ANNEX I – Description of Action

Supporting increased forest-based revenue and livelihoods for forest users and forest fringe communities in the Gola and Grebo-Krahn Landscape of Liberia

LEH GO GREEN (LET'S GO GREEN)

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SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title	LEH GO GREEN (Let's Go Green)
Overall Objectives and Focal Areas	The project's objective is to i*mprove natural resources governance and business environment for sustainable forest-based activities in line with the* 2021-2024 EU Programming Forestry & Conservation Contribution to TEI 'Sustainable Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation in Liberia'. It will focus on strengthening the sustainable use of natural resources in Liberia while contributing to the fight against climate change and increasing jobs and growth for forest communities in the Grebo-Krahn and Gola Forest landscapes in Liberia for enhancing access to forest-based revenue and livelihood opportunities for improved forestry and conservation activities.
Project Outcomes	**Outcomes 1:** Community Conservation Agreement(CCA) developed and implemented to support sustainable livelihood and nature-based solutions in targeted authorized forest communities. **Outcomes 2: Su**stainable management of reduced impact community-based commercial logging promoted based on best practice and guidelines developed and piloted in targeted authorized forest communities. **Outcomes 3:** Resilient and diversified income and livelihood opportunities and business development of forest related enterprises created and strengthened. **Outcomes 4:** Mechanisms to foster sustainable financing of local forest-based enterprises promoted for enhancing capacity of forest communities to be aware of carbon market opportunities to participate in carbon readiness activities.
Geographical Scope	Liberia: South-eastern and North-western landscape - At least 20 cluster forest fringe communities around the Grebo-Krahn and Gola Forest landscape
UNDP's Implementing Partners	Forestry Development Authority Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia Forestry Training Institute Wild Chimpanzee Foundation BRAC Sustainable Agriculture Promoters

Acronyms:

ASM	Artisanal & Small-Scale Mining
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBF	Community-based Forestry
CBFM	Community based forestry & Protected Area Management Project
CCA	Community Conservation Agreement
CBOs	Community-based organizations
CFM	Community Forest Management
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ETMP	Extractive Timber Management Protocol
EUD	European Union Delegation in Liberia
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FDA	The Forest Development Authority
FLEGT	**Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade**
FPIC	**Free, Prior & Informed Consent**
FTI	**Forestry Training Institute**
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
LLA	The Liberia Land Authority
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
MSMEs	Micro Small & Medium Enterprises
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products

NUCFMB	National Union of Community Forest Management Board
NUCFDCs	National Union of Community Forest Management Committees
PAs	Protected Areas
PMU	Project Management Unit
PROSPER	People, Rules and Organizations Supporting The Protection of Ecosystem Resources
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.
RIL	Reduced Impact Logging
RP	Responsible Partner
SCNL	Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
VSLA	Village Savings Loan Association
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNVs	United Nations Volunteers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCF	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

1.0 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Amidst a fragile economy and a challenged governance structure, Liberia is ranked as a least developed country *(175th of the 189 countries on the 2022 Human Development Index (HDI))* with a Multi-dimensional Poverty Index of 0.374, where widespread economic exclusion, poverty, and inequality still exists. Poverty afflicts 50.9% of the population, with majority of those affected being women whose work is unpaid and goes unrecognized. About 80% of the population's workforce is vulnerably employed. In rural areas, poverty is higher (71.8%) compared to urban settings (31.5%). This is because of limited income-generating opportunities with only 18.1% of the workforce in paid employment, and the informal sector accounting for 80% of all employment in the country. The degree of poverty and fragility is in part due to the number of shocks the country has faced in the last 20 years. These include shocks from the civil war, Ebola, and COVID-19 that have further weakened the ability of the central Government to deliver services to its people. Additionally, there are issues around governance that is adding to the fragility of the central Government owing to a severe lack of capacity to develop and implement policies. The Liberian economy is based on a limited number of commodities either through extraction (iron, gold, tropical timber) or plantations (rubber, palm oil) and therefore subject to extreme shocks on the international markets, with the forestry sector accounting for approximately 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)[1]

The country recognizes agriculture as the main engine of its economic growth and reduction of poverty. Approximately 70% of Liberians make their living predominantly through agricultural related activities[2]. In addition to the agriculture sector, the informal Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is another important sector that provides income and livelihoods; however, these sectors face several challenges. The agriculture sector, for instance, is constrained by low human capital, poor infrastructure (roads, access to energy, machinery and technology), poor access to farm inputs, credit and extension services, weak policies and lack of implementation that deter private investments, and a lack of trust among market actors to engage in bulk purchasing, storage and marketing while MSMEs, on the other hand are constrained by weak management, fragmented markets, limited diversification, high operating costs, limited access to capital and credit; limited skilled workforce, the absence of long-term planning, among others.

Liberia is host to a forest cover of 6.6 million ha, which represents approximately 69% of the total landmass.[3]. Regarded as one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world, Liberia has approximately 43% of the remaining Upper Guinea forest with enormous biodiversity that includes plants with high endemism. Irrespective of the global and national significance of Liberia's forest and biodiversity, Liberia faces several challenges and threats to its forest resources, including unsustainable logging, slash and burn agriculture, the heavy reliance of local people on natural forests for fuelwood and timber, wildlife poaching etc. These drivers are causing considerable damage to the integrity of the ecosystems and the provision of essential ecosystem services, which are exacerbated by inadequate livelihood opportunities and economic incentives for the forest communities.

[1] Support Mission to the EU Delegation to Liberia" – Final Report 2021 by Forest for the Future Facility

[2] Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Impact Evaluation 2018, Endline Survey-Liberia, World Bank

[3] https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/system/files/documents/Liberia%20National%20Forest%20Inventory.pdf

With forest land making more than half of Liberia's land mass[4], forests are critical in terms of providing vital resources and opportunities that have the potential to contribute to the reduction of extreme poverty in terms of green economy, notably for the rural population. The forests of Liberia have been commercially exploited since the decade of 1950, mainly for exporting purposes. The sector has its own specificities and has been traditionally poorly understood by policy makers. Currently responsible for 10% of Liberian GDP, the government expressed intentions to raise the overall contribution of the sector up to 12%[5]. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 people are formally employed in the sector with approximately 20,000 persons having their income linked to informal activities within the forest sector[6].

There is little economic activity in most rural forest areas, jobs are scarce, and the population mainly relies on subsistence farming, hunting and Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) collection with limited access to social infrastructure. For forest conservation projects to be effective and successful, there must be viable and sustainable economic alternatives to using forest resources to compensate for losses incurred by forest dependent communities due to restrictions imposed on the use of the forest (on chainsaw milling, artisanal mining and hunting in particular). At present such alternatives in most rural forest communities are limited and past experiences, in forest protected areas, show that developing alternatives that persist in the long-term is a challenge. Developing agricultural and non-timber forest-based alternatives is often a chosen solution but this can only work if there is access to markets and processing facilities, and if enterprises are developed/strengthened and linked to financial capital.

With forest exploitation primarily focused on extraction and export of raw materials in addition to various forms of deforestation activities, including the rising needs of the rural population, Liberia's forest cover is receding and progressively being degraded, losing their capacity to provide environmental and socio-economic services and benefits, and to contribute to climate change mitigation.[7] Since 2013 the EU and UK FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) have provided substantial resources (about EUR 15 million) to set up the regulatory and enforcement systems required to reach FLEGT Licensing as foreseen under Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Liberia and the EU with an roadmap[8] agreed between the parties for issuing FLEGT licenses by 2020, an objective which was not achieved due to political constraints and a requirement for additional support, mostly in terms of effective enforcement of legality and core regulatory functions.

There has been increasing recognition of community forestry as a means for promoting sustainable forest management that can allow for maximizing benefits for forest dependent people who are custodians of the forest and its resources. This has given rise to governments increasingly ceding forest and land management rights/control to local people and communities. As part of the post-conflict forest reform, Liberia developed a Community Rights Law that aims to empower communities to engage in the sustainable management of these forests. This law allows communities to obtain a

See also National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan-II 2017-2025 (pg. 37 for figures).

[4] FLEGT Independent Market Monitor, 2021. Liberia Country profile. https://flegtimm.eu/country-profiles/liberia/

[5] Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity And Development (PAPD) - (July 2018 – June 2023).

[6] "Support Mission to the EU Delegation to Liberia" – Final Report 2021 by Forest for the Future Facility.

[7] https://redd.unfccc.int/files/liberia_frel_submission_december_2019_for_webposting.pdf

[8] FLEGT-VPA between Government of Liberia and EU was ratified and entered in into force in December 2013.

Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA) for areas between 5,000 and 50,000 hectares for 15 years, with the possibility of extension. While this represents an important step for optimizing the engagement of local communities in forest management initiatives, and ensuring that the forest sector contributes to the reduction of poverty and livelihood improvement; the implementation of community forestry has faced couple of challenges, including limited or lack of capacity at the community level and at the level of the Forestry Department to operationalize community forestry, exploitation of CFMAs by logging companies and inadequate distribution of forest proceeds. According to a report done by the Sustainable Development Institute in 2020, community livelihood benefits from CFMAs have been inadequate, because the bulk of the profits go to the logging companies while the proceeds from forest revenues have not been equitably distributed among community members, as men tend to dominate the governance structures and use their position to influence decision-making processes. Meanwhile, even though the law aims to ensure that community forest resources are managed in an environmentally sustainable manner, including conserving and protecting wildlife within the Community Forest; conservation has not been prominent in community forest management as most community forest are more inclined to go into contracts with logging companies rather than pursuing conservation forestry. This is mainly because communities are not presented with pathways that offer incentives/benefits for them as an alternative to what they can obtain from logging contracts and because the potential for climate finance to support rural income and livelihood has not been developed and exploited in Liberia.

The Gola Landscape of Liberia is the largest of the remaining blocks of tropical forest with high conservation value in West Africa, connecting the Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leon. It holds significant populations of wildlife, some of which are endangered species of global importance. These include primates like Western Chimpanzee, Diana Monkey, Western Red Colobus and large mammals like the Forest Elephant and Pygmy Hippopotamus. The Gola Landscape is comprised of a mosaic of Protected Areas (PA), mainly the Gola Forest National Park and the proposed Foya PA, with unprotected forests at increasing risk of deforestation, which would leave the PA vulnerable as isolated fragments of forest. Crucially, Liberia has policy and procedures to support establishment and management of Community Forests which can include areas of high conservation value and have the potential to connect these PAs, especially if we can ensure sustainable management of Community Forests through forest friendly practices.

The Grebo-Krahn National Park is globally recognized as a biodiversity hotspot. Located across Grand Gedeh and Rivergee Counties and lying at the heart of the Taï-Grebo-Sapo Transboundary Forest Complex is home to one of the largest populations of the critically endangered West African chimpanzee, the endangered pygmy hippopotamus, western red colobus, vulnerable diana monkey, forest elephant, leopard, and other numerous threatened and endemic species. So far, about 300 species of fauna and 220 species of plant life have been observed in the forest. The forest is of immense importance in mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, and ensuring fertile soil for local communities. According to the FDA, there are 56 communities situated within the fringes of the National Park and depend on the natural resources. Because of its rich source of resources, the National Park has been plagued with threats such as: hunting for bushmeat, illegal mining, illegal logging, and encroachment into the national forest by illegal farmers (cocoa plantations) are the main threats faced by the forest.

Liberia submitted its revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2021 amidst increasing risks and severity of natural disasters, through more intense temperatures as well as rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and prolonged heat waves. The country's high vulnerability is linked to its high dependence on 'climate sensitive' sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and energy and mining[9]. This serious threat to Liberia's natural resources is in turn negatively impacting its social and economic development.

Liberia intends to follow a climate-resilient, low-carbon development path linked to green growth and broader sustainable development goals. Forestry, together with agriculture, fisheries and SMEs development are noted to be crucial to Liberia's inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction goals. To make forestry more productive and sustainable, the NDC provides a number of interventions that include both mitigation and adaptation measures, such as (i) reduce the national deforestation rate by 50%; (ii) reforest, including through natural regeneration and tree planting through community and school programs; (iii) restore 25% of priority degraded forests by 2030; (iv) establish 5 new Protected Areas.

The proposed project intends to strengthen the sustainable use of natural resources in Liberia, while contributing to fight climate change and increasing jobs and growth for forest communities in the Grebo-Krahn and Gola Forest landscapes in Liberia; to enable them have access to forest-based revenue and alternative income and livelihood opportunities to effectively enhance forestry and conservation activities while keeping a balance between environmental, social and economic benefits for the for the present and future local populations. The project will promote social equity by supporting women-led initiatives and enhance women participation in decision-making and land-use activities.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION (BRIEF) -Goals and Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to i*mprove natural resources governance and business environment for sustainable forest-based activities in line with the* 2021-2024 EU Programming Forestry & Conservation Contribution to TEI 'Sustainable Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation in Liberia'. It will focus on strengthening the sustainable use of natural resources in Liberia while contributing to the fight against climate change and increasing jobs and growth for forest communities in the Grebo-Krahn and Gola Forest landscapes in Liberia for enhancing access to forest-based revenue and livelihood opportunities for improved forestry and conservation activities. This objective is in line with the EUD Action Document for 'Protecting a green future: Forestry and Conservation for a sustainable economic development in Liberia; with the specific objective to increase forest-based revenue and livelihoods.

[9] According to 2020 data, the country's GDP is dominated by the agriculture sector (inclusive of fishing and forestry), which accounts for 42.6% of GDP and the industry sector (including mining, construction, electricity, water and gas), which contributes 11.7% of GDP (Source: World Bank, 2021 Climate Risk Profile).

Through the proposed actions, UNDP seeks to address livelihood and climate change mitigation barriers by enhancing forest restoration in degraded areas; promoting diversified livelihoods that can respond to environmental shocks and stresses; increasing economic engagement and opportunities for underserved populations (youth and women); sustainable utilization of forest resources to achieve economic and conservation outcomes; promoting incentive-based and collaborative conservation agreements and reduced impact commercial logging to enhance community stewardship and benefits from sustainable forest management, and building local capacity to engage in carbon markets dialogues. The projected impact for the target landscapes is to enhance local communities governance structures and capacity to effectively implement nature-based solutions including forest friendly enterprises that improve livelihood, ensure food security and improve the conservation of biodiversity.

The project will address planning, capacity building, livelihood, and knowledge barriers by effectively promoting sustainable livelihood and use of natural resources targeting at least forest fringe communities through incentive-based conservation activities working with FDA, FTI and SCNL field staff on the ground to set and show proof of concept that allows communities to drive these initiatives. More importantly, the project will contribute to conservation of biodiversity of global significance, promote carbon sequestration and reduce GHG emissions in the forest sector.

Besides, making investments for building capacities, introducing alternate livelihood opportunities (e.g., NTFP, charcoal briquettes, tree nurseries, cane rat production), the project will promote participatory biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability, peace and gender equality and women empowerment in the regions. The project will also enhance the flow of capital to forest-based MSMEs (Medium and Small-Scale Enterprises) and business development skills to agriculture and forest based MSMEs to allow them to scale up their operations and contribute to job and income creation, while expanding access to economic opportunities for underserved populations (youth and women).

The project objectives and interventions are aligned with the EU Action Document for 'Protecting a green future: Forestry and Conservation for a sustainable economic development in Liberia', including: the European Green Deal[10] in its external dimension, the new EU forest strategy for 2030[11], the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030[12] (in particular the NaturAfrica component), the EU Adaptation Strategy[13] and the EU's Gender Equality Strategy and Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III)[14]. These objectives are also aligned with the 2021 EU Country Action Plan (CLIP) for Liberia, which underscores that by creating investments in the agricultural, fishery and forestry sectors, a boost of Liberia's economy and of job creation opportunities across sectors is foreseen, particularly for Liberia's women and youth. They are also aligned with the commitments articulated by Liberia at the recent UNFCCC COP26 regarding sustainable use of forests, including measures that protect forest biodiversity. The project will support the implementation of

[10] COM(2019) 640 final.
[11] COM(2021) 572 final.
[12] COM(2020) 380 final.
[13] COM(2021) 82 final.
[14] SWD(2020) 284 final.

the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration[15] by: a) generating and sharing knowledge on best practices on forest management and forest landscape restoration; b) developing innovative financing mechanisms to unleash the economic potential of forest value chains as an incentive for improved management and restoration; c) building public awareness of the importance of forest ecosystems restoration; d) building technical capacity of relevant institutions to lead the public in all the above. It will contribute to the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regional forest Convergence Plan on the sustainable management and utilization of forest ecosystems in West Africa, as well as its Regional Forest Investment Programme. It will be implemented in close collaboration with other projects like the Embassy of Sweden funded CBFM project on forests.[16] It will also contribute to the roll out at national level of the Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (2020-2030).

2.1 RELEVANCE TO THE OBJECTIVES/SECTORS/THEMES/SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

So far, current support to the forestry sector is not adequate for expanding the livelihoods of the people and communities to motivate and supplement resources for forest protection and development. Support to sustainable livelihood for forest fringe communities linked to forest protection and conservation is not only a need and a goal, but also an important solution identified in the National Forest Reform Law and other relevant instruments for forest conservation and protection in Liberia. This is particularly significant for those communities that have either acquired legal status as community forests or are in the process of doing so, with interest in multiple use including conservation (i.e. Normon, Tonglay, Sopo, Glaro and Konobo) for whom by supporting the conservation of some part of community forest you enable the protection of specific corridor to maintain protected areas connectivity. The South-eastern and North-western landscape that includes Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe and Rivercess counties have been identified as priority conservation landscapes. However, these represent remote and rural areas, where nearly 71.8% of the population are underprivileged communities living within or adjacent to natural forests. As climate change becomes a more pressing issue and a negative impact on key economic sector, the Government of Liberia has indicated its interests in a growth path that places forestry as a national priority, making forest protection and development one of the cornerstones of its Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and development.

From the experience of UNDP, livelihood improvement linked to forest protection and development is a wise choice to achieve a "balance" between "people's lives" and "forests' survival and development." In recognition thereof, the proposed actions are relevant in that they can provide high incentive to encourage local people to participate in forestry conservation, to improve and enhance the quality of life for the people, as well as protect and develop forests and effectively respond to natural disasters, risks, and climate change.

Conservation agreements, sustainable livelihood alternatives, forest enterprise development and the small-scale commercial forest to supply timber for local markets are relevant not just within the contexts of promoting community rights but also for addressing poverty reduction for communities

[15] The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals.

[16] The five-year FAO-Sida funded project set to improve knowledge of forest dynamics; support legal reforms and harmonize legislative frameworks for forest policy, facilitate the sharing of community-based forest practices across the region and develop a regional knowledge portal to improve access to data and share information on best forest management practices and build capacity and knowledge on forest management practices.

who have long been marginalized and exploited by commercial interests. The result of the pilots on community-based logging enterprise and conservation agreements can offer innovative solutions for enhancing community benefits from forest as well as create the right incentives for communities to steer long term forest conservation as opposed to unsustainable practices that degrade forest and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. These actions which will be informed by experiences and best practices locally or regionally, will also promote local ownership of forest resources and enhance the rights of youth and women through decision making and economic empowerment.

3.0 PROJECT STRATEGY

Forests in Liberia are critical for socio-economic development, especially for the rural population that depends on forests for fuelwood, timber and non-timber forest resources as well as for jobs and investments. They are also of importance for agriculture where the protection of forests and introduction of rational practices for their sustainable use significantly affects the population's socio-economic standing. However, these forests are threatened by human activities which have severe consequences for wildlife, the climate, biodiversity, and humans. Deforestation for logging, farming, and energy consumption is contributing to the depletion of the rainforests and biodiversity. Poor forest management coupled with inadequate livelihood schemes for forest communities further exacerbates the issues facing forest conservation and management. Proper forest management, adherence to environmental policies and laws, and knowledge of sustainable land use are important to conserving nature.

The current trends in forest management across Liberia demands an urgent need to promote the transition to sustainable forest management and improve the livelihoods of at-risk forest dependent communities and businesses. Liberia needs to quickly move towards multi-purpose use of forests with modern approaches and technologies, including reducing the pressure on forests by creating alternative sources of incomes, promoting alternative fuel resources and promoting agroforestry practices that enhance food and cash crop production.

The project will contribute to combatting ecosystem degradation by supporting the development of sustainable livelihood alternatives, at the local levels, providing capacity building for a wide range of stakeholders, at all levels. The project will strive to carry out a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach in implementing its activities, to promote inter-institutional cooperation. The development of sustainable alternative livelihoods by local communities will be driven by the project and will decrease pressure on the landscapes' natural resources. Awareness on environmental issues and the conservation of natural resources will be raised at the national and local levels, targeting government officials, rural and urban dwellers, and school students. The project interventions undertaken at the landscape and local levels will lead to reduced unsustainable logging and poaching, as well as to enhanced community benefit from forest resources. These interventions will have important benefits for biodiversity conservation, ecosystem functioning and carbon sequestration. Decreased forest eco-system degradation and tree planting initiatives will also contribute to climate change mitigation by halting the release of GHG emissions through avoided deforestation.

The project will promote responsible, productive, and sustainable management of forest resources by local communities to meet their needs and to stimulate community-driven conservation and livelihood development. This is expected to be realized by collaborating with the FDA and its partners on community based SFM through building the knowledge and capacity of communities in sustainable

forest management and on responsible utilization of forest resources. This will be done while collaborating, sharing knowledge and lessons learnt as well as synergies with other projects in the sector and bringing onboard expertise and support of conservation-based organization with proven incentive-based approaches, technical forestry training institutions, private sector, etc., with the Forestry Development Authority as the nodal government entity working in partnership with the other relevant entities.

The Project strategy is grounded in building long-term resilience with a comprehensive and transformational view that would maximize local people participation and involvement, which can benefit communities financially, enhance their economic returns and incentivize their participation in conservation. Grounded in UNDP Country Development Programme and EU Action Document, the project will promote sustainable forest management and strengthening actions against climate change through the following livelihoods recovery outcomes: i) diversified livelihoods that can respond to environmental shocks and stresses; ii) increased economic engagement of youth, women and persons with disabilities; and iii) sustainable utilization of local environment and forest resources to achieve economic and conservation outcomes. When achieved, the project would have contributed to sustaining Liberia's nature reserve and reducing climate change effects through sustainable livelihood, conservation, and forest restoration, all in a gender-responsive manner.

The project implementation Strategy will enhance lessons-learning and communication. Lessons learnt, and good practices will be consolidated and documented during project implementation and will help to redefine and refine project implementation strategy as well as the M&E framework that will assess project progress against indicators jointly identified by the project team and value chain actors. Such indicators will be gender- sensitive.

The project design is aligned with the principles of: **"People-Prosperity-Planet,"** which are linked to the EU forest strategy for 2030[17], United Nations Sustainable Development and Cooperation Framework for Liberia (2020-2024), and the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity & Development.

4.0 THE OVERALL THEORY OF CHANGE

The forest resources of Liberia (6.692 Mha) are under heavy pressure from deforestation and forest degradation as a result of shifting cultivation, oil palm production, illegal pit-sawing, mining, logging and rubber farming among others[18], with reports that Liberia lost 2.05 million hectares of tree cover from 2001 to 2021 and the current deforestation rate estimated at around 2% per year[19]. A rapid analysis of the current and potential future threats to the country's forests, the causes of this deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the barriers to reducing and eliminating these causes are presented below:

[17] promoting sustainable forest management (SFM), including by encouraging the sustainable use of wood-based resources, providing financial incentives for forest owners and managers to adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as those linked to carbon storage and sequestration, promoting alternative forest industries, planting 3 billion new trees by 2030.

[18] National Forest Inventory, FDA (2018-2019)
[19] Global Forest Watch. Country Profile Liberia

Table 1: Threats, root causes and barrier analysis

Threats	Root causes	Barrier analysis
Large-scale infrastructure development Poaching Unsustainable and illegal logging Shifting cultivation. Limited programs for strengthening income generating activities around the PAs, PPAs or at the forest fringe communities	Poor economic and infrastructure development planning Limited opportunities for income generating development based on sustainable use and management of land. Unsustainable demand for natural resources (wood, charcoal and bush meat) due to limited alternatives Human-wildlife conflicts Weak governance system and limited law enforcement	No integrated land use planning Poor inter-government, sectoral and program coordination and collaboration Insufficient government (FDA) and community capacities (financial and logistical) on sustainable resource management and land use planning Limited or no community involvement in management of protected area

While past initiatives have made or will make an important contribution to minimizing the threats and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Liberia, there are important barriers that remain to be addressed in order to ensure sustainable forest management that integrates benefits of forests people at the community level. The Theory of Change (ToC) identifies the main barriers that UNDP aims to urgently address in the target project areas. It specifies the interventions that the team must design, adapt, and scale-up through a system approach to deliver the expected results.

Barrier 1: Unsustainable demand for natural resources (wood, charcoal and bush meat)

Bush meat hunting for the provision of protein, and as a source of income is a common component of household economies and it is part of the culture in many rural communities. This demand is accentuated by the fact that most of the population has no access to alternative source of protein. These pressures are not only felt in ordinary forest but also within protected areas. The strong demand for bush meat has created groups of professional hunters whose activity is favored by the opening of new forest tracks in forests, the creation of roads for different development activities and the acquisition of modern shotguns, as well as the use of traps, which is widespread throughout the country. The poor control of hunting by forestry agents and the lack of enforcement of existing laws make hunting an unsustainable activity. Because of this weakness of control and legal enforcement, this unsustainable hunting activity has proliferated even in areas where hunting is prohibited, i.e., in protected areas, and the same can be said for protected species. Illegal and unsustainable hunting thus contributes to the disappearance of both protected and non-protected species. The lack of

alternatives in the rural areas means that the extractive use of forests is of immense importance for local communities. Informal timber harvesting is linked to local and national market demand and the increasing difficulty of obtaining low-cost legal timber. The demand for timber stems from local housing construction that is predominantly made from wood. Commercial timber harvesting is strongly linked to urban demand. Across Liberia and mainly in rural communities, biomass (firewood and charcoal,) is the primary source of energy for cooking and heating for more than 90% of the population and these are harvested from tropical forest. Such an overwhelming and persistent dependence on biomass fuels is associated with severe environmental, health, and social implications, such as the destruction of forests, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, indoor air pollution, and increased travel distances for resource collection. The lack of alternative and the inefficient production system for charcoal represents a serious challenge for SFM.

Barrier 2: Weak institutional and technical capacities for sustainable land and forest management

- The FDA needs to build a strong cadre of staff that is decentralized with the ability to advocate for and support community management of forests. This should underpin a broader process of institutional reform that regards forests as national assets with local and global values that far surpass that offered by export markets for timber.
- In tandem, Liberian NGOs must grow their technical capacities in order to complement their current policy advocacy work with on-the-ground support to community-based forest initiatives.
- Institutional capacities are also limited on community forest monitoring and community-based sustainable land and forest management.
- There is no accessible and systematized information on forests that could facilitate the strategic planning and decision making of forestry institutions. Moreover, the existing information does not always match with the reality in the field. Local authorities do not have the means or capacity to gather information, which makes informed decision-making even more difficult.
- Middle and higher education institutions still suffer from a curriculum that does not comprehensively address the country's environmental problems and the importance of sustainable forest management. The lack of theoretical training is combined with lack of practical activities that would allow students to directly understand the field context and be actively engaged in present and future solutions. There is still limited gender awareness that hinders the capacity of local institutions to adequately address the specific needs and priorities of local men and women.

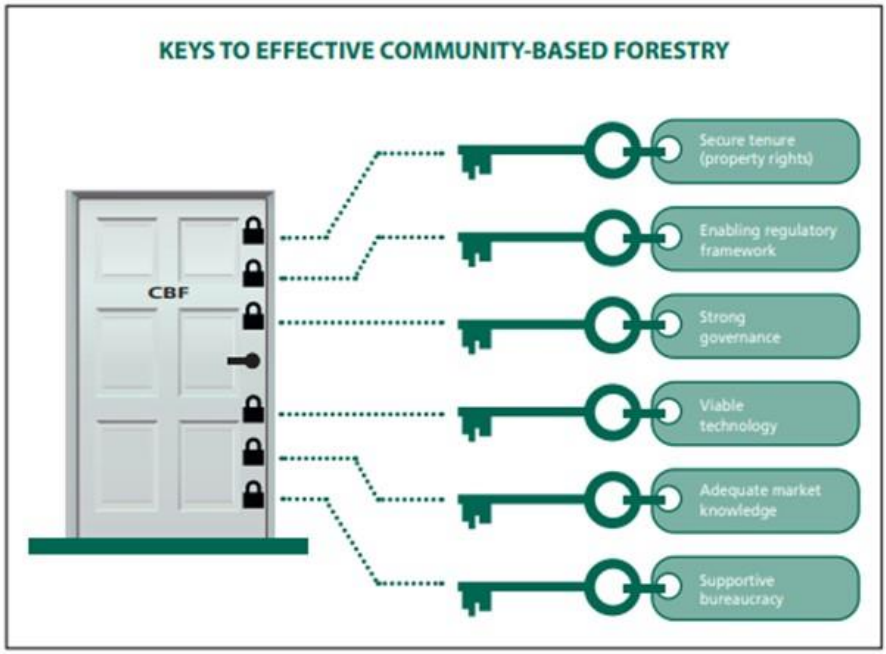
Barrier 3: Lack of experience and capacities of communities on sustainable forest management

- Consultations have shown that forestry actors, specifically in communal forests, lack capacities to undertake inventories, develop forest management plans and/or use forest resources sustainably, and so they are not undertaken despite the legal requirements. This situation leads to overexploitation.
- Wood harvesting operations are poor and unsustainable, degrading forest ecosystems with limited benefits for community, including lack of value addition that comes from processing.
- Despite the broad range of non-timber forest products (NTFP) used for subsistence and trade in Liberia, there are very few formal value chains and their use and management remain underdeveloped and informal.

Barrier 4: Lack of experience and capacities on sustainable community-based forestry

- Liberia has already put in place many of the building blocks required for a truly sustainable forest management system. Yet some of the key elements for CBF are missing.

Figure 1: Keys for community-based forestry



- **Tenure security**: In this context, it is necessary to increase the land tenure security of communities, including a sound and harmonized legislative framework, reflecting simplified procedures for land demarcation, registration, clarifying property titling, user, and transfer rights.
- **Enabling regulatory framework**: The regulatory framework should be harmonized, in addition to establishing the regulatory technical requirements to ensure sustainable forest management (forest inventories, management and monitoring plans, etc.), including that is favorable to community forestry.
- **Strong governance:** Community land and forest management requires strengthening community governance and control of their own territories, carrying out awareness raising on current legal framework, strengthening the knowledge and access to information for both men and women about their own resources, as well as promoting organizational, technical, and business capabilities. There are community groups who work jointly in the field, especially in coffee or cocoa areas. However, they are very fragile and with limited capabilities. To promote community land and forest management in the long term, greater human and financial resources are needed, as well as an institutional field presence that supports and trains the communities on organizational, technical, and business skills.
- **Viable technology:** Liberia lags behind neighboring countries in terms of technology and knowledge about sustainable land and forest management. Considering the limited experiences in the country, the communities would need technical support throughout the process, as well as partnerships with private initiatives with business experience.
- **Adequate market knowledge:** Liberian communities are not fully tapping the economic value of the goods and services generated by their forest resources. Wood and non-wood forest products are traded in national markets, but are not articulated around value chains, and there is no formal data on the volume of exchange. There is limited market knowledge and insufficient business skills.
- **Supportive bureaucracy:** Communities can obtain certificates that recognize their communal forests as well forest use authorizations, but there is no information on the procedures, nor systematic support to the communities throughout the process. Public institutions are not

actively involved in the promotion of sustainable land management practices and/or in the development of forestry/agroforestry enterprises that can improve and diversify the livelihoods of the rural population.

Barrier 5: Limited livelihood opportunities in rural areas, which are climate friendly and reduce pressure on forests.

- Limited economic opportunities combined with the needs of rural families were highlighted as the main triggers of illegal logging and unsustainable forest use. The local population in rural areas have limited possibilities and means to initiate climate friendly livelihoods initiatives related to forestry, agriculture or agroforestry and, as such, resort to activities that increase forest loss or to the unsustainable use of forest resources. In particular, women have more limited access than men to technologies and practices that could help them to manage natural resources in a sustainable way and better adapt to climate change.
- The local population, and rural women in particular, do not have necessary technical capacities to engage in sustainable value chains: the lack of opportunities for rural communities have made them focus for a long time on subsistence farming and illegal logging. New sets of skills need to be fostered to face new livelihoods opportunities: for example, skills in agro-forestry value chains, such as coffee or cocoa; production of non-wood forest products, such as honey or medicinal plants; and legal sustainable wood harvesting and value addition through timber processing for market purpose.
- There are limited financial options available to smallholders to initiate new enterprises. The development of new sustainable businesses requires investments that the majority of the vulnerable population are not able to provide. Whether for the creation of new agroforestry production systems, for managing and marketing new non-timber products or for improving the efficiency of the wood value chain, an initial financial support is needed to start up and minimize risks with collaborative partnership from communities in the form of unpaid labor or other inputs for sharing risks.
- Limited access to local markets: One of the main problems observed in the formulation phase is the lack of market connections and the difficulties that small producers have in developing efficient and effective market channels. In addition, the small size of the national market requires exploring international markets which becomes a barrier for small producers.

5.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES & COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT

The project has four outcomes stitched together through complementary outputs. Each of these outputs will require the implementation of certain activities, as outlined below:

Outcomes 1: Community Conservation Agreements (CCA) developed and implemented to support sustainable livelihood and nature-based solutions in targeted authorized forest communities.

The main objective of this outcome is to pilot Community Conservation Agreements (CCA) as an incentive-based model that can promote sustainable and nature based (forest friendly and climate resilient) livelihoods through which communities are able to establish conservation areas within community forest and promote sustainable forestry practices that are ecologically sound and economically viable.

Under this Outcome, three Outputs will be delivered.

Output **1.1.** Conduct cost-benefit estimates to allow understanding and comparison between the benefits and loss of unsustainable activities (e.g., logging) and other sustainable land use systems (e.g., forest friendly enterprises, participation in REDD+, etc.).

Activity 1.1.1. Using participatory methodology, carry out a rapid cost-benefit analysis of alternative community forest management scenarios (e.g., managed for logging/carbon) in reference to Konigar-B and Konobo CF to support the preparation of a Community Conservation Agreement

Activity 1.1.2. Conduct/update Baseline Forest and Biodiversity inventory to serve as the basis of the CCA.

Output **1.2 Establish systems (including monitoring and organizational strengthening, incentive payment scheme incentive evaluation etc.) for CCA in partnership with the local community, NGOs and relevant government institutions- Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the LLA).**

Activity 1.2.2 . Develop Community -based Monitoring Framework (Ecoguards) to monitor and ensure compliance with the obligations signed in the CCA.

Output **1.3**. CCA signed, and implementation commences in four pilot Community Forests

Community conservation agreement[20] Is a strategy that involves a participatory planning process of identifying conservation milestones and livelihood needs assessment, which is followed by asking community members to be part of a win-win agreement. In exchange for making specific conservation commitments to protect their lands, forests etc — such as keeping forests standing by not logging them — communities receive benefits from the funder, such as support for agriculture or other livelihood activities to improve access to income or training and wages for patrolling forests to stop illegal logging. By signing an agreement, communities gain access to alternative livelihood and income

[20] What on Earth is a 'conservation agreement'?

opportunities. In return, community members agree to pursue conservation initiatives with targets based upon which the benefit to the community is derived. Link to success stories of CCA can be seen in the following footnote:[2122]

Activity 1.3.1. Develop a CCA Sustainability Plan and commence implementation with Yearly Funding Agreement for the CCA.

Activity 1.3.2 Conduct community-based validation and ratification the CCA Agreement and Implementation Plan with Funds allocated for 3 years.

Activity 1.3.3 Support for monitoring, and documenting lessons learned from the pilots to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions on CCA at the national level.

[21] Community engagement and conservation agreements in the heart of the Colombian Amazon (worldbank.org)
[22] Conservation Agreements: A win-win in the Western Ghats, India - Conservation Leadership Programme

Step 1: Implement the conservation agreements.

- Inclusive design of the conservation agreements: Clarify at the very inception that the CA are voluntary for all parties, and the design and negotiation processes must be transparent and inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Design the management plan and agreements with technical support.

Step 2: Monitoring and organizational strengthening

- Initial training for the community.
- Feedback given to the community.
- inventory.

Organizational strengthening: Organizational strengthening and experience are key aspects for the success of the conservation agreements and the incentive payment schemes. Training must be focused on the following issues:

- With the community: Key aspects of the conservation agreement (activities that they can and can't do in the area), decision making process and participation in the community assemblies, role of men and women in the incentive-based activities and the conservation agreement, diversification of economic activities.
- With the leaders: legal requirement, accounting, reporting process,

Step 3: Develop incentive payment scheme.

Structure, value, and objective of the incentive: The payment is based as a cost-effective incentive, it is structured in a way that maximizes the number of hectares that enter the program and be inclined to minimize costs of transaction and equity. A fixed annual amount according to the area included in the CCA.

Step 4: Evaluate the impact of the incentive.

The pilot CCA will have a duration of 3 years with performance evaluation. The FDA and partners develop on-site inspections at agreed intervals monitor compliance with the obligations signed in the CCA.

Source: *UNEP 2023*

Outcomes 2: Sustainable management of reduced impact community-based commercial logging promoted based on best practice and guidelines developed and piloted in targeted authorized forest communities.

This outcome will address capacity barriers 1, 2 and 3 through:

Output **2.1.** A system developed to support community-based reduced impact logging in Commercial zones of community forests (mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc).

Activity 2.1.1 Conduct national level stakeholders' consultation and review on best practices for community-based low impact timber harvesting in Liberia based on PROSPER guidelines and FAO Model code of forest harvesting practice to be adapted for the project.

Activity 2.1.2 Raise Community level Awareness and Education of the process, principles, and management of Sustainable Forest Management to generate buy-in

Activity 2.1.3. Review/revise Community Forest Management and zoning Plan to include Conservation Zones-including for carbon, Commercial and other community uses.

Activity 2.1.4. Support Community to conduct enabling activities: mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc for RIL.

Output **2.2.**. A pilot reduced impact commercial timber extraction based on agreed national guidelines in at least one CF (Sokpo/ Konigar-B within the Northwest forest landscape). This initiative will utilize a tool developed by USAID in 2016 "Best Practices for Community-Based Low Impact Timber Harvesting In Liberia"[23] as well as leverage on the experience of the Ekuri Community in Nigeria, which won the UNDP's "Equator Award" in 2004 in recognition of the community's successes in reducing poverty through conservation and sustainable forest management[24].

Activity 2.2.1 Assess the Commercial zone of Community Forest.

Activity 2.2.2 Organize one (1) knowledge sharing and learning exchange visits with communities that have prior experience with community-based reduced impact logging to generate and understand impacts, lessons, and challenges that can inform the project.

Activity 2.2.3 Recruit consultant to facilitate training, design and provide specs for procurement of logistics (sawmill with bandsaw, conveyor, hydraulic motion components, and a human-operated controller, power saw, small transport vehicle/tractor etc), to implement low impact commercial logging and processing scheme managed by community with FDA support.

Activity 2.2.4 Monitor, and document lessons learned from the pilot to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions on low impact commercial logging in community forests.

Outcomes 3: Resilient and diversified income and livelihood opportunities and business development of forest related enterprises created and strengthened.

This outcome will address capacity barriers 1 and 5 by promoting sustainable alternatives for wood, charcoal and bush meat, and increasing livelihood opportunities for communities through promoting

[23] USAID_Land_Tenure_PROSPER_Best_Practices_for_Community_Based_Low_Impact_Timber.pdf
[24] Nigeria: A unique example of community based forest management at the Ekuri community | World Rainforest Movement (wrm.org.uy)

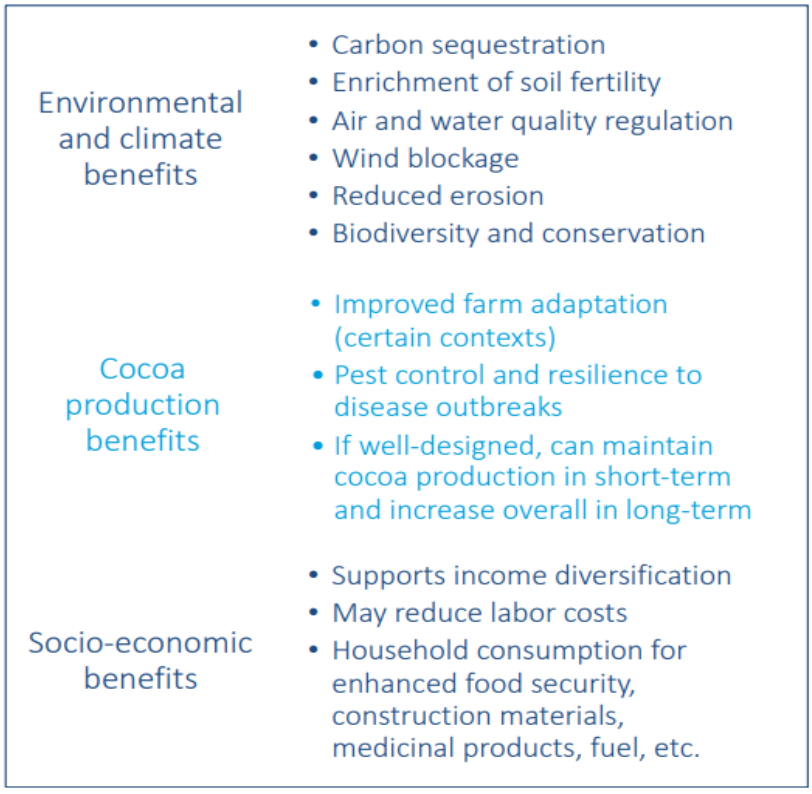
climate-friendly income-generating activities and promoting sustainable forest management activities linked to CCA and other communities.

Output 3.1 A agroforestry scheme (forest friendly cocoa, other crops) set up in at least 20 target communities with approximately 500 household beneficiaries from 500 ha at 1ha per household

Under **Output 3.1** the project will set up an agroforestry scheme (forest friendly cocoa, other crops) in at least 20 target communities with approximately 500 household beneficiaries from 500 ha at 1ha per household).

Cocoa agroforestry scheme proposed for this project provides for a production system that incorporate development of cocoa and non-cocoa tree species (indigenous forest species) on the same plot along with fruit trees and vegetables. This design is intended to enhance the potential to achieve a range of benefits to the environment, climate, cocoa production, and socio-economic systems which may address deforestation, farmers' livelihoods, and forest restoration.

Figure 2: Benefit from cocoa agroforestry



Source: Developing Cocoa Agroforestry Systems in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire-Climate Focus, USAID and World Cocoa foundation, 2020

For this scheme, temporary shade trees (banana and plantain) and permanent shade trees oranges, mangoes and indigenous species such as Parinari excelsa will be used. Parinari excelsa is a fast-growing tree known to grow well within the various soils across Liberia. There exist significant quantities of Parinari excelsa within the landscape from where seeds will be collected to establish nurseries for seedlings to be planted alongside the oranges and mangoes. The scheme will avoid cutting of existing native trees, which will provide additional shades for the planted trees. The

seedlings will be planted approximately 3–4 m apart and approximately 3–6 m from the shade trees. A total of approximately 1000 trees per ha is projected, including 800 cocoa, and 200 trees mix of fruit trees and forest trees, which amount to a target of approximately 500,000 trees over a period of 3 years. This scheme earmarks to achieve the following impacts: income and livelihoods for the host forest fringe communities, degraded forest areas restoration with a mix of cocoa, fruit trees and temporary food crops amongst native vegetation and enhanced conservation and protection of the landscape. These will be achieved by working directly with the communities through facilitating, motivating, and providing incentives and support to meet economic, social, and ecological benefits. Full time community enlisted for the project UNVs will be embedded within the communities to provide extension support for establishment of nurseries, plantation development, maintenance and long-term sustainability of the agroforestry scheme.

Activity 3.1.1 Conduct review/validate livelihood needs assessment in target landscape and conduct baselines to quantify the mitigation target/ potential for the project.

Activity 3.1.2 Convene community level engagements in the project sites to finalizeon selected communities for interventions, agree on criteria for beneficiary selection with FDA and communities, identify target beneficiaries.

Activity 3.1.3 Set up approximately 500 ha youth, women and men centered agroforestry plots that promotes income and livelihoods for the host communities surrounding protected areas/community forest (Maemai, Zue, Garleo, Tempo, Delayee, Bao, Tarloken, Barwu, Tarsla)

Output 3.2: Livelihood activities diversified to offers incentives to target communities and populations into sustainable initiatives (climate smart lowland rice, fish farming, honey production, ratan, bamboo) to reduce deforestation and enhance climate resilience

Output 3.2 will provide support to diversify livelihood activities that offers incentives to target communities and populations into sustainable initiatives (climate smart lowland rice, fish farming, honey production, ratan, bamboo) to reduce deforestation and enable climate resilience. These initiatives will be implemented.

This output will involve setting up two Community Woodlots and 2 cane rat domestication pilots in sub-urban (Tubmanburg and Zwedru) through collaboration with Forestry Training Institute of Liberia, Grand Gedeh Community College, and SCNL; provide support to diversify immediate benefits livelihood activities that offers immediate incentives to engage 20 target communities into conservation initiatives (climate smart lowland rice, honey production, ratan, bamboo etc); support (technical training, including farm inputs like seeds and tools) multipurpose tree nursery enterprise development targeting 200 local men, women, PWDs and youth in sub-urban (i.e. Tubmanburg, Latia, Zwedru, Fish Town); support (procurement of efficient charcoal production machines and training in production of charcoal and cook stoves) a sustainable charcoal production scheme will be set up (charcoal briquettes kilns, energy efficient cook stove, woodlot plantation) to support demobilization of chainsaw millers, artisanal miners, and charcoal producers in sub-urban (Tubmanburg and Zwedru)

Snail farming

The climate of Liberia is good for snail breeding as it is the natural habitat of the Giant African Land Snail. Snail farming in Africa requires small capital and the running cost is exceptionally low. It is a clean animal to raise, and it requires extraordinarily little time daily. The project will target about 50 women in the targeted forest fringe communities, including CCA areas to be trained in snail farming at a snail training farm to be set up in each of the landscapes (2 snail farms), allowing them to train others and set up their own snail farms. Each one of the beneficiaries who complete the training will receive the first set of snail inputs and technical support to set up their farms. They will then benefit from follow-up coaching and monitoring for at least a year. UNDP is currently working with Nimba Ventures, a local enterprise that has expertise in snail farming including providing training. Within the project's target communities, women will be recruited in groups of 5-10 to come in for about 30 minutes every day for the first few months to learn about snails, clean the pens, feed the snails, etc. Once the hatchlings are mature enough, around 3 to 6 months old, the women will each be given a small batch to take home and raise to maturity. The beneficiaries will continue to come to the snail training farm once a week to make sure they are maintaining proper techniques and to assist with the work on the farm. Each week there will be a new topic of additional training on entrepreneurial skills, managing people, and how to market and sell. When the snails are large enough to sell, the project will aim to link the women to buyers. Often women are not afforded with the same opportunities as men, relegating them to menial or degrading ways to raise money. They often experience great difficulty accessing financing. The women beneficiaries of the intervention will be able to maintain their traditional family responsibilities, earn extra income, educate themselves and become positive role models of success for their families and their communities.

Tree nurseries

Access to excellent quality seeds and seedlings for food crops (rice, cowpea, corn, groundnut etc) and commercial crops (cocoa, oil palm, cashew etc) represents a serious challenge for many farmers in Liberia, with many farmers going to Ivory Coast and Guinea to purchase seedlings. The timely availability of improved seedlings at prices farmers can afford is critical to improving access to income, resilience, and livelihoods for smallholder farmers across the country. Seedlings of improved varieties can deliver state-of-the-art technology to farmers including higher yields, disease and pest resistance, climate change adaptation, and reduced losses. Like in most African countries, the industry surrounding seed consists of two systems (informal and formal sector). The informal sector involves a system where seeds/seedlings are produced, maintained, and distributed through networks of informal supply chains that tend to be decentralized and might revolve around local enterprises, seed banks, and community-based seeds/seedling production (McGuire & Sperling 2016). The project proposes to train about 200 youth through farmers field schools in the two landscapes with skills and knowledge in the production of multiple seedlings that are in demand. Through these skills, it is expected that the project will support the beneficiaries to set-up tree nursery enterprises design as revolving commercial scheme to cater to the demand of farmers and thus afford the beneficiaries opportunity for sustainable income and livelihood. this intervention will target local men, women, PWDs and youth, including those involved in unsustainable forest activities across the two targeted landscape and target communities, including CCA areas.

Cane Rat farming

With bushmeat trade representing a serious threat to biodiversity conservation in Liberia, the project proposes cane rat farming as an alternative source of protection and income generation for women involved in illegal wildlife trade as well as youth and hunters. Cane-rat (Thryonomys swinderianus Temminck) is both a pest of crops in Liberia and a valuable source of animal protein. They are fast-growing, tough and long-living giant rats that can attain a particularly good body weight within a noticeably short time and little feed. The males attain a body size that doubles the size of chicken meat. In addition, they grow fast and at 12 weeks of age, they are ready to be sold as breeders. The combination of their fast maturation and cheapness of feed qualifies cane rats to be kept and raised for market purposes. A cane rat is ready to be used as breeding stock at age 3-4 months old. A colony comprises of 1 male and 4 females. A productive colony that is professionally managed can produce between 50 – 56 cane rats in a year (AgriAfrica, 2020) , which can represent significant income at a price of US$20.00 for a mature adult in Liberia. The project proposes to set up 2 cane rat domestication pilots in sub-urban (Tubmanburg and Zwedru) through collaboration with Forestry Training Institute of Liberia, Grand Gedeh Community College and SCNL. These pilot will serve as center of knowledge and training grounds for youth and women who can be encouraged to acquire skills for setting up their own cane rat farms, while at the same time serving as hubs for domestic production and marketing of the cane rat, which objective is to cater to urban demands for bushmeat, while minimizing the impact of illegal wildlife trade and creating opportunities for income and livelihoods for youth, women and men. Domestication of cane rat is becoming a success story in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana and Nigeria.

Chainsaw millers' demobilization

While chainsaw milling is noted to be a key source of employment for many Liberians (between 19,000 and 24,000), it is said to affect 99,000 to 132,000 forest hectares per year[25], rendering it a key driver of deforestation. However, the sector tends to provide benefit that is distributed along a value chain that spans rural and urban areas with provision of income to rural populations beyond those directly employed in chainsaw milling operations, including communities with forest lands and local authorities. The operations are said to generate cash flows that contribute to poverty reduction in rural areas, at least in the short-term. Some of the recommendations emerging from the studies conducted by Building Markets[26] note that local interventions in forest communities should be accompanied by market-based solutions to incentivize communities to sustainably manage forest resources and that innovative business models adapted to the local context should be piloted and replicated across forested communities. Thus, while the project aims at piloting reduced impact community-based logging that could provide opportunity for some of the illegal chainsaw millers to be absorbed in legal operations; there is a need to provide alternative livelihood outside of chainsaw milling as a means of demobilizing illegal chainsaw millers, particularly those operating around community forests linked to the project interventions. The project proposes to introduce the concept of demobilization and reintegration that was used during Liberia's civil war to disarm and reintegrate ex-combatants through support, including identification, training and start-up grants for ex-chainsaw millers to support green enterprises development through cooperatives (woodlots, energy efficient

[25] Liberia Domestic timber Value Chain Analysis-Building Markets, 2016

[26] Building Market is a USAID funded project that conducted a value chain analysis studies on chainsaw milling for domestic markets in 2017

charcoal production briquettes machines in targeted peri-urban communities linked to the target landscape (Zleh Town, Bopolu, Jabo, Tubmanburg, Zwedru). These will be awarded under low value grant with a ceiling between 10,000-50,000 for large cooperatives. Such grant will be administered by UNDP to cover procurement of the machines, training of the beneficiaries. Grants to individuals will range from 500-1,000 to support small enterprises like cook stoves production following training. The trainings will cover both technical and business skills to make the initiatives sustainable. UNDP has already been working with Green Gold to deploy such grants and training, particularly for women in energy efficient stoves production. This initiative will aim at working with the same partner.

FDA has a regulation on chainsaw milling that shall serve as guidance, ensuring that stakeholders are educated on the requirements of the regulations and to also guide the project interventions (Chain Saw Milling Regulation (FDA Regulation No. 115-11). The project will provide help to enhance sensitization on this regulation and leverage support from the EU VPA project to support upstream dialogueas well as implementation of the guidelines on chainsaw milling.

Activity 3.2.1 Enlist 15 Graduates of forest and agriculture community colleges in Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Cape Mount and Bomi as fulltime community UNVs to support diversified livelihood venture (Woodlot establishment, cane rat domestic production, multi-purpose tree nursery development, agroforestry plantation) with intent to provide onsite extension support for these community level interventions for 1 year.

The project provides for a full-time national project technical staff with expertise in natural resource management and resilient livelihoods who will be in charge of field operations for the most part of his/her assignment. The staff will work with the community UNVs/graduates as well as all the partners involved in supporting project activities in the field. This staff will also support monitoring and evaluation functions at the field level for tracking results. The staff will be the direct supervisor for the 15 UNVs/graduates. For 3 months, prior to their formal contracting and deployment, UNDP and its partners will provide additional training and transfer of knowledge and skills to the final shortlisted candidates to get them fully ready for the assignment

Activity 3.2.2 Support local women and youth development and enhance their technical capacity for nursery development, through farmer field schools (rubber, cacao, cashew, coffee, coconut, oil palm etc.), support alternative livelihood, including vegetable gardening, low-land rice farming, honey production etc. to promote livelihood in addition to women involvement in VSLAs

This will be done to promote a revolving commercial scheme for nursery production of tree crops (rubber, cacao, cashew, coffee, coconut, oil pal, orange, mango)

Activity 3.2.3 Support sustainable charcoal production (through fast growing tree plantations) and set up of 4 charcoal briquettes plants to produce bio-charcoal from biodegradable waste to support chainsaw millers' demobilization (Zleh Town, Bopolu, Tubmanburg, Jabo, Zwedru)

Activity 3.2.4 Setup 2 cane rat and snail production training site and pilot commercial scheme targeting women bushmeat sellers, ASM miners and hunters at the FTI in Tubmanburg and Grand Gedeh Community College in Zwedru

Activity 3.2.5 Training and support for ASM site reclamation and restoration, participatory monitoring and sustainable ASM practices, including cash for work schemes through collaboration with UNDP funded Environmental Governance Project[27] (Billibo, Kongbo)

Activity 3.2.6 Organize 1 national and 2 regional capacity building trainings for CSOs on carbon market to enhance their capacity to engage in the dialogue and support forest fringe communities to participate in carbon markets.

Outcomes 4: Mechanisms to foster sustainable financing of local forest-based enterprises promoted for enhancing capacity of forest communities to be aware of carbon market opportunities to participate in carbon readiness activities.

This component will address capacity barrier 5 by increasing livelihood opportunities for communities through promoting climate-friendly income-generating activities and access to finance.

Output **4.1** Two financing models funded to support youth and women owned forest-based enterprise (Village Savings Loan Association and Growth Accelerator)

VSLA: Access to finance is one of the major challenges facing forest fringe communities. In the absence of a banking system and other informal financial mechanisms, local people find it almost impossible to access financing to support their enterprises. The VSLA scheme has been applied by UNDP in Liberia for almost 10 years, as an alternative livelihood opportunity through which groups members will save their resources and borrow among themselves without collateral. Through the VSLA, women in the targeted forest communities can be empowered to take control of their financial destinies, fostering self-reliance, and creating opportunities for themselves to survive and support their families. This scheme provides a platform for women to come together, pool their resources, and engage in savings and lending activities. By contributing a portion of their income to the VSLAs, these women create a communal fund that acts as a financial safety net for all members. This collective effort enables them to access credit for their businesses and invest in income-generating activities. The project will provide capacity building training and supply of needed logistics (locker box, stationery etc.) as well as investments into social funds that can initiate sustainable enterprises for members of the VSLA. The projects aims to strengthen/set-up approximately 30 groups of forest-dependent poor and smallholder households and directly reach the same groups of households with VSLA training and establish 30 VSLA in the target communities, including those with CCA. This intervention is expected to benefit between 150-200 beneficiaries based on the average household size.

Based on discussions with BRAC and their concept note share, the following revisions has been made with the aim of bringing BRAC into partnership using UNDP model of Responsible Partners Agreement. However, UNDP will maintain core supervisory function and direct initiatives toward the achievement of the anticipated results. To implement this initiative, UNDP will leverage its experience working in forest communities along with the expertise of BRAC on poverty reduction initiatives linked with agriculture, food security and livelihood, and microfinance with an emphasis on building long-term resilience of communities. Through this partnership, BRAC will implement the following:

1. **Direct engagement:** The project will organize forest-dependent smallholder farmers into 30 groups of about 30 each. Through these groups, the project will train the households in

[27] Liberia by Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) - Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) - Exposure

sustainable farming techniques, including homestead gardening training with a nutritional focus and climate-smart agriculture including low-land rice production, seed multiplication, and livestock rearing.

2. **Savings Groups:** The program will integrate the VSLA model to build a savings culture and provide them with a safe space to save; and avail small credits from the pooled funding to invest or meet emergency needs. The VSLA component will span both the social and economic empowerment interventions - as a part of basic life skills, the associations will be initiated during the first six months and continue over the second half of the year as a complement to livelihood training and income-generating activities in addition to mentorship and monitoring for the remaining duration of the project. The project interns (UNVs)/Project Assistants (PAs) and mentors will be trained in VSLA management and will support the formation of the groups with the goal of self-governance. They can also engage community leadership and members in supporting the VSLAs, as is traditionally done in the model.

   Towards the end of implementation, PAs will mobilize the VSLA members to register their VSLAs with local authorities (i.e., as formal/semi-formal Savings and Credit Co-Operative Society (SACCOs)), so that the 30 VSLAs can easily connect with locally available resources, networks and opportunities. Measures will be taken to connect the VSLAs or their members to BRAC microfinance or other formal financial institutions present in their locality.

3. **Community-based promoters:** will be selected and trained to serve these households with extension services on how to grow lowland rice, vegetable and rear poultry, and other livestock and where applicable support in vaccinations, BRAC will train 10 community agriculture and livestock promoters.
4. **Enterprises:** To meet the increased demand for quality inputs resulting from the farmer training, the project will strengthen enterprises on the input and output side of the value chain. We will also vet, train, and support 15 small private enterprises serving the farmers and facilitate these market linkages by introducing the agriculture/livestock promoters and smallholder groups to these enterprises.

Growth Accelerator: The Growth Accelerator Liberia Programme is a UNDP business and agricultural cooperative accelerator that targets impactful and innovative ventures and cooperatives in Liberia across all sectors. The programme targets post-revenue businesses and cooperatives to assist them to scale and grow with a combination of Co-financing grant, Mentorship, and Technical Assistance including developing value chains and access to markets. The programme is implemented in collaboration with iCampus Liberia, a local NGO that focuses on the intersection of technology, entrepreneurship and inclusion in Liberia. The initiative proposed under this project is to identify existing enterprises for NTFPs (honey, rattan etc) that can be supported to improve their capacity create additional employment and acquire more income. The intervention targets between 20 to 30 forest-based enterprises to be enrolled into the program across the target communities, including those in the CCA. The program entails the provision of technical training through business development bootcamps for the entrepreneurs over a period of up to 6 months this is followed by providing catalytic grants and linking the entrepreneurs to banking institutions and their financial services. The core objective of the program is to support businesses to grow their initiatives, include value addition.

https://www.undp.org/liberia/news/five-liberian-businesses-win-grants-growth-accelerator-program

Activity 4.1.1 Enable access to technical skills training and finance for identified sustainable forest enterprises to scale up through the UNDP Growth Accelerator Program (Scale your business (growlib.org)-(rattan, honey, bamboo, cane rat) to promote local empowerment for forest fringe communities.

Activity 4.1.2 Set up/strengthen and provide resources to 30 groups of revolving Village Savings Loan Association (VSLAs) across the two target landscapes as a model of economic empowerment for women in forest fringe communities.

Output 4.2 Communities readiness capacity enhanced to engage and participate in carbon market dialogue; REDD+ and other payment for Ecosystem Services opportunities provided by their forests.

Output **4.2** will involve the conduct of capacity building trainings to educate and raise awareness on carbon market and build community capacity to engage when the market opens for Liberia. Communities/CFMB will be made aware and ready to participate in the design, management and benefit sharing of REDD+ and other payment for Ecosystem Services opportunities provided by their forests. The project will produce two user-friendly video documentaries (10 mins max) produced on the linkage of forests to livelihoods, climate, and the support to human wellbeing. These will be made showcased in the forest communities and made available across social media platforms and other media channels in Liberia and abroad for visibility and raising awareness of the cultural and biodiversity significance of the Grebo Krahn National Park.

Activity 4.2.1 Organize Community based simple carbon market and carbon readiness training of trainers (TOT) for 2 CFMBs in the target landscape to enhance understanding on the link between forest conservation and how they can benefit from ecosystem services (like REDD+ /carbon) and participate in carbon dialogues when the market opens for Liberia.

These initiatives will be documented in the minutes of the CFMBs records as part of efforts to get communities ready for carbon market. People who participate in these trainings will be certificated by the project, mentioning the intervention as a carbon readiness initiative. The project will further monitor and engage with CFMBs to track how the knowledge is transfer to other stakeholders

Activity 4.2.2 Produce two short video documentaries: One on carbon readiness with respect to REDD+/Article 6 framework and carbon market to support national awareness and civil society engagement and another one to promote awareness on the Grebo Krahn National Park

Activity 4.2.3 Produce information, communication, and educational materials in user-friendly language to support sustainable forest management and livelihoods; and convene project closure learning and knowledge event.

Technical institutional and sectoral collaboration, partnership and sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt will be key to the achievement of the project results, UNDP has an established convening role

and works with public, private and civil society stakeholders to facilitate more inclusive solutions as the integrator across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNDP will bring stakeholders together (inter-institutional and cross-sectoral) to kick-start collaboration and cooperation processes beginning from the project inception (RSPB, WCF, BRAC, IDH, SCNL, FAO, VOSIEDA , PADEV etc). Working along with the FDA, the project will promote multistakeholder activities such as regular coordination meetings, jointly planning interventions within the landscape with other partners operating in the landscapes, implementing activities through local partners already working in the landscapes and learning from other institutions with demonstrated and proven approaches and solutions that can foster SFM and sustainable livelihoods for forest fringe communities within the context of the projects outcomes.

6.0 MAIN TARGET GROUPS AND COUNTIES

Approximately 64% of the population of Liberia is below the age of 25[28] and women make up 49.7% of the population[29]. Women in the agriculture sector constitute over half of crop farmers and account for less than one-third of workers in livestock, poultry, and fisheries. In forestry, the ratio of men to women is 4 to 1[30]. Women and youth play key roles in agriculture and the forestry sectors. However, they remain more challenged and disadvantaged as compared to the male and adult population because they have fewer skills, financial resources, physical assets. Women are actively involved in managing natural resources and biodiversity as major users of forest and NTFP. They spend most of their time in productive gender roles during the farming season. Working in forests fringe communities, they collect fuel, medicinal plants, and water and are responsible for storing grain. Women are also most often involved with managing livestock. Overall, women have a great deal of traditional knowledge essential for conservation. Men and women have different roles within the family, communities, and larger socio-political arena. Unfortunately, Women are physically removed from men in society at large, and in rural communities' women's roles in governance and decision making are negligible, and in some areas restricted to adult. However, when forests are degraded or loss the impacts are heavily felt by women, including the exacerbation of food insecurity and loss of livelihoods. Female literacy rates lag males. The project, in its approach to promote youth and women empowerment, will integrate gender equality in all stages beginning from development analysis, planning and implementation, to meet the specific needs of women and youth. The specific targets include the following: 200 local men, women and youth for tree nursery development; 500 households (male and female led) in targeted communities for agroforestry schemes; 50 ex-chainsaw millers for demobilization grants and fuelwood plantations; and 200 youth for forest enterprise training and development (cane rat, bee, and snail farming).

Forest-fringe communities: These are communities within 3km buffer zone of forest protected areas who usually depend on forest to meet their day-to-day sustenance and biomass needs. In 2020, the World Bank estimated that half of the population of Liberia lives within 2.5 kilometers of a forest. The FDA recently identified more than 100 communities that have been designated as forest fringe

[28] Index Mun Factbook 2019: Liberia Demographics Profile 2019, accessed February 10, 2020, from https://bit.ly/33AY0cu

[29] Population, female (% of total population) - Liberia | Data (worldbank.org)

[30] FAO National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series-2018

communities in the Northwest and South-eastern landscapes. The needs of these communities relate to sustainable forest-based livelihood and inclusive participation in forest decision making.

Chainsaw millers: Most of Liberia's domestic timber supply is sourced from wood harvested and processed through chainsaw milling which is unregulated making current chainsaw milling activities unsustainable and largely noncompliant with the existing legal framework governing forestry, including traceability, environmental regulations, fiscal obligations, and benefit for forest communities. It is estimated that the sector provides between 19,000 and 24,000 more or less permanent jobs to urban and rural individuals, mostly youth (USAID 2016). The project will support them with alternative income and livelihood restoration activities as well as schemes intended to promote sustainable production of timber for domestic consumption.

Artisanal miners: The Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (LEITI) estimates that those directly employed by the ASM sector vary widely from 30,000 to 100,000 with an estimated 787,500 (and perhaps as many at 1.575 million) men, women and children believed to depend indirectly on the sector for at least part of their income (LEITI 2015, 16). The ASM sector has been under-regulated thus undermining its enormous potential to support social economic growth and livelihood of rural communities. The limited level of governance and regulation in the sector has rendered it a driver of deforestation and environmental pollution.

For both chainsaw millers and artisanal miners their needs relate to viable alternative income and livelihood activities that can help them escape the existing challenges of poverty and deprivation and these needs can be met through forest-based livelihood alternatives including agroforestry and other forest enterprises (honey, snail etc.) that are proposed above.

Main target groups:

- Approximately 10,000 forest users: community forest owners, chainsaw millers, artisanal miners, women, PWDs and youth (alternative livelihood, capacity building, awareness and training)
- At least 20 cluster forest fringe communities around the Grebo-Krahn, Sapo and Gola Forest landscape (alternative livelihood, capacity building, awareness and training)
- 4 Government agencies (FDA, EPA, LLA, MME) and 20 officials directly concerned with the conservation of the target landscapes (Technical collaboration, knowledge sharing and capacity building).
- Community Forest Management Bodies in the target landscapes (capacity building, awareness and training)
- 20 Staff/interns of civil society organizations (SCNL) and (FTI) other community colleges graduates whose capacity can be leveraged to support sustainable livelihoods and conservation in the target landscape (hands-on knowledge transfer and support for extension services).
- Four communities forests to benefit from the Community Conservation Agreement (CCA) as an innovative approach to support sustainable livelihood and nature-based solutions (forest friendly and climate resilient (alternative livelihood, capacity building, awareness and training)

With emphasis on community forests, the South-eastern and North-western landscape will be prioritized (Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, River Gee). See map below:

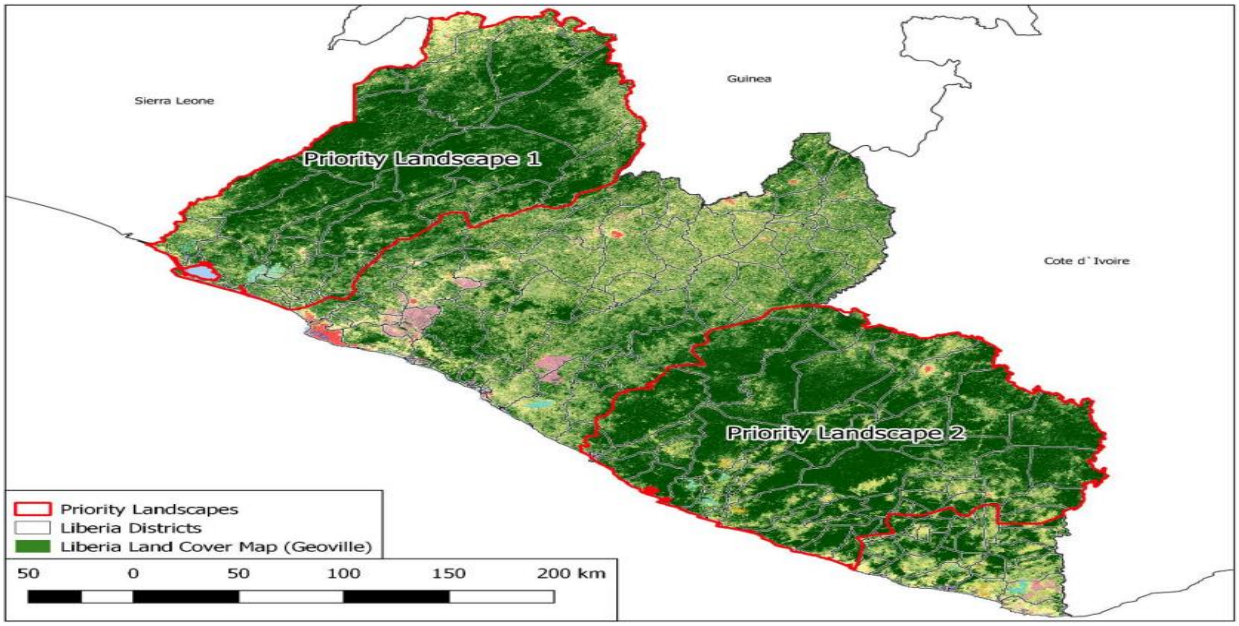


Figure 3: Priority landscapes (Adapted from Liberia's forest reference emission level submission to the UNFCCC, 2019)

6.1 Beneficiary Selection for Livelihood Interventions:

Consultation meetings in the target landscape: Beneficiary selection will be jointly implemented with the FDA and initiated through consultation meetings in identified project communities where relevant FDA focal points, local authorities and potential beneficiaries are present. The project objectives and expected results and needs of the target groups are interchanged during these engagements. Beneficiary will be selected based on the following criteria. All the potential beneficiaries are scored under each criterion for final selection through purposeful sampling:

Forest dependency (farmer, hunter, miner, chainsaw miller etc.) and persons involved in NTFP based enterprises for commercial purpose	Location (forest community, sub-urban community influencing forest activities/demand for forest products)
Demographic/social	Asset diversity
Gender/sex	Household income
Food security	Age

Figure 4: Criteria for beneficiary selection

7.0 RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Project Results framework

	Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)* *(2023)*	*Target (value & reference year)* *(2026)*	*Current value* (reference year)* *(* to be included in interim and final reports in due time)*	*Source and meanof verification*	*Assumptions*
Impact level (Overall objective)	**O.O**.*: Improved natural resources governance and business environment for sustainable forest-based activities.*	**OO.1.** Number of community forests supported by the project that set aside conservation areas	0	4 community forest		FDA Community Forestry Department Report Project Report	It is assumed that FDA Board approves draft regulations with a quota for conservation areas to be set aside by community forests
		00.2 Number of local officials from CFMBs (disaggregated by sex) trained as TOT in sustainable forestry who contribute to national dialogue *(like REDD+ /carbon)*	0	TBD (2024)		Project evaluation reports	

		OO.3. Number of forest-based enterprises supported that have increased capacity and revenue	0	10		Project Report	
Outcome level (Specific Objective(s) + Intermediate	**SO 1:** Community Conservation Agreement(CCA) developed and implemented to support sustainable livelihood and nature-based solutions in targeted authorized forest communities.	**SO.1.** Number of (a) jobs, (b) green jobs supported/ sustained by the EU (disaggregated for sex and age)	TBD	TBD		Project Report- SCNL, BRAC, UNDP FDA report	
		SO.2. No of hectares of forest set aside for conservation through the CCA	*0*	Tbd (by year 2)		Project Report- SCNL, UNDP	It is assumed that communities will embrace the CCA as an alternative source of income and livelihood other than timber concessions
	SO 2: Sustainable management of reduced impact community-based commercial logging promoted based on best practices and guidelines developed and piloted in targeted authorized forest communities.	**SO.2.1.** - Percent increase in revenue for forest-based processed products	0	20%		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	There are technical skills available locally to support capacity building at the community level for community-based logging

	SO.3 Resilient and diversified income and livelihood opportunities and business development of forest-related enterprises created and strengthened.)	**SO.3.1.** Number of climate resilient livelihood initiatives implemented in target communities and percent of increase in income.	0	At least 1 set per community engaged with an average income increase of 25%		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	Investments in diversified and sustainable livelihoods will promote forest-based enterprises and create incentives for community stewardship in conservation and forest protection
	SO.4 Mechanisms to foster sustainable financing of local forest-based enterprises promoted for enhancing capacity of forest communities to be aware of carbon market opportunities to participate in carbon readiness activities.	**SO.4.1.** Revenues from processed products	0	TBD (by year 2)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	The creation of sustainable financing models at the community level will promote the economic empowerment of the population, including women and youth

Output level	**Outputs (for each Outcome**	**OP1.1:** Conduct cost-benefit estimates to allow understanding and comparison between the benefits and loss of unsustainable activities (e.g., logging) and other sustainable land use systems (e.g., forest friendly enterprises, participation in REDD+, etc.).	**OP.1.1.1** Cost-benefit and loss analysis report	0 (2022)	Tbd in inception phase (by year 1)		Study report	The outcome of the study will provide valuable information that provides a rationale for conservation financing to offset community income losses from timber concessions
		OP1.2: Establish systems (including monitoring and organizational strengthening, incentive payment scheme incentive evaluation etc.) for CCA in partnership with the local community, NGOs and relevant government institutions- Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the LLA).	**OP.1.2.1**. Number of Number of functional guidelines for CCA established/strengthened.	TBD (by year 2)	TBD (by year 2)		Documented guidelines	
		OP1.3: CCA signed, and implementation	**OP.1.3.1.** Number of CCA and pilot activities developed.	TBD (by year 1)	4 (by year 2)		Signed CCA FDA annual report	

	commences in four Pilot Community Forest					Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	
		OP.1.3.2. No of ha of forest set aside for conservation through CCA	0	TBD (by year 2)		Progress reports for the intervention	
	OP2.1: . A system developed to support community-based reduced impact logging in Commercial zones of community forests (mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc)	**OP.2.1.1.** Number of Sustainable Forest-based Management plans developed.	0	2		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
	OP2.2: A pilot reduced impact commercial timber extraction based on agreed national guidelines in at least one CF within the northwest landscape(Sokpo/ Konigar-B)	**OP.2.2.1.** Area of CF under management plans (ha) for low-impact logging	0	TBD (by year 2)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP.2.2.2. Number of commercial zones of community forests with established low impact logging methodology.	TBD	TBD		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	

	OP3.1: A agroforestry scheme (forest friendly cocoa, other crops) set up in at least 20 target communities with approximately 500 household beneficiaries from 500 ha at 1ha per household	**OP.3.1.1.** Number of households involved with livelihood-based climate resilient forestry and agroforestry practices	0	500 households		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Project periodic /community monitoring reports	
		OP.3.1.2. Tonnes of CO2 emissions avoided or reduced.	0	TBD (by year 3)		End of project report	
		OP.3.1.3. Number of ha of cocoa-based agroforestry plots set up	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Project periodic /community monitoring reports	
	OP3.2 Livelihood activities diversified to offers incentives to target communities and populations into sustainable initiatives (climate smart lowland rice, fish farming, honey production, ratan,	**OP.3.2.1**. No of land (ha) developed for woodlot.	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP3.2.2. Number of chainsaw loggers engaging in legal activities.	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	

	bamboo) to reduce deforestation and enhance climate resilience.	**OP.3.2.3**. - Number of forest and agro-forest based enterprises established/supported.	0	30 with 40% of enterprises women led.		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP.3.2.4 Number of community-based value addition services provided for forest and agro-forest based enterprises.	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP.3.2.5 Number of women having an income through their job or their own business.	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP.3.2.6 Number of Initiatives of climate smart agriculture	0	20 initiatives where 40% of beneficiaries are women.		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
	OP4.1 Two financing models funded to support youth and women owned forest-based enterprise (Village Savings Loan Association and	**OP.4.1.1** Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services with EU support: a) firms b) Individuals	0	tbd – (50% of beneficiaries are women).		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
		OP.4.1.2 Number of women receiving financial support for	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	

	Growth Accelerator	forest-based enterprises.				Evaluation reports	
		OP.4.1.3 Number of agriculture and forest-based enterprises/beneficiaries having access to business development training and grants through the Growth Accelerator with increase in business revenue/new income created.	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Evaluation reports	
	OP4.2 Communities readiness capacity enhanced to engage and participate in carbon market dialogue; REDD+ and other payment for Ecosystem Services opportunities provided by their forests	**OP.4.2.1** Number of people trained/educated/informed through technical transfers, dialogues, workshops, campaigns, and other efforts (disaggregated by: male, female, youth (15-24) and forest people)	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Knowledge and communication products Evaluation reports	
		OP.4.2.2 - % of women attending the training.	0	40% of training participants are women Presence of gender responsive aspects in the training.		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Knowledge and communication products	

						Evaluation reports	
		OP.4.2.3 Number of social media views/access of video documentary	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Knowledge and communication products Evaluation reports	
		OP.4.2.4 Incorporation of gender responsive aspects in the awareness, communication, and educational materials	0	TBD in inception phase (by year 1)		FDA annual report Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention Knowledge and communication products Evaluation reports	

8.0 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & VISIBIITY

Knowledge management will be mainstreamed across all outputs of the project. This will include raising public awareness and educating communities and school children on the value of the forest ecosystems and the importance of conserving them. The awareness raising activities will also be linked to monitoring and evaluation in order to foster behavior change that will facilitate the implementation of local level forest management plans, the effectiveness of conservation of protected areas and the development of sustainable alternative livelihoods. This will also include and enable the sharing of project experiences and lessons learnt at local and national level through various means of communication so as to touch a large number of stakeholders. The project's progress will be tracked, and project management and interventions adapted accordingly, to ensure project impact and sharing knowledge gained through project experience. The project will provide knowledge management instruments that will be used to strengthen sharing of lessons learnt and best practices.

UNDP's communication and visibility activities for this project will be used to ensure the EU visibility for its contribution to the implementation of this specific project, will aim at creating awareness among beneficiaries, project communities, implementing partners, and the media about impact on the ground, as well as ensuring the visibility of the EU's contribution to sustainable forest management in Liberia. *The specific objectives of the communication and visibility activities to be pursued are: Improve education awareness about the importance of sustainable management of Liberia's forest resources with intent to influence behavior change,* promote and communicate the results of the project, promote the cooperation of the Government of Liberia and EU Delegation to Liberia in respect to the "Action Document for 'Protecting a green future: Forestry and Conservation for a sustainable economic development in Liberia" to deliver on the project goals, and **ensure visibility of EU 's support to the project**.

Information, communication, education Activities

i. Development of the project corporate identity (logo)
ii. Press releases published on UNDP website and channeled through media aimed to target audience. Milestones to communicate:
    a. Project launch/inception meeting.
    b. Signing of agreements, MOUs
    c. Capacity building/ Training events
    d. Project closure event/results
iii. Publication of a biannual newsletter with information gathered during the implementation period, including stories of change.
iv. Printing and dissemination of information, communication and education materials purposed at enhancing *education and awareness of the national and local population about the importance of sustainable management of Liberia's forest resources with intent to influence behavior change (poster sheets,* calendars, diaries, T-shirts, etc)
v. *Airing of SFM related education and awareness jingles on community-based radio stations*
vi. Diffusion of all newsworthy materials, including photo/video stories of change, through social media networks

vii. Printing and dissemination of branded stationery and items (posters, notebooks, ball points, lead pencils, bags, etc.) and promotional material (calendars, diaries, T-shirts, etc.) to targeted communities and stakeholders.

viii. Dissemination of information about EU contribution to SFM in Liberia and about new EU Deforestation regulation (EUDR) especially when it comes to cocoa plantation (importance of land use and traceability)

ix. Signboards of the project with EU logo prepared and installed at important points in target areas.

x. Development/support for at least two nature clubs (nature talks, display of video documentary etc) to empower and educate students about the importance of environmental conservation and to create awareness about the threats and importance of biodiversity.

xi. Follow-up work and monitoring of the published news (offline y online media and social networks) and elaboration of a final report.

Specific attention will be paid to communication and visibility events around "international days" relevant to the project's activities and goals (e.g., forest, gender, environment/climate change, day etc.). In addition, visibility opportunities in key regional and/or international events may be identified. All events and communication and visibility products will be coordinated and realized in close collaboration with EU's communication and visibility team.

Target Audience of Communication Actions

- Direct beneficiaries: residents of forest fringe communities, including youth and women, community forest owners, smallholders, forestry technicians, schools in forest fringe communities.
- Representative local groups such as community forest management bodies and community-based organizations: Residents from the forest fringe communities more directly involved in the project will be engaged to actively participate and contribute to educative and SFM actions that will take place in their geographical range of action.
- General public, government institutions, local authorities, informal groups of citizens, and others throughout the country will have access to information products, social media post, newsletters and be aware of the results of the project and the EU's contribution through the dissemination strategy that will be implemented.

UNDP website and other partners as applicable will have regular features on the project's activities. Appropriate logo of the European Union, according to the EU visibility rules on the use of its emblem, will be placed on information and communication materials.

Thanks to UNDP support, the Environmental Protection Agency has two dedicated platforms for knowledge sharing (Liberia Climate Change Knowledge Sharing Platform (gnf.tf) and ekmsliberia.info). In addition to platforms hosted by the implementing partners, these platforms will serve as online repository for knowledge management products and will be used to share and the results achieved by the project with the stakeholders, researchers, etc. Additionally, project reports, newsletters and publications will be shared with stakeholders within and outside the project circle.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY - COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL OWNERSHIPS, AND OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND DONOR SUPPORT

The proposed project will contribute to the achievement of NDC targets through the application of sustainable forest management practices and consequently increasing carbon capturing potential, introducing energy-efficient technologies, facilitating development and investment towards rural forest communities, promoting green enterprises, reducing the risk of climate-driven floods, and developing local capacities to address these risks. The project will also contribute to Liberia's efforts to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, reduce deforestation, restore degraded forests (SDG Goal 15.1) and combat climate change (SDG goal 13). The sustainability of the project is framed within the context of the following: (i) o*wnership and community involvement, (ii) enterprise development and (iii) private sector linkages and partnerships.* The project will work along with existing local governance structures and community institutions and further integrate them with local and national government agencies into every aspect of project design and implementation. By so doing, the project will ensure the creation of a broad-based network that is necessary for sustaining the investment and achievement of the conservation and development outcomes identified. The project will leverage on the enabling support provided by the Swedish Funded CFMP project capacity support to the NUCFMB, NUCFDCs and other community forest bodies to enhance support for forest communities. This will be linked to funding opportunities that will help capitalize and scale up diversified livelihood initiatives to support sustainable management of forests (including NTFPs) and agroforestry. The process will also involve developing and implementing business plans and establishing community-managed funds, including revolving VSLAs with a view to ensure financial sustainability. These interventions will ensure gender mainstreaming and, where needed, additional attention to the needs of women and youth groups. To strengthen local ownership, the project will create an enabling environment for INRM, biodiversity conservation, and enhance institutional and local capacities. The project will link with or build upon ongoing interventions, including those funded by EU, USAID, Sweden etc. This will allow for the sharing of experiences and knowledge that can contribute to expanding the outcomes and overcoming barriers and challenges.

By building partnership with national and sectoral agencies during implementation, interventions can be integrated within regular operations of entities such as the Forestry Development Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Gender, etc. Linkages with the private sector will allow for opening market opportunities for the enterprises. Through these actions the project will support environmental and financial sustainability by ensuring wise use of natural resources, and contributing to conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, while supporting the livelihoods of forest fringe and forest dependent communities.

10. SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

The project has been designed to remove identified barriers and create an enabling environment for the implementation of community-based sustainable forest management. It is expected that by end of the project, institutions, communities, and other stakeholders will ensure continuity to the activities undertaken by the project.

Factors that encourage sustainability in its social, environmental, economic, and capacity building dimensions are listed below:

Social sustainability

Gender equality and mainstreaming at the institutional and community levels: The project will promote the participation of women and empowering them to strengthen their role in planning and decision-making, and to improve their productivity, incomes, and living conditions. At the institutional level, participation will take place in the community townhall forums, by ensuring that women make up at least 40% of those participating in these engagements. The project will facilitate women's access to training and technical assistance. Training programmes delivered through the project will ensure that at least 40% of the participants are women.

Food security: This has very strong linkages to the ecosystem goods and services provided by the forests and protected area. The sustainable management of the forests targeted by the project will ensure the flow of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) that act as a key safety net for local communities, and the availability of fuelwood for local use. Agroforestry practices integrated with food crop production, in addition to diversifying production, will contribute immensely to household level food security.

Ownership by local institutions and communities: This is vital for the social sustainability of the project. The basic tenet of sustainable forest management is the commitment and display of ownership by local communities and strong facilitation of local institutions; the project's strategy is to implement SFM through community forest management bodies on the ground, and this will ensure continued ownership at the local level.

Environmental sustainability

The project will be implemented in areas under severe threat of degradation and hold importance in the context of combating desertification. This project will intensify efforts to manage these forests sustainably ensuring the flow of ecosystem services. Pressures on the forest resources will be reduced (including woodlot plantation and improved cooking charcoal production); this coupled with assisted natural regeneration will allow rehabilitation of native vegetation. Through the CF management plans and community conservation agreements, and the benefits derived by the involved communities through the plans/agreements, environmental gains are generated through the project.

Financial and economic sustainability

The financial and economic sustainability of the project will be achieved to the extent that these activities are financially and economically viable for the parties involved, including farmers[31] the

[31] Liberian cocoa production is low compared to other producers, and Liberian cocoa farmers are producing barely 20 percent of their potential. Seed costs are very high in Liberia, which might discourage planting of new trees- Growing cocoa in Liberia: Challenges and opportunities, African Center for Economic Transformation-January 2023

Community forest management bodies and their members. The activities promoted by the project will help increase the financial and economic sustainability of rural beneficiaries and improve their livelihoods. The project will build the capacity of the community and forest bodies to be able to engage/participate in carbon market readiness activities, which would open up new opportunity for filling the financial gaps created at project closure. Carbon/climate financing will be critical in sustaining SFM initiatives such as those under the Community Conservation Agreement. The project's dissemination of information, communication and education materials on sustainable forest management best practices will tend to improve financial sustainability in the medium term through training, initial investment, and technical support during the project period. The project will support the design of forest management plans and low impact community-based logging, helping to generate resources and investments directly into the communities.

Sustainability of capacity development

Capacity development is one of the essential pillars that will ensure the project's sustainability at the CF and institutional levels. The project will address two dimensions of capacity development: 1) Technical capabilities; directed at producers (in this case the communities involved in SFM through community forestry) and entities directly providing technical support to the producers. 2) Functional capabilities; aimed at supporting organizations (both government and non-government), to plan, direct, manage, and sustain change initiatives that ensure that specialized technical expertise will be incorporated into local systems and processed in a sustainable manner. With regard to technical capabilities, the project will strengthen the theoretical and practical skills of regional level support institutions (Forestry extension and regional staff, CBOs/NGOs), and the community forestry management bodies in CF concepts and SFM practices and techniques. These trainings will give special consideration to youth and women, who constitute the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Technical capabilities: These are directed at producers (in this case the communities involved in SFM through community forestry) and entities directly providing technical support to the producers.

Functional capabilities: These are aimed at supporting organizations (both government and non-government), to plan, direct, manage, and sustain change initiatives that ensure that specialized technical expertise will be incorporated into local systems and processed in a sustainable manner.

Appropriateness of technologies introduced and cost/effectiveness technologies.

The Project will promote tested and cost-effective resource management, utilization, and production practices. These practices include assisted natural regeneration, forest protection, forest rehabilitation, agroforestry (with native species), grazing/pasture management, holistic bushfire prevention and control, sustainable harvesting of forest products, and improved processing of forest products.

Project technical feasibility is based on the presence of entities with sufficient fundamental technical capacity to support and further transfer local technologies at the ground level. The Department of Forestry and various national and local organizations and entities (including the executing and co-financing partners of this project) have a long track record of providing extension services, promoting

community forestry and SFM practices, supporting small scale forest enterprises and expansion of improved cooking stoves.

Exit strategy.

The exit of the project involves turning over responsibility for conducting community-based sustainable forest management, agroforestry, forest enterprise development activities to the Forestry Development Authority, individual farmers, community forest management bodies, Forest Enterprise Groups and other entities, NGOs, CBOs etc. The overall approach to exit will be to turn over most of these activities to the FDA which is the lead government partner on forestry to this project to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture on sustaining the interventions.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT, INCLUDING THE ROLES OF THE RELEVANT ACTORS, INCLUDING NATIONAL PARTNERS

The project will be implemented by UNDP using the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM)[32], with the FDA as Responsible Partner (RP). The project will integrate several mechanisms to ensure effective governance, programme management and coordination, both internally and externally vis-à-vis national stakeholders, donors/development partners and other implementers.

11.1 UNDP Comparative advantage of implementing this project

Among UNDP's comparative advantages is its solid *in-country* capacity (national experts on forestry, climate change, environment and livelihoods), combined with UNDP's surge capacities in its regional offices, which can be readily deployed. No other development agency in Liberia has the same level of in-country expertise, or readily available regional capacity on environment, climate change and forestry. UNDP, along with its local partners in Liberia, has considerable experience and expertise in implementing sustainable forest management and actions against climate change, including multi-purpose tree nurseries production and developing community centered agroforestry in the northwest and south-eastern forest landscapes in Liberia. Its novel initiative in developing urban green corridors with livelihood incentives for youth and women in urban settlements is a driving force for enhancing conservation and restoration of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and their services.

UNDP signature approaches will foster a strong partnership with the Government and national/local institutions, while also pursuing synergies among complementary initiatives funded by other donors. The work on sustainable forestry and climate change, is focused on balancing conservation with fostering livelihoods and socioeconomic inclusion of the population strongly dependent on natural resources. UNDP is committed to breaking down the barriers that prevent gender equality in

[32] Direct Implementation (DIM) is the modality whereby responsible UN agency takes on the role of Implementing Partner. In DIM modality, the UN agency has the technical and administrative capacity to assume the responsibility for mobilizing and applying effectively the required inputs reach the expected outputs. Said UN assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for project implementation. Accordingly, the institution is required to follow all policies and procedures established for its own operations.

programme strategies and planning while fostering solid social and environmental safeguard standards and procedures that lead to inclusive and participatory project design and implementation.

11.2 Particular added-value elements

UNDP is currently working with the Government of Liberia for the purpose of developing a carbon market roadmap. Elements of the Roadmap will include (1) a gap analysis and needs assessment for Article 6 and (2) broad carbon market access strategy adaptable to different sectors and purposes, which then can enable Liberia to put in place the legal and governance infrastructure for the country to begin accessing opportunities for Article 6 and Voluntary Carbon Markets, including attracting benefits for community forests holders. The project will build capacity at the local level to enable community people to engage in carbon market dialogue and participate in carbon trading when the market opens for Liberia, thus influencing their behavior toward sustainable forest management as an additionality that would not have occurred without the project intervention. The CCA would represent a classic example of how communities can benefit from sustainable forest management activities without depleting forests or engaging in emission-intensive activities. Persons benefiting from these capacity building initiatives will be certificated, mentioning EU contribution to carbon readiness. The project report will document total number of beneficiaries and number of persons having access to the training as a result of this support. Avoided emissions from the CCA will also be documented in the project results.

UNDP is similarly implementing the Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management project funded by Sweden. The EU programme represents an important programmatic vehicle for enhancing complementarity and synergy between the different initiatives using the UNDP approach while fostering the #TeamEurope initiatives in which the EU collaborates with France, Germany, Sweden, and Ireland to help Liberia protect its forests and biodiversity. The added value of the UNDP proposed approach for the EU programme is hinged on putting forest people livelihoods and benefits at the center of forest conservation. This is especially important for forming “genuine owners” to bring about “practical benefits”. By linking livelihoods to forest protection and conservation, the livelihood assets of individuals, households and communities are improved through the process of managing, protecting, developing, utilizing, and benefiting from forests and forested lands simultaneously.

UNDP is also important for its convening power, especially because it can have a coordination role at local level, not only with EU project but also with the other initiative on the ground.

To ensure coordination with Swedish, USAID and other projects in the country, UNDP will undertake the following initiatives through the Programme Coordinator:

- Coordinate with the FDA and the Ministry of Finance for Development Planning in the planning, programming, and implementation of project activities.
- Use its convening mandate and experience to convene donor roundtable and policy dialogues around sector objectives and policy issues; as well as facilitate local meetings at local and community level, to harmonize and create synergies among different programs.
- Support new and ongoing initiatives, reforms, dialogues etc with relevant government agencies around forest governance, land and community rights, climate finance, integrated land use planning etc..

- Develop and strengthen strategic alliances and partnerships, foster joint planning, and review meetings and maintain close liaison with relevant donors, regional and national NGOs, UNDP COs, Governments, and other actors supporting the forestry sector in Liberia.
- Plan, organize and coordinate the conduct of Annual Review Meetings/Mid-Term Review/ End of Project Evaluation and ensure that lessons learned feed into the design and implementation of project activities.
- Development and implement a stakeholder's engagement and communication plan.
- Prepare periodic reports, information and communication products and disseminate widely, including with donors.

11.3 Governance and Management Arrangements

The project will be implemented directly by UNDP (DIM) in accordance with UNDP rules and regulations. UNDP Liberia will use the structures in place (office shared among Inclusive Growth & Sustainable Development portfolio projects) for the project implementation. It includes fully established working space, meeting room, ICT equipment, office furniture and supplies, transport means, security, insurance, communication, Internet and other means needed for the proper functioning of the project office and implementation of this specific project as well. The administrative and management costs for implementing the project will be charged proportionally in complementarity with other IGSD portfolio Projects.

UNDP Country Office in Liberia will provide operational support to the project implementation, including in recruitment, granting, procurement and financing. UNDP CO will ensure the project implementation and all processes therein takes place in accordance with the UNDP rules and regulations as stipulated in the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and are in line with best international standards.

As per UNDP's Financial Regulations and Rules, the following general principles must be given consideration while executing granting or procurement on behalf of the organization: (1) Best Value for Money, (2) Fairness, Integrity and Transparency and (3) Effective Competition. The UNDP Country Office will provide the operational and programmatic support and advice to the project, and will ensure troubleshooting and smooth decision-making, as needed.

The UNDP Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development (IGSD) Team Leader's role will be instrumental here as portfolio manager. The IGSD Team Leader who is a core staff of UNDP will be responsible for direct oversight and supervision of the project from a portfolio perspective. In this role the Team leader will be supported by the Programme Specialist, partially paid (50% of his/her time) by the project's budget who will have direct oversight and supervision for the project. UNDP Liberia's Deputy Resident Representative/Programme (DRR/P) in close collaboration with UNDP Resident Representative (RR) will provide overall guidance on project related activities as well as on risks and mitigation measures.

The main strategic decision-making body for the project will be the Project Board, where UNDP will be representing project executive's role and co-chairing the board, the EU Delegation will represent the donor, while FDA will stand for senior beneficiary. The Project Board (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. To ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in

accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. The members of the PB shall seek to reach consensus on all decisions. In case consensus cannot be reached within the Board, the UNDP Resident Representative (or their designate) will mediate to find consensus and, if this cannot be found, will take the final decision to ensure project implementation is not unduly delayed.

The Project Board will meet once upon project inception and once per year with the option of any member being able to call for ad hoc meetings to address issues of concern. Additionally, a technical working group comprising of technical representatives of the partners (EU, UNDP, FDA, Civil Society, collaborating partners and other relevant actors) will convene once every quarter for the purpose of reviewing project progress, addressing bottlenecks, exploring opportunities for strategic partnerships, visibility opportunities etc., and approval of quarterly workplans. FDA will serve as a Responsible Party. Letter of Agreement with FDA, SCNL and FTI and other partners will be signed to implement targeted project activities. The FDA plays a significant role in the forest sector as the forest management body in the country and has assumed responsibility for the sustainable management of Liberia's forests. The Ministry of Finance & Development Planning will provide the policy level support and guidance. Partnerships with other forests sector project will be envisaged to ensure complementarity and coordination of efforts, but also knowledge sharing.

11.4 Project Management

11.4.1 Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

To deliver maximum results with available resources, the project will use a portfolio management approach to improve cost effectiveness by leveraging activities and partnerships with ongoing initiatives and projects. For example, the project will co-finance the salaries of Programme Coordinator with other sources of funding in the IGSD portfolio projects. In addition to ensuring the more effective use of budgetary resources, these shared positions will also be used to ensure greater policy and programmatic synergies within and across the programmes and team implementing the programme. Also, office space, transportation, administrative and operational services will be co-shared with other UNDP projects in the portfolio.

11.4.2 Project Management

The project will be managed through the Project Management Unit (composed of a Project Manager and Administrative/Finance Assistant) based in Liberia to ensure day-to-day implementation of the project and reporting in line with the relevant provisions of the EU-UNDP Contribution Agreement. The final report will also include, to the extent possible, calculating the amount of carbon sequester/emissions avoided. The project will organize project launching (inception) as well as project closure events. For these, and other events, such as site visits, trainings or other project milestones, UNDP will make efforts to maintain high visibility (issue press releases, ensure social and TV media coverage, photo/video stories). The project visibility will be promoted as per the communication and visibility activities presented in chapter 8 above and followed throughout project implementation and ensure continuous engagement and partnership with the EU Delegation in Liberia, and other potential stakeholders.

11.4.3 Personnel and Expertise

PERSONNEL	BACKSTOPPING SUPPORT/DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES
Project Manager (NPSA 8/9) Fulltime staff	Ensures effective representation and Strategic Advisory Support, focusing on the achievement of the project results. Provide substantive technical oversight and technical backstopping for SFM and livelihood interventions. Support the development and review TORs, concept notes etc. for all project activities. Ensure alignment of all activities with project document and approved workplans. Provides efficient co-ordination of project activities. Provides effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation process, focusing on the achievement of the project results. Manage the project in accordance with its work plan and budget tolerance levels. Contribute full staff time toward coordinating, supervision and oversight to the project
Programme Specialist/ (NPSA 10/11-NB 5) 50% part time staff	Serve as thematic expert with 50% staff time to provide strategic oversight for the project, including on key themes (climate, livelihood and SFM) Propose strategies, indicators and targets for incorporation into the Project Results Framework. Design of detailed project interventions and workplans Conduct reviews and clearance for TORs and reports. Direct oversight/supervision for Project Manager
Project Associate Fulltime field staff with occasional office related missions in Monrovia	Serve as a full-time national project technical staff with expertise in natural resource management and resilient livelihoods who will be in charge of field operations for the most part of his/her assignment. The staff will work with the community UNVs/graduates as well as all the partners involved in supporting project activities in the field. This staff will also support monitoring and evaluation functions at the field level for tracking results. The staff will be the direct supervisor for the 15 UNVs/graduates. The staff will support the work of experts/consultants recruited for different project activities
Administrative & Finance Associate (NPSA 6/7-NB 3) Contribute fulltime programme management support to the project	Drafts routine correspondence to respond to enquiries in respect to relevant administrative, financial audit, personnel matters. Coordinates extensively with service units and liaises frequently with internal team members both in Monrovia and in the field. Assists managers in the elaboration of resource requirements for budget submissions. Prepares or customizes financial reports Co-ordinates with other finance and budget staff on related issues during preparation of budget reports. Monitors expenditures and compares with approved budget; prepares adjustments, as necessary. Assists with day-to-day administration of contracts between the UN and external contractors for outsourced services. Assists in preparation of budget performance submissions and finalization of budget performance reports, Processes the payment of contractors' invoices and monitor payments.

	Ensure administration of budgets and functioning of the optimal cost-recovery system
Gender, Communications and Advocacy Officer NPSA 7/8 Contribute fulltime programme management support to the project	The Gender Officer will work on integrating and mainstreaming gender across the project interventions and provide expert advice on this to the respective project staff and IPs. S/he will also work on issues of inclusion of marginalized groups in an effort to ensure that interventions are sensitive to these dynamics on the ground. S/he will conduct gender screening of all interventions. Integrate communication, advocacy, and outreach activities into projects initiatives, coordinate, implement, and monitor the implementation of the project's communications and advocacy plans, as well as publications plans, coordinate and implement the development and dissemination of communication and advocacy materials for the project.
15 Community UNVs	The 15 Community UNVs will be embedded within the communities, as field staff, to provide extension support for establishment of nurseries, plantation development, maintenance and lay the foundation for long-term sustainability of the agroforestry scheme

BRAC Project Assistants (PAs): BRAC will deploy at least 6 field staff to support training on VSLAs and livelihood as well as provide mentoring and monitoring

11.4.4 . Other project office costs

To support the smooth implementation of the project, the EU contribution will be used to cover other project office cost as follows:

Project vehicle and driver/ 2 bikes: To support project implementation and logistics, including transport of personnel for field activities, field monitoring and supervision, etc. The vehicle will be managed based on UNDP's vehicle regulations and road safety requirements with driver holding UNDP contract for the duration of the project. The 2 bikes will be deployed in the field

Office space (rental) and common services: Cost sharing for office space hosting the Project Management Unit staff of the project. This will cover for Rent; Utilities; Insurance; Security at the Pan African Plaza

IT: this includes ICT Equipment (computer); Internet Services; and software licenses that will be procured for the use of the project staff to support project implementation, including administrative services. The IT equipment and services will be managed based on UNDP Communication and Information technology Policy.

Stationary and office supplies: this will include paper, pens, pencils, filing supplies, ledger sheets and, janitorial and cleaning supplies needed for the operations of the project office.

Travel and subsistence: These include authorized duty travel expenses that shall be paid or reimbursed by the UNDP under the relevant provisions that include Daily subsistence allowance to UNDP or government staff on project duty/assignment based on approved travel authorization as per UNDP DSA rate and travel policies.

Knowledge Management, Communications and Visibility: As per communication and visibility activities listed under Chapter 8 the following will constitute cost for supporting project communication, visibility and management of knowledge products: Meeting Costs; Support for school nature clubs, Media costs, Printing and communication tools (Information Education Materials, Banners, poster, fliers, pens, note pads, stickers, t-shirts etc),

12.0 PROJECT ACTIVITIES EXECUTION

A number of implementation partners will be involved in ensuring project implementation and carrying out project activities, under supervision and in collaboration with the PMU, as presented in the table below:

Table 2: Activity Matrix

Planned Activities	Collaboration and partnership during implementation
Activity 1.1.1. Using participatory methodology, carry out a rapid cost-benefit analysis of alternative community forest management scenarios (e.g., managed for logging/carbon) in reference to Sokpo/ Konigar-B/Konobo to support the preparation of a Community Conservation Agreement	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA (community forestry and commercial forestry department) and local communities in collaboration with RSPB and national experts

Activity 1.1.2. Conduct/update Baseline Forest and Biodiversity inventory to serve as the basis of the CCA	
Activity 1.2.1. Develop evidence-based system for FPIC, monitoring and capacity building, incentive payment and evaluation	
Activity 1.2.2 . Develop Community -based Monitoring Framework (Ecoguards) to monitor and ensure compliance with the obligations signed in the CCA	UNDP field staff will work with FDA field staff, local partners and local authorities on the CCA communities
Activity 1.3.1. Develop a CCA Sustainability Plan and commence implementation with Yearly Funding Agreement for the CCA.	UNDP will collaborate with FDA, national experts and partners (RSPB, WCF, SCNL etc)
Activity 1.3.2 Conduct community-based validation and ratification the CCA Agreement and Implementation Plan with Funds allocated for 3 years.	UNDP will work inclusively with the CCA communities, FDA and partners (RSPB, WCF, SCNL etc)
Activity 1.3.3 Support for monitoring, and documenting lessons learned from the pilots to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions and inter-institutional cooperation on CCA at the national level	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA (community forestry and commercial forestry department) in collaboration with RSPB, national experts and other partners (national and international)
Activity 2.1.1 Conduct national level stakeholders' consultation and review on best practices for community-based low impact timber harvesting in Liberia based on PROSPER guidelines and FAO Model code of forest harvesting practice to be adapted for the project	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA (community forestry and commercial forestry department) in collaboration with RSPB/SCNL, national experts and other partners (national and international)
Activity 2.1.2 Raise Community level Awareness and Education of the process, principles, and management of Sustainable Forest Management to generate buy-in	UNDP will work with CBOs, media organization
Activity 2.1.3. Review/revise Community Forest Management and zoning Plan to include Conservation Zones-including for carbon, Commercial and other community uses	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA (community forestry and commercial forestry department) in collaboration with RSPB, national experts and other partners (national and international)
Activity 2.1.4. Support Community to conduct enabling activities: mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc for RIL	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA field staff in collaboration with RSPB, national experts and other partners (national and international)
Activity 2.2.1 Assessment of the Commercial zone of Community Forest.	UNDP will work with national experts and FDA
Activity 2.2.2 Organize one (1) knowledge sharing and learning exchange visits with communities that have prior experience with community-based reduced impact logging to generate and understand impacts, lessons, and challenges that can inform the project.	UNDP in collaboration with FDA
Activity 2.2.3 Recruit consultant to facilitate training, design and provide specs for procurement of logistics (sawmill with bandsaw, conveyor, hydraulic motion components, and a human-operated controller, power saw, small transport vehicle etc), to up low impact commercial logging scheme managed by community with FDA support.	UNDP in collaboration with FDA technical staff (commercial department)
Activity 2.2.4 Monitor, and document lessons learned from the pilot to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions on low impact commercial logging in community forests	UNDP in collaboration with FDA and EU
Activity 3.1.1 Conduct review/validate livelihood needs assessment in target landscape and conduct baselines to quantify the mitigation target/ potential for the project.	UNDP in collaboration with FDA and MOA field staff

Activity 3.1.2 Convene community level engagements in the project sites to finalize on selected communities for interventions, agree on criteria for beneficiary selection with FDA and communities, identify target beneficiaries.	
Activity 3.1.3 Set up approximately 500 ha youth, women and men centered agroforestry plots that promotes income and livelihoods for the host communities surrounding protected areas/community forest (Maemai, Zue, Garleo, Tempo, Delayee, Bao, Tarloken, Barwu, Tarsla)	UNDP in collaboration with Sustainable Agriculture Programme, Wild Chimpanzees Foundation and Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia
Activity 3.2.1 Enlist 15 forest and agriculture community colleges in Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Cape Mount and Bomi as fulltime community UNVs as interns to support diversified livelihood venture (Woodlot establishment, cane rat domestic production, multi-purpose tree nursery development, agroforestry plantation) with intent to provide onsite extension support for these community level interventions for 1 year.	UNDP in collaboration with FDA and relevant technical training institutions
Activity 3.2.2 Support local women develop and enhance their technical capacity for nursery development, vegetable gardening and livestock farming through field schools (rubber, cacao, cashew, coffee, coconut, oil palm etc), fruit trees (orange, mango) and provision of inputs to promote livelihood in addition to their involvement in VSLAs	UNDP will work in partnership with the BRAC Wild Chimpanzee Foundation/SCNL and other partners
Activity 3.2.3 Support sustainable charcoal production (through fast growing tree plantations) and set up of 4 charcoal briquettes plants to produce bio-charcoal from biodegradable waste to support chainsaw millers' demobilization (Zleh Town, Bopolu, Tubmanburg, Jabo, Zwedru	UNDP will work in partnership with the WCF and SCNL
Activity 3.2.4 Support sustainable charcoal production (through fast growing tree plantations) and set up of 4 charcoal briquettes plants to produce bio-charcoal from biodegradable waste to support chainsaw millers' demobilization (Zleh Town, Bopolu, Tubmanburg, Jabo, Zwedru	UNDP will work in partnership Green Gold Liberia[33]
Activity 3.2.5 Setup 2 cane rat and snail production training site and pilot commercial scheme targeting women bushmeat sellers, ASM miners and hunters at the FTI in Tubmanburg and Grand Gedeh Community College in Zwedru	UNDP will work in partnership with Nimba Ventures[34], FTI, other relevant technical training institutions and experts. Consultant
Activity 3.2.6 Training and support for ASM site reclamation and restoration and sustainable ASM practices through UNDP funded Environmental Governance Project[35] (Billibo, Kongbo)	UNDP will work in partnership with the WCF and SCNL to promote awareness and support forest restoration activities in ASM degraded areas as well as promote monitoring
Activity 3.2.7 Organize 1 national and 2 regional capacity building training for CSOs on carbon market to enhance their capacity to engage in the dialogue and support forest fringe communities to participate in carbon markets.	UNDP with work in collaboration with the National Civil Society Council of Liberia and relevant CSOs as well as target communities
Activity 4.1.1 Enable access to technical skills training and finance for identified sustainable forest enterprises to scale up through the UNDP Growth Accelerator Program (Scale your business	UNDP will work in partnership with iCampus[36]

[33] (2) Facebook
[34] (2) Facebook
[35] Liberia by Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) - Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) - Exposure
[36] iCampus Liberia – A Liberian Innovation Space

(growlib.org)-(rattan, honey, bamboo, cane rat) to promote local empowerment for forest fringe communities	
Activity 4.1.2 Set up/strengthen and provide additional resources to 10 revolving Village Savings Loan Association (VSLAs) across the two target landscapes as a model of economic empowerment for women in forest fringe communities	UNDP will work in partnership with BRAC Liberia
Activity 4.2.1 Organize Community based simple carbon market and carbon readiness training of trainers (TOT) for 2 CFMBs in the target landscape to enhance understanding on the link between forest conservation and how they can benefit from ecosystem services (like REDD+ /carbon) and participate in carbon dialogues when the market opens for Liberia	UNDP will collaborate with FDA
Activity 4.2.2 Produce two short video documentaries: One on carbon readiness with respect to REDD+/Article 6 framework and carbon market to support national awareness and civil society engagement and another one to promote awareness on the Grebo Krahn National Park	UNDP will collaborate with FDA
Activity 4.2.3 Produce information, communication, and educational materials in user-friendly language to support sustainable forest management and livelihoods; and convene project closure learning and knowledge event	UNDP will collaborate with FDA

12.1 Project Inception Phase

The project inception phase will be the first three (3) month of the project's implementation period. The purpose of this phase is to facilitate concurrence among all project stakeholders (donor, project board, implementing partners, responsible parties and communities) on the lifecycle objectives for the project, and to understand the key constraints and targets. During this phase, the project team will seek to clarify the project scope, clear objectives, baselines, targets, indicators and feasibility of the intended interventions. This phase will foresee the following activities:

1. Constitute and convene Project Steering Committee Meeting
2. Project Kick-off meeting (Inception meeting): Present project to stakeholders, Introduce project team, set expectations, communicates the project goals and objectives, explains the project scope, background information and project timeline, meet with other partners to define and agree on areas of collaboration, partnership and synergy and define specific communities and areas where the project will intervene.
3. Community level assessment/baseline data: Community level engagement, collection of baseline data and information to help inform project implementation, completion of ESIA screening checklist, Gender analysis/assessment of the program.
4. Partners Capacity Assessment: capacity assessment of partners that UNDP will be working with directly, including direct transfer of funds in order to assess capacity to implement project activities, identify risks and determine the nature of agreement and modality for fund transfer for engaging the partners.
5. An assessment of the role of the private sector and building linkage with private sector umbrella organizations

6. An assessment of the potential of including sustainable low impact community-based logging, charcoal production, cane rat production, wood lot plantation etc as some of the livelihood activities, based on established success stories locally or regionally.
7. Signing of agreements: Signing of agreements with project partners (CSOs, NGOs etc.) who are deemed to have the required capacity to implement different activities (Letter of Agreement, Responsible Party Agreement)
8. Refine and submit result framework.
9. Submission updated program document and workplan informed by findings from the baselines assessments.

12.2 Implementing Partners for Receiving Direct funds.

Although UNDP assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for project implementation, a list of potential organizations (CSOs, NGOs, etc.) have been identified who may receive direct fund from UNDP for implementation of specific activities where there is proven capacity to achieve results based on capacity assessment and track record of the organization. These will be informed by the following selection criteria:

- Be accountable for delivering on the expected outputs in the time required, manage risks and sustain results after the project ends.
- Ensure national ownership and broad stakeholder engagement.
- Ensure sustainability of project results

Entity	Potential fund receiving organizations
UNDP	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), BRAC, ICampus, Green Gold Liberia, Sustainable Agriculture Program of Liberia

13. LINKAGES/SYNERGIES, OR GAPS

13.1 Relevance to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries, region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)

Liberia remains resource rich, however, the lack of knowledge, technology and financial investments required to transform its natural resource wealth for the development of its people is undermining growth. The country recognizes forestry as an important sector that can contribute to economic growth and reduction of poverty and aims to leverage its forest assets to attract climate finance at scale. However, the capacity to support this vision particularly at the local level is quite limited.

Based on the 2019 National Forest Inventory, Liberia has a forest cover estimated at 6.6 million hectares, about 69% of the total landmass. It is Africa's oldest independent nation and hosts West Africa's important remains of evergreen and semi-deciduous forest biospheres. The two main forest blocks of the state contribute to the quality of environment, socioeconomics, quality of life, and climate. The country currently hosts approximately 43% of the remaining Upper Guinea forest and is recognized as one of the biodiversity hotspots with enormous benefits if it can be effectively managed

and utilized. Liberia has more than 2000 flower plant species, 600 bird species and 125 mammal species. Despite these advantages to Liberia as a country,

Despite this rich heritage, Liberia faces daunting challenges and threats to its forest resources. These threats are in the form an increasing rate of deforestation, through extensive logging, commercial tree crop plantation, slash and burn agriculture/shifting cultivation, heavy reliance of local people on natural forests for fuelwood and timber, and unsustainable harvest and use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and wildlife poaching. These issues continue to cause considerable damage and harm to the integrity of the ecosystems and the provision of essential ecosystem services, including soil quality, forest cover and forest health. There are also threats to water quality and biodiversity. Efforts to mitigate this situation are impeded by inadequate alternative livelihood opportunities and economic incentives for forest communities. There are also issues bordering on weak institutional capacity and application of the regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in Community Forest Management (CFM) planning, limited information on the existing state of biodiversity in community forests, and limited participation of forest-dependent/forest fringe communities in Protected Areas (PAs) management.

The EU delegation and the Government of Liberia recently signed an Action Document for 'Protecting a green future: Forestry and Conservation for a sustainable economic development in Liberia.' The proposed action, amongst other things, aims at enhancing conservation and restoration of terrestrial, ecosystems and their services, strengthening the actions against climate change over the period 2023-2029 with a national geographical focus that includes Grebo-Khran-Sapo and Gola Landscapes. The action document is very much aligned and can complement/contribute to key national initiatives as follows:

Community Rights Law 2009

Supporting and promoting mechanisms to promote informed and representative community participation in matters related to community forest management.

Liberia National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan 2011-2022

Promoting participatory forest management and monitoring to reduce threats to forest and biodiversity; Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use and enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Nationally Determined Contributions 2021

Improve national programs and policies to enhance forest carbon stocks by incentivizing and increasing agroforestry, reforestation, afforestation, and forest restoration ; Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation; promote sustainable community forest management!

National Adaptation Plan 2020-2030

The project is consistent with certain strategies and action plans to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the forestry and agriculture sectors, namely: - Sustainable management of forests in Liberia to maintain ecosystem integrity; Implement reforestation and afforestation activities in degraded

areas, increase rural incomes, and improve biodiversity richness; community-based adaptation approaches, on alternative livelihoods to hunting wildlife for food, and campaigns to reduce market demand for bushmeat

13.2 Synergy and Gaps

To avoid duplication or competition, an analysis of past, ongoing, and emerging intervention in the proposed landscapes has been conducted for the purpose of identifying opportunity for synergies and gaps that the project can fill. Below is a list of some of the key interventions, results achieved and expected results.

Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP)

The LFSP which started in 2016 and expected to end in June 2023 builds on the Liberia REDD+ Readiness Project, aim at completing Liberia's Readiness and implementing the Investment/Implementation Phase (Phase 2) of Liberia's REDD+ Process. The project is focused on improving management of the forest and increasing benefit-sharing in forest landscapes. The key achievements of the project include: Up to 40 communities supported on timber and non-forest timber products certification; Up to 40 Community Action Plans produced; Up to 40 Community Land Use Plans prepared; 1,500 farmers supported on conservation agriculture; Road map for national land use planning produced; Technical and operational resources provided to the MoA to enable agroforestry and livelihood development activities in target landscape communities; State of Environment Report for Liberia produced. The new EU program can build on achievements in LFSP project communities in order to sustain the momentum and avoid losing on the gains achieved thus far.

Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM)

The project, which is funded by the Embassy of Sweden, seeks to strengthen management of community forests and protected areas in Liberia through improved governance of community forest management bodies, capacity building of forest regulatory institutions, empowerment of national CSOs/NGOs and Forest and Farm Producer Organizations[37], integrated natural resources management and the promotion of sustainable livelihood incentives for forest fringe communities. The project has already identified a list of targeted communities within the two landscapes where these activities will be implemented to complement, and/or synergize with current or past activities.

FAO-EU FLEGT Programme – 2021

Under the intervention "Sustaining Gains: Improving Community Capacity to Monitor and Properly Manage Benefits from Commercial Logging in Liberia," FAO worked with the National Union of Community Forest Development Committees and delivered increased capacities of "affected communities" to monitor the benefits they receive through commercial logging, to communicate and share information on the use of benefits sharing funds and robustly defend their right under said agreement. Outcomes included: Women's active representation in CFDCs is enhanced; Social Agreements are effectively renegotiated, and their implementation monitored; the capacity of CFDCs to use the Public Procurement Concession Commission (PPCC) standard in awarding community

[37] By this, it is emphasized that they should be member-based, democratically managed organizations of farmers living in forest fringe.

project is strengthened; collaboration between the leadership of the NUCFDC and the NBSTB is fostered.

Liberia Conservation Works Activity (Liberia CWA)

The CWA is geared at developing an inclusive, multi-sectoral approach that engages communities in management of protected areas, gives them a stake in their long-term protection, to conserve Liberia's rich biodiversity and ensure improved sustainable livelihoods and long-term economic growth and prosperity. The project timeframe runs from November 1, 2021 - October 31, 2026, is implemented by EcoHealth Alliance, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection (LCRP), and Partners in Development (PADEV). The key results expected include development of at least 25 ecotourism-focused enterprises established in target landscapes, create a minimum of two new Pas, improve management and protection of 5 PAs and PPAs (over 400 ha), improved technical and institutional capacity in both the FDA and local communities surrounding PAs and PPAs.

West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABILED)

The program is intended to Promote biodiversity conservation and climate-resilient, low emissions development in West Africa from July 2021 – July 2025 at a cost of 49m. The key results of the project include: Enhanced responsible land-based private sector investment and innovation to develop and strengthen the value chains of NFTPs that support ecosystem services, climate resilience, and social equity; Support collaboration among stakeholders to improve management and conservation of forests that increases carbon sequestration, reduces emissions, while also forging synergies with ongoing programs and projects and incentivize community-based natural resource management efforts and; increased protection and management for transboundary forest landscapes and the wildlife that live in them, with a focus on West African chimpanzees.

The interventions within this proposal are earmarked to complement, build upon and synergize with the ongoing and upcoming initiatives rather than duplicate efforts. UNDP has already initiated discussions with various partners and identified the following communities earmarked in the landscape for the planned EU interventions.

In conclusion, an analysis of past and ongoing interventions in Liberia has revealed linkages between the proposed project and several past, ongoing, and emerging interventions, which requires coordination and engagement with other partners working along with the Forestry Development Authorities. The analysis has also identified several gaps to be filled (in line with identified threats and barriers), that this project will contribute to filling through collaboration with the FDA, LFSP, CWA, FOLUR and other interventions (including those led by UNDP and partners) on the ground to support complementarity, synergy and upscaling.

Gaps to be filled	Project contribution to fill gaps
Limited opportunities for forest fringe communities to develop environmentally sustainable livelihood activities, including lack of opportunities for	Contribution to innovative, improved, and diversified livelihoods based on the sustainable use of forest and agricultural resources, including income generating and livelihood options for communities (short,

alternative protein sources. Most livelihood interventions are short term	medium, and long term), adopted and implemented through agroforestry, agro-forest based enterprises, forest friendly enterprises (bee farming, snail farming, fish farming etc.)-Output 3.2
Limited opportunities for youth and women participation and benefit from sustainable forest management	Engagement of youth and women in reforestation and restoration; woodlot plantation and youth and women centered alternative livelihoods (**Activity 3.2.2, Activity 3.2.5**)
Many communities' forests are yet to develop community forest management plans and those with plans do not have the capacity to implement those plans and land use plans at all levels, leading to conflicting land uses;	Contribution to the active engagement of forest communities through conservation agreements to support community-forest management and support to the development of reduced impact community - based logging initiatives(Output 1.2 and Output 2.2)
Insufficient technical capacity of relevant government personnel to plan and make decisions for the sustainable use of natural resources.	Capacity building program strengthening the ability of relevant government personnel at local and provincial levels to enhance sustainable forest management at the local level (output 2.1, Output 2.2)
Knowledge gaps and limited understanding regarding the value of gender-balanced community forest management and co-management of Pas; and forest enterprises	Contribution to participatory generation of knowledge and lesson learned, best practices and dissemination with, professionals and local communities; knowledge and skills for forest enterprises will be integrated in all components of the project
Limited community involvement/participation in planning, decision-making processes and governance regarding the management and use of natural resources.	Contribution to efforts that enhances participatory forest management (Output 1.2)

According to information generated from the LFSP, there are approximately 66 forest fringe communities in the Northwestern forest landscape (Gola Forest National Park, and Foya Proposed Protected Area, excluding the Kpo Protected area; with approximately 60 within the Southeastern forest landscape. The current LFSP project supports livelihood interventions (market access, land use planning, agroforestry, fish farming, bee farming, lowland agriculture, village savings loan, support for eco guards, etc.) in the two priority landscapes. However, these interventions have just been contracted to SCNL/IDH and are expected to end by June 2022 and are not expected to cover all 120 communities within the two landscapes. The USAID funded project which runs up to 2026 will support protected area management, ecotourism enterprises targeting 200 jobs and livelihood activities targeting 15,500 direct and indirect beneficiaries. Like the LFSP, the CWA is also not intended to cover all the forest fringe communities. Hence, as part of the inception phase consultations, this project will convene a meeting of partners under the auspices of the FDA to discuss and agree on communities that this project will particularly support although the Gola Forest National Park and Grebo Krahn National Park and their adjacent community forests remain key areas of consideration. These consultations are expected to clearly define the scope of the other partners interventions and areas

where this project can complement or fill remaining gaps for interventions. The project also proposes to introduce new livelihood interventions that are not being implemented in the two landscapes.

This program will seek to complement interventions in this project around agroforestry, multi-purpose tree nurseries, sustainable charcoal production plantations, demobilization of chainsaw millers through support for alternative livelihood, carbon markets and combating illegal wildlife trade. These proposed interventions are expected to complement/build synergize with those being proposed under this project and expected to be implemented in additional landscapes not covered by this project, including urban landscapes.

14.0 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Approximately 64% of the population of Liberia is below the age of 25[38] and women make up 49.7% of the population.[39] Women in the agriculture sector constitute over half of crop farmers and account for less than one-third of workers in livestock, poultry, and fisheries. In forestry, the ratio of men to women is 4 to 1.[40] Women and youth play key roles in agriculture and the forestry sectors. However, they remain more challenged and disadvantaged as compared to the male and adult population because they have fewer skills, financial resources, physical assets. Women are actively involved in managing natural resources and biodiversity as major users of forest and NTFP. Additionally, they spend most of their time in productive gender roles during the farming season. Working in forests fringe communities, they collect fuel, medicinal plants, and water and are responsible for storing grain. Women are also most often involved with managing livestock.

The socio-cultural burdens reproduced by the communities and the socialization process weigh on women in Liberia and relegate them to secondary roles. Liberian society is predominantly patrilineal which means that men dominate at all levels of society. Thus, women are perceived as a social element devoid of decision-making power and as the subordinates of men.

Overall, women have a great deal of traditional knowledge essential for conservation. Men and women have distinctive roles within the family, communities, and larger socio-political arena. Unfortunately, women are physically removed from men in society at large, and in rural communities, women's roles in governance and decision making are negligible, and in some areas restricted to adults. However, when forests are degraded or lost the impacts are heavily felt by women, including the exacerbation of food insecurity and loss of livelihoods. Female literacy rates lag males. There is also an indication that women's perceptions towards forest may be different than men, due to their differing social roles. Recognizing the importance of the role played by women in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use as well as the impact on forest loss, the project will build on a gender analysis undertaken by the FLEGT to assess opportunities to enhance the status of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in respect to biodiversity conservation related activities. Gender analysis be integrated into the Community level assessment during the inception phase.

The project does not have the ambition of transforming the country's gender related challenges. Nevertheless, it will contribute to addressing some of these challenges, and promote the participation of women wherever possible. In this sense, a Gender Action Plan will be developed, with the specific

[38] Index Mun Factbook 2019: Liberia Demographics Profile 2019, accessed February 10, 2020 from https://bit.ly/33AY0cu
[39] Population, female (% of total population) - Liberia | Data (worldbank.org)

[40] FAO National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series-2018

gender sensitive indicators in the results framework integrated in the plan. The purpose of the proposed Gender Action Plan is to ensure that the challenges and opportunities highlighted in the gender analysis are effectively mainstreamed into the proposed project activities. This mainstreaming involves ensuring that:

- Both men and women actively and meaningfully participate.
- Both men and women have equal access to opportunities, resources and benefits arising from the project.
- Inequalities identified are not perpetuated.

The project will integrate gender equality in all stages beginning from development analysis and planning to implementation. It will also determine the need to have specific livelihoods strategies addressing the unique needs of women and men to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. During mobilization, community consultations will be organized to obtain views and inputs of a wide range of local stakeholders, including women, youth, PWDs etc. to ensure full gender considerations. Gender-disaggregated targets and indicators will be included within the project results framework, and appropriately evaluated during project monitoring and evaluation.

15.0 STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT

To ensure stakeholders participation in the project execution, a stakeholders' engagement plan will be developed during the inception phase to describe detailed stakeholders' engagement during the implementation of the full project cycle. Roles and responsibilities of all the major stakeholders will be defined and they will be actively engaged during activities planning and implementation of the project. They will be given representation at the level of the Project Steering Committees keeping in view their experience and expertise in alternative livelihoods, conservation, and integrated management of natural resources. Some of these stakeholders, particularly the local NGOs, will be engaged as responsible parties for the implementation of some activities based on their competitive advantage and footprint in the targeted landscapes.

Stakeholder engagement will form the basis for building strong, constructive, and responsive partnership that are essential for the successful implementation of the project. The intent of this process is to establish and maintain a constructive relationship with a variety of external stakeholders over the entire life of the Project. All relevant stakeholders, including state and non-state actors, and private sector will be engaged, within the framework of this project, through a consultative process that allows for communities to have a strong voice. Community consultations will be organized to obtain views and inputs of a wide range of local stakeholders, including women, to develop project activities and to ensure that the stakeholder involvement plan takes fully into account gender considerations.

Stakeholders	Engagement
Local Communities, forest users and farmers groups	The primary actors and partners of the project will be the local communities. The inclusion of local communities in the project is of vital interest if results are to be achieved. Many conservation and livelihood projects have failed because local communities were not integrated in the design and implementation. Inhabitants of the

	selected project areas will be made aware of project activities and invited to take part in decision-making processes. They will be actively involved in the project activities. Their cooperation will be sought in project implementation: alternative livelihoods activities, governance of protected areas, capacity building programs, community forest management capacity building, multistakeholder platforms and consultations, the development of land forest management plan etc. Heads of local communities and community leaders will be the main counterparts in linking the project objectives and activities to the needs of the people in the project area.
Women and informal women groups/associations	Women will be active partners in all community related project activities. They will participate in the alternative livelihoods output, the development of community forest management plans, and will be consulted in the various project studies and assessments. Their knowledge of local contexts will be put to use
Youth	Youth will be mainstream participants in all community related activities, with specific emphasis to include them
Forestry Development Authority	As the agency in charge of community forests and protected areas the project is in line with its missions, and it will participate in it. Ensure participation in relevant capacity building programs and in multistakeholder dialogues. Increased capacity of personnel and engagement as responsible partners for supporting the implementation of some activities, mainly those on reforestation
Environmental Protection Agency	The EPA is a key agency for policy formulation regarding biodiversity and acts as the national designated agency for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The EPA will be integrally involved during the monitoring and implementation of the project and its knowledge management/sharing platforms will serve a useful purpose
Ministry of Agriculture	It is concerned by agriculture related activities, from production to processing and marketing. Ensure participation in relevant capacity building programs and in multistakeholder dialogues linked to conservation agriculture, cooperatives, and enterprise development
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)/Local Authorities	MIA is concerned by governance aspects and local governments. Ensure participation in relevant capacity building programs and in multistakeholder dialogues linked to land use and management of natural resources. Request support and facilitation of project interventions.
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	The Ministry is concerned by all gender aspects, including women empowerment. Consult at various stages of the project, request guidance to ensure that women are adequately engaged and involved in the project

National NGOs, Community Forest Management Bodies.	These NGOs are grounded within the targeted landscapes and are well positioned to exert positive influence, provide technical contributions and provision of knowledge of project landscapes. Consult at various stages of the project, involve in work with local communities, particularly on alternative livelihood and NTFP related activities. Ensure participation in awareness raising activities within the landscapes, share their experience of working with local communities, facilitate interactions with those communities
International NGOs; Fauna and Flora International, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Conservation International, USAID	Synergies with relevant NGO projects. Ensure participation in multi-stakeholder dialogues linked to forest conservation and management and support to forest community livelihoods
Private sector	Increased awareness and capacity on sustainable forest management. Leveraging the private sector to promote business opportunities and marketing for farming and forest enterprises. Ensure participation in relevant training sessions and multi-stakeholder dialogues and platforms on sustainable forest management

To address the climate risk and forestry development challenges in Liberia, the private sector has an especially key role to plan. The project will seek to promote private sector engagement as a more sustainable way of supporting communities to achieve sustainable development outcomes on a larger scale. Although there is some evidence on private sector initiatives in the value chains on NTFPs and other forest enterprises, UNDP will engage with the private sector for investment in SFM activities beginning at the inception phase.

The involvement of private sector/companies can play a vital role by creating market demand and opening new markets and investment opportunities for scaling up while addressing unsustainable forest management and protection problems, including high CO2 emission practices (e.g., zero or deforestation-free commodity initiatives). In addition, the private sector can provide business expertise and technical know-how, explore markets, and mobilize capital to support non-timber forest enterprises. Mobilizing capital can include supporting producers/suppliers to have better access to credit to upscale their businesses within the value chain.

The Project will encourage its staff and partners to engage deliberately and consistently with the private sector in initial stages, considering that early, and ongoing, engagement with private-sector actors is important to achieve the Project's goals. This early and continuous engagement with the private sector can lead not only to better identification of market-based opportunities, but also increases the flexibility and coordination necessary to leverage private sector resources and expertise in later programming phases. The project will create market opportunities around non-forest enterprises (i.e., tree crops, bee farming, fish farming, forest oils etc.) and encourage private sector involvement in the development of their value chains, which then expand opportunities for private sector investments and profits.

The project will ensure that direct beneficiaries of the project are aware of the existing Stakeholder Response Mechanism, which will allow them to submit their concerns about the social and

environmental impacts of the project. The mechanism will be available when UNDP project-level stakeholder engagement processes have not successfully resolved issues of concern. UNDP Country Office management will lead Stakeholder Response. However, the beneficiaries will be informed that they have the option to file the request directly with the Stakeholder Response Mechanism at UNDP.

16.0 MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring of the project implementation will be conducted according to the project workplan by the M&E staff of UNDP. Quarterly activity updates will be prepared and submitted internally, and these will be used to conduct field monitoring. Internal UNDP quarterly progress reports based on the expected activities implemented and outputs realized will be provided by the Project Manager for internal review and oversight based on the indicators outlined in the logical framework, and through the mission reports that will be provided by all technical experts supporting the project implementation. Gender-disaggregated targets and indicators will be included within the project results framework, and appropriately evaluated during the project monitoring and evaluation. These reports will be tabled and discussed at the PMU, which will convene quarterly technical steering committee meetings to review and discuss project progress and provide technical support for enhancement where necessary. UNDP will submit a full-fledged progress narrative and financial report to the EU in line with article 3 of the General Conditions (Annex 2 to the Contribution Agreement)

An annual project review including field visits will be conducted by the project management and partners. Discussions will revolve around the project impact on project beneficiaries as per the targets. This review exercise will also serve as a mechanism to verify monthly and quarterly reports provided by the project. The outcomes of the annual review exercise will form the basis for the project annual report.

A final project report, including both narrative and financial components, will be provided at the end of the project. Feedback from participants and the government will be collected through questionnaires and individual interviews to be included in the report. The final report will be submitted to the EUD. The project may also be audited in line with UNDP's policy.

A mid-term and final evaluation of the project will be conducted by external evaluators (consultants) mid-way and at the end of project implementation. The programme coordinator will coordinate and facilitate the exercise in liaison with the Programme Management Support Unit and the implementing partners. The identification and selection of the evaluator will be conducted as per UNDP rules and regulations regarding project evaluations.

17.0 RISK ANAYSIS & RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Several risks have been identified for this project - external risks, technical & operational risks, and environmental & social risks. Measures to mitigate these risks have been integrated into the proposal design as demonstrated in the table below. The risk level describes the residual risks considering that mitigation measures are implemented. The Implementing Partners will comply with the policies, procedures, and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS). Social and

environmental sustainability will be enhanced through the application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and related Accountability Mechanism.

UNDP will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.

Risk Description	Level	Mitigation Measures
External Risks		
Fiduciary and corruption risk	High	There is an elevated risk of corruption in Liberia. To mitigate the risk of project funds being diverted, UNDP will directly execute the project. The UN system procedure for the disbursement of funds will be strictly followed. Stakeholders being paid to implement activities will receive the funds in stages, after having justified the expenses and presented the work done. In addition, UNDP will hire the project staff independently of the government. The periodic monitoring and mid-term project evaluation is an additional opportunity to monitor the appropriate use of funds.
Lack of effective participation of local communities in project interventions	Medium	Effective participation of local communities will be ensured through their inclusion and consultation during the project inception meetings. Local communities will also be represented on the steering committee. Specific governance related activities will be planned to promote the involvement of local communities in protected areas and community forest governance. - A specific gender action plan will be developed to ensure active participation and consultation of women.
Strong climate variability during project lifetime negates positive effects of project intervention	Medium	Climate change and variability are recognized as environmental problems in the target landscapes and are expected to continue to impact these areas. Efforts to conserve and protect the forests of the PAs through activities in Outcome 2, as well as to provide alternative livelihood activities for the local population through Outcome 3 will help to build the resilience of local ecosystems and communities.
Technical & operational risks		
Low level of cooperation and coordination between Implementing Partners from different projects	Medium	Several activities throughout the project's logical framework will bring stakeholders together (inter-institutional and cross-sectoral) to kick-start collaboration and cooperation processes. Working along with the FDA, the project will promote multistakeholder activities such as jointly planning interventions within the landscape with other partners operating in the landscapes, implementing activities through local partners already working in the landscapes etc.
Institutional weakness: weak implementation capacity at local and institutional levels	High	National capacities to implement some of the project activities are limited. This is one of the reasons why UNDP will serve as the project's executing agency. However, this does not mean that the UN agencies will implement all activities. It will collaborate with local and national stakeholders to implement activities on ground, guiding and accompanying them, and building capacity as it does (through the project staff). Where capacities are not available locally for the implementation of activities (for example carrying out certain specific studies or training sessions), the project will call for international services through calls for tenders. In addition, the project will contribute to building institutional capacity through various capacity building sessions.
Cultural norms limit gender integration, especially women's participation in project interventions	Moderate	Conducting awareness raising sessions and meetings with notables, political and religious leaders of communities will help in gender integration and ensure participation of women folks in project activities

Private sector will not be forthcoming to participate in the project	Moderate	So far, the private sector, especially outfitters, tour operators, hotel chains etc. have not been involved in the conservation activities, except a few. The mechanism for involvement of the private sector in community-based conservation will be further assessed and a private sector's involvement strategy will be developed during the inception phase of the project. The project will also present a business case for private sector participation in the NTFP value chain

18.0 Workplan

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Responsible Party	YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1. Derive estimated value on community forest to allow communities compare the benefits and loss between unsustainable activities (e.g., logging) and other sustainable land use systems (e.g., forest friendly enterprises, participation in REDD+, etc.).	**Activity 1.1.1**. Using participatory methodology, carry out a rapid cost-benefit analysis of alternative community forest management scenarios (e.g., managed for logging/carbon) in reference to Sokpo/ Konigar-B/Konobo to support the preparation of a Community Conservation Agreement	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 1.1.2. Conduct/update Baseline Forest inventory to serve as the basis of the CCA	UNDP (Co Project Team)/												
Output 1.2. Establish systems (including monitoring and organizationa stregthening, incentive payment scheme incentive evaluation etc.) for CCA in partnership with the local community, NGOs and relevant government institutions- Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the LLA).	**Activity 1.2.1**. Develop evidence-based system for FPIC, monitoring and capacity building, incentive payment and evaluation	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 1.2.2 . Develop Community -based Monitoring Framework (Ecoguards) to monitor and ensure compliance with the obligations signed in the CCA	UNDP (Co Project Team)												

Output: 1.3. CCA signed, and implementation commences in two Pilot Community Forests	Activity 1.3.1. Develop a CCA Sustainability Plan and commence implementation with Yearly Funding Agreement for the CCA.	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 1.3.2 Conduct community based validation and ratification the CCA Agreement and Implementation Plan with Funds allocated for 3 years.	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 1.3.3 Support for monitoring, and documenting lessons learned from the pilots to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions and inter-instituional cooperation on CCA at the national level	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
Output 2.1.A system developed to support community-based reduced impact logging in Commercial zones of community forests (mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc)	Activity 2.1.1 Conduct national level stakeholders' consultation and review on best practices for community-based low impact timber harvesting in Liberia based on PROSPER guidelines and FAO Model code of forest harvesting practice to be adapted for the project	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 2.1.2 Raise Community level Awareness and Education of the process, principles, and management of Sustainable Forest Management to generate buy-in	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 2.1.3. Review/revise Community Forest Management and zoning Plan to include Conservation Zones-including for carbon, Commercial and other community uses	UNDP (Co Project Team)/consultant												

	Activity 2.1.4. Support Community to conduct enabling activities: mapping, inventory, environmental assessment, operational plan etc for RIL	UNDP (Co Project Team)/consultant												
Output 2.2. A pilot reduced impact commercial timber extraction based on agreed national guidelines in at least one CF within the norwtwest landscape(Sokpo/ Konigar-B)	Activity 2.2.1 Assessment of the Commercial zone of Community Forest.	UNDP (Co Project Team)/consultant												
	Activity 2.2.2 Organize one (1) knowledge sharing and learning exchange visits with communities that have prior experience with community-based reduced impact logging to generate and understand impacts, lessons, and challenges that can inform the project.	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 2.2.3 Recruit consultant to facilitate training, design and provide specs for procurement of logistics (sawmill with bandsaw, conveyor, hydraulic motion components, and a human-operated controller, power saw, small trasnport vehicle etc), to implement low impact commercial logging scheme managed by community with FDA support.	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 2.2.4 Monitor, and document lessons learned from the pilot to share at national platforms and help inform policy actions on low impact commercial logging in community forests	UNDP (Co Project Team)												

Output 3.1 A agroforestry scheme (forest friendly cocoa, other crops) set up in at least 20 target communities with approximately 500 household beneficiaries	Activity 3.1.1 Conduct review/validate livelihood needs assessment in target landscape and conduct baselines to quantify the mitigation target/ potential for the project.	UNDP (Co Project Team)/consultant												
	Activity 3.1.2 Convene community level engagements in the project sites to finalize on selected communities for interventions, agree on criteria for beneficiary selection with FDA and communities, identify target beneficiaries.	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 3.1.3 Set up approximately 500 ha youth, women and men centered agroforestry plots that promotes income and livelihoods for the host communities surrounding protected areas/community forest (Maemai, Zue, Garleo, Tempo, Delayee, Bao, Tarloken, Barwu, Tarsla)	UNDP (Co Project Team) via Responsible Party Agreement												
Output 3.2: Livelihood activities diversified to offers incentives to target communities and populations into sustainable initiatives (climate smart lowland rice, fish farming, honey production, ratan, bamboo) to reduce deforestation and enhance climate resilience	Activity 3.2.1 Enlist 15 Graduates of forest and agriculture community colleges in Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Cape Mount and Bomi as fulltime community UNVs to support diversified livelihood venture (Woodlot establishment, cane rat domestic production, multi-purpose tree nursery development, agroforestry	UNDP (Co Project Team)												

	plantation) with intent to provide onsite extension support for these community level interventions for 1 year.													
	Activity 3.2.2 Support local women and youth develop and enhance their technical capacity for nursery development, through farmer field schools (rubber, cacao, cashew, coffee, coconut, oil palm etc), support alternative livelihood, including vegetable gardening, low-land rice farming, honey production etc to promote livelihood in addition to women involvement in VSLAs	UNDP (Co Project Team) via Low Value Grant												
	Activity 3.2.3 Support sustainable charcoal production (through fast growing tree plantations) and set up of 4 charcoal briquettes plants to produce bio-charcoal from biodegradable waste to support chainsaw millers' demobilization (Zleh Town, Bopolu, Tubmanburg, Jabo, Zwedru	UNDP (Co Project Team) via Low Value Grant												
	Activity 3.2.4 Setup 2 cane rat and snail production training site and pilot commercial scheme targeting women bushmeat sellers, ASM miners and hunters at the FTI in Tubmanburg and Grand Gedeh Community College in Zwedru	UNDP (Co Project Team)/consultant												

	ctivity 3.2.5 Training and support for ASM site reclamation and restoration, participatory monitoring, and sustainable ASM practices, including cash-for-work schemes to support alternative livelihood for ASM miners (Billibo, Kongbo) through partnership with the Environmental Governance Program	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 3.2.6 Organize 1 national and 2 regional capacity building training for CSOs on carbon market to enhance their capacity to engage in the dialogue and support forest fringe communities to participate in carbon markets..	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
Output 4.1Two financing models funded to support youth and women owned forest-based enterprise (Village Savings Loan Association and Growth Accelerator)	Activity 4.1.1 Enable access to technical skills training and finance for identified sustainable forest enterprises to scale up through the UNDP Growth Accelerator Program (Scale your business (growlib.org)-(rattan, honey, bamboo, cane rat) to promote local empowerment for forest fringe communities	UNDP (Co Project Team) via Responsible Party Agreement												
	Activity 4.1.2 Set up/strengthen and provide resources to 30 groups of revolving Village Savings Loan Association (VSLAs) annually across the two target landscapes as a model of economic empowerment for women in forest fringe communities	UNDP (Co Project Team) via Low Value Grant												

Output 4.2 Communities readiness capacity enhanced to engage and participate in carbon market dialogue; REDD+ and other payment for Ecosystem Services opportunities provided by their forests.	Activity 4.2.1 Organize Community based simple carbon market and carbon readiness training of trainers (TOT) for 2 CFMBs in the target landscape to enhance understanding on the link between forest conservation and how they can benefit from ecosystem services (like REDD+ /carbon) and participate in carbon dialogues when the market opens for Liberia	Meeting costs; Travel; DSA;												
	Activity 4.2.2 Produce two short video documentaries: One on carbon readiness with respect to REDD+/Article 6 framework and carbon market to support national awareness and civil society engagement and another one to promote awareness on the Grebo Krahn National Park	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
	Activity 4.2.3 Produce information, communication, and educational materials in user-friendly language to support sustainable forest management and livelihoods; and convene project closure learning and knowledge event	UNDP (Co Project Team)												
Knowledge Management, Communications and Visibility	(Pre-project closure event to showcase result)													