites Comments: For this objective the estimated Technical Execution rate during this reporting period is 50%. The development of the Regional TDA is a gradual process and the TDA trainings have been completed. The expression of interest and TOR have been developed for the recruitment of the regional consultant for the SAP. The TDA/ SAP process follows a technical and scientific methodology like ROAM process. This approach has to harmonize the format for the regional synthesis for the regional TDA.

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

The overall technical achievement of this component is estimated to 65%

4. Objective 4. The project is effectively and efficiently managed

The aim of the objective was to establish at regional level 1 technical Unit and country levels 4 technical units. As per the indicators of this objective 60%of the target has been achieved, with communication between regional coordinating unit and national coordinating units, despite some gaps and needs for improvement especially in relation to become responsive in a timely manner

In summary: (i) the target of Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities is achieved to 40%; (ii) Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs, achieved to 75%, (iii) Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management, achieved to 50%.

The project management has been assessed to be effectively and efficiently to 60%, and Globally to 56.25%. Indeed, as stated under PIR 2021-2022 report, the assumption of the four Government of MRU achievements was, rather than seeking for a short-term gain, was based on true commitments for Member States at all levels of the project to focus their interventions on the principles of sustainable development and underlying Biodiversity Convention, with good will of forestry and mining sectors, as well as local communities, to cooperate and get involved truly in the project achievements and allow the information sharing to interested groups. Unfortunately, such expectation did not fully meet, as some stakeholders feared, inter alia, the risk of their interests be constrained by the newly established integrated land use and management system proved too difficult to maintain in the current context of extracting practice.

At national level

Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management: this component is amply executed in the four countries, with an average achievement of the six outputs ??:

i. Cote-D'Ivoire:

As indicated above, the component 1 has not been implemented in Cote-D'Ivoire, therefore no activity is being carried out. The activities are focused on component 2 and component 3, with the following results. However, some key activities aiming to strengthen stakeholder's capacities were conducted:

- This component 1 is not implemented in Cote-D'Ivoire. However, as per MRU/ MPU estimates in its 2021 annual report the average achievement of component 1, 59% to provide information and background situation, and training purposes. The NEA achieved 100% of activities planned under the Output 1.1.1. (Best practices in activities) in identifying and disseminating the main production sectors that threaten the forest ecosystem (Act. 1.1.1.2: conduct a survey and compilation of data on best practices and results of different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, environmentally friendly mining and other tree-growing practices) and 20% activities achieved under (Act.1.1.1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders) and 87% of Act. 1.1.1.12 (Set up local advisory committees and cross-border platforms and organize their meetings).
- **Under the outcome 1.2** (Component 1 is monitored and evaluated) the NEA achieved 65.5%, 62% of the Output 1.2.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders) with activities (7-100%).

ii. Guinea:

Activities conducted by the Guinea NEA, from 2017 to 2021, involved all the 3 components, with below outcomes and outputs achievements ranging between 27.75- 90%, as of December 2021 (Ref. table 2, Annex 3.2.1)

- **Under the outcome 1.1** (Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities) the achievement is estimated to **92.36% for output 1.1.1** (Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems; 86.67% achieved under output 1.1.2 (Establishment of training systems for farmers to improve management methods to meet the requirements of certification programmes); 97.8% achieved under ooutput 1.1.3 (Improved management of agricultural activities in the vicinity of protected areas); 84% achieved under ooutput 1.1.4 Integrated land use planning to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from forest and agroforestry products,

- **Under outcome 1.2** (Component 1 is monitored and evaluated), **75.8%** have been achieved, with 82.5% achieved under output 1.2.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders); 69% achieved under output 1.2.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out).

iii. Liberia:

Activities have been executed by the NEA, from 2017 to 2021, and involved all the 3 components, with an average of the six outputs estimated to **be 69%, ranging between 0- 90%,** as of December 2021.

achievement of the six outputs estimated to 80%

- **Under outcome 1.1** (Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities), 77.97% have been achieved, with **79.2%** under Output 1.1.1 (Best practices in activities related to production sectors that threaten the forest ecosystem are identified and disseminated in the main production sectors); **100%** under Output 1.1.2 (Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs); **74%** under Output 1.1.3 (Improved management of agricultural activities in the vicinity of protected areas); **58.67%** under Output 1.1.4.(Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions);
- **Under outcome 1.2** (Component 1 is monitored and evaluated), 73.25% achieved; with 77.5% under output 1.2.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders); 69% under output 1.2.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out).

iv. Sierra Leone:

- Under this component 1, activities have been executed by the NEA, from 2017 to 2021, involved all the 3 components, with 73% (80%??) of average achievement of outcomes and outputs, ranging between 0- 90%, as of December 2021.
- **Under outcome 1.1** (Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities),ROAM **92.36%** have been achieved, with: **87% under Output 1.1.1** (Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems; **91.67%** under Output 1.1.2 (Establishment of training systems for farmers to improve management methods to meet the requirements of certification programmes); **78.4%** under Output 1.1.3 (Improved management of agricultural activities in the vicinity of protected areas); **75.17%** under Output 1.1.4 (Integrated land use planning to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from forest and agroforestry products),

- **Under Outcome 1.2** (Component 1 is monitored and evaluated), 76.25% achieved, with **83.5%** under Output 1.2.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders); 69% under Output 1.2.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out).

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

i. Cote-D'Ivoire:

This component 2 is the the main component addressing issues pertaining water resource management in Cote-D'Ivoire, with output average achievement estimated to 50% (table5, Annex 3.2.1.)

- **Under Outcome 2.1 (**Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA): achieved to 75% of outcomes achieved, with Outputs varying between 66.67% and 66.67%.
- **Under Outcome 2.2** (Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened ??(Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA), 48.17% of outcome achieved, with Outputs varying between 0.0% and 100%.
- **Outcome 2.3 (**Is monitored and evaluated): 75% achieved, with Outputs varying between 0.0% and 50%.

ii. NEA Guinea

- **Under Outcome 2.1**: (Gestion des ressources en eau à l'échelle régionale sous l'égide des organes institutionnels transfrontaliers) : achieved at -%, with 93.33% of Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial committees established and operational); 75% of Produit 2.1.2 - Renforcement des capacités pour élaborer et adopter l'ADT et le PAS en vue de la protection des eaux internationales et de la biodiversité;
- **Under Outcome 2.2**. Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programs (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area;, 20% of Product 2.2.1 Design and implementation of an awareness program on transboundary and environmental issues;54.17% of Product 2.2.2 Preparation of transboundary diagnostic analysis of the region and ongoing validation and adoption at ministerial level; 40% of Product 2.2.3: Development and dissemination of IW:LEARN products to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders; 0% of Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented;
- **Under Outcome 2.3**: (Is monitored and evaluated): 77.5% of Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders; 69% of Product 2.3.2 Évaluation du project et réalisation d'une mission audit.

- **Under Outcome 2.3** (Is monitored and evaluated): 75% achieved, with 81% under Output 2.3.1 (Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders), achieved at 7-30%; with 69% under Output 2.3.2 (Project evaluation and audit mission carried out), with Activities achieved at 2-18%

iii. Liberia

- **Under Outcome 2.1**: Gestion des ressources en eau à l'échelle régionale sous l'égide des organes institutionnels transfrontaliers achieved at 54.44%, with 88.33% of Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial committees established and operational); 75% of Produit 2.1.2 - Renforcement des capacités pour élaborer et adopter l'ADT et le PAS en vue de la protection des eaux internationales et de la biodiversité;
- **Under Outcome 2.2**: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programs (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area;, 20% of Product 2.2.1 Design and implementation of an awareness program on transboundary and environmental issues; 55.83% Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared; 38% of Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional; 0% of Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented.

1. **Under Outcome 2.3**: Is monitored and evaluated; 81% of Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders; 69% of Product 2.3.2 Evaluation of the project and realization of an audit mission.

iv. Sierra Leone

1. **Outcome 2.1**: Regional water resources management under the aegis of transboundary institutional bodies achieved at 84.17%, with 93.33% of Output 2.1.1 (National inter-ministerial

committees established and operational); 75% of Product 2.1.2 - Capacity building to develop and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity;

- **Outcome 2.2**: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programs (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area; achieved at 38.03%, with 20% of Output 2.2.1 Design and implementation of a transboundary and environmental awareness program;54.17% of Product 2.2.2 Preparation of transboundary diagnostic analysis of the region and ongoing validation and adoption at ministerial level; 40% of Product 2.2.3: Development and dissemination of IW:LEARN products to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders; 0% of Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented;

1. **Outcome 2.3**: Is monitored and evaluated; 87.5% of Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders; 69% of Product 2.3.2 Evaluation of the project and realization of an audit engagement.

Component 3: Project Management Costs: focused on the project technical, operational and financial management, monitoring and capacity building

The execution is undertaken on a yearly basis, January 2028 to December 2021.

i. **Cote-D'Ivoire:** 70% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.

ii. **Guinea**: 70% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.

iii. Liberia: 65% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.

iv. Sierra Leone: 67.5% of outcomes, output and activities have been achieved.

The low delivery in some outcomes is particularly due to the delay in the project inception workshop and field activities, as well as the preparation and implementation of the TDA activities and particularly the design of the SAP of which most of the activities are still pending. Nevertheless, above achievements are assessed satisfactory due to the context of the project implementation and signal good progress towards the project targets as of its end in 2023.

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

The project execution by MRU/SG/PMU is assessed by the mission as satisfactory (MS:4/6).

2.2.6.2. Effectiveness of the project output achieved and deliveries

This section assesses the project implementation effectiveness based on the objectives, outcomes and output indicator achieved and the findings of the project implementation selected site visits conducted during the

MTE in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, in June 2022. The findings of the field achievement assessment and discussions with the community beneficiaries, the I.C noted the followings:

Under the Component 1 (Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management), as per the monitoring-evaluation results reported by the project (PIR, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, NEAS, reports, etc.) nearly 73.40%/78.25 % of the landscape restoration target outputs were achieved through natural regeneration of degraded forest landscapes, agroforestry-friendly and various forms of tree-based systems practices in the four transboundary project priority sites. The interventions also focused management of the degraded natural ecosystem mosaics within merely intact areas of forest vegetation that continue to offer sufficient habitat for the survival of the last remaining wildlife populations. Furthermore, the objectives and result outputs achieved are not likely to be effective to ensure significant change and improvement of degraded forest landscapes restored and enabling biodiversity protection.

However, as for the forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation, although the assessment of the project achievements highlighted interesting results and outputs of activities carried in the four countries, the forest interventions and activities were mainly focused on cash trees and fruit tree plantation (orchards and lines opened inside the forest), so-called agroforestry systems, which in turn are simply fruit and crop tree planting inside the forests and forest land conversion. While these activities respond to the objective of improvement of livelihood of the vulnerable farmers and communities living inside or the margins of the forests, the core interventions of the project such as degraded forest landscape restoration, integrated natural forest resource management, as well as biodiversity conservation, have been given less focus.

Under the component 2, the TDA process has been an opportunity to highlight and address issues pertaining to the stakeholder's concerns at various levels during the bilateral meetings, at the two regional workshops and the Social impact assessment field mission. As highlighted in the reports, 91% of outcome 2.1 activities were achieved and discussed with important focus on staff and community capacity building to strengthening without any limitation to enable concreted actions towards water resources management at the regional and national levels. Stakeholders by the concerned specialized technical institutional organs, including the many qualified partners involved in the TDA and who are not at their first experience of water governance process. The outcome 2.2 aiming to "Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management" resulted to 45% of achievement, but only limited activities related to water resource management, the SAP development being still under preliminary stage of development at this MTE period. In addition to their location in transboundary river basins, the four proposed project sites have been identified because of their historic remoteness in the MRU sub-region. They all hold significant areas of intact and secondary forest, including wildlife populations. The exceptional conservation potential for these last portions of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem earned in the last decades attention from all kinds of nature conservation organisms active at the international, regional, national, and local level.

Furthermore only 40% of the activities pertaining TDA and SAP are achieved at this MTE, with 65 % of the output activities remaining and at risk for not to be completed before the project implementation in 2023 (that's less than 1 year before the project completion). Indeed, the SAP is still under preparation without any assurance the framework will be addressed in full fledged manner, with the risk its design core activities won't be fully fledged developed and in consistent manner. The assessment of the I.C highlighted that most of the results achieved are still very fragile and weak and rather mostly descriptive and not consistent with the SAP design background data and information requirement to address the project development rationale pinpointed at its formulation. Indeed, the I.C noted that the TDA lacks key analytical data and key sectoral action drivers pertaining sustainable integrated water and watershed management to be undertaken by the NEAs in their respective countries. As the time left is becoming a major constraint to complete the project, the design of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), there is no doubt that its design and adoption will sound as

an unachievable full-fledged flag sheet to effectively mainstreaming the integrated water management of the Mano River basin.

The I.C whish to recall similar inefficient outcome and weaknesses in stakeholder capacities were also raised and discussed during the workshop held on10-11 June, 2022, (in NZerekore, Guinea) by IUCN & MRU/SG, as well as with MRU/SG authorities, country executing agencies and staff, partners and beneficiary communities, and that had undermined most of past initiatives and investments provided by GEF and other donors (UNDP, USAID, European Union, etc.) and on-going GEF project planned with hopeful objectives to sustainably address the transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management and integrated water management within the Mano river basin and tributaries, that resulted to disillusions, to some extent, with same "achievements" far below expected outputs, unable to reverse the continuous trends of land degradation and community vulnerability" (GEF/MRU Prodoc., 2017)

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

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

It is not possible to estimate at this stage of assessment, the extent to which the project has contributed to reduce the rate of forest landscape and river basin degradation, which are from combined impacts of climate change and socioeconomic impacts. In addition, most of the project's activities, particularly those related to reforestation and sustainable management of land use planning, are of long term and which effectiveness cannot be demonstrated after 5 years to enhance environmental paradigm change and vulnerable community substantial income generating activities.

Considering the ambitious approach and multisectoral linkages beyond the capacities of the stakeholders and communities to run such complex project which requires demonstrated experience and proven technologies/practices that the teams were unable to demonstrate at country and community levels to streamline the achievements, including the time required to achieve tangible results, mainly those of component 1, and the light touch on the vulnerable community concerns apart from nursery and tree planting which are long term benefit activities, ***the I.C. assessed the overall project implementation as moderately satisfactory (MS:4/6)***.

2.3. Project Efficiency

The project achievement against the financial resources show inadequacy between result achieved and the expenses. To this regard, the project implementation efficiency which tends to measure activities and

outcomes of the project and resource expenses for the various project components activities, such as (i) management, procurement, equipment, operations, personnel salaries, field mission fees, capacity development workshops, hiring specialized experts to conduct specific studies, etc.

1. **Project budget**

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

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

iii. **Sub-total co-financing (I + ii): USD56,390,642**

2. **Budget execution**

The project cash is limited to the GEF contribution, aiming to directly support the implementation of the activities during the5 years, for the total approved amount of USD 6,336,364. The allocated budget by component is as follows:

i. Component 1: USD4,000,000 (57.39%)
ii. Component 2: USD2,034,633 (29.19%)
iii. Component 3: USD301,731 (4.33%)

As for the budget of the executing entities, the allocations are as follow:

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

Annual budget execution:

i.	2021	436,983 USD
ii.	2020	1.256,227 USD
iii.	2019	733,383 USD
iv.	2018	314,409 USD
v.	2017	30,344 USD

That's the total amount of 2,771,346 USD (43.74%) spent from 2017 to June 2021. The Cumulative disbursement as of 30 June 2022 is USD 4,395,665, meaning a total amount of 1,624,319 USD spent from July 2021 to June 2022 and a total budget balance of 1,940,699 USD.

The project financial resources are well distributed between the components (i) Component 1 with more than half (57.39%) and Component 2 with 29.19%, that's a total budget of USD 6,034,633 (86.58%)

allocated for the project key field activities against 13.48% for the component 3 (administration, operations, management and capacity building, monitoring-evaluation, etc.). as well as between the executing entities.

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

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

Therefore, the consultant assessed the project incremental cost budget allocation very relevant and consistent with the project activity achievement required expenses and as ***satisfactory (HS: 5/6)***.

The project total budget is funded by the Global Environment Facility for the total amount of 6,336,364 USD to finance the execution of the overall management and administration, field activities, personnel, operation, supervision monitoring-evaluation progress of the project achievements, as well as capacity building, evaluation and audit at both regional and country levels (Cote-D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

The budget is managed by SG/MRU under supervision of IUCN, as well for the budget execution supervision against progress of the project achievements, to meet the financial needs of each activity execution period to carry out any remaining activities to cover the concerned workplan until the project completion. The cashflow and the daily management of the budget expenditure statements at the regional level is the responsibility of the SG/MRU and at the country level the responsibility of NEA.

The resources were managed and used through an annual plan basis (January-December) adopted at the beginning of each year, from 2017 to 2021 to support the workplan activity expenses. Following the project extension at no additional cost for two more years (2023) due to the delay in implementing the project activities, the budget has also been reorganized to cover the expenses over the seven years. The budget has been executed by the MRU/SG under supervision of IUCN. Its management was based on the annual plan and budget with allotment disbursement consistent with the project achievement progress.

Considering the limited progress achieved from 2017 to 2021 towards expected results and the hypothetical completion of the project implementation by end of 2021, it was recommended at the 4th session in 2020 of the Project Regional Steering Committee held in Freetown (Sierra Leone) to extend at no cost until June 2023, then improving the financial resource management in expediting funds allocations and expenses justification, that is the overall project implementation of 7 years, from 2017 to 2023.

As of December 2021, the budget execution by component is summarized as follows:

1. **Component 1**: 54% (2,160,000 USD) of the resource used for the expenses as of December 31, 2021; that is a balance of 56% (2,240,000 USD) of the component budget
2. **Component 2**: 69% (1,403,896.77USD), as of December 31, 2021; that is a balance of 31% (630,736.23 USD) of the component budget.

3. **Component 3**: 301,731 USD total expenses??

As for component 2, the consultant noted a total budget of 69% (1,403,896.77USD) was spent only to conduct the Transboundary Diagnostic-Analysis of water resources and representing 50% of the activities focused on studies without any tangible outputs.

In summary, as indicated above, 61% (3,865,627.77USD) of the project budget were spent, meaning a balance of 39% (2,470,736.23 USD). The consultant noted a low budget delivery after 5 years of the project implementation, due to important delays in adopting the annual work plan (no field activity was undertaken in 2027 apart from the project inception workshop) and delay in allocating the funds to the NEAs. Indeed, the budget is often disposed of at the NEA around June-July of each year, thus causing important prejudicial impacts on the work progress towards the project outputs and smooth delivery of targeted outputs. Consequently, this means the project still has from August 2021 to June 2023 a total amount of 2,470,736.23 USD (39%) of the total budget to spend.

All the above budget allocations and expenditures have been audited by a dedicated independent Audit-Cabinet "MOORE Sierra Leone, 55 Sir Samuel LEWIS Rd, Aberden, P.O. Box 1278, Freetown. The budget execution has been audited from January 1st, 2017, to December 31st, 2020. The Audit provided the MRU/SG and IUCN reports for the sole use by the project management in reporting the information to MRU/SG and the ICN. The auditor's responsibilities are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and issue to an auditor report that includes the auditor's opinion. The audit complied with the international standards on auditing and did not detect any existing misstatement arising from fraud or error. As part of the audit, in accordance with international standards on Auditing, the auditor exercised professional judgement and scepticism throughout the process in identifying and assessing any risk of material misstatement of the financial misstatement and obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit and evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies.

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In conclusion the consultant assessed the use of the financial resources not consistent with the project output, thus the project implementation efficiency is moderately satisfactory (MS: 4/6).

2.4. Project Sustainability

Considering a multifactor integrated approach involving many factors, such as ecosystem characteristics, climate change impacts, human factors, community vulnerability, stakeholder involvement and attitude changes, land use practices, soils characteristics, which are often subject to changes and degradation with time and the output indicators, the IC assessed of the project achievement sustainability, as unsustainable.

Based on the achievement findings, the implementation strategy adopted by the NEA is likely to be inconsistent with the dedicated landscape forest restoration and biodiversity. Indeed, the activities were focused on agroforestry plantations and orchards, with lesser achievements on forest management and land restoration. Indeed, the activities are more related to community livelihood which indeed are seen as means and incentives to motivate the community participation, rather than on natural resources and biodiversity conservation which relies on long term interventions to restore degraded landscapes. Furthermore, the approach lacks sound forestry techniques and integrated land use management that could have enhanced sustainability of the forest ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, and in the long term building the foundation of threat and risk reduction on natural resources and livelihood improvement.

Although, the interventions and result achieved are relevant, it is obvious they need certainly more time to ensuring sustainability of the forest landscape restoration efforts and providing substantial benefits to the communities. As assessed in the field visits, the commitments of the communities are still very sporadic, except for individual farmers embarked in coffee and cacao farming for cash. The major threats which may undermine forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation are mainly traditional agricultural practices “slash-and-burn”, mining, and poor road infrastructure, which unfortunately were not given focus. Indeed, it takes time to mobilize communities to identify their forestry related interventions and prioritize key actions for restoration with along proven restoration strategies that will sustain the benefits of the restored areas.

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

The determined engagement and contribution of the partners highlighted interesting developments and in-depth commitment of the stakeholders are promising signs to ensure in the future efficient inputs towards the effectiveness of the project, particularly in providing sound knowledge, capacities and skills gained from the project on (i) establishment of nurseries, (ii) seedling management, (iii) tree planting and practical training trainings, including fostering the project performances and sustainability.

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

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

v. **Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2)**: The NWRMA, NPAA and all MDAs in the Multisectoral Technical Committee have all been very important partners that will enhance sustainability of achievements.
vi. **Environmental Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2)**: the agroforestry plots have a very good chance of success as the community benefits are enough incentive for them to carry on. However, the challenge now is market access because of the poor road network and reforestation of degraded areas using forest trees.

vii. **Social Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely (MU: 2),** (in the medium term), and expected the national and regional platforms will be sustained and especially as the NEAs are looking to integrate them into their plans and implementation,

viii. Sustainability/Financial and Economic Viability: Moderately Unlikely (MU:2)

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

The results outputs are assessed somewhat Probable (ML).

2.5. Project Impacts

The consultant also assessed the project achievement impacts and the key drivers to support their overall contribution towards sustainable ecosystem management and environmental sustainability, as well as people livelihood.

The consultant found out that the limited results achieved may alert IUCN and Mano River Union about the project contribution to streamline the implementation in the remaining project duration and whether the approach used to overcome forest landscape degradation and biodiversity conservation can be replicated in wide area throughout the transboundary basins and other similar areas in the sub-region.

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

Most of activities achieved were focused on cash fruit trees nursery development (coffee, pineapple, cacao, etc.) to improve people socioeconomic benefits and livelihood, rather than restoring degraded forest landscape activities, that are the rationale and substance of the project implementation. Indeed, activities achieved mainly targeted fruit and crop trees for economic revenue generation, mainly coffee, pineapple, cacao, etc., rather than true agroforestry systems. As such, there are many forestland encroachment areas cleared using bushfire and slash and burn practices, throughout the intervention areas of targeted landscapes. Thus, the so-called agroforestry system practiced by the project team seem to be a forestland conversion into agricultural farming, rather than agroforestry system practices aiming to demonstrate practices such as "alley cropping, soil fertility improvement, improving forest cover to protect soil against erosion and land degradation through tree planting, forest regeneration and management which are the main substance of the component 1 to cutter human pressure on the forest landscape. Furthermore, there are little activities targeting climate change issues which could have better inform about the impact assessment process and potential changes on degraded land recovery as results of the project achievements and guide the subsequent recommendations for streamlining implementation of activities of the remaining period.

The project achievements being at their initial stage, they haven't produced any or negligeable impact, neither at the level of forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, improved land management

practices, improving community livelihood, etc. However, the project contribution to build institutional capacity is assessed Highly satisfactory.

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Apart from community awareness raising and capacity building, the project achievements being at their initial stage, no evident any relevant or negligeable impact has been noticed in the sites visited, neither at the level of forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, improved land management practices, improving community livelihood, etc.

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

2.6. Theory of change

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

3. Conclusion, lessons learned and recommendations

3.1. Conclusion

3.1.1. Project achievements

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

ii. It's unfortunate, the field visits were limited to few visits, due to limited time (2-3 days, including travel) allocated in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and focused on nurseries and agroforestry cash fruit tree lines or as orchards planted in the buffer zones and inside the dense forests. However, they are not representative of the various plantations, as we couldn't visit some trees planted for restoration of the forest landscapes. However, the I.C. knows his assessment is not representative for all activities of tree plantations achieved inside the buffer zones and forest landscapes restoration areas in the context of component 1. Therefore, the I.C. further consulted with the communities and reviewed NEAs reports to validate or not his assessment of the project output effectiveness with regard the improvement of the baseline situation described at the project design (threats, roots causes, and barriers, etc.) in 2016/2017.

iii. The assessment of the output findings in many sites revealed well managed nurseries by dedicated communities, particularly women, thriving to produce good various seedlings (< 2 acres) for the establishment of small orchards for the household ash generation and consumption and forest landscape

restoration and land degradation control purpose. Their contribution towards changes of the previous situation, as result of the project interventions or magnitude, seem to be still very unsignifying, after almost 5 years of the project implementation, as the areas visited remain somehow unchanged or with little change as before, due to limited activities undertaken and the community poor knowledge and capacities despite important the workshops organized by the NEAs, and particularly inadequate agroforestry system practiced within dense forest areas.

iv. The achievements visited were dominated by agroforestry activities very much appreciated by women and considered as key technology that can drive substantial benefits to improve their livelihood while protecting the forest and the river basin against heavy socio/economic pressure and environmental impacts. Indeed, promoting the project true outputs throughout the basin could have been an inspiring way to build sustainability. In various areas including healthy dense forest cover one can question about the sustainability of such interventions promoted by the NEA. In fact, these interventions raise a concern about potential threat of converting good forest into orchards of agroforestry farms toward forest landscape conservation as it encourages farmers to convert forestlands into farms to grow crops and cash fruits, thus leading to important encroachments in the forests, rather than guaranteeing sustainable protection of the existing forests. Thus, appropriate application of mitigation, and environmental and social risks management should have been encouraged as a prerequisite of agroforestry system adoption in the dense forests in relation with GEF project implementation requirements towards environmental procedures.

v. Although they are very much appreciated by the populations, these activities cover small areas, thus with limited impacts on the socioeconomic and income generation. Furthermore, most of the sites we visited are still at their seedling stage, as the plantations are of 2-3 years. Therefore, their effectiveness is still insignificant, and need to be better and further nurtured by the communities or owners.

vi. Because of focus to agroforestry interventions, it's sad to note that almost after five years of nurturing the agroforestry plantations, the project achievements and outputs did not enable to overcome the major environmental threats inherent from climate change and correlated socioeconomic pressure from the people living in the forest edge and depending on fragile natural ecosystem and degradation land resources, despite important sensitization and trainings activities carried out to raise aware of the importance of protecting and conserving the forest reserves close to their settlements within the targeted project area of the four Member States of the MRU. Neither they enhanced the improvement of the economic opportunities for local populations, and positively addressing insufficient institutional capacity at technical staff at decentralized and local community levels to design and enforce restoration management measures of the natural ecosystem degradation.

vii. Indeed, what could have been considered as the project achievement flag sheet- landscape restoration and sustainable farming practices in the buffer zones, was not tackled enough to illustrate the effectiveness of the forest landscape restoration and integrated water resource conservation feasibility by the country NEA team works and to demonstrate a salvatory way towards community to reach sustainable on-farm income generation and self-sufficiency food security. Therefore, apart from the capacity building and knowledge improvement, the project achievements resulted to limited impacts and which may probably impact the forests and community livelihood in a long-term perspective (10-15 years), as the project component 1 objective and outcomes effectiveness was not demonstrated yet and boost any effective change in the forest resource degradation and biodiversity conservation. Does it mean, the project has missed its goal because of unlikely proven strategy and technology packages promoted at both forest management and livelihood improvement. Erosion and land degradation through slash and burn practices are still widespread and constituted vicious threat to the nature and biodiversity conservation.

viii. In most of the sites visited, the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the works adequately conducted within a professional specific context of the project implementation in tracking tools provided to the main partners to allow the use of existing information and deliver the expected results. However, the extent to which the project team uses inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring systems to ensure the follow-up and/or reactive management actions of the forest landscape restoration have not been adequately taken

to address complexity of the forest vegetation patterns in introducing various fruit trees inside the dense forest covers.

ix. All above considerations call for questions about the appropriateness of the techniques applied, as basic sylviculture knowledges and techniques seem to be lacking as revealed by the discussions on the field with the concerned communities. Indeed, there are many gaps in the forest landscape restoration and sylvicultural management knowledge and techniques used to overcome land degradation and build stakeholder capacities to ensure viable tree planting inside the forest and sustainability of the management of the restored forest lands within the degraded areas. It was also noted a lack of focus in the introduction of the tree seedlings inside the forest as it was noted during our field visits. Such introduction should first answer the question "to which extent a project activity should be undertaken, for which purpose, and which proven techniques would be appropriate and for how long"?

x. Discussions and interviews with the stakeholders, provided relevant achievements highlighted relevant results and commitment of the population to pursue the project activities and improving their capacities and skills to establish nurseries and plantations, the monitoring process seemed to be left aside in second priority, while this could lead to effective achievements that could build change in the environment and people behaviour in the forest land use planning and conservation.

xi. Considering the harshness of the region weather and climate change conditions, socioeconomic vulnerability of the landscapes and basin areas, the political instability which put at risk most of the achievements related to environment and natural resource management, the project teams achieved tremendous works, even though the outputs did not result to substantial change on the forest landscape improvement and community vulnerability and poverty reduction.

xii. Involvement of partners and communities: It happens that many activities are compromised at the site level, particularly those related to component 1, are very fragile and unable to decide on any decision to restore and preserve forest resources, either upstream or downstream to allow for engagement. However, the contracts signed between the project (ANEx) and the national consultants in November 2018 to support the field activities demonstrated the interest of the populations

3.1.2. Difficulties

The project implementation faced several constraints, such as:

Delay to start-up

i. **Implementation start-up delay**: The project implementation inception workshop was launched on 11-12 July 20217 in Freetown, Sierra Leone, while the execution at the country levels has stared in January March, that's 7–9-month delay. These delays were due to lack of preparedness of the country executing institution to allocate appropriate office and basic equipment to the project, appointed the national staff;
ii. **Lack of proven staff and skilled partners:** this involves some routine activities, and with low delivery (implementation below 20% of the target, in some NEA).
iii. **Funds mobilization**: Important delay in fund allocation and disbursement from MRU/SG to the NEA, and that delay many field activities. The funds disbursement system put in place by the MRU/SG/PMU, consisting in grouping and addressing the requests from the NEAs, has created a low fund mobilization and difficulties for some NEAs to accelerate the implementation of their work plan activities at their own pace since they must wait for the slow ones to submit financial requests.

iv. **In some NEA**, there has been withdrawal of potential foreseen partners identified during the start-up process of the project such as FFI and Rain Forest Alliance and which constituted a major handicap in the implementation of the activities.
v. **Delay in the recruitment of experts** at the regional level to coordinate field activities also constitutes a major handicap in the implementation of activities, especially for start-up of the project execution.
vi. **Mobility difficulties:** The project implementation has been also delayed due to cumbersome office works, unnecessary meetings, usual administrative burden, lack of travel means to move the staff to the project location, and long delay of recruitment of some staff, such as Technical Assistants, etc.
vii. **Many demands**: Meetings at regional levels or for NPSC for monitoring the activities, etc.
viii. **Lack of working tools** and delay in obtaining the IUCN Notice of No Objection (NOA) during the procurement process.
ix. **Weather hazards** (very rainy winter season) during the implementation of activities especially and limiting field activity monitoring.

3.2. Lesson learned

The MTE provide several lessons to us, that are:

i. Ambitious objectives with lack of focus and appropriated demonstrative approach when dealing in natural resource management in harsh and climate change prone environment;

ii. In turn, it looks like despite all efforts and activities achieved by this GEF Project, the outcomes reach, more less, same results as for previous projects implemented or supported by precedent donors and the governments, and which were unable to address the degradation situation of the same transboundary Upper Guinean Forest ecosystems management at regional level: (i) *The Guinean forests of West and Central Africa ecosystem Profile Project* – Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) - IUCN - 2013/2015. In 2013, IUCN (PACO and GSP) and the United Nations Environment Program's World Conservation Monitoring Centre developed an Ecosystem Profile that includes investment strategy for the Upper and Lower Guinean Forests to guide future grant making to civil society groups working in the region, (ii) USAID "*Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development*" (STEWARD) Program (2007/2016) joint investment of EGAT, AFR, USAID/West Africa and US Forest Service, focused on regional threats to biodiversity, forests while capitalizing on regional opportunities to spread best practices, harmonize policies and improve regional markets (as a trans-boundary protected area conservation and livelihoods improvement project, between Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone) with main objective to build capacity for increased regional collaboration in biodiversity conservation, fisheries, forestry, sustainable agriculture and trade within national and regional institutions; foster regional policy innovations and harmonization of national policies.

iii. Reversing environmental and land degradation under severe and unpredictable climate change threats, and vulnerable population striving for their survival, required long term commitment at both financial and skills staff engaged in transformation vision to make change happen, particularly in the Shared River basin, such as the Mano River Union region. Mainstreaming the basis of forest management, sustainable land use planning and management at farm level, and climate change resilience and adaptation to improve crop yield an overall agricultural production to sustain food security and on farm generation.

iv. It must be clearly understood by all practitioners, that Agroforestry differs to many extents from forestry: Agroforestry usually applies in agricultural lands to improve the soil fertility, protect the

farm against erosion (water or wind), and provide goods (products, fruits, leaves, etc.), while Forestry relies on sylvicultural practices to educate and expand forest plantations and woodlots in a dedicated land for wood or timber production, or for any other use, on a state owned land or private or community land, but at a larger scale.

v. Forest development will enable environmental improvement in harsh climate change and drought prone areas, with erratic and uncertainty of rainfalls, and traditional farming systems may rely on strengthening the stakeholder's capacities at regional, national and local levels. However, this take dedicated and skilled staff who are ready to work tireless.

vi. Based on the achievements of this GEF project and of the previous project call for in-depth baseline study by knowledgeable and experienced experts/practitioners to design and propose execution strategies and subordinate the project implementation by the commitment in cash from the government and existence of compelling legislation frameworks. The rationale of this is to avoid doing and redoing repeatedly similar projects and designing legal framework which in turn nobody follows while in the jobs on the field, thus become suddenly outdate.

vii. This project has hinged the path and direction of previous or ongoing forest and biodiversity management focusing the "promotion of cooperation through transboundary water resource management", with same rhetoric of TDA and SAP, which in most of the cases are not implemented in the life span of the project, but just studies and developing strategies without any solid foundation.

viii. Improving management of water related sectors: as water is among the primary needs for our life, focused must be put on its conservation and sustainable use, whatever is the size and quality of the water. However, it requires sound integrated strategic plan framework which considers water resources as of same importance with land resources and soil resources.

ix. Difficulties encountered by Cote-D'Ivoire NEA: During the year 2019 which highlighted the importance of respecting commitments made with the local populations: At Mount Nimba forest landscape the collaboration with communities was satisfactory with cordial relations with the populations, while with the communities of the Taï forest landscape the NEA team couldn't build trust with the communities. It is therefore suggested to set a permanent motivation for the stakeholders to participate to ensure achievement maintenance agreement prior to implement the project activity execution.

x. Establishing a lasting collaboration with other organizations and institutions present in the field for a better synergy of actions as started initiated with some stakeholders, such as WABiCC, FFI and the European Union, to avoid disparities in approach, operation, and duplication of actions around the intervention areas (Ziama reserve, etc.)

3.3. Recommendation

Considering less than one year remaining toward the project completion, as well as weaknesses and low output deliveries, the following recommendations are made to improve progress of the outputs toward the project implementation effectiveness:

1. Consolidation of 2017-2022 achievements

From January to June 2023, it is recommended to focus consolidation of unsuccessful activities carried out from 2018 to December 2022, to give change of achievement visibility and convince the communities that

with determination and commitment everything is possible. This means, as of December 31st, 2022, no new field activities, such as tree plantations for landscape restoration within the forests, should not be conducted at field level.

2. Awareness raising and capacity building:

i. No new activities must be planned and undertaken.
ii. Organizing a meeting at the level of forest landscapes with all the partners involved, in order to identify synergies, complementarities in order to maximize the use of resources and determine the gaps that will provide the elements for the mobilization of additional resources (National Implementing Agency Managers, National Coordination);
iii. Continuing advocacy for the mobilization of additional resources at the national and international levels, particularly at the national level through the inclusion of the project in the National Development Budget or the Public Investment Program (Member State officials, MRU Secretariat and IUCN).
iv. Encouraging and streamlining the establishment of Platforms at the level of landscapes and intervention sites as a means of sustaining the achievements resulting from the implementation of the project.
v. Encouraging Regional Executing Agencies (MRUs) and National Executing Agencies to engage in in-depth consultation process with the project implementation partners to involve them in the implementation of the project activities.
vi. Continuous Awareness raising for farmers and local communities on the importance of landscape restoration and within their vicinity.
vii. Pursuing and adopting a consolidated framework for awareness and capacity building, as a mandatory tool for all NEA and government executing institutions.
viii. Encouraging Regional Executing Agencies (MRUs) and National Executing Agencies to engage in in-depth consultation process with the project implementation partners to involve them in the implementation of the project activities.
ix. Awareness is raising among farmers and local communities on the importance of landscape restoration and the importance of the Gola forest.
x. Encouraging the farmers to scale up the community farms for sustainable financial returns as that will give them higher yields that will attract buyers or market.
xi. All efforts should be made for the establishment of a Regional Transboundary Management Body for the MRU Transboundary Basins
xii. Forest landscape restoration requires more investment. Several hectares have been identified that should be restored and IUCN should be solicited to empower the national technical structures so that they can access the green funds, climate funds and carbon funds among others

3. Developing Forest landscape characterization and monitoring framework

i. Consolidate existing activities, that means no new activity should be planned and implemented , thus focusing efforts on identified weaknesses and filling community knowledge gaps to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the outputs at the end of the project phase.
ii. Conducting characterization and detailed mapping: land cover, vegetation map, forest density, landscape map with degradation index (1:100,000 to 1:250,000) for the four-basin transboundary forest landscapes. This should take advantage of the ROAM research findings, but in focusing on what is relevant for the project area and not translating results from the other countries included in the study.

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

iv. Project monitoring-evaluation, based on output and outcome indicators.
v. Landscape restoration and sustainable forest management techniques.
vi. Sustainable integrated land use management guidelines.

5. **Developing a Web-based Land survey and land cover mapping and database**
   i. Land characterization.
   ii. Land feature description.
   iii. Soil survey,
   iv. Land cover, classification and mapping at large scale (1:10,000-250,000); Land and soil evaluation, Soil physical and chemical properties characterization.
   v. Assessment of Soil suitability and aptitudes; soil database, etc.

6. Sustainable agroforestry land use system framework, including:
   i. Land use planning and management, Land preparation, Land fertility improvement.
   ii. Land and soil conservation.
   iii. Erosion control on upland landscape restoration and costal protection, etc.
   iv. Agroforestry system and practices: alley cropping, cover cropping, windbreak, nitrogen fixing trees, crop rotation, mixed tree establishment (fruit tree, leguminous, etc.).

7. **Agricultural land rehabilitation framework**:
   i. Develop agricultural land rehabilitation framework.
   ii. Develop forest landscape restoration scheme and practices framework for upland protection.

8. **Develop Biodiversity conservation tools**
   i. Priority Terrestrial protected areas.
   ii. Management of transboundary basin areas.
   iii. Control of invasive species, etc.

4. REFERENCES

MRU-Secretariat, 2017: Work Plan and Budget report: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021.

Cote d'Ivoire: Annual report 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Guinea: Annual report 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021;

Liberia: Annual report 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021;

PIR: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Prodoc, 2017: Mano River Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project; 141p.

Project Report 2017 : Atelier de lancement du projet de conservation des ecosystemes et gestion des ressources en eau internationales de l'union du fleuve Mano, Freetown du 03 au 07 juillet 2017 ; 14p

ROAM:

RPSC: regional meeting reports: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021.

Sierra-Leone : 2019 : Annual report 2019;

5. ANNEXES

5.1. Annex 1: TORs

***GEF Project* "Terms of reference of Mid-Term-Evaluation"**
"Ecosystem Conservation and Management of International Water Resources of the Mano River Union"

I- Background

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

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

The intervention sites of the project are:

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

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

- T**rans-boundary Basin Target 1**: Moa / Makona River Basin shared by Guinea 44%, Liberia 8.5% and Sierra Leone 47.5% (additionally based on initial BRIDGE activities) and Mano River Basin;
- **Trans-boundary Basin Target 2**: Cavally River Basin shared by Côte d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea 5%, and Liberia 41%;–
- **Trans-boundary Basin Target 3**: Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins shared by Guinea 66% and Sierra Leone 34%.

II- Justification

The project was initially intended to end on 31st December 2020. However, a No Cost extension was granted for it from 1st January to end on 30th June 2023. Therefore, having executed the project for 4 years (July

2017 to June 2021), after extension, it is indeed necessary to conduct mid – Term evaluation in order to determine whether the implementation is well geared towards the achievement of the expected results. This will create opportunity for a revision of the current strategies in order to obtain the intended outcomes.

The mid-term evaluation is meant to evaluate the evolution of the implementation of the project. It serves as a window of opportunity to take appropriate decisions that will help to reinforce gains made and to correct mistakes that might have occurred. It also measures the level at which the intended outcomes are in focus and at the same time captures unintended outcomes (positive and or negative) if any. This MTR is a turning point which brings concrete suggestion to move from "Marginally satisfactory" Implementation status to "Highly satisfactory"

IIIa. Objective of the project

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

IIIb. Objectives of the MTE

The mid-term evaluation is meant to determine the pertinence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and the sustainability of the project.

It will also determine the direction of the implementation in relation to the set objectives. It eventually determines the realisation of the project in relation to its set objectives.

More specifically, it will focus on the following key points:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Timeliness of the project in terms of the economic, institutional and current environmental conditions of the 4 project landscapes, the 3 transboundary basins and their adjacent communities.
- Capture the initial lessons learnt from the implementation.
- Contribution of the programme to Goal 12 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals sub section 12.2 : ***By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.***
- The mid-term evaluation will examine the proposed activities of the project and will provide comments and recommendations of their appropriateness.

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

The MTE shall identify all pending requests from the executing entity prior to departure and ensure their review and conclusion during the mission period, besides addressing the following generic issues related to the following keys points:

(i) Review progress of project implementation on a component by component basis. The mission will also review achievements made against targets set in the annual work plans and budget(s), in addition to assessment of overall progress since project effectiveness, as well as assessing the implementation of recommendations that were made during the previous mission(s).

(ii) Assess the project progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes, and in the use of funds, and recommend measures, if any.

(iii) Assess the performance of the project in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness of the activities undertaken including project procurement.

(iv) Review compliance with all grant conditions.

(v) Assess the adequacy and efficiency of the executing agency and the project management unit; Document organizational and human resources constraints, if any, and formulate appropriate recommendations for redress.
(vi) Review the appropriateness and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the project.
(vii) Verify functionality of the project's monitoring and evaluation systems, in particular the collection and analysis of information/data against indicators in the project's logical framework matrices and advise PMUs on the regularity, quality and content of mandatory reports especially semi-annual or annual reports [depending on the implementing agreement signed between IUCN and the Executing Agency].
(viii) Undertake project risk analysis and jointly agree on contingency plans and mitigation measures where necessary.
(ix) Discuss with project beneficiaries, other project stakeholders and collaborating institutions to ascertain their views on implementation and progress.
(x) Assess the status and progress in implementing the environment and social management plan and the gender plan.
(xi) Assessing the status of the various approved procurement activities and performance of the approved contracts for services, goods and works under each Project.
(xii) Assess status of readiness for the Annual Audit for [year] in addition to following-up and verifying implementation of the recommendations arising from external audits from [the past year].
(xiii) Providing implementation assistance to the PMU as may be required, including processing of any pending requests during the mission period.
(xiv) Agree jointly on necessary adjustments of the logical framework, activities and outputs to be delivered, the overall budget lines allocation (within the approved budget), procurement and disbursements that would be required.

Findings and recommendations of the mission will be presented to the government officials and the PMU staff at a wrap-up meeting to be organized at the end of the mission. The Mission will sign an Aide-Mémoire containing the key findings and issues in addition to agreed actions with timeline for resolution of the issues. The enhanced Aide-Memoire format will propose and shall be used by the mission team.

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

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

Name of site visited	Geographic coordinate	Type of intervention(s)	Name and contact of community leader(s)

IV. Methodological Approach and tools

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

This mid-term evaluation has three components: -

- Desk review
- Visits to Project sites and
- Conduct interviews (through survey questionnaire, Focus Group discussions and or Key informant interviews) with individuals (gender considerations) who are either affiliated to the project on the

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

Desk Review

The mid-term evaluation team has to familiarise themselves with the project by going through pertinent project documents before the field visits. The following documents among others are key :-

- Monitoring and evaluation documents,
- Activity reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020
- The Multisectoral Technical Committee reports from the 4 project countries
- Aides mémoire of the two supervision missions and recommendations progress
- Reports of studies realised on the project
- Other relevant communication support

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

Field visits

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

Interviews

The evaluation team will conduct interviews with persons or groups of persons as follows:-

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

Although the evaluators are independent and should feel free to discuss issues concerning their tasks with authorities that are related to the project, they are not authorised to undertake any engagement in the name of IUCN and or the Mano River Union Secretariat.

V. Mid-term Evaluation indicators

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

- ✓ The reports of the Baseline research to establish the level of the project indicators
- ✓ The project output and outcome indicator tracking matrix
- ✓ Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)
- ✓ The training of 663 farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs

- ✓ The training of 115 participants in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)
- ✓ The type of Forest Landscape Restoration undertaken on the 4 project landscapes; detailing the number of hectares already under restoration through project support ;

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VI. Expected results, conclusion and recommendations

Based on the objective of the mid-term evaluation, the project indicators and the methodology, the evaluation team is expected to furnish conclusions and recommendations including:

- Aide- memoire bringing out key finding and general recommendations for the implementation of the project
- The level of attainment of the set project objectives
- Important lessons drawn from the implementation and the results of the project with particular emphasis on what worked well and what did not work
- Recommandations for future actions

VII. The report of the mid-term evaluation

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

- The Terms of Reference for the mid-term evaluation
- The itinerary
- List of meetings held with participants lists (with their contacts if any)
- Liste of persons interviewed
- Field visit summary report
- List of documents revised/ consulted
- Any other relevant documents

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

VIII: Costing

Eligible costs for this evaluation include:

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

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

IX. Budget

The project budget will finance the mid-term evaluation

X. Composition and pprofile for the mid-term evaluation mission

The mid-term evaluation will be conducted by a consultancy firm/ an individual consultant recruited by the Mano River Union Secretariat. The consultancy firm / individual consultant is expected to be well grounded in the intervention areas (in forest landscape restoration and in the management of transboundary water resources and legislations). It is imperative for the consultancy firm/ individual consultant to have good knowledge in Forest Landscape Restoration and in the management of international water resources including a scientific understanding and the pertinence of project evaluation techniques particularly GEF / IUCN projects and a good knowledge of the Mano River Union region. The lead of the consortium / international consultant is expected to be :-

- A Specialist in the management of natural resources trained (at least BAC +5) with at least 10 years' experience in environment, soil science, geography or similar domain. The Specialist should have experience related to land degradation and in Forest Landscape Restoration processes and vast experience in project evaluation techniques particularly GEF / IUCN projects.

- The lead of the consultancy firm / international consultant should be an Agroeconomist or an Agronomist or a socio-economist trained (Bac +5) with at least 10 years experience in rural development and in developmental project analysis.

- A Specialist in financial management trained (at least Bac +4) with at least 5 years experience in financial management, economics or other related field. The Specialist should have an understanding of the Mano River Union region and knowledge on the operational procedures and disbursement of GEF /IUCN projects. The consultancy firm is not expected to be directly involved in the implementation of the project.

XI. Timeline, duration and itinerary of the mid-term evaluation

This mid-term evaluation will be conducted from 28th June to 31st July 2021. The duration of the consultancy including travelling days will not exceed one calendar month. The itinerary will be finalized by the lead of the consultancy firm and the project Regional Coordinator at the Mano River Union Secretariat.

XII. APPLICATION

Offers from the individual application or Consulting Firm, consisting of an updated CV, a letter of submission, a letter of commitment (indicating the availability for the period of the mission) and of a technical and financial offer (separate) are admissible (in electronic version) no later than **January 5, 2022** at the e-mail addresses below:

- For sending the proposal: doumbia1959@gmail.com, tayirogerdore@gmail.com ;leonardoswilson@gmail.com.
- With copy to dominique.endamana@iucn.org

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

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

XIII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Intellectual property rights

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

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

B. Liability, Indemnity and Insurance

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

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

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

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

D. Amendments
The parties reserve the right to make, where necessary and by mutual agreement, amendments to certain provisions of this contract.
Any modification must be consigned in an amendment duly signed by the two parties.

E. Termination
E1. Any failure by either party to fulfil its obligations under the present contract will cause, at the discretion of the other party, the full cancellation of the contract, 15 days after receipt of a formal notice to carry out the unexecuted contract terms and conditions, if such notice remained without effect, without prejudice to any damages.
E2. The exercise of this termination right will not exempt the faulty party from completing the obligations contracted up to the termination date, and without prejudice to any indemnifications that the other party claims due to the damages caused by the anticipated termination of the contract. Such termination will not have effect to release the consultant from its obligations, mainly but not only, the obligation to deliver all reports due up to the effective date of termination.

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

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

E4. In the event that a contract is terminated prior to the date of expiration the consultant will be compensated on a pro-rata basis for no more than the actual amount of work performed to the satisfaction

of MRU. Additional costs incurred by MRU resulting from the termination of a contract by the consultant will be deducted from any amount due to him/her by MRU. The Consultant will reimburse to MRU any unused funds with any the interest earned.

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

XIV. Additional Information

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

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

Table 1: Project selected intervention sites

Trans-boundary landscapes	Location	Area covered (Ha)	Targeted areas
Site 1: Trans-boundary block of forest	Cote-D'Ivoire (Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI) Guinea (Integrated Forest Reserves of the Nimba Highland (GN/CI); protected area complex of National Forest of Diéké) Liberia (National Park of the East Nimba)	Baseline for East Nimba shows: 13,569ha. Agroforestry work done by Liberia in East Nimba: 8 hectares Total = 13,577 ha	Project target = 88,400 hectares
Site 2: Trans-boundary block of forest	Guinea: National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam & Centre de Gestion Environnementale de Mt Nimba et Simadou (CEGENS) and the Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF) with the Office des Forêts Classées de N'Zérékoré (former Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré) Liberia: National Forest Protected Area Complex of the National Park of Wonegisi-Ziam & Forestry Development Authority	Baseline for Diecke shows: 61020ha Diecke - Guinea: 48.5ha agroforestry Baseline West Nimba shows : 0ha West Nimba - Guinea: 48.5ha agroforestry Baseline Ziama: 5800ha Ziama - Guinea: 97ha agroforestry Baseline for Wonegizi shows: 37979ha Wonegizi -Liberia: 7ha TOTAL # under restoration: 105,799ha	Project Target is 93,400 hectares
Site 3: Trans-boundary block and corridor	Guinea: Diecke National Forest Liberia: National Forest of Gola (LB), West Nimba National Forest (WNNF) Sierra: protected area complex of the National Park of Gola Forest (SL)	Baseline for Gola Sierra Leone shows: 20914ha Gola - Sierra Leone: 1653.36 Acres (661.34 ha) agroforestry	?

		Baseline for Gola Liberia shows: 4042ha Gola- Liberia: 7ha - agroforestry	
Site 4: Trans-boundary Block of Forest and Corridor	CI: National Park of Tai (CI). Liberia: National Park Protected Area Complex; National Park of Sapo (LB), the Grebo National Forest (Liberia)	?	?
Trans-boundary Basin Target 1	Guinea: Moa / Makona River Basin shared by Guinea 44% Liberia: 8.5% Sierra Leone : 47.5% (additionally based on initial BRIDGE activities) and Mano River Basin;	?	?
Trans-boundary Basin Target 2:	CI: Cavally River Basin shared by Côte d'Ivoire 54%, Guinea: 5%, Liberia: 41%;	?	?
Trans-boundary Basin Target 3:	Guinea: Great and Little Scarcies/ Kolenté-kaba basins (66%) Sierra Leone: 34%.	?	?

5.3. Annex 2: Evaluation Questionnaire

5.3.1. Annex 2.2. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability & Impacts

COTE -D'IVOIRE

Question 1 : To what extent are the project objectives and outcomes consistent with regional and national policies, strategies and priorities for ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, landscape restoration and international water resources management (IWRM)?

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

Question 2 : To what extent is the project implementation strategy likely to address the issues (climate change, forest landscape degradation, rivers and tributaries, targeted environmental threats and knowledge barriers, etc.) that the project seeks to address?

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

Question 3 : To what extent are the objectives and results of the project realistic in relation to the knowledge gaps and vulnerability of the area and the community at the regional, national and local implementation levels of the municipality?

Answer: The objectives and results are realistic but certainly needs more time for the implementation of the forest landscape restoration efforts. It takes time to mobilize communities identify and prioritize sites for restoration but also what restoration strategies are to be implemented for a complete bye in that will sustain the gains of the restored areas.

Question 4: What do you think of the effectiveness of the implementation and management of the project in relation to the expected results?

Answer: The effectiveness and implementation require time and constant monitoring that takes a lot of resources

Question 5 : How effective do you think are the commitment and contribution of the SG/SRM, the project coordination, management and implementation teams, the country NEA teams, including the Regional Project Steering Committee, IUCN and partners in delivering the project implementation expected results?

Has their technical support efficiently ensured consistent implementation of activities and achieved the expected results?

Answer: The commitment and contribution from the SG/RPMU has been immense and she has been very actively involved in the process through field visits, meetings and general inputs and follow up. The NEAs from the NWRMA and NPAA have been very supportive and have used their resources and expertise to support the implementation since inception. The EPA-SL who are also in charge of Climate change coordination, programs and GEF activities are also very supportive of the implementation process.

Question 6 : What are the main socio-economic and environmental threats, including any other external factors observed in the project intervention areas that have affected the project activities?

How did the execution teams solve them?

Answer: The major threats are slash-and-burn agriculture, mining, the poor road network. The team worked with local communities and partners through the Local consultative committees to raise awareness, and through training and involvement in the project. There were also outreach through radio. TV and social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp)

Question 7: What do you think of the involvement and contribution of other partners operating in the Mano River area, including government technical departments, private companies, NGOs and local communities in the implementation of the project?

Answer: The contributions of our implementing partners like Gola rainforest Conservation Ltd by Guarantee and Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH) have been very positive and will ensure sustainability as both partners have long term presence and programs in the Gola. The involvement of Gola is particularly important for the communities to support the conservation outcomes of the project. Other NGOs like Green Life, Mohapewa and others have been very involved in the implementation

process. Njala University was also engaged for training material and training of Trainers for Agroforestry implementation

Question 8 : How do you assess the overall achievements of the project (Satisfactory, Average, Fair, Mediocre, etc.)

Answer: Average

Question 9: How do you assess the sustainability of achievements:

1. Institutional sustainability: The NWRMA and NPAA and all MDAs in the Multisectoral Technical Committee have all been very important partners that will enhance sustainability of achievements.

2. Environmental sustainability: The agroforestry plots have a very good chance of success as the community benefits are enough incentive for them to carry on. However, the challenge now is market access because of the poor road network and reforestation of degraded areas using forest trees

3. Social Sustainability: the national and regional platforms will be sustained and especially as the NEAs are looking to integrate them into their plans and implementation

4. Sustainability/Financial and economic viability: Through the New Agroforestry practices, the farms will be more productive and will give gains to the farmers. the farmers are expected to start making money from the sales of the cocoa which will start in the third year of planting, which is basically 2023/2024. Some sales have started for the pineapples, Bananas, plantains.

5. Infrastructure sustainability: Improved methods through trainings and nurseries have helped communities and farmers to understand how to manage community forests and the protected area.

Question 10: What are the impacts of the project in terms of reinforcement:

1. Institutional capacity: High

2. Technical capabilities: Medium

3. Multi-sectoral implementation and project management capabilities: High

4. Operational capabilities: Medium

Question 11 : What would you suggest that is different compared to:

1. The design of this Mano River project, including its objectives and expected results,

2. Its financing modalities: Long term sustainable financing and follow up on farmers for several years to help build cooperatives, partnerships and value chain additions that will ensure financial, social and economic viability.

3. Implementation strategy to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of integrated water resources management, sustainable management of agroforestry landscapes, biodiversity conservation and improvement of livelihoods of people in transboundary basins?

    - Support to the local platforms to continue working/monitoring farmers
    - Training in business management and in biodiversity conservation
    - Refresher training in agroforestry planning, implementing and marketing of produce
    - Awareness raising for farmers and local communities on the importance of landscape restoration and the importance of the Gola forest
    - Encourage the farmers to scale up the community farms for sustainable financial returns as that will give them higher yields that will attract buyers or markets

5.3.2. Annex 3.2.1: Project outcome achieved at country level (as of December 2021)

Table 1: Annex 3.2.1.a: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Cote-D'Ivoire, as of December

Component	Outcome	Outputs rating (%)	NOT YET ACHIEVED & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. **Not applicable**	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoring the productivity of tree systems disseminated to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in key production sectors affecting forest ecosystems. **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	**Because several activities are not carried out in CI** **Pending deliverables from activities 4 and 1.15 not carried out in CI**
		Output 1.1.2 : Establishment of training systems for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs. **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	**Pending deliverables from activities 4 and 1.15 not carried out in CI**
		Output 1.1.3 : Improved management of agricultural activities in the vicinity of protected areas **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	**The implementation of the Taï – Grebo – Sapo forest landscape platform is still pending. The NTP Landscape Advisory Committee is established.**
		Output 1.1.4 : Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions. **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated **Executed 100%**	Output 1.2.1 : Project progress towards outcomes is documented and shared with all parties involved. **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	**Activities attributed to the IC were regularly monitored**
		Result 1.2.2 : Completion of a project evaluation and audit engagement **Not applicable because only a few activities are performed**	**Evaluation is ongoing**
Component 2: Sustainable	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary	Output 2.1.1 : Established and Operational Interdepartmental National Implementation Committees 83.33%	**Almost reached, remains the execution of an activity**

Management of Transboundary Waters **66.06%**	institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); **Executed at 88.8%, 75%**	**100%**	**The MTC's field activities had not yet begun.**
		Output 2.1.2 : Strengthened capacity to prepare for and adopt ADD and PAS for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.66.67%	**Delay in the preparation of the ADT document** **Delay in execution:** AER
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); **48,8%/48.17%**	Output 2.2.1 : Design and implementation of an outreach program focused on transboundary and environmental issues.53% **83.33%**	**Partially carried out with the support of the BRIDGE project/ Pending the programme of the programme carried out for this purpose**
		Output 2.2.2 : The regional cross-border diagnostic analysis is prepared and is being validated and adopted at the ministerial level. Preliminary regional strategic action programmes are prepared, 39.67% **40%**	**Pending the establishment of the regional technical team. The national team is already in place.** **Remains the organization of meeting of the cross-border committee**

			Awaiting regional ADT report **Pending the preparation of the validated regional ADT report** **Linked to the realization of the ADT**
		Output 2.2.3 : Inland navigation learning products generated and disseminated to a large community of local, national and regional stakeholders.100% **58%**	
		Output 2.2.4 : Financial Resource Mobilization Strategy developed and implemented 0%	**Can only start after the SAP has been developed** **Linked to the implementation of the SAP** **Linked to the implementation of the SAP**
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate **100% 75%**	Output 2.3.1 : Project progress towards outcomes is documented and shared with all parties involved. **100%**	
		Result 2.3.2 : Completion of a project evaluation and audit engagement **50%**	**Only the evaluation mission is in progress**
Component 3: Project Management Costs **100%**	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented **100%**	Output 3.1.1 : The project management team is developed and functional **100%**	**The audits are carried out, but not yet the evaluation of the project**

Table 2: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Guinea, as of December 2021

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	Weaknesses
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 90% Satisfaisant	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems 95% Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.1.1.1**: Procure project operation logistics; ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.1.2**: *Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems;* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.1.3**: *Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;* ***85 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.1.4**: *Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes];* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.1.5**: *Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders*; ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant**	Project administration and logistics ongoing. (i) slow administrative proactivity and financial constraints, (ii) late appointment of the essential staff and selection of the intervention sites on the ground caused undermined the progress of the activities, (iii) lack of equipment and materials, including vehicles and office equipment, as well as the withdrawal of some key partners, encountered by the NEA in the project implementation and the recruitment of Technical Assistants which was only became effective in December 2018, that is, at the end of the second year.
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs 90% Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.1.2.1**: *Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.2.2**: *Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural*	

			oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles; ***85%*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.2.3**: *Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups*; ***85 %*** **Satisfaisant**	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas 91% Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.1.3.1**: Activity 1.9: *Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods*; ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.3.2**: *Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers;* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.3.3**: *Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures*; ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.3.4**: *Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings*; ***70 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.3.5**: *Activity 1.13: Deliver* in situ *technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;* ***86 %*** **Satisfaisant**	**Final maps to be produced after all the restoration activities**
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions 84% Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.1.4.1**: *Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ;* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.4.2**: *Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations*; ***95%*** **Satisfaisant**	**Second stage of Activity ongoing**

			Activity 1.1.4.3: *Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas*; ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.4.4**: *Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups;* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.4.5**: *Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees;* ***50 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 1.1.4.6**: *Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers*; ***60 %*** **Satisfaisant**	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 76% Satisfaisant	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders *77%* Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.2.1.1**: Activity 1.20: *Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions* ***76 %*** **Satisfaisant**	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 75% Satisfaisant	**Activity 1.2.2.2**: Activity 1.22: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.* ***75 %*** **Satisfaisant**	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational 92% Satisfaisant	**Activity 2.1.1.1**: *Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.1.2**: *Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks****100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.1.3**: *Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans*. ***75%*** **Satisfaisant**	**This is ongoing and has been largely succesful**

	Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 82% Satisfaisant			
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity 72% Satisfaisant	**Activity 2.1.2.1**: *Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins*. ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.2.2**: *Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme* . ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.2.3**: *Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin*. ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.2.4**: *Activity 2.7*: *Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP*. **0%** **Activity 2.1.2.5**: *Activity 2.8*: *Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5.* ***60 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.2.6**: *Activity 2.9*: *Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about*	

			international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.1.2.7**: *Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues.****0%***	
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); 27.75% Passable	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented 20% Passable	**Activity 2.2.1.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* ***20 % Faible*** **Activity 2.2.1.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.* ***??%*** **Activity 2.2.1.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. . ***??*** **Activity 2.2.1.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, ***?? %*** **Activity 2.2.1.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. ***0?? %*** **Activity 2.2.1.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.***??%**	
			Activity 2.2.1.7: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination*. **??%**	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary	**Activity 2.2.2.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the*	

		Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared 43% Moyen	*preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* ***53%*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.2.2.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively* ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.2.2.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. ***100 %*** **Satisfaisant** **Activity 2.2.2.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, ***00 %*** **Activity 2.2.2.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. ***00 %*** **Activity 2.2.2.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.* ***00 %***	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders 48% Moyen	**Activity 2.2.3.1**: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination* **48% Moyen**	
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented **0%**	**Activity 2.2.4.1**: *Activity 2.18*: *Development of the resource mobilization strategy*. **00%** **Activity 2.2.4.2**: *Activity 2.19*: *Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity*. **00%**	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented	**Activity 2.3.1.1**: *Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions* ***65%*** ***Satisfaisant***	

	57.5% Moyen	and shared with all stakeholders 65% Satisfaisant		
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50% Moyen	**Activity 2.3.2.1**: *Activity 2.22*: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.* ***50% Satisfaisant***	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented 94% Satisfaisant 80%	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional 94% Satisfaisant	**Activity 3.1.1.1**: *Activity 3.1*: *Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels.* ***100% Satisfaisant*** **Activity 3.1.1.2**: *Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units* ***98% Satisfaisant***	

Table 3: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Liberia, as of December 2021

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	NOT YET ACHIEVED & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 70%	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems 80%	**Activity 1.1.1.1**: Procure project operation logistics; 80% **Activity 1.1.1.2**: *Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems ~~60%~~ 100%* **Activity 1.1.1.3**: *Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems; 100%* **Activity 1.1.1.4**: *Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]*; ~~*100%*~~ *80%* **Activity 1.1.1.5**: *Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders*; ~~*100%*~~ *80%*	
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management	**Activity 1.1.2.1**: *Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners 100%* **Activity 1.1.2.2**: *Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic*	

		practices to meet certification programs 100%	*organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles*; *100%* **Activity 1.1.2.3**: *Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups*; ~~*100*~~*% 80%*	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas 70%	**Activity 1.1.3.1**: Activity 1.9: *Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods*; *100%* **Activity 1.1.3.2**: *Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers; 100%* **Activity 1.1.3.3**: *Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures*; *100%* **Activity 1.1.3.4**: *Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings*; *100%* **Activity 1.1.3.5**: *Activity 1.13: Deliver* in situ *technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;* ~~*100%*~~ *80%*	
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to	**Activity 1.1.4.1**: *Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate*	

		enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions 70%	*origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ; 100%* **Activity 1.1.4.2**: *Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations*; 80% **Activity 1.1.4.3**: *Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas*; *100%* **Activity 1.1.4.4**: *Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups; 100%* **Activity 1.1.4.5**: *Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees;* On going **Activity 1.1.4.6**: *Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers*; On going	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated 85%	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 70%	**Activity 1.2.1.1**: Activity 1.20: *Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 70%*	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 100%	**Activity 1.2.2.2**: Activity 1.22: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits70%*	
Component 2: Sustainable	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-	**Activity 2.1.1.1**: *Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial*	

Management of Transboundary Waters	the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 50%	Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational 100%	*committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU 100%* **Activity 2.1.1.2**: *Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks 100%* **Activity 2.1.1.3**: *Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans100%*	
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity 0%	**Activity 2.1.2.1**: *Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins*. (*100%* **Activity 2.1.2.2**: *Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme 100%* **Activity 2.1.2.3**: *Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin*. *100%* **Activity 2.1.2.4**: *Activity 2.7*: *Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP*. *0%* **Activity 2.1.2.5**: *Activity 2.8*: *Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including*	

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

	32.5%, Not yet fully achieved as the SAP is yet to be initiated			
			Activity 2.2.1.7: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 40%*	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared 50%	**Activity 2.2.2.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins. 100%* **Activity 2.2.2.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively. 100%* **Activity 2.2.2.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. *100%* **Activity 2.2.2.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, On going **Activity 2.2.2.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. ~~*100%*~~ *On going* **Activity 2.2.2.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 0+++%*	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of	**Activity 2.2.3.1**: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination* ~~*0%*~~ *40%*	

		local, national and regional stakeholders 15%		
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented 15%	**Activity 2.2.4.1**: *Activity 2.18*: *Development of the resource mobilization strategy. 0%* **Activity 2.2.4.2**: *Activity 2.19*: *Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity. 0%*	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 32.5%	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders 15%	**Activity 2.3.1.1**: *Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 15%*	
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out 50%	**Activity 2.3.2.1**: *Activity 2.22*: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits* ***(50%)***	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented Achieved	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional 100%	**Activity 3.1.1.1**: *Activity 3.1*: *Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. ~~0%~~ 100%* **Activity 3.1.1.2**: *Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units 90%* .	

Table 4: Achievements of National Execution Agency of Sierra Leone, as of December 2021)

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	NOT YET ACHIEVED & REASON
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 87%	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems **90%**	**Activity 1.1.1.1**: Procure project operation logistics; (70%) **Activity 1.1.1.2**: *Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems;* (100%) **Activity 1.1.1.3**: *Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;* (95%) **Activity 1.1.1.4**: *Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]*; ; (100%) **Activity 1.1.1.5**: *Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising*	

			campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders; (98%)	
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs 90%	**Activity 1.1.2.1**: *Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners* (95%) **Activity 1.1.2.2**: *Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles*; (95%) **Activity 1.1.2.3**: *Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups*; (95%)	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas **98%**	**Activity 1.1.3.1**: Activity 1.9: *Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.2**: *Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers;* (20%)	

			Activity 1.1.3.3: *Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.4**: *Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.5**: *Activity 1.13: Deliver* in situ *technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;* (95%)	
		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions **70%**	**Activity 1.1.4.1**: *Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ;* (98%) **Activity 1.1.4.2**: *Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations*; (85%) **Activity 1.1.4.3**: *Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas*; (98%) **Activity 1.1.4.4**: *Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups;* (98%)	

			Activity 1.1.4.5: *Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees;* (60%) **Activity 1.1.4.6**: *Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers*; (60%)	
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated **55%**	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders **60%**	**Activity 1.2.1.1**: Activity 1.20: *Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions* (60%)	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out **50%**	**Activity 1.2.2.2**: Activity 1.22: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.* (50%)	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational **90%**	**Activity 2.1.1.1**: *Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU* (90%) **Activity 2.1.1.2**: *Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks* (98%) **Activity 2.1.1.3**: *Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans*. (75%)	

	River Union area (Outcome 2.1); **85%**			
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity **80%**	**Activity 2.1.2.1**: *Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins*. (98%) **Activity 2.1.2.2**: *Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme* (98%) **Activity 2.1.2.3**: *Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin*. (40%) **Activity 2.1.2.4**: *Activity 2.7*: *Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP*. (0%) **Activity 2.1.2.5**: *Activity 2.8*: *Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5.* (45%) **Activity 2.1.2.6**: *Activity 2.9*: *Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information*	

			compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), (95%) **Activity 2.1.2.7**: *Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues.* (10%)	
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); **27.5%**	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented **30%**	**Activity 2.2.1.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* (90%) **Activity 2.2.1.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.* (96%) **Activity 2.2.1.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. (96%) **Activity 2.2.1.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%) **Activity 2.2.1.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. (80%) **Activity 2.2.1.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.* (30%)	

			Activity 2.2.1.7: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination* (30%)	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared **50%**	**Activity 2.2.2.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* (96%) **Activity 2.2.2.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.* **Activity 2.2.2.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. 100% **Activity 2.2.2.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, 15% **Activity 2.2.2.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. On going **Activity 2.2.2.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme. 30%*	
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a	**Activity 2.2.3.1**: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination 40%*	

		broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders **30%**		
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented **0%**	**Activity 2.2.4.1**: *Activity 2.18*: *Development of the resource mobilization strategy*. *0%* **Activity 2.2.4.2**: *Activity 2.19*: *Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity*. 0%	
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 45%	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders **40%**	**Activity 2.3.1.1**: *Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions 40%*	
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out **50%**	**Activity 2.3.2.1**: *Activity 2.22*: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.**(50%)***	
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented **92.5%**	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional **92.5%**	**Activity 3.1.1.1**: *Activity 3.1*: *Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels. **(95%)*** **Activity 3.1.1.2**: *Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units **(90%)*** .	

5.3.3. Project results achieved at regional level, as of December 2021

Table 5 (Ref. Annex 3.2.1): Achievements of the operation plan (From Patrick 2021consolidated report;

How did you get the data from Cote-D'Ivoire, since it is not concerned by Component 1? LINKS WITH TABLE 8?)

OUTPUTS OF COMPONENT 1:	SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA	LIBERIA	COTE D'IVOIRE I UNDERSTAND COMPONENT 1 IS NOT IMPLEMENTED IN COTE-D'IVOIRE AS PER THE QUESTIONNAIRE FILLED IN AND I RECEIVED FROM THEM	MRU	GLOBAL
Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems	93%	88 400 ha 93%	79%	60% ??	93%	81%
Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	92%	95%	100%		20%	77%
Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	76%	91%	60%		81%	77%
Output 1.1.4. Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions	63%	87%	56%		92%	74%
Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders	68%	68%	68%	68% ??	68%	68%
Output 1.2.2 Project evaluation and audit mission carried out.	50%	50%	50%	50% ??	50%	50%
Average Component 1 (6 Outputs)	73%	80%	69%	59% ??	67%	71%
OUTPUT OF COMPONENT 2:	SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA	LIBERIA	COTE D'IVOIRE	MRU	Global
Output 2.1.1: National inter-ministerial committees established and operational	93%	90%	85%	87%	100%	91%

Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.	75%	75%	75%	67%	75%	73%
Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented	56%	60%	60%	60%	60%	59%
Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared.	38%	35%	33%	31%	34%	34%
Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders	48%	40%	38%	40%	40%	41%
Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders	68%	68%	63%	68%	68%	67%
Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out.	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Average Component 2	53%	52%	50%	50%	53%	52%

Table 7: Annex 3.2.1Progress toward outcomes/outputs indicators tracking

WHAT DO YOU CALL OBJECTIVES? : Outcomes: if yes how come you have here four and repeated

Outcome/Output Indicators	Periodic Result	Results to Date	Target	Project Target	Progress
Objective 1:- Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities**.**					**78.25%**
1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)	20914	38964	88,400	88400	44%
1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting, etc.)	8,054	105,000.0	93,400	93,400	112.42%
Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs					**100%**

2.1.a: Number of subbasins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures	2	4	4	4	100%
Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management					**100%**
2.2.a: Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management	1	5	5	5	100%
Objective 4. The project is effectively and efficiently managed					100%
2.2.p: Number of project management unit established at regional level	1	1	1	1	100%
2.2.q: Number of project coordination unit established at national level	4	4	4	4	100%
Objective 1. Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities					**65%**
1.1.d: Number of site-specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.	0	2	4	4	50%
1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented	308	678	800	800	85%
1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	23	80	80	80	100%
1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed	1	2	4	4	50%
1.1.h: Percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry	0%	10%	25%	25%	40%
Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs					**91%**
2.1.b: Number of Multi sectorial Technical Committee (MTC) established	4	4	4	4	100%
Number of events/tools developed and implemented:	0	6	6	6	100%
Number of awareness-raising days,	2	10	6	6	167%
Number and type of publications,	0	5	8	8	63%
Number and content of radio-programme	4	6	9	9	67%
2.1.c: Number of sessions of Multi sectorial Technical Committee meetings (MTC) organized	4	24	24	24	100%
2.1.d: Number of training programme established	1	1	1	1	100%
Number training material disseminated	1	1	1	1	100%
2.1.e: Number of Male/Female staff trained;	18	20	20	20	100%

2.1.f: Number of training workshops organized about TDA-SAP and for water governance champions;	2	2	2	2	100%
2.1.g: Number of study tours organized	0	0	1	1	0%
Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management					**45%**
2.2.b: Number of awareness raising tools	0	15	16	16	94%
Number of awareness-raising days,	2	6	6	6	100%
Number and type of publications,	0	5	8	8	63%
Number and content of radio-programme	2	6	9	9	67%
2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management	328	20,000	20000	20000	100%
2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level;	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed;	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and resilience measures in the SAP;	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.g: Number of websites created;	4	4	4	4	100%
2.2.h: Number of newsletter published on websites;	4	6	12	12	50%
2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed.	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.j: Number of experience notes	0	0	2	2	0%
2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences	1	1	1	1	100%
2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU	0%	0%	30%	30%	0%
2.2.n: Number of international donors conference organized	0	0	1	1	0%
2.2.o: Number of regional events in which the projects is presented	2	3	3	3	100%
Overall outcome progress					95%
Overall output progress					67%
Objective 1. Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities					**65%**
Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs					**91%**
Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management					**45%**
Objective 4. The project is effectively and efficiently managed					100%
					75%

Table 6: Progress towards the project output completion at regional level

Component	Outcome	Output	Activities	Weaknesses
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management	Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities. 87%	Output 1.1.1: Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems **90%**	**Activity 1.1.1.1**: Procure project operation logistics; (70%) **Activity 1.1.1.2**: *Activity 1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems;* (100%) **Activity 1.1.1.3**: *Activity 1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;* (95%) **Activity 1.1.1.4**: *Activity 1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes]*; *;* (100%) **Activity 1.1.1.5**: *Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders*; (98%)	**Project administration and logistics ongoing.** **Final Stage**
		Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs	**Activity 1.1.2.1**: *Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners* (95%) **Activity 1.1.2.2**: *Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic*	

		90%	*organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles*; (95%) **Activity 1.1.2.3**: *Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups*; (95%)	
		Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas **98%**	**Activity 1.1.3.1**: Activity 1.9: *Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.2**: *Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers;* (20%) **Activity 1.1.3.3**: *Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.4**: *Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings*; (80%) **Activity 1.1.3.5**: *Activity 1.13: Deliver* in situ *technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;* (95%)	**Final maps to be produced after all the restoration activities**

		Output 1.1.4: Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions **70%**	**Activity 1.1.4.1**: *Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ;* (98%) **Activity 1.1.4.2**: *Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations*; (85%) **Activity 1.1.4.3**: *Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas*; (98%) **Activity 1.1.4.4**: *Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups;* (98%) **Activity 1.1.4.5**: *Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees;* (60%) **Activity 1.1.4.6**: *Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers*; (60%)	**Second stage of Activity ongoing**
	Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated **55%**	Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders **60%**	**Activity 1.2.1.1**: Activity 1.20: *Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions* (60%)	
		Output 1.2.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out **50%**	**Activity 1.2.2.2**: Activity 1.22: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.* (70%)	

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters	Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs (2.1:Strengthening the capacities in the region for the formulation of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.1); 85%	Output 2.1.1: National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committees established and operational **90%** (Not achieved: Multisectoral Technical)	**Activity 2.1.1.1**: *Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national inter-ministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU* (90%) **Activity 2.1.1.2**: *Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks* (98%) **Activity 2.1.1.3**: *Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans*. (75%)	**This is ongoing and has been largely succesful**
		Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity **80%**	**Activity 2.1.2.1**: *Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins*. (98%) **Activity 2.1.2.2**: *Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme* (98%) **Activity 2.1.2.3**: *Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach*	

			and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin. (40%) **Activity 2.1.2.4**: *Activity 2.7*: *Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP*. (0%) **Activity 2.1.2.5**: *Activity 2.8*: *Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5.* (45%) **Activity 2.1.2.6**: *Activity 2.9*: *Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity*, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), (95%) **Activity 2.1.2.7**: *Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues.* (10%)	
	Outcome 2.2: Technical and financial capacity of government institutions for transboundary water resource management is strengthened (Developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA) and a preliminary Strategic Action	Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented **30%** (Awareness raising programs tors designed for the recruitment of Communication expert to help implement those activities)	**Activity 2.2.1.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* (90%) **Activity 2.2.1.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.* (96%) **Activity 2.2.1.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. (96%)	

	Programmes (SAP) for the protection and the management of the transboundary water resources in the Mano River Union area (Outcome 2.2); 27.5%		**Activity 2.2.1.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%) **Activity 2.2.1.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. (80%) **Activity 2.2.1.6**: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.* (30%)	
			Activity 2.2.1.7: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination* (30%)	
		Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared **50%** (National and Regional TDA Completed and validated. Awaiting the start of the SAP)	**Activity 2.2.2.1**: *Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.* (90%) **Activity 2.2.2.2**: *Activity 2.12*: *Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively* (95). **Activity 2.2.2.3**: *Activity 2.13*: *Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis*. (90%) **Activity 2.2.2.4**: *Activity 2.14*: *Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA.* To insure a fully consultative decision-making process, (80%) **Activity 2.2.2.5**: *Activity 2.15*: *Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins*. (80%)	

			Activity 2.2.2.6: *Activity 2.16*: *Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme.* (30%)
		Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders **30%**	**Activity 2.2.3.1**: *Activity 2.17*: *Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination* (30%)
		Output 2.2.4: Financial resource mobilization strategy developed and implemented **0%**	**Activity 2.2.4.1**: *Activity 2.18*: *Development of the resource mobilization strategy.* (0%) **Activity 2.2.4.2**: *Activity 2.19*: *Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donors conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity*. Base (0%)
	Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluate 45%	Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders **40%**	**Activity 2.3.1.1**: *Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions* (0%)
		Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out **50%** (Audit mission carried out twice since inception)	**Activity 2.3.2.1**: *Activity 2.22*: *Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.* ***(0%)***
Component 3: Project Management Costs	Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented	Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional	**Activity 3.1.1.1**: *Activity 3.1*: *Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels.* ***(95%)*** **Activity 3.1.1.2**: *Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units* ***(90%)***

	90%	**90%** (NPCU actively functioning in the project implementation)		

5.3.4. Annex 3.2.4. 6 & 7-Activites des Parties Prenantes -26-05-2022-Fr

Table 7 below highlighted activities achieved or not by the targeted partners..

Table 7. Contribution of the Stakeholder engaged in the project implementation (extracted from Patrick report)
(From P. Masuba, Report)

STAKEHOLDERS	**COUNTRY**	**ROLE / PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT**	**ACHIEVEMENTS**
Rainforest Alliance	SL-LIB-GN	Support activities 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8	
RSPB-SL – Gola Rainforest NP	SL	Support activities 1.13, 1.15, 1.17, on SL sites	
Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	SL	Support activities 1.13 on SL sites	
Farmers Association for Conservation of the Environment (FACE)	LB	Support activities 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 1.17 & 1.19 on LB sites	Implemented the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology
Rural Integrated Centre for Community Empowerment (RICCE)	LB		
Partner for Nature and Development (PAND)	LB	Support to the implementation of activities 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8	Output 1.12, Training system established for Farmer how to inprove management patrices to meet certification program.
GREENLIFE/ FACE PARTNERSHIP	??	Worked with FACE (partnership) to implement Activities 1.2, 1.9, 1.14 and 1.17, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.15	*Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems*
SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (SEC)	??	Implemented Activity 1.16	*Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions*
WEDE Agriculture Development Industry	??	Implemented Activity 1.10	*Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas*
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	LB	Support activities 1.13 on LB sites	
Fauna and Flora International, (FFI)	GN	Support activities 1.13 on GN sites	

Environmental management Centre of the Nimba Mountains (CEGENS)	GN	Take advantage of the project's support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	
Nzérékoré Forest Centre	GN	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	
Cooperative Woko associated with the Research Institute and Applications ofnDevelopment - IRAM (Production Robusta Coffee Certified « Coffee Ziama-Macenta")	GN	Support activities 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 1.19 on GN sites	
National Council of Civil Society national in Guinea	GN	Support activities 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.15 for the portions of basin organizations	
Ivorian Observatory Resources (OI-REN)	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	
Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR)	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	Uninflamed activities in Cote-D'Ivoire. However, the OIPR was involved in activities 1.12 (100%) and 2.3 (100%)
Parks and Reserves Foundation	CI	Take advantage of the project support to implement natural conservation (Activity 1.7) and training sessions (Activity 1.10)	Activities not carried out in CI. However, the Foundation is invited to some activities: Project Launch, Activities 2.6, Activity 2.13.
National Partnership of Water in Côte Côte d'Ivoire (PNECI)	CI	Support activities 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.15, for National portions of the targeted basin	Activity 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 (100%). Activity 2.15 not yet performed
Rowland Stevens	Information not provided	Outcome 2.4.	No information provided
Rowland Stevens	Information not provided	Outcome 2.5.	

MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 1.9.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Act. 1.17.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 1.2.	
MOHAPEWA CO. Ltd	Information not provided	Act.1.11.6	
Greenlife West Africa	Information not provided	Outcome 1.14.	
Ecosys SL Ltd	Information not provided	Outcome 2.9 & 2.13	
Gola Rainforest National Park	Information not provided	Outcome 1.6, 1.7 & 1.8	
Welt Hunger Hilfe	Information not provided	Outcome 1.3 & 1.13	
Greenlife West Africa	Information not provided	Outcome 1.4, 1.5 & 1.15	

5.3.5. Annex 4: Budget

Table 8: Detail budget expenditures (From P. Masuba, Report)

Liberia etension File	**Budget Contractuel**	**Extension Budget 2021-23**	**Cummulative Balance December 31 2021**
A.1.1: Procure project operation logistics	385,533.00	231,447.00	166,542.00
A.1.2: Undertake investigation and data compilation on best practices and results from different forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, nature compliant mining and other tree-based agricultural practices such traditional and enhanced agroforestry systems	11,630.00	11,190.00	10,750.00
A.1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;	49,066.67	21,271.00	(6,525.00)
A.1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification schemes];	19,173.33	11,802.00	6,523.00

A.1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders;	22,200.00	16,478.00	10,756.00
Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners	9,300.00	5,050.00	1,550.00
Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles;	81,700.00	60,380.00	39,060.00
Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups;	31,733.33	23,765.00	15,797.00
Activity 1.9: Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs. Put in place simple methods to measure and monitor biomass changes resulting from creation of new farms or better management of old ones using recognized biomass monitoring methods	21,325.00	21,325.00	21,325.00
Activity 1.10: Select and train staff to develop synergies between forest and agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers;	36,266.67	36,267.00	36,267.00
Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures;	51,666.67	40,870.00	35,573.00

Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings;	45,000.00	36,532.00	28,064.00
Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;	219,200.00	96,773.00	(25,654.00)
Activity 1.14: Gather information on human populations and socio-economic economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources ;	31,720.00	31,480.00	31,240.00
Activity 1.15: Pilot and sustain permanent experimental best practices to demonstrate on the job improved land use methods with reorganised rural land-use zoning around the protected areas and hold associated planning and assessment workshops that engender recommendations;	70,666.67	60,508.00	50,349.00
Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification and zoning of identified priority forest areas;	36,933.33	28,266.00	23,519.00
Activity 1.17: Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups;	10,666.67	10,667.00	10,667.00
Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees;	8,800.00	7,610.00	6,420.00
Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers; Distribute progress and evaluation reports every quarter of year at each site, renovate the visibility of the project (via translation / publication/communication) two times every year	16,000.00	12,839.00	9,678.00
	1,158,581.33	**764,520.00**	**471,901.00**

Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions.	42,333.33	23,728.00	22,123.00
Activity 1.21: Organise project steering committee meetings. The annual technical and financial reports will be submitted to the project regional steering committee to seek for advice, guidance and strategic orientation on the project course;	8,333.33	6,213.00	4,093.00
Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.	18,355.56	7,861.00	7,861.00
	69,022.22	**37,802.00**	**34,077.00**
	1,227,603.56	**802,322.00**	**505,978.00**
Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national interministerial committees for the sustainable management of water resources shared within MRU.	12,000.00	-	-
Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national inter-ministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks.	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans.	34,000.00	31,279.00	28,558.00

Activity 2.4: Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins.	4,520.00	4,520.00	4,520.00
Activity 2.5: Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme.	4,520.00	4,520.00	4,520.00
Activity 2.6: Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin.	20,120.00	16,000.00	11,880.00
Activity 2.7: Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP.	17,280.00	17,280.00	17,280.00
Activity 2.8: Facilitate national training workshops for water governance champions on themes including leadership skills, action planning, policy influencing and gender mainstreaming in each targeted basin (Moa/Makona, Cavally, Great Scarcies/Kolanté), as per the training programme developed under activity 2.5	10,080.00	10,080.00	10,080.00
Activity 2.9: Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), to enable sustainable capitalization on the databases and informed decision making at transboundary level.	2,980.00	1,357.00	824.00
	110,500.00	**90,036.00**	**77,662.00**

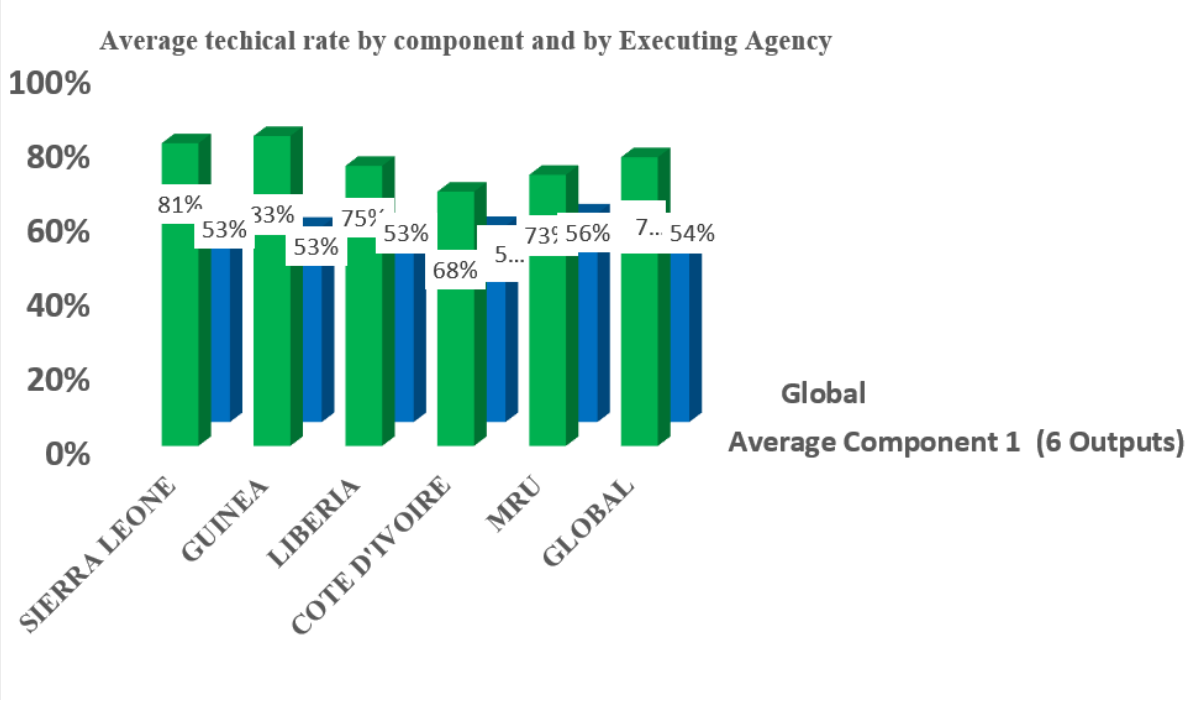
Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues.	42,800.00	36,300.00	36,300.00
Activity 2.11: Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins	14,475.00	14,475.00	14,475.00
Activity 2.12: Support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.	12,225.00	(3,339.00)	(3,339.00)
Activity 2.13: Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. The main objective of the activity will be to identify, quantify, and set priorities for water-related problems that are transboundary in nature, to constitute a factual basis for the further SAP development (Activity 2.15).	95,125.00	54,520.00	39,769.00
Activity 2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically specific TDA.	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00
Activity 2.15: Distribute/disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis at regional level and locally in the 3 targeted basins.	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
Activity 2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme	94,575.00	59,575.00	59,575.00

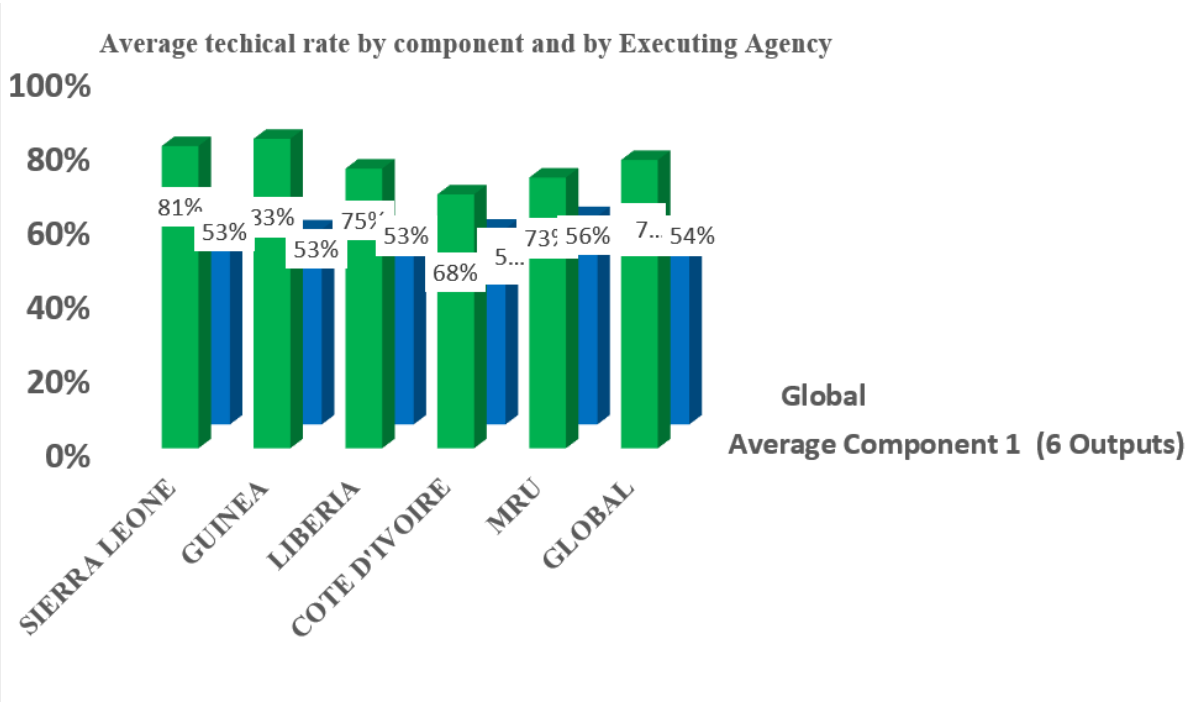
Activity 2.17: Development of IW LEARN Information products and dissemination.	13,000.00	9,400.00	9,400.00
Activity 2.18: Development of the resource mobilization strategy.	11,040.00	5,040.00	5,040.00
Activity 2.19: Liaise with key bilateral and multi-lateral donors to agree on a mobilization roadmap for the SAP based on an international donor's conference (or forum, or round-tables), and on communication in regional events related to international waters and biodiversity.	11,146.60	2,007.00	2,007.00
	322,886.60	**206,478.00**	**191,727.00**
Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions.	-	-	
Activity 2.21: Organise project steering committee meetings	-	-	

Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.	-	-	
	-	-	
	433,386.60	**296,514.00**	**269,389.00**
Activity 3.1: Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels.	22,500.00	(625.00)	
Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units.	5,760.00	55.00	
	28,260.00	**(570.00)**	
	1,689,250.16	**1,098,266.00**	**775,367.00**
	Description	**Amount (USD)**	

	Budget for 2022	475,328	
	Less: Transfer to REA	91,942	
	EXPENSES 2022	71,682	
	Less: Balance in project special account as of 31 March 2022	67,184.08	
	2022 Funding Request	**336,462.09**	

5.3.6. Annex 5: Project achievement rating (From P. Masuba, Report)




Average techical rate by component and by Executing Agency
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
81%
53%
33%
53%
75%
53%
68%
5...
73%
56%
7...
54%
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
LIBERIA
COTE D'IVOIRE
MRU
GLOBAL
Global
Average Component 1 (6 Outputs)

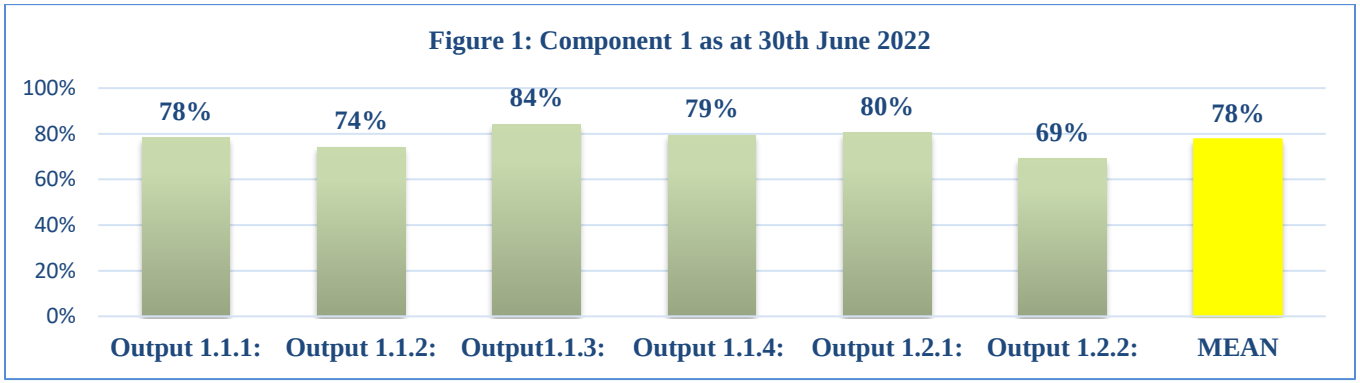


Figure 1: Component 1 as at 30th June 2022
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
78%
74%
84%
79%
80%
69%
78%
Output 1.1.1:
Output 1.1.2:
Output1.1.3:
Output 1.1.4:
Output 1.2.1:
Output 1.2.2:
MEAN

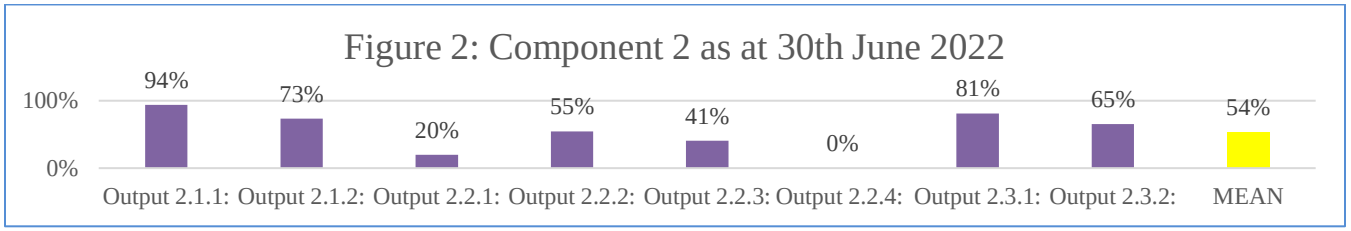


Figure 2: Component 2 as at 30th June 2022
100%
0%
94%
73%
20%
55%
41%
0%
81%
65%
54%
Output 2.1.1:
Output 2.1.2:
Output 2.2.1:
Output 2.2.2:
Output 2.2.3:
Output 2.2.4:
Output 2.3.1:
Output 2.3.2:
MEAN

Table 8: Outomes and outputs achievement as per indicator (From P. Masuba, Report)

	Outcome/Output Indicators	Results to Date	Project Target	Progress
C. Outcomes achievements and project effectiveness	**Objective 1: -** Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities**.**			**78.25%**
	1.1.a: Number of hectares benefiting from restoration interventions (natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting)	38964	88400	44%
	1.1.b: Number of hectares of forests and other land cover types in the buffer zones of National Parks or Classified Forests under different restoration Interventions (e.g., natural regeneration, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, reforestation, enrichment planting, etc.)	105,000.0	93,400	112.42%
	Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs			**100%**
	2.1.a: Number of subbasins in the Mano River Union area covered by transboundary water resources management structures	4	4	100%
	Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management			**100%**
	2.2.a: Number of government agencies and institutions with capacity for transboundary water resource management	5	5	100%
	Objective 4. The project is effectively and efficiently managed			100%
	2.2.p: Number of project management unit established at regional level	1	1	100%
	2.2.q: Number of project coordination unit established at national level	4	4	100%

Output achievements and project delivery	**Objective 1. Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities**			**65%**
	1.1.d: Number of site-specific guidelines on forest landscape and water resources management available.	2	4	50%
	1.1.e: Number of trained farmers (gender disaggregated) on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs developed and implemented	678	800	85%
	1.1.f: Number of trained staff (gender disaggregated) in improving the management of biomass in agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas	80	80	100%
	1.1.g: Number of integrated land use plans developed	2	4	50%
	1.1.h: Percentage increase of income from sustainably managed forest products and agroforestry	10%	25%	40%
	Objective 2. Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs			**91%**
	2.1.b: Number of Multi sectorial Technical Committee (MTC) established	4	4	100%
	Number of events/tools developed and implemented:	6	6	100%
	Number of awareness-raising days,	10	6	167%
	Number and type of publications,	5	8	63%
	Number and content of radio-programme	6	9	67%
	2.1.c: Number of sessions of Multi sectorial Technical Committee meetings (MTC) organized	24	24	100%
	2.1.d: Number of training programme established	1	1	100%
	Number training material disseminated	1	1	100%
	2.1.e: Number of Male/Female staff trained;	20	20	100%

	2.1.f: Number of training workshops organized about TDA-SAP and for water governance champions;	2	2	100%
	2.1.g: Number of study tours organized	0	1	0%
	Objective 3. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management			**45%**
	2.2.b: Number of awareness raising tools	15	16	94%
	Number of awareness-raising days,	6	6	100%
	Number and type of publications,	5	8	63%
	Number and content of radio-programme	6	9	67%
	2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management	20,000	20000	100%
	2.2.d: Number of regional TDA developed and under the process of being validated at ministerial level;	0	1	0%
	2.2.e: Number of preliminary regional SAP developed;	0	1	0%
	2.2.f: Introduction of climate change and resilience measures in the SAP;	0	1	0%
	2.2.g: Number of websites created;	4	4	100%
	2.2.h: Number of newsletters published on websites;	6	12	50%
	2.2.i: Number of IWLEARN database developed.	0	1	0%
	2.2.j: Number of experience notes	0	2	0%
	2.2.k: Participation to the biannual GEF International Water Conferences	1	1	100%
	2.2.l: Number of resource mobilization strategy documents developed for MRU and national executing agencies	0	1	0%
	2.2.m: Ramping up of the country contributions to cover operational financing needs of the Water Resources Authority to be established under the auspice of MRU	0%	30%	0%
	2.2.n: Number of international donor's conference organized	0	1	0%
	2.2.o: Number of regional events in which the projects are presented	3	3	100%

5.3.7. Annex 8: Sites visited

Guinea:

i. Guekedou: X: 8° 30' 00" N; Y: 10° 07' 56" W; Description: Forest landscapes + farms;
ii. Iama Forest, Mont Nimba: X: 7° 37' 48" N; Y : 8° 28' 03" W; Altitude: 571 m; Description :Nimba landscape, fruit tree plantation (coffee, palm, cacao, etc.) on community demonstration plots to promote fruit tree planting in the area though agroforestry technics and training farmers on forest natural regeneration, without any soil preparation work or improvement, including animal husbandry (small ruminants, pigs, poultry, etc.).
iii. Bah Village: X: 7° 37' 02" N; Y : 8° 32' 27" W; Altitude: 576 m; Description : Before we used to clear the forest to implement farm through "Slash and burn" practices in the forest to cultivate crops, and once the fertility declines, we open a new farm leaving behind a shrubby fallow. Now we take care of the forest without cutting down the trees, just direct planting of fruit trees in opened areas (cacao, Coffee, Pineapple, The community trained is composed of 17 men and 17 women. The nursery requires some improvements with supply of plastic bag and seeds for nursery

Liberia:

i. Site 1 : ???: X: ??; Y: ??; Altitude: ??; Description: Two sites visited. Tree seedling planted along lines opened inside the forest and planted with fruit trees (Cacao, Coffee, etc.);
ii. Site 2: ??: X: ???: X: ??; Y: ??; Altitude: ??; Description: Coffee and Cacao farm planted randomly on forest area after clearing, without any land improvement. The young, planted seedlings have a good shape and well maintained much better than the inside forest planted lines

Leone:

i. Site 1: Hunger project; X: 7° 53' 17" N; Y: 11°11' 32" W; Activities: Briefing meeting with the staff
ii. Gola forest: X: 7° 51' 12" N; Y : 11°11' 09" W; Altitude: 169 m; Description: Meeting with Staff of the Gola forest conservation;
iii. Site 2 : Baoma village: X: 7° 33' 07" N; Y : 11°18' 10" W; Altitude : ??; Description : Village center;
iv. Site 3: Mapuma: X: 7° 33' 09" N; Y : 11°19' 27" W; Altitude : ??; Description : Community individual farmer's fruit tree plantation: 29 Farmer plots: Fruit Trees garden (450 coco, 50 pineapple, 50 Banana plantain, 6 bamboos, 6 Medicinal plants, etc.); training on nursery, tree planting; poor seedlings;
v. Site 4: Gola demonstration site: X: 7° 33' 07" N; Y : 11°17' 39" W; Altitude : 115 m; Description : 25 owners (15 men & 10 women) on area of 1 acre; weak plants needing more maintenance support at least for 3 years
vi. Site 5: Slush and burn tree farm; X: 7° 33' 38" N; Y: 11°18' 08" W; Description: Forestland clearing through Slash & Burn for farming.

SOME ILLUSTRATIVE IMAGES OF SITES VISITED