



REPORT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' INCEPTION WORKSHOP AND HACT TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE GEF-FUNDED NET ZERO NATURE POSITIVE (NZNP) PROJECTS IN THE NIGER-DELTA

DATE: MONDAY, 13TH, OCTOBER, 2025

VENUE: BOLTON WHITE HOTEL, ABUJA, NIGERIA



REPORT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' INCEPTION WORKSHOP AND HACT TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE GEF-FUNDED NET ZERO NATURE POSITIVE (NZNP) PROJECTS IN THE NIGER-

DELTA, HELD ON MONDAY 13TH OCTOBER, 2025 AT BOLTON
WHITE HOTEL, ABUJA, NIGERIA

1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 Nigeria's Niger Delta region is rich in biodiversity and natural resources but faces complex environmental challenges driven by industrial activity, deforestation, land degradation, and climate change. In response, global and national commitments such as the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) emphasize ecosystem restoration, sustainable resource management, and community resilience as pathways toward a Net Zero and Nature Positive (NZNP) future.

1.2 Within this context, the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project represents a collaborative initiative between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv). The project is designed to advance sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and inclusive community engagement in the Niger Delta, with a particular focus on Bayelsa and Rivers States as key intervention areas.

1.3 The NZNP Project directly supports Nigeria's transition toward a Net Zero and Nature Positive economy by promoting ecosystem restoration, expanding access to clean and renewable energy, and de-risking sustainable investments. It contributes to the achievement of Nigeria's Nature Positive Commitment by 2030 and Net Zero target by 2060.

1.4 To kick-start the project, a One-day Stakeholders Inception Workshop and Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Training Programme for the GEF-Funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Projects in the Niger-Delta, was organized by UNDP in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment.

The objectives of the workshop include:

- i. Present the project's objectives, components, and overall implementation strategy.
- ii. Facilitate inclusive engagement of key stakeholders to ensure alignment on governance, coordination, and reporting mechanisms.
- iii. Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities among implementing partners and stakeholders for smooth project execution.

- iv. Enhance understanding of risk management, monitoring, and accountability tools to ensure transparency and compliance throughout project implementation.

2.0 Participation

2.1.1 The Workshop which was declared open by the Director, Forestry Department, Federal of Environment (FMENV), Hajia Halima Bawa-Bwari had in attendance 100 participants from the academia, policy makers, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) amongst others. Dignitaries at the event included: Director Planning, Research and Statistics-GEF, Mrs. Aneke Agnes Nkechi; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident representative, Mr Blessed Chirimuta; Conservator General, National Park Service, Dr. Ibrahim Musa Goni, represented by Assistant Conservator General, Mr. Cornelius Oladipo; Directors and Director-Generals/CEOs representatives of the Federal Ministry of Environment.

2.1.2 Others were representatives of Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Academia, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Child Health Organisation, Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Development Partners, Youths, Women, CSOs, NGOs, the Media, as well as other relevant stakeholders.



Group photograph of participants and dignitaries at the Workshop

2.2 Commencement

2.2.1 The opening session commenced at 10:00 am with rendition of the National Anthem.

2.3 Opening Remarks by the Director, Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment, Hajia Halima Bawa-Bwari

2.3.1 The Director of Forestry, in her opening remarks, warmly welcomed participants to the inception workshop of the Net-Zero Nature-Positive (NZNP) Project. She noted that the event marked a significant step in Nigeria's pursuit of a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich and inclusive future. She emphasized the realities of climate change and biodiversity loss, adding that the NZNP Project presents an opportunity for Nigeria to address these challenges through integrated and transformative actions. She reiterated Nigeria's commitment to achieving a net-zero and nature-positive future as reflected in the nation's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and increased investment in nature-based solutions that deliver both mitigation and adaptation outcomes.

2.3.2 The Director underscored that the project aims to strengthen institutional coordination, enhance biodiversity conservation, restore degraded ecosystems and stimulate investment in low-carbon, nature-positive development, while prioritizing social equity and the empowerment of women, youth and indigenous communities. She further noted Nigeria's achievements in biodiversity conservation, including the establishment of over 17 National Parks, 1,129 Forest Reserves and various Game Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Ramsar Sites. She emphasized Nigeria's adoption of innovative tools such as GIS mapping to monitor deforestation and land use, integrating these technologies into national planning frameworks.



**Opening remarks delivered by the Director Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment,
Hajia Halima Bawa-Bwari**

2.3.3 In conclusion, she expressed pride in Nigeria's role as one of the 12 pioneering countries implementing the NZNP initiative with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She called on participants to use the workshop as a platform for collaboration, strategic dialogue and innovation toward achieving national and global climate and biodiversity goals.

2.4 Welcome Address by Director of Planning, Research & Statistics (PRS) and GEF Operational Focal Point, Federal Ministry of Environment; Mrs. Aneke Agnes Nkechi

2.4.1 The Director PRS/GEF OFP, Mrs Aneke Agnes Nkechi welcomed participants to the inception workshop and HACT training of the GEF-funded Net-Zero Nature-Positive (NZNP) Project. She noted that the NZNP Accelerator is one of the 11 Integrated Programmes under the GEF-8 cycle designed to advance nature-positive and net-zero pathways through investments in nature and innovative technologies. She said the project focused on the Niger Delta regions of Bayelsa and Rivers States, represents a significant step toward achieving Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Nature-Positive Commitment by 2030 and Net-Zero emission target by 2060. She emphasized that the project would promote ecosystem restoration, expand access to clean energy and de-risk sustainable investments, contributing to Nigeria's environmental and developmental goals.

2.4.2 The Director PRS stressed the link between climate change and biodiversity loss, stressing that these interconnected crises must be addressed, especially given their disproportionate impacts on women, children and vulnerable communities in the Niger Delta. She expressed appreciation to the implementing agency, the UNDP, as well as the Department of Forestry, private sector representatives, development partners and all stakeholders for their collaboration and commitment. In conclusion, she said that the workshop serves as a valuable platform to discuss strategies to ensure effective delivery and lasting impact.

2.5 Key Remarks by UNDP Resident Representative; Ms. Elsie Attafuah

2.5.1 **Representing the UNDP Resident Representative,** Mr. Blessed Chirimuta expressed appreciation to the Director of Forestry, Director of Planning, Research

and Statistics, the Federal Ministry of Environment, participants and the media for their collaboration and presence at the Inception Workshop of the GEF-funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project. He described the initiative as a bold and transformative step, reflecting Nigeria's strong commitment to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2060 and its Nature-Positive goals by 2030. He highlighted the Niger-Delta particularly Rivers and Bayelsa States as a region of immense ecological importance, endowed with rich biodiversity and natural resources but burdened by pollution, degradation and the effects of climate change. He noted the NZNP Project provides an opportunity to reverse these trends through integrated actions that support Nigeria's climate agenda under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, focusing on mitigation, adaptation, green growth and environmental justice.

He further emphasized that the project will strengthen collaboration with the governments of Rivers and Bayelsa States to mainstream net-zero and nature-positive strategies into development planning, while empowering communities to lead ecosystem restoration initiatives rooted in cultural and social values. The project will engage women's cooperatives, youths, universities, research institutions and the private sector to promote innovation, inclusivity and environmental accountability in the Niger-Delta. He said for the people of the Niger Delta, the initiative will foster healthier ecosystems, improved livelihoods and greater resilience to climate shocks. In conclusion, he reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to working closely with the Federal Ministry of Environment, GEF, UNEP, State Governments, and Local Stakeholders to ensure that the project delivers tangible benefits at both the national and community levels.

2.6 Remarks by Key Partners

2.5.1 Representative of Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Director of Technical Programmes, Mr. Adedamola Ogunsesan, commended the Federal Ministry of Environment, the National Park Service and UNDP Nigeria for initiating a project that strengthens conservation and sustainable management of the Apoi Creek and Edumanom ecosystems in Bayelsa State; covering over 57,000 hectares of critical mangroves and wetlands essential for biodiversity, climate regulation and livelihoods. He emphasized that the initiative demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to translating global environmental goals into practical national action toward achieving the Net Zero and '30x30' targets.

He further noted the strong collaboration among national NGOs such as CMAP, Chicoco Maps, NCF, HOMEF and CEHRD, whose expertise in community engagement and environmental restoration will enhance project delivery. Drawing from his field experience mapping the Apoi landscape for Ramsar designation, he stressed the ecological value of the area and the importance of continued investment in its protection. Mr. Ogunesan also highlighted the alignment between the NZNP and NCF's Afforestation, Livelihood and Environmental Conservation (ALEC) Project in Bayelsa State, reaffirming the collective commitment of Nigerian NGOs to support the initiative through collaboration, technical expertise, and community partnership.

2.6.2 Conservator General, National Park Service, Dr. Ibrahim Musa Goni, represented by Assistant Conservator General, Mr. Cornelius Oladipo, welcomed participants to the NZNP Inception Workshop and commended the Federal Ministry of Environment for its leadership in driving the NZNP project. He re-emphasized that the Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) project reflects Nigeria's collective commitment to environmental sustainability and community well-being, particularly in Bayelsa and Rivers States. Dr. Goni expressed the Service's delight that the two newly approved National Parks in Bayelsa State will play a key role in achieving the project's objectives. He appreciated the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for its funding support, as well as the UNDP and the Department of Forestry for their collaborative efforts under the guidance of the Honourable Minister of Environment. Emphasizing the importance of partnership and synergy in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Dr. Goni commended UNDP for collaborating on a project aligned with Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions, Nature-Positive commitment by 2030 and Net-Zero target by 2060. He expressed confidence that the workshop's outcomes would significantly advance national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development efforts, while wishing participants productive deliberations.

2.6.3 Representing CMAP, Mr. Michael Uwemedimo, Project Director, highlighted that the Nigeria Net-Zero Nature-Positive (NZNP) Project represents a vital opportunity to drive transformative change toward a regenerative, climate-resilient, and biodiverse future. He emphasized that achieving this goal requires inclusive collaboration beyond traditional approaches, engaging stakeholders at all levels especially grassroots communities. He noted that the project's strength lies in integrating climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation efforts to deliver

tangible benefits such as restored ecosystems, clean energy access, and sustainable livelihoods.

Mr. Uwemedimo outlined four key reflections for effective implementation namely: ensuring clear roles and responsibilities among all partners; creating strong feedback loops between policy and field activities to enhance sustainability; balancing ambition with bankability and social equity through strategic site selection and meaningful stakeholder participation; and maintaining integrity in carbon market engagement through credible monitoring, verification and transparent reporting. He also underscored the importance of strategic coordination with the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), effective communication and compelling storytelling to attract investment, strengthen partnerships and ensure long-term success of the NZNP initiative.

2.6.4 Representing West African Blue, Mr. Ebuka Nwobi, expressed the organization's deep honor and commitment as a key private sector partner in the Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project. He emphasized that the initiative represents a vital investment in Nigeria's future and aligns closely with the nation's climate agenda and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Highlighting West African Blue's dedication to the Niger Delta region, he noted that his organization will focus on providing technical expertise for high-standard mangrove restoration and mobilizing financial resources to generate verified carbon credits for long-term sustainability. He stressed that the success of the NZNP Project depends on genuine collaboration, community ownership and inclusive participation of those living around the mangrove ecosystems. He concluded by reaffirming his organization's readiness to support effective coordination, sound governance and strategic alignment throughout the project's implementation.

2.7 Goodwill Messages

2.7.1 Representative of Rivers State Ministry of Environment; Director of Forestry Mrs. Nkem Eberechi, delivered a goodwill message on behalf of the Government and people of Rivers State, congratulating the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Department of Forestry and UNDP on the successful convening of the Inception Stakeholders Workshop for the GEF-funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project in the Niger Delta. She acknowledged the project's focus on Bayelsa and Rivers States, noting its alignment with the state's commitment to sustainable

development, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. Mrs. Eberechi reaffirmed Rivers State's readiness to collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Environment and UNDP in promoting ecosystem restoration, strengthening community engagement and supporting sustainable investments to advance Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions, Nature Positive goals and Net Zero targets.

2.7.2 Representative of Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment, State Director of Forestry Mrs. Susan E. Oyadongha, in her goodwill message conveyed warm greetings on behalf of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment and expressed appreciation for the selection of Bayelsa as a key intervention area. Mrs. Oyadongha noted that the NZNP Project aligns with the state's commitment to environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. She commended the UNDP and the Federal Ministry of Environment for their collaborative leadership. She emphasized that the workshop provides an important platform for stakeholder engagement, capacity building and alignment toward effective project delivery, expressing confidence that its outcomes will advance Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions, Nature Positive goals and Net Zero target while supporting sustainable development across Bayelsa, Rivers and the wider Niger Delta region.

2.8 Launch of NZNP Project

2.8.1 The Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project was officially launched by the Director of Forestry (FMEnv), the Director of Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS, FMEnv) and the GEF Operational Focal Point and the UNDP Resident Representative. In her remarks, Director of Forestry, FMEnv, declared the project open, emphasizing its significance for the restoration and sustainability of Nigeria's ecosystems and the well-being of present and future generations. She expressed hope that the initiative's impact would be widely felt across communities. The UNDP Resident Representative, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), reaffirmed UNDP's full support for the project and expressed strong confidence that its objectives would be successfully achieved through collective commitment and collaboration.

3.0 Technical Presentations and Plenary

3.1 Presentation on the GEF-Funded Nigeria Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project: Strategic Overview, Objectives and RBM Framework by Regional

Technical Advisor, Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Hub, UNDP, Faris Khader. The presentation:

- ❖ Highlighted the global rationale for integrating net-zero and nature-positive agendas, stressing that nature-based solutions deliver dual benefits (mitigation and biodiversity) and help avoid unintended trade-offs since climate change and ecosystem decline are interlinked crises.
- ❖ Outlined project's objective and scope to include: accelerate investment and implementation of nature-positive, net-zero pathways via a global platform and 12 national projects.
- ❖ Emphasized the structure of the project across three interlinked components namely: Upstream (governance/strategy/finance foundations), Downstream (sectoral policies and investment mobilization), and Cross-cutting (monitoring/knowledge/capacity). All supported by a Global Platform for coordination and results tracking.
- ❖ Detailed Nigeria project interventions to protect and restore mangroves in two marine protected areas and buffer zones, and to deploy solar battery mini-grids and clean-cooking technologies in Port Harcourt, Apoi Creek, and Edumanom. Enabling clean-energy access, improve livelihoods, and create green jobs, with restoration focused in Bayelsa and Rivers States.
- ❖ Clarified implementation responsibilities: UNDP Country Office for oversight/quality assurance and GEF/UNDP compliance; UNDP Regional Team for technical oversight and compliance support; Federal Ministry of Environment as Implementing Partner responsible for delivery of outputs.
- ❖ Explained that monitoring project progress will be done through annual project implementation reports (PIRs), which track key indicators from the start, mid-term, and end stages. The results will be measured and validated regularly, ensuring progress is on track.
- ❖ Emphasized the need for stakeholder engagement as required by UNDP's social and environmental standards. This includes ensuring inclusive, culturally sensitive involvement and maintaining transparency with timely information and grievance handling.
- ❖ Gave an overview of the project's monitoring timeline (2026–2030), including five PIRs, a Mid-Term Review, and a Terminal Evaluation, all designed to assess and respond to the project's progress effectively.
- ❖ Mentioned that adaptive management tools, such as Steering/Board meetings and work planning, will help adjust project activities as needed to stay on

course. Minor changes to the project may be made within a specific budget range to improve impact, while larger revisions would require approval.

- ❖ Addressed risk management in several areas such as financial, social, and operational. Also highlighted that any changes to the project timeline will only be considered under exceptional circumstances with strong justification.
- ❖ Concluded that successful delivery depends on mobilizing/de-risking finance, strong coordination across Agencies, rigorous safeguards compliance, robust monitoring and learning, and gender- and community-responsive implementation.
- ❖ Summarized key insights are as follows:
 - ✓ Integrating net-zero and nature-positive action is essential for impact at scale.
 - ✓ Nigeria's mangrove restoration and clean-energy access model links biodiversity gains to livelihoods and emissions cuts.
 - ✓ Strong RBM, safeguards, finance mobilization, and adaptive management are pivotal to achieving 2026 to 2030 targets.

3.2 Presentation on Accelerating Nature and Climate Action to Advance Nigeria's Net Zero and '30x30' Targets by Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Desk Officer, Mrs Sikeade Egbuwalo. The presentation:

- ❖ Outlined the overall goal of the GEF-funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project.
- ❖ Explained that the project seeks to support Nigeria's transition to a Net Zero and Nature Positive future by 2060, directly contributing to the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and "30 by 30" biodiversity target.
- ❖ Highlighted the project's total financing of \$100.99 million, comprising a GEF grant of \$7.14 million and co-financing of \$93.85 million from the Government, private sector, and partners.
- ❖ Identified five core components of implementation:
 - ✓ Policy and Strategy Development: Development of a national NZNP implementation plan and enabling policies.
 - ✓ Ecosystem Restoration: Rehabilitation of mangroves and biodiversity landscapes across 5,096 hectares.
 - ✓ Decarbonizing Energy Access: Deployment of eight solar mini-grids and 10,000 clean cookstoves to reduce GHG emissions.

- ✓ Financial Instruments for Green Investments: Design of de-risking tools and incentives for sustainable financing.
- ✓ Knowledge Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation: Establishment of peer learning, reporting, and adaptive management systems.
- ❖ Noted that the project will directly benefit over 100,000 people (52 percent women) through enhanced livelihoods, energy access, and ecosystem resilience.
- ❖ Outlined that Federal Ministry of Environment serves as the lead implementing partner under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), with collaboration from Agencies such as National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), CMAP, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), NSEAI, and West Africa Blue.
- ❖ Presented the expected outcomes including approval of the National NZNP Plan, restoration of degraded ecosystems, deployment of clean energy technologies, establishment of de-risking mechanisms, and improved institutional learning and accountability.
- ❖ Emphasized knowledge-sharing mechanisms including mid-term (2028) and terminal (2031) evaluations, annual GEF Project Implementation Reports, and dissemination of lessons through UNDP, CBD COPs, UNFCCC COPs, and GEF global platforms.

3.3 Discussion on Strengthening Activities to achieve the Outcomes of NZNP, Implementation Arrangement, and Institutional Roles

3.3.1 Three multi-stakeholder groups, namely Group I, Group II, and Group III, comprising of subject matter experts, policymakers, academics, civil society representatives amongst others considered the Outcomes of the NZNP including implementation arrangement and institutional roles.

3.3.2 The thoughts of the three groups were captured, presented and deliberated upon during Plenary.

3.3.2.1 Group 1 Review and Presentation on Component 1 and 2 (Policy & Strategy Development; and Ecosystem Conservation/Restoration) are as follows:

- ❖ Emphasized the development of a national NZNP Implementation Plan, which will be guided by stakeholder mapping, nationwide advocacy, and awareness

campaigns in such a way that relevant Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) and State Governments are carried along and impact cascaded to the grassroots.

- ❖ Focused on strengthening policy coordination, ensuring that states and local governments align with national documents, and fostering collaboration across MDAs like FMEnv, NCCC, and State Ministries.
- ❖ Asked that knowledge sharing platform established should be robust and facilitate exchanging experiences, and capacity building.
- ❖ Detailed plans for ecosystem restoration, particularly the rehabilitation of degraded mangrove ecosystems. This includes site restoration, community sensitization, and introducing sustainable livelihoods like piggery, beekeeping, and fish farming.
- ❖ Opined that local communities should be trained to manage invasive *Nypa* palm and use it for small-scale enterprises, such as making jewelry or biomass for fish-smoking.
- ❖ Stressed the importance of planting economic trees through afforestation programs and customizing livelihood packages to better suit local needs, ensuring greater participation and equity.
- ❖ Highlighted community-based conservation, emphasizing the provision of incentives for local communities to sustain conservation efforts.
- ❖ Concluded that successful implementation relies on integrating ecological restoration with social protection and green enterprise; ensuring alignment between federal, state, and local levels; continuous monitoring; and accessible communication channels.

3.3.2.2 Group 2 Review and Presentation on Component 3 and 4 (Decarbonizing Energy Access; and Finance Mobilization and De-risking) are as follows:

- ❖ Reaffirmed that access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy remains a major barrier to sustainable livelihoods in the Niger Delta, with continued dependence on diesel and kerosene-based systems increasing emissions and community vulnerability.
- ❖ Highlighted that the Decarbonizing Energy Access component should emphasize promotion of low-carbon development through the deployment of renewable energy technologies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve health outcomes.

- ❖ Noted that financing gaps and weak community sensitization often limit adoption of clean energy solutions.
- ❖ Underscored the need for innovative financing models, including blended finance, public–private partnerships, and micro-credit schemes tailored to local contexts.
- ❖ Emphasized the importance of capacity building for local artisans, women cooperatives, and technicians to ensure sustainability and ownership of renewable energy installations.
- ❖ Recommended that cost–benefit analyses be conducted to assess the financial viability and long-term economic benefits of low-carbon technologies compared to fossil-based alternatives.
- ❖ Identified the need to integrate gender-responsive approaches, ensuring that women and youth are active participants in energy access and green enterprise development.
- ❖ Stressed the importance of policy coherence between national renewable energy strategies, state-level implementation frameworks, and the NZNP Project’s objectives to avoid duplication and maximize impact.
- ❖ Concluded that successful decarbonization in the Niger Delta will depend on community ownership, accessible financing instruments, private-sector engagement, and sustained behavioral change toward clean energy use.

3.3.2.3 Group 3 Review and Presentation on Component 5 (Knowledge Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation) and Implementation Arrangement and Institutional Roles are as follows:

- ❖ Focused on how effective knowledge management and a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system are vital for tracking progress, promoting transparency, and ensuring adaptive management across NZNP interventions.
- ❖ Revised the component outcome to emphasize institutional capacity strengthening for learning, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based decision-making among project partners and stakeholders.
- ❖ Identified two major outputs:
 - ✓ Establishment of a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning System to guide data collection, performance tracking, and reporting.
 - ✓ Production and dissemination of knowledge products and communication tools to facilitate learning, replication, and policy influence.

- ❖ Recommended development of a comprehensive M&E framework with baseline indicators, mid-term and terminal evaluations, and digital data management tools to support real-time reporting.
- ❖ Proposed the creation of a centralized digital knowledge repository for lessons learned, reports, and case studies accessible to government agencies, civil society, and development partners.
- ❖ Highlighted the need to integrate gender-responsive indicators and ensure that knowledge platforms capture the perspectives and contributions of women, youth, and marginalized communities.
- ❖ Supported the idea of facilitating national and regional learning workshops and South–South knowledge exchanges through the NZNP Global Platform to promote cross-country learning and replication of successful models.
- ❖ Stressed that knowledge products including policy briefs, multimedia tools, and best-practice reports should be tailored to target audiences such as policymakers, communities, and the private sector.
- ❖ Concluded that sustained learning, adaptive planning, and inclusive participation are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability of NZNP outcomes.

4.0 Observations/Notes

4.1 During the course of the Workshop, participants noted:

- i. The need to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration and alignment across federal, state, and local institutions to ensure coherent implementation of the NZNP Project in line with national climate and biodiversity priorities.
- ii. That the development of a National NZNP Workplan is essential to provide a unified framework for policy coordination, stakeholder mapping, awareness creation, and results-based monitoring at all levels.
- iii. The need to link ecosystem restoration with social protection and livelihood enhancement, ensuring that interventions such as mangrove rehabilitation, afforestation, and invasive species management are complemented with sustainable income-generating activities for local communities.
- iv. That access to clean and affordable energy remains limited in the Niger Delta, underscoring the importance of accelerating renewable energy deployment through solar mini-grids, clean cookstoves, and other low-carbon technologies to support both environmental and health benefits.
- v. The need to establish innovative financing mechanisms, including blended finance, public–private partnerships, and microcredit facilities, to close

funding gaps and de-risk private investments in renewable energy and ecosystem restoration initiatives.

- vi. The need to enhance institutional and financial management capacity of implementing partners in line with the UNDP Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficient resource utilization.
- vii. That the establishment of a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework is critical for tracking progress, assessing impact, and informing adaptive management throughout project implementation.
- viii. The need to institutionalize knowledge management and exchange mechanisms, including digital knowledge repositories, learning workshops, and South–South collaboration platforms, to document best practices and promote policy learning.
- ix. The need to mainstream gender and social inclusion across all NZNP components, ensuring equitable participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups in project design, implementation, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- x. The need for effective communication and advocacy strategies to raise public awareness, build trust among communities, and sustain behavioral change toward green enterprise and environmental stewardship.
- xi. The need to clarify institutional role dichotomies at the subnational level for effective project implementation. It was observed that in some States, Departments of Forestry are housed under Ministries other than the Ministry of Environment, unlike the arrangement at the Federal level, creating coordination and reporting challenges.

4.1.1 All observations, comments and questions raised by participants were addressed and harmonized.

5.0 Resolutions

After extensive deliberations and brainstorming during the Inception Stakeholders Workshop and HACT Training for the GEF-funded Net Zero Nature Positive (NZNP) Project, participants resolved as follows:

- i. Agreed that National NZNP Work Plan would serve as the principal coordination and results framework, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, timelines, and performance indicators across federal, state, and local levels.

- ii. Emphasized the need to mainstream NZNP principles into State development plans and environmental policies, ensuring that subnational actions are aligned with national and international climate and biodiversity commitments.
- iii. Resolved to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination among the Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEnv), National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) and other relevant MDAs to enhance synergy and avoid duplication in project implementation.
- iv. Agreed to prioritize ecosystem restoration and community resilience, focusing on degraded mangroves, wetlands, and forest landscapes in Bayelsa and Rivers States, while linking restoration with livelihood diversification and green enterprise development.
- v. Called for the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms, including blended finance models, public–private partnerships (PPPs), and community revolving funds to mobilize private capital and de-risk green investments.
- vi. Resolved to strengthen institutional and financial capacity of implementing partners under the UNDP Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework through targeted training, risk assessment, and accountability systems.
- vii. Supported the creation of a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, incorporating digital data management tools, baseline indicators, and periodic evaluations to ensure transparency, adaptive learning, and evidence-based reporting.
- viii. Agreed to institutionalize knowledge management platforms for the generation, storage, and dissemination of best practices, including a centralized digital repository, annual learning workshops, and South–South exchange opportunities under the NZNP Global Platform.
- ix. Reaffirmed the importance of gender and social inclusion, mandating the integration of gender-responsive indicators and ensuring meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups in all phases of project design, implementation, and monitoring.
- x. Highlighted the need to clarify institutional role dichotomies at subnational levels, particularly where State Forestry Departments operate under Ministries other than Environment Ministry, to ensure coherent coordination and reporting structures.
- xi. Emphasized that effective communication and advocacy must accompany all project interventions to promote behavioral change, public awareness, and community ownership of the NZNP Project.

- xii. Called for stronger partnerships and networking among Federal and State Governments, Development Partners, CSOs, Academia, and the private sector to leverage technical expertise and mobilize resources for sustained impact.
- xiii. Recommended that Nigeria leverage existing multilateral mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) to scale up financing for NZNP-aligned interventions.
- xiv. Resolved that the success of the NZNP Project will depend on sustained political commitment, inclusive governance, and transparent monitoring systems that ensure measurable contributions to Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Nature Positive Commitment by 2030, and Net Zero Target by 2060.

6.0 Closing Remarks by the Head of Conservation Division, FMEnv, Mr Labaran Ahmed represented by Mrs. Hafsat Adeyemi

6.1 In his closing remarks, Mr Labaran Ahmed expressed profound appreciation to the Director of Forestry, the Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and all distinguished participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions throughout the workshop.

6.2 He noted that the workshop marked a significant milestone in aligning collective efforts toward the realization of the Net Zero National Programme (NZNP) and advancing the nation's commitment to a more sustainable and climate-resilient future. Mr. Ahmed commended the collaborative spirit and dedication demonstrated during the sessions, emphasizing that such partnership and shared commitment would continue to drive meaningful action, foster enduring collaboration, and support the attainment of shared environmental goals.

6.3 He further highlighted that the rich discussions and deliberations held during the workshop had helped identify key areas for strengthening existing initiatives and improving implementation outcomes. He encouraged all stakeholders to build on the momentum gained, work collectively, and accelerate progress toward achieving Net Zero emissions through the reduction of greenhouse gas outputs.

6.4 In conclusion, he conveyed his sincere gratitude to all participants for their unwavering commitment and contributions, which he affirmed had been instrumental to the overall success of the inaugural workshop.

6.5 The Workshop was officially closed at 5:00 p.m.

7.0 Annexures

7.1 Programme of Event

   		
NET ZERO NATURE POSITIVE (NZNP) PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS' INCEPTION WORKSHOP BOLTON WHITE HOTEL, AREA 11, GARKI, 13TH OCTOBER 2025		
AGENDA		
Time	Item	Responsibility
9:00 - 9:30am	Registration	Ministry
9:30 - 9:40	National Anthem	All
9:40 - 10:00	Remarks	UNDP Resident Representative Director, Forestry, FMENV DPRS-GEF OFF DG NCCC
10:00 - 10:20	Goodwill Messages	Bayelsa and Rivers State Government
10:00 - 10:40	Remarks by Key Partners	NPS, REA, NCF, HOMEF, CMAP and West African Blue
10:20 - 10:40	Launch of the Project	UNDP Resident Representative and Director, Forestry
10:40 - 11:00	Group picture/ Tea Break	All
11:00 - 11:30	Presentation on the overview, objectives and RBM of the NZNP Project	Faris Khader, Regional Technical Advisor, Climate Change Mitigation Climate Hub, UNDP
11:30 - 11:50	Project Component Presentation	CBD Desk, FDF
11:50 - 12:10	Q&A	All
12:10 - 1:30pm	Discussions on Strengthening activities to achieve Outcomes of NZNP, Implementation Arrangements and Institutional Roles Breakout sessions (3 groups) Group 1: Outcome 1 and 2 Group 2: Outcome 3 and 4 Group 3: Outcome 5, Implementation arrangement and Institutional Roles	Facilitator
1:30 - 2:30pm	Lunch	All
2:30 - 3:30pm	Plenary Sessions	Group Leads
3:30 - 4:00pm	Closing remarks	CSO Cons/UNDP Environment Lead

7.2 Photos Speak









7.3 Attendance of the Participants



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