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COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT (CBFM)

ANNUAL programme NARRATIVE progress report MPTF Office GENERIC ANNUAL programme 1

NARRATIVE progress report

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 June – 31 December 2022

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM): Boosting Biodiversity Conservation and Improving Livelihoods of Forest-Fringe/Forest-Dependent Communities and Groups in Liberia Programme Number 00133363 MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>(The CBFM Project is implemented in 7 counties (Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, and River Cess) within the North-West and South-East Landscapes of Liberia.</p> <p>Priority area/ strategic results</p> <p>UNSDCF Output 2.2: By 2024, National and subnational capacity to deliver sustainable natural resource management and climate-aware initiatives is strengthened.</p> <p>UNDP CPD OUTCOME 3:1 By 2024, Liberia has diversified, and inclusive economic growth underpinned by investments in sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture, food security, job creation and improved resilience to climate change and natural disasters</p>
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forestry Development Authority
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p>	<p>Programme Duration</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<p>Total approved budget as per project document:</p> <p>7,894,569.18354 USD</p> <p>•</p>	<p>Overall Duration 48 <i>months</i></p> <p>Start Date⁴ 22/06/2022</p> <p>Original End Date⁵ 31/05/2026</p> <p>Current End date⁶ 31/05/2026)</p>
<p>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>	<p>Report Submitted By</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Loy Adepit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Joint Project manager</p> <p>Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Email address: loy.adepit@undp.org</p>

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBFM	: Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management
CSO	: Civil Society Organization
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDA	: Forestry Development Authority
LCC	: Liberia Cocoa Corporation
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PAs	: Protected Areas

⁴ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁶ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

PPAs	: Proposed Protected Areas
ToT	: Training of trainers
UNICF	: United Nations Corporation Framework
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of the Community Based Forest and Protected Area Management Joint Programme commenced in two of Liberia's priority landscapes with funding from the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia. The Joint Programme uses the pass-through funding modality where UNDP and FAO are the Participating UN Organizations, and the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) acts as Administrative Agent. UNDP and FAO are implementing the project in collaboration with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA). The Joint Programme was officially launched in November 2022. The inception meeting and launch was attended by 50 representatives from the Swedish Embassy near Monrovia, the FDA, MFDP, MGCSP, CD/WCF, Integrity Watch, CSOs, County Superintendents, UNDP, and the FAO. This report provides a highlight of the project milestones from the time of its initiation in June 2022 to December 2022.

Following contract signing in June 2022, 5 project implementing staff were recruited. (FAO – 2) (UNDP - 3). The community engagements preceded the inception meeting and official launch of the project in November 2022 and were precursor to the full-scale project implementation.

The first Community Engagement and Consultative meetings were held in North-west landscapes targeting Proposed Protected Areas and in Forest Fringe Communities. The stakeholder meetings were organized at the grassroot level with FDA playing a key coordination role. The first round of community stakeholders' engagement and consultative meetings were held in the North-West and South-East landscapes of Liberia.

NARRATIVE REPORT:

I. Purpose

The Joint PRogramme seeks to strengthen the 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 ; integrated natural resources management and the promotion of sustainable livelihood incentives for forest fringe communities. The CBFM JP is in line with Strategic UN Planning Framework (UNSDCF Outcome 2), geared towards Sustainable Economic Development - Diversified and inclusive economic growth; sustainable agriculture, food security, job creation; and resilience to climate change and natural disasters and the Liberian Government Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) Pillar 2: Increased agricultural production and productivity and improved forest utilization through competitive value chains and market linkages.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcomes:

The JP has four comes which include;

- Strengthened institutional and community capacity, and regulatory framework for community forest management
- Status of key species and their Habitats improved
- Livelihood options for communities made climate resilient:
- Knowledge Management system strengthened to support gender-based community forestry management and Co management of protected Areas by communities.

Given that the JP is still at an inception level of implementation, none of the above outcomes has been achieved. However, the main beneficiaries are people living within the fringes of the forests and proposed protected areas.

Outputs:

The JP was officially launched in November 2022. Some of the recommendations from the high level stakeholder's meeting included the following:

The joint project ought to map out existing actors and their initiatives to avoid duplication and find out areas where the joint project adds value to the precious initiatives, ensure proper timing and sequencing of project activities to avoid delays and missing out the right season especially for agriculture related activities, develop a clear road map for gender mainstreaming and that swamp/water reserve protection activities too should be considered. The stakeholders decried the existing rampant corruption and urged the responsible project implementing parties to take keen interest in finding ways to prevent it from frustrating project efforts.

The community engagement meetings preceded the launch and were successfully implemented. Some of the participants of the community level meetings included; Local government officials at county /District and Town level, the Forest Development Authority (FDA) stakeholders at the local level (i.e. Regional Foresters, Chief Park Warden, Zone Warden, Community Extension Officers Rangers, conservation officers) field-based staff from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)s, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Forest Governance Structures (CFMBs), Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) at the local level, community Eco guards, Chief hunters, Youth and women leaders, People with Disabilities (PWDs) and the general members of the communities/people living in the fringes of forests and in the targeted 7 counties.

The purpose of the community level meetings was to ensure grassroots stakeholders from the target JP communities are widely consulted, the project activities well explained, their acceptance and feedback obtained. During these community meetings, stakeholders identified potential livelihood options for specific beneficiaries i.e., women, men, and youth, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups. One

of the critical aspects of the consultative meetings was the lesson learnt provided by the target beneficiaries and feedback on how best the CBFM project can leverage lessons learnt to ensure sustainability. Community stakeholders recommended the following.

- JP activities should be accompanied with strong messaging and skills building to ensure sustainability.
- Awareness raising needs to be well integrated in the interventions to foster attitude change.
- The community must be consulted and involved in selecting interventions.
- Market linkages will play a key role in not only providing market for the products but also in ensuring the sustainability of the interventions.
- Livelihood alternatives should be made available, substantial, and sustainable for the people living in and around the forests and protected areas
- Broaden the work of the Forest Eco guards to enforce laws in addition to the routine research and forest monitoring

The general outcome of the consultation meetings provided a foundation for overall project implementation.

Outputs under Outcomes 1,2 and 3 largely entailed procurement related activities. Over this reporting period, some progress was made towards procurement of project equipment and services (i.e., firms and consultants to carry out various assessments) and partner identification and contracting. Procurement processes were initiated for the following services needs assessment, consultancy to conduct Agrarian System Analysis, review and analysis of the legislations, plans, and policies regarding land and forest tenure governance, support the project implementation (Reforestation & Afforestation) and consultancy for ToT on gender empowerment, participation, and transparency has been advertised, pending bid evaluation.

Five staff directly supporting the project were hired (2 from FAO and 3 for UNDP). Implementation catch plans have been put in place to expertise activity implementation process.

Delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:

The process of hiring and awarding contracts has been slow in the last two-quarters of the project implementation. This was partly attributed to the system migration of ATLAS to Quantum (UNDP program management platform). In December 2022, the UNDP migrated its program management platform. Transfer process and staff learning the new platform slowed down processes which were on course then.

- Project Staff recruitment towards the end of the year (October, November 2022) end of the earlier
- Community engagements time were extended due to long distances of target communities specifically in South-eastern landscape. Actions taken to mitigate challenges was to have 2 teams going in simultaneously to conduct community engagements.
- Some communities refused the project and used cultural threats to drive away project Team e.g.: Pelokan Forest Community. The Team had a meeting and agreed to replace community with another community in the same landscape

Qualitative assessment:

The project being at the inception level, overall, the project achievement during this first reporting period is still low. Despite this, some progress has been made, specifically in terms of personnel recruitment.

Throughout activity implementation, regular coordination during planning and joint activity implementation and reporting were exercised. There were periodic joint project implementation team meetings (from the UN agencies and government counterparts) to plan and review progress. Furthermore, close collaboration with the FDA – government key implementing partner department was very critical during project implementation. The coordination and joint activity implementation enabled the completion of the activities reported against. Technical support from, community mobilization undertaken by, the countryside staff facilitated entry to the targeted communities.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1⁷ Indicator: Baseline: Planned Target:			
Output 1.1 Outcome indicator 1.1.a: – Number of communities with strengthened capacities on CFM Baseline – TBD Target – 7 to 10 communities with strengthened capacities on CFM	None	The project is still at inception stage	
Output 1.1.1 A Existing local governance institutions [CFMBs/ Community-Based Organizations	None	The selection of communities to work with is in progress.	

⁷ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

(CBOs)] and Conservancy-based forums strengthened			
Output 1.2 Outcome indicator 2.1.1: - Percentage increase in biodiversity conserved in PAs Baseline – TBD Target – 20%	None	This is a higher-level indicator which is early to report on given the stage of the project implementation	
Output 2.1.1: Co-management of selected PAs implemented through tripartite (Government, CBOs, and conservation NGOs) Agreements	None	Activity implantation towards the achievement of this output has just started	
Outcome indicator 3.1.1a: Number of climate resilient livelihood initiatives implemented in target communities Baseline – 0	None	None achieved	
Outcome 3.1: Livelihood options for communities are made climate-resilient through diversification, enterprise development, SLFM, CSA and ASM formalization	None	The implementing partners still at the preliminary level of implementation. However, livelihood options have been identified.	

Outcome 4.1: Knowledge management system built /strengthened to support gender-balanced community forest management and co-management of Pas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception meeting held • Stakeholder meetings successfully conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge management system building activities will be carried out in year 2 onwards. 	
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