



“MANO RIVER ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVATION AND INTERNATIONAL WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT” PROJECT



Photo: Transboundary Committee Executive members of Moa/Makona river basin

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Regional Executing Agency: Mano River Union,

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ACRONYMS:

ANBO	AFRICAN NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANISATIONS
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
CFZ	Centre Forestier de Nzerekore
ENNR	EAST NIMBA NATURAL RESERVES
EOI	Express Of Interest
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRCLG	Gola Rainforest Conservation Limited
IUCN – PACO	International Union for Conservation of Nature Program Afrique du Centre et de l’Ouest
IW LEARN	International Water Learning Exchange And Resource Network
M.E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRU	Mano River Union
MTC	Multisectoral Technical Committee
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NEA	National Executing Agency
NO	Non Objection
OMVS	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal
REA	Regional Executing Agency
ROAM	Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology
RPMU	Regional Project Management Unit
RSPB	Royal Society of the Protection of Birds
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNOPS	United National Operation Project Services
WA-BICC	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

The overall or global technical rate of progress during the year 2019 is 35% of outputs related to the first disbursement. The execution rate as per Execution Agency is described in the consolidated operational plan (see attached file). The financial execution rate as at December 31st, 2019 is detailed in part 4 of this report (Financial Execution). The Executing Agencies with the support of the Implementing Agency made efforts to improve the project performance since the supervision mission in April 2019. Most of the recommendations of the 3rd Regional Steering Committee have been implemented. The external audit process is in preparation with the recruitment of the Firm. The audit activity is planned for the next two months.

The studies related to ROAM are at the last stage; some results are tangible such as the production of the degradation maps of landscape. New activities related to the field work and capacity building of the local communities bordering the forest landscapes were initiated. Field work will commence in the next quarter.

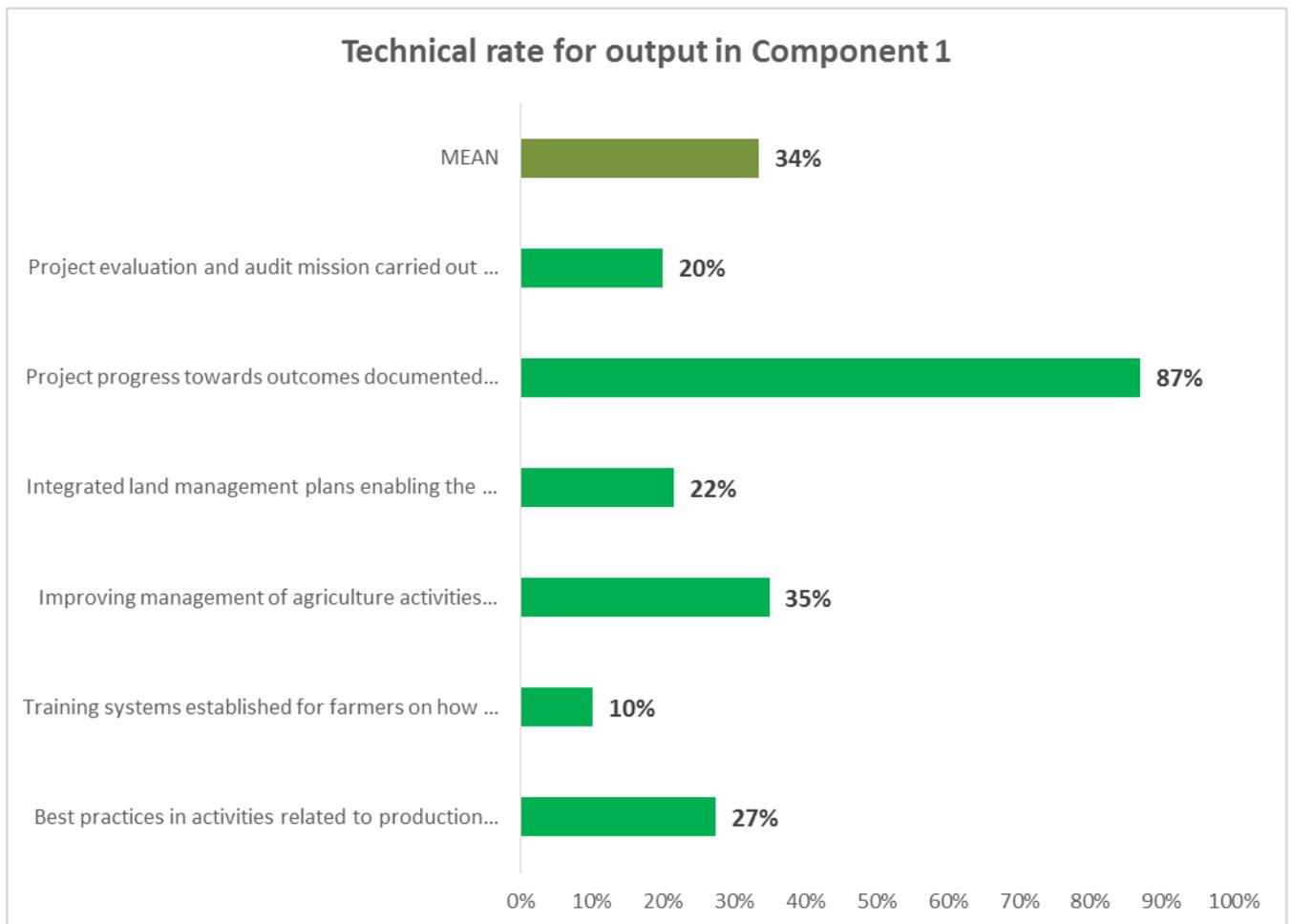
The preparatory activities for the TDA/SAP training and development were achieved with the establishment of national and transboundary committees of water users in the river basins, the establishment of national technical advisory teams and the recruitment of the national and regional consultants.

The communication on project visibility has been improved with the production of press release on major activities undertaken through various media: Radio and TV broadcasting and dedicated Websites.

The details of the implementation are described below

Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management

In relation to the first disbursement, the consolidated execution of activities of Component 1 implemented by the 4NEAs and REA contributing to **outputs** reached an average technical rate of 34% as illustrated in graph 1.



During this period, the executing agencies and national consultants strengthened their capacities on ROAM approach. They were trained in the use of tools to undertake the tasks for the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) from February 23rd to March 1st 2019, in Monrovia, Liberia. A roadmap was validated to conduct the ROAM activities with a new timeframe.

The **objective** of this training workshop was for the International Consultant to support ROAM in the MRU in order to develop landscape restoration and sustainable forest management strategies and plans that meet national goals and community needs in selected priority landscapes of the GEF- Mano project.

The national consultants took advantage of the training to improve their knowledge in FLR. Reports and mapping produced by the consultants uploaded into a google drive and can be visited using the following link:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_D9b80dWNhIbkYZXP6RGU4ICvWIkDseG

Fig 1 Example of Multi-criteria Degradation map

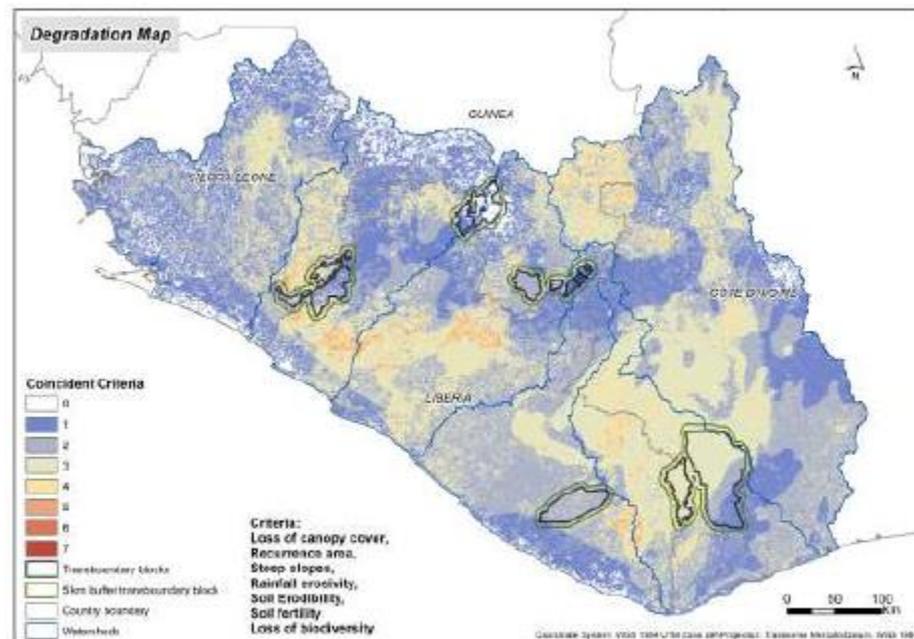


Figure 3. Degradation map. Seven input criteria were used as proxies for the multi-criteria degradation map. Red indicates a higher number of coincident criteria in a specific area, which, based on the input criteria, form a measure of landscape degradation severity.

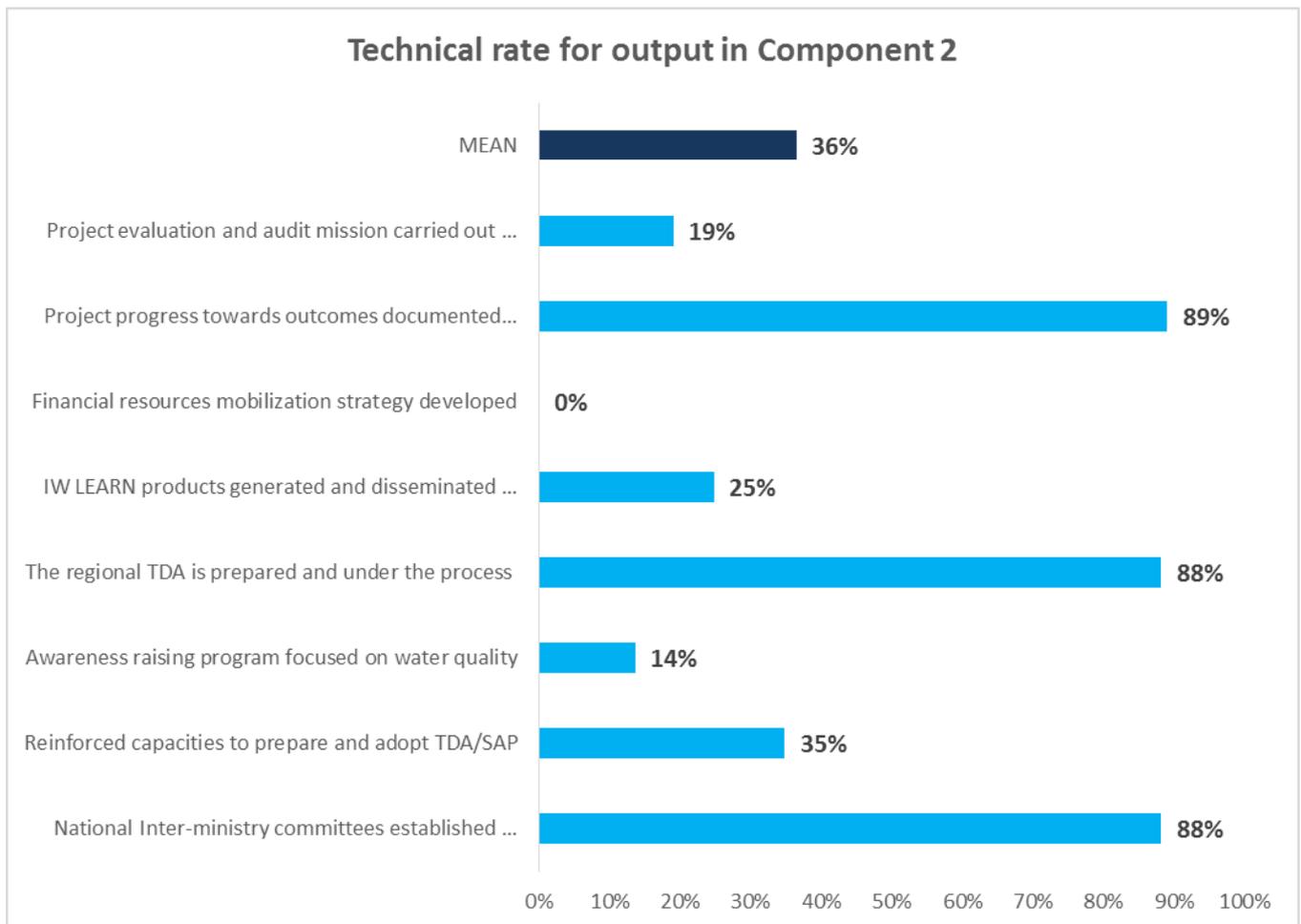
The production of the degradation maps, objectives map and opportunities maps will be the basic tools to be used for the implementation of activities on the field during the next quarter. The complementary activities to ROAM process were published on website and, newspapers to hire consultancy services, related to the training of farmers, to nursery production, to certification program and the production of guidelines. Besides, the project supported the process of the elaboration of the Ziamawone Biosphere Reserve Landscape development and management in Guinea by cofounding activities with the other implementing partners UNOPS and WABiCC. Project supported many consultative meetings with the local communities living in the vicinity of the landscape during the preparation of the plan. In October 2019, the Ziamawone management Plan was validated at national level in Conakry.

The document can be consulted on the link <https://we.tl/t-k0UKr6Gle>

Moreover, the project with the same partners supported CFZ and FDA to draft a bilateral agreement aiming to promote the integrated management of the transboundary Complex Forest Ziamawone-Wonegizi-Wologizi. Two legal instruments were adopted with the participation of all stakeholders in October in Conakry: (i) bilateral agreement framework signed between the two governments Liberia and Guinea, (ii) MOU of technical collaboration signed between FDA and CFZ..

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

In relation to the first disbursement, the consolidated execution of activities of Component 2 implemented by the 4NEAs and REA contributing to **outputs** reached a technical rate mean of 36% as illustrated in graph 2



For this component, the major activities accomplished in 2019 were the establishment of the Transboundary Committees of water users in the Great & Little Scarcies / Kolente & Kaba and Moa/Mokano river basins. The role of these bodies is to facilitate the dialogue at transboundary level on the cooperation for shared water resources management; the establishment of national advisory teams for TDA/SAP process. These governance bodies will insure the core principles of the project: legitimacy and promotion of a strong local community empowerment during the development of the TDA/SAP process. The respect of gender balance was a key criteria.

The MTC held its regular meetings and reporting to the authorities the project progress



Photo 1 Great & Little Scarcies/Kaba & Kolenté Transboundary Committee executive members



Photo 2 Transboundary Committee Moa/Makona

Component 3: Project management

During the year 2019, the NPCU and RPMU deployed efforts to improve the technical and financial rate of the project from 10% in 2018 to 91% in 2019. However, NPCU should drastically reduce the delay in the procurement process, notably the preparation of ToR, Recruitment of national consultants and reporting of the activities.

The communication between executing agencies has to be improved in order to facilitate the coordination of the activities.

INTRODUCTION

During 2019, the main outputs focussed on the effective implementation of the activities such as the establishment of National Consultative committees for water users, the National Technical Advisory Teams and the Transboundary Committees. Project implementation also focused on the procurement of goods and services related to logistics, the completion of Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) studies and preparation for preliminary studies of Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) and validation of Baseline studies for the M&E system.

This annual report for 2019 is articulated as follows: (i) planned activities in the period, (ii) progress in connection with outputs (iii) producing knowledge, communicating and monitoring and evaluation, (iv) financial execution as at December 31st, 2019, (v) constraints and difficulties encountered; (vi) lessons learned (vii) planned activities for the first quarter of 2020 and (viii) conclusion.

1. PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD

For the year 2019, twenty-three (23) activities were planned in both components 1 and 2, as presented below:

Component 1: INTEGRATED FOREST ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- **Activity 1.1:** Procure project operation logistics
- **Activity 1.2:** Conduct a survey and compile data on best practices and outcomes of various forest and landscape restoration interventions such as sustainable forestry, natural regeneration, enrichment planting, reforestation, eco-friendly mining and other tree management practices such as traditional and improved agroforestry systems.
- **Activity 1.3:** Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;
- **Activity 1.7:** Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations on silvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles
- **Activity 1.8:** Provide follow-up training sessions for the main stakeholders and their target groups
- **Activity 1.9:** Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs.
- **Activity 1.11:** Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures
- **Activity 1.12:** Establish local Consultative Committees for Water Users and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings.
- **Activity 1.13:** Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results
- **Activity 1.14** Gather information on human populations and socio-economic dynamics to evaluate origins of threats to natural resources and pathways for impacts on livelihoods and sustainable management of resources.
- **Activity 1.17** Negotiate integrated land use plans in a participatory way with stakeholders and target groups.
- **Activity 2.22:** Organize Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits
- **Activities complementary to ROAM process in preparation (1.4, 1.6, 1.5 & 1.15, 1.10 and 1.16).**

Component 2: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS.

- **Activity 2.3** Support the implementation of the national inter-ministerial committees' action plans.
- **Activity 2.4** Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins.
- **Activity 2.5** Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP process and develop a training programme.
- **Activity 2.6** Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin.
- **Activity 2.9:** Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity, during TDA surveys (activity 2.12), to enable sustainable capitalization on the databases and informed decision making at transboundary level.
- **Activity 2.10** Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues.
- **Activity 2.11** Establish national and regional technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins.
- **Activity 2.12** Support to the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies basins;
- **Activity 2.13:** Develop the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis.
- **Activity 2.22:** Organize Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits

Component 3: Project management

- **Activity 3.2:** Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units

2. PROGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH OUTPUTS

The progress realized during the year 2019 contributed to the outputs related to the three components of the project.

Component/outcomes/outputs	Activity executed	Description on how this activity has been conducted and obtained or made progress on the result
Component 1: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management		
Outcome 1.1: Transboundary natural resources in the Upper Guinea forest ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, involving local communities		
Output 1.1.1. Site-specific guidelines for restoration of productivity of tree-based systems produced to promote the use of best practices in forest and landscape restoration interventions and sedentary agricultural practices in the main production sectors affecting forest ecosystems		
	Activity 1.1: Procure project operation logistics.	The Global Execution Rate for Output 1.1.1 up to 31 st December 2019 is 27%.
	Activity 1.2 Conduct a survey and compile data on best practices...	Under the Component 1 the project selected the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), in order to restore forest ecosystem services, conserve biodiversity and increase the resilience of the local livelihoods. This methodology aims to identify, analyse and locate specific areas of Forest Landscape Restoration opportunities based in a spatial multi-criteria analysis. The process is based in the stakeholder engagement and is driven by the context in analyse.
	Activity A.1.3: Identify and establish on-farm learning/production plots to support and strengthen diverse trees components in existing agricultural systems;	Forest Landscape Restoration is a collaborative and participatory process, hence the stakeholders must agree on the long-term objectives for their landscapes. It is important for them to define the current condition of their landscape and the desired condition that they want to achieve through landscape restoration intervention.
	Activity A.1.4: Produce guidelines for site specific best practices or opportunities for the use of tree-based systems [enrichment planting in tree-crop systems, fuel and fodder woodlots, small tree-cop plantations, tree-crop mixtures, assisted natural regeneration, and stabilized agricultural systems, that comprise a list of native forest tree species with relevance to prevailing certification scheme	<p>As new approach the IUCN Climate Change Program was hired to conduct the process on January 2019 to conduct the transboundary ROAM approach. In this regard, before starting the studies, A regional training workshop on ROAM was held in Monrovia in February 2019 of which the objectives to be achieved through Forest Landscape Restoration were (i) poverty alleviation and improving livelihoods through income generation activities and-(ii) biodiversity conservation and restoration of forest ecosystem services. These objectives will be considered in the analysis to help define opportunity areas where specific forest landscape restoration interventions should be implemented to target these objectives.</p> <p>During the workshop, Executing agencies and national consultants strengthened their capacities in use of tools to undertake tasks for the Forest Landscape Restoration. 36 participants (with 4 women) attend the training.</p> <p>To implement the activities on ground,, all the necessary logistics needed have been acquired by each project team..</p> <p>The knowledge generation for ROAM are based on various studies requiring data collection such as, socioeconomic, best practices in forest and landscape restoration. National consultants and international under the supervision of executing agencies undertaking the research.</p> <p>Through this research consultants have been able to capture the perception of community people on forest degradation, the type of forest restoration practices they can embark upon that is more relevant to them and the</p>

	<p>Activity 1.5: Disseminate the guideline documents during awareness raising campaigns held in cooperation with the main stakeholders;</p>	<p>roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the restoration process. The costs of the various interventions were also discussed.</p> <p>The key findings are that residents on the landscapes in all the 4 countries are interested in the idea of FLR. The selected interventions have high potentials for carbon sequestration. Community people were able to identify the types of interventions that are more pertinent and relevant to them which included life tree farming of cacao, oil palm and some rubber plantation</p> <p>All the reports of consultants are posted on Google Drive and the validation is done by participative approach. The various reports can be consulted on the link : https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_D9b80dWNhIbkYZXP6RGU4ICvWikDseG.</p>
<p>Output 1.1.2: Training systems established for farmers on how to improve management practices to meet certification programs</p>		
	<p>Activity 1.6: Establish offers for training courses and promote them via the media to the different target groups like farmers and land use planners</p>	<p>The Technical Execution Rate of this Output as at 31st December 2019 is 10%. Capacity building of stakeholders to be engaged in the Forest Landscape Restoration is key element for the success of ROAM approach. Preparation to recruit consultants to carry the activities is ongoing.</p> <p>=</p>
	<p>Activity 1.7: Work with Rainforest Alliance expert to develop Terms of Reference to train strategic organisations (Centre Forestier Nzérékoré, CEGENS, Tubmanburg/Bomi Training Institute) on sylvicultural oriented new agricultural measures/approaches and their certification principles;</p>	
	<p>Activity 1.8: Provide follow-up training sessions for the main</p>	

	stakeholders and their target groups	
Output 1.1.3: Improved management of agriculture activities within the vicinity of protected areas		
	Activity 1.9 Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities	<p>The Technical Execution Rate for Output 1.1.3 in 2019 was 35%.</p> <p>The assessment of the drivers of degradation, extent and location is crucial for the assessment of forest landscape restoration opportunities in a country. The drivers of degradation were identified by the stakeholders during the inception workshop; in Monrovia in February 2019. In the context of the Mano River Union, the expansion of agriculture and mining areas as well as exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products have been the mainly drivers that have threaten the last remnants of a unique biodiversity hotspot area, the Upper Guinean Forest. The reasons beyond these drivers are associated with the population increase combine with high levels of poverty and a high reliance on agriculture and forest resources to sustain their livelihoods</p> <p>Considering the drivers of degradation, the assessment carried out identifies areas where FLR actions should be implemented to generate most social and ecological benefits and revert degradation. A multi-criteria analysis will be implemented to define degradation and opportunity areas to achieve specific objectives through FLR. The output of this assessment is a FLR priority map.</p> <p>In this regard, National consultants in collaboration with the IUCN team, considering these drivers, proxies such as loss of canopy cover, fire recurrence area, steep slopes, rainfall erosivity, soil erodibility, soil fertility and loss of biodiversity were used by the consultants in the analysis to assess degradation. Effectively, the combination of this information identified areas where the biophysical predisposition to degradation is being aggravated by human disturbances. The output of this analysis is a degradation map that will be used in all subsequent MCAs for each FLR objective to help identify where the intensity of degradation may overlap with restoration opportunities for improve livelihoods and increase biodiversity.</p> <p>For each transboundary landscape, in its national portion, degradation maps, objectives maps and opportunities maps were produced at the initial level. The quality of the maps depends on reliable and availability of data and information. At this stage there difficulty to produce maps at transboundary level.</p> <p>Indeed, the different methodologies applied hamper the combination of national maps into transboundary maps. To overcome this constrains, the international consultants used global datasets available online to create a degradation map for the MRU-level landscape, as well as 2 objectives maps and priority map. In the next steps there is a need to explore how national teams can collect information to enhance and better contextualize these maps</p> <p>the reports can access through the link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_D9b80dWNhIbkYZXP6RGU4ICvWikDseG?usp=sharing Guinea posted a degradation map Of national part of Mont Nimba landscape on GOOGLE DRIVE in this link : https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zd1MqtoZ_MBF4CX9Ebk0SWOwe7gGi7j0</p> <p>Once these maps will be finalized the stakeholders at transboundary level will be invited to discuss on the validation.</p>
	Activity 1.10: Select and train staff for the Forest/Agriculture intersection and appoint them in the extension services for consultancy services offered to the targeted farmers	
	Activity 1.11: Revise and produce legal documents gazetting the project relevant forest rehabilitation areas with agroforestry measures;	
	Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees	
	Activity 1.13: Deliver in situ technical assistance and monitoring over the project lifespan to ensure sustainability of the results;	

		<p>In line with the principle of the project “Learning by doing”, two transboundary landscapes will be selected as pilots sites where focussing the intervention and later upgrade to other are areas based on the feedbacks).</p> <p>thus in the respect the core principles of legitimacy and promotion of a strong local community empowerment, executing agencies with the support of local authority in each landscape established , local consultative committee for Ziama, Wonegisi, Gola , Diecke and Nimba Forests. The tranbou dary committee of each landscape will be established during the validation of maps on the site</p> <p>Besides, the project supported the process of the elaboration n of the Ziama Biosphere Reserve Landscape development and management in Guinea by cofounding activities with the other implementing partners UNOPS and WABiCC . Project supported many consultative meetings with the local communities living in the vicinity of the landscape during the preparation of the plan. In October, The Ziama management Plan was validated at national level in October 2019, in Conakry. The document can be consulted on the link https://we.tl/t-k0UKr6Gle</p> <p>Moreover, the project with the same partners supported CFZ and FDA to draft a bilateral agreement aiming to promote the integrated management of the transboundary Complex Forest Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi. Two legal instruments were adopted with the participation of all stakeholders on October 2019 in Conakry : (i) bilateral agreement framework signed between the two governments Liberia and Guinea, (ii) MOU of technical collaboration signed between FDA and CFZ</p>
Output 1.1.4. Integrated land use plans developed to enable the generation of sustainable sources of income from different restoration interventions		
	Activity 1.14 Gather information on human populations and socio-economic	Output 1.1.4 up to 31st December 2019 obtained 22% Technical Execution Rate. This Output is yet at the initial stage as it involves six activities. Before the ROAM research work on the field, consultants on the landscapes had series of stakeholders’ engagements to understand the dynamics existing among the various groups on the landscape. The consultants were able to access reports about the activities which informed their research methodology. One of the strategies deployed by the consultants was that the data collection team was based in the landscape during the research period in order to increase their accessibility to the targeted communities and to also enable them to interact with community members outside formal interviews for diverse opinion gathering. Hence, they were able to capture detailed information about the landscape with diverse opinions across each landscape. All data and information collected are feeding the process of the ROAM
	Activity 1.15: Hold workshops with demonstration of recommendations for improvement of land use methods and reorganisation of rural land-use zoning around the protected areas	The reports can be consulted on Google Drive : https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_D9b80dWNhIbkYZXP6RGU4ICvWikDseG ; Each project landscape acknowledged that the forest of their landscape is being rapidly depleted while some areas are losing some economic tree species that are cut down to harvest the fruits for sale. Farming is mostly
	Activity 1.16: Produce formal recommendations for legal (re)classification	done in the forest close to communities outside the protected area. Logging is done in some parts of the landscape causing forest degradation.

	and zoning of identified priority forest areas	<p>People living on the landscapes expressed interest in any future action that would help restore their landscapes. It has been revealed across the 4 countries that because of the limited knowledge community members have on landscape management, any restoration intervention should start with training and awareness creation to increase the local people’s knowledge of the restoration process.</p> <p>Based on reactions obtained across the 4 project countries, any land use plan should include information on tree species to be planted/cultivated, and management practices that can be easily adapted and sustained by the local people as this helps them to own the process.</p> <p>Analysis shows that there has been a serious effort, to develop a legal and policy framework to regulate access, exploitation and protection of natural resources and biodiversity but these efforts are also prone to human activities for survival.</p>
	Activity 1.17 Negotiate integrated land use plans	
	Activity 1.18: Hold Advisory Committees	
	Activity 1.19: Verify via progress and evaluation reports, and visits to the targeted farmers	
Outcome 1.2: Component 1 is monitored and evaluated		
Output 1.2.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders		
	Activity 1.20: Organise project annual reporting and ME missions	<p>It is recorded that the Technical Execution Rate for this Output is 87 % which stands out as the highest among others for 2019. In the respect of the principle of project “Support MRU in its role as regional executing agency”, the REA coordinated the preparation and the organization of the supervision mission and the regional steering committee in march and April 2019.</p> <p>All the 5 Project Execution Units have been actively involved in the attainment of this Output as most of them sent in their quarterly, semester and annual reports. All of them attended the regional steering committee meeting that was held in Freetown. They also help the consultancy firm that was retained to undertake the baseline report. It was through the support given by the project national coordinators that the Multisectoral committee in each country participated in the validation of the key findings of the baseline research.</p> <p>The data collected informed the revision process of the M and E Framework</p> <p>ME missions</p> <p>The Regional M and E and Communication Specialists visited the new management of Sierra Leone and discussed on project implementation issues. They also visited Guinea and participated in the validation process of the key findings of the baseline research. It was during this visit that a session was held with Centre Forestier de N’Zérékoré for the establishment of the project website.</p>
	Activity 1.21 Organise project steering committee meetings	
	Activity 1.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.	
Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters		
Outcome 2.1: Water resources are managed at the regional level based on transboundary institutional organs.		
	Output 2.1.1: National inter-ministerial committees	The Technical Execution Rate for this Output is 88% for this year. Across the 4 project countries, the

<p>established and operational</p>	<p>Activity 2.1: Organise ministerial consultations to identify relevant members of the national interministerial committees</p> <p>Activity 2.2: Set-up officially the national interministerial committees and prepare their mandate, action plan and organisational frameworks</p> <p>Activity 2.3: Support the implementation of the national interministerial committees' action plans</p>	<p>Multisectoral Technical Committees met during this year and validated reports submitted by the National Consultants for the ROAM process and for activities 2.4 and 2.5. They also participated in other activities for instance in Sierra Leone, the MTC supported the NPCU to present the Project to the new Minister of Water and Minister of Agriculture. In Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea, the Project was often discussed at Ministerial Cabinet level. Reports on Project are regularly sent to them as recommended by the aide memoire of supervision mission. The main outcome of the MTC in Cote d'Ivoire was to recommend the national executing agency to create new account of the project in commercial bank to solve the constraint the national executing agency has to access their budget to execute the project. The project monitoring committee of the ministry of water resources sent its commendation to the Secretariat of the MRU and to the National Project Coordination Unit for their efforts. Guinea participated in a regional workshop that was organized for the development of a management plan for the Ziama biosphere which reminded Guinea and Liberia of their commitments towards the protection of Ziama biosphere.</p>
<p>Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.</p>		
	<p>Activity 2.4 Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins.</p>	<p>As at 31st December 2019, Output 2.1.2 was at 35% Technical Execution Rate. The preparation of the TDA / SAP process was well underway. In fact the International Consultant had already been retained to undertake the training leading the TDA /SAP processes focusing the training needs identified earlier. The main thematic areas were: transboundary cooperation, best practices in fishing, agriculture and mining activities, water pollution, revenue generating activities, climate change effects, legal framework of international waters management and the , development of bankable projects.</p>
	<p>Activity 2.5 Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP 2.6, 2.13 and 2.9</p>	<p>In 2019, the Regional Project Coordinator had the opportunity of attending international conferences where he was able to discuss with partners (IW LEARN, ANBO, and OMVS) the possibility of organizing study tour in another international river basin so that NATT and representatives of local platform of the 3 river basins will be trained on TDA and SAP process. The Regional Coordinator has already made advanced contacts with OMVS Executive Director to undertake such visit in Senegal Basin in Dakar. A letter should be written with address to OMVS along with ToR.</p>
	<p>Activity 2.6 Implement training sessions in each participating country concerning the methodological approach and the planning process for preparing a TDA and a SAP in a transboundary basin</p>	<p>This also requires the establishment of a simple regional database for the storing of data and information obtained around international waters and biodiversity which will promote information sharing.</p>

	Activity 2.7 Organize a study tour in one other international river basin organisation having developed a TDA and a SAP	
	Activity 2.9 Set-up a simple regional database storing data and information compiled about international waters and biodiversity	
Output 2.2.1: Awareness raising program focused on transboundary and environmental issues designed and implemented		
	Activity 2.10: Develop and implement an awareness raising programme on site-specific transboundary and environmental issues	<p>The Technical Execution Rate of this whole Output up to December 2019 was 14%. The Communication Expert developed a draft of the awareness programme and a concept note. During the establishment of national platform of little and great scarcies in Sierra Leone on August 22nd, more than 54 persons of which 17% were women were sensitized on the water pollution, the degradation of biodiversity and the river bank, malpractice fishing.. In Liberia, 40 participants attended the establishment of the national platform of Moa/Makona river basin and were sensitized in the protection of the environment of which 43% are women. On 14th November 2019, Sierra Leone established the Nation platform for Moa / Makona. On 15th November 2019 the Transboundary Platform on the Moa / Makona basin was established.with 46 participants 22% of whom were women. During this reporting period, the transboundary platform for the Great / Little Scarcies and Kolenté was established on 12th September 2019 and the Transboundary Committee for Moa / Makona basin was established on 15th November 2019.</p> <p>June 5th, International Environment Day:</p> <p>In Sierra Leone The national project coordinator raised awareness among listeners and viewers of SLBC TV and SLBC Radio on the issues of ecosystem conservation and international water resources management. These TV and radio programmes served as a framework for presenting the objectives and results of the project.</p> <p>In Guinea the national coordination Unit raised the awareness of 100 persons (pupils and teachers) of Malweita primary school on environmental issues and demonstrated how from the GEF Mano project, they can fully contribute to the preservation of the environment.</p>
Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level. The preliminary regional Strategic Actions Programs is prepared		
	Activity 2.11 Establish national and regional	The Technical Execution Rate of Output 2.2.2 is 19%.

	technical advisory teams for the management of the preparation of the TDA and SAP processes in the targeted basins	In the respect of the legality, legitimacy, promote strong local communities empowerment, Support MRU in its role as regional executing agency, the stakeholder at local, national and transboundary will be effectively participate in the process of TDA elaboration, validation and adoption Guinea and Sierra Leone have established the local and transboundary committees of Great/Little Scarcies river basin. The Moa Makona river basin local and Transboundary Committees were also established for Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.
	Activity 2.12 Support to the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies basins	NEAs of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Lone have established their National Technical Teams The composition of the advisory committee was respecting the gender aspect.
	Activity 2.13 3 Development of the regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis	The preparation of the TDA implementation is ongoing, all the consultants have been recruited by executing agencies. The works on ground will start in the next quarter once the second disbursement transferred
	2.14: Follow-up and support of the review and adoption process at ministerial and regional levels of the final geographically-specific TDA	
	2.15: Disseminate broadly the adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis in the 3 targeted basins	
	2.16: Development of the preliminary Strategic Action Programme	
'Output 2.2.3 IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders		
	Activity 2.17 Development of IW LEARN Information and products	Output 2.2.3 was at 28%. In the principle of project “communication and awareness raising”, most of the activities have a communication aspects. Media to support the communication of the project visibility are stated. Below.

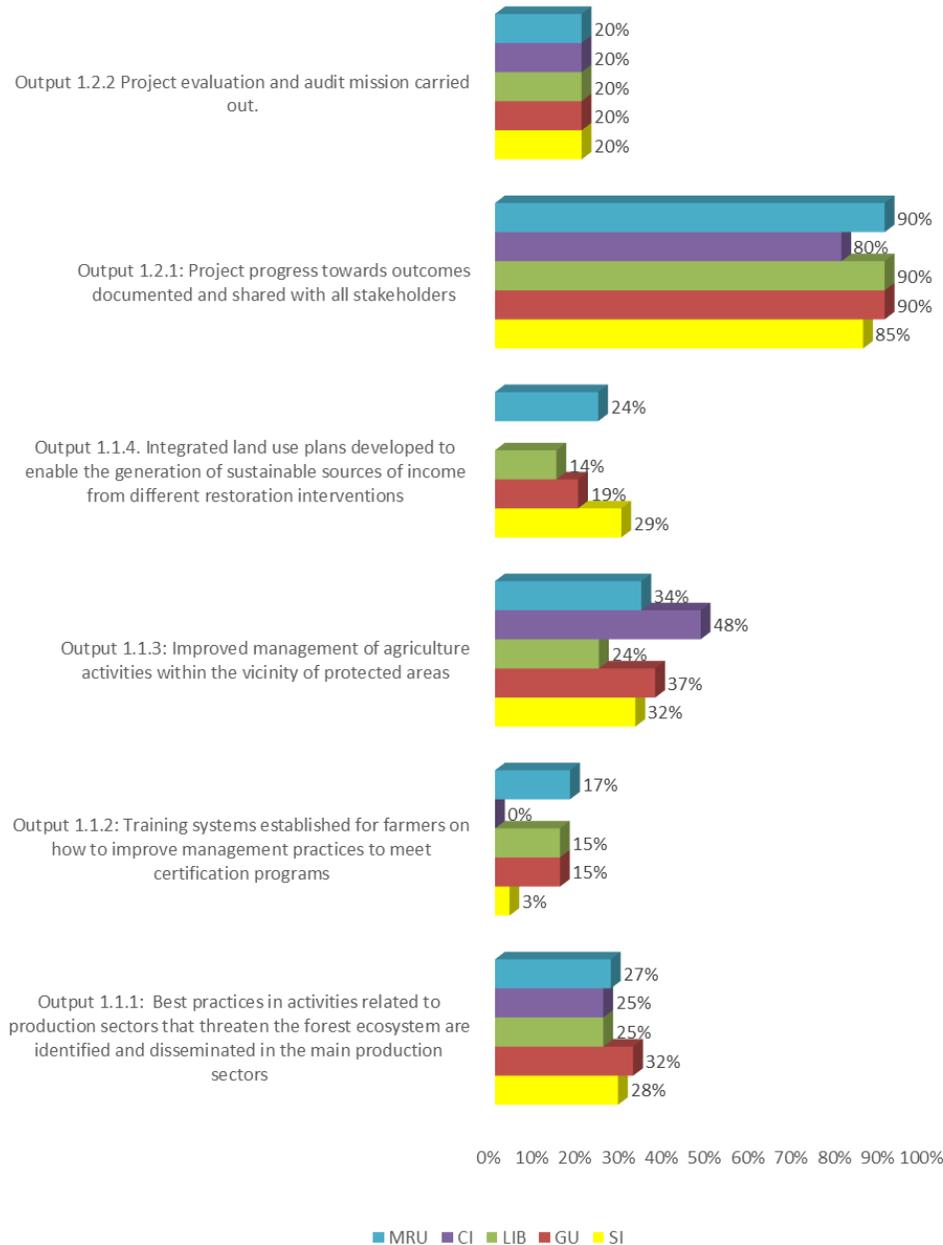
	dissemination	<p>Two websites are already available: the MRU: https://www.mru.int</p> <p>FDA, NEA of Liberia : https://www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr.</p> <p>The website of the CFZ is underway: www.cfzguinee.org. (The Management team of the CFZ (Guinea) suspended the finalization of the website, due to the preparation of the validation workshop of the Ziama and others activities).</p> <p>Social media tools have been created:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youtube: Mano River Union <p>The link to the research of Video record of some activities carried out https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQw7KuKsQt0&list=UU07ucaQcWKIoVJ9XRbP74Tg&index=5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBCGrkTzFlk&list=UU07ucaQcWKIoVJ9XRbP74Tg&index=1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HULQuE4QO0k&list=UU07ucaQcWKIoVJ9XRbP74Tg&index=2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70juDdAnzZo&list=UU07ucaQcWKIoVJ9XRbP74Tg&index=9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tweeter: @GefIucn - Facebook: @GefIUCNManoproject <p>The Communication Expert is on the fourth edition (activities from October to December) which is under review rating the technical execution at 25%.</p> <p>The previous have been posted on the web site of the MRU and on the project web site of Liberia. These Newsletters are focused on the activities carried out from January September 2019.</p> <p>The link to the research the Newsletters are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the MRU: http://mru.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Newsletter.pdf / http://mru.int/project-gef-iucn-mru-press-release/ http://mru.int/restoration-without-borders-in-west-africa/ <p>For the website site of the project in Liberia: http://iwrm.fda.gov.lr/tag/newsletters/</p>
Outcome 2.3: Component 2 is monitored and evaluated		
Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders		
	Activity 2.20: Organise project annual reporting, review and	Idem act 1.20

	planning including M&E missions	
	Activity 2.21: Organise project steering committee meetings	Idem act1.21
Output 2.3.2: Project evaluation and audit mission carried out.		
	Activity 2.22: Organise Project mi-term and termination evaluations, and audits.	Idem 1.22
Component 3 Project management		
Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented		
Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional		
	Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units	Procurement committee was put in place by each execution agency and through transparent and legal principles to carry out the acquisition of goods and service. The REA and NEAs ensured that their respective office was functional during the reporting period.

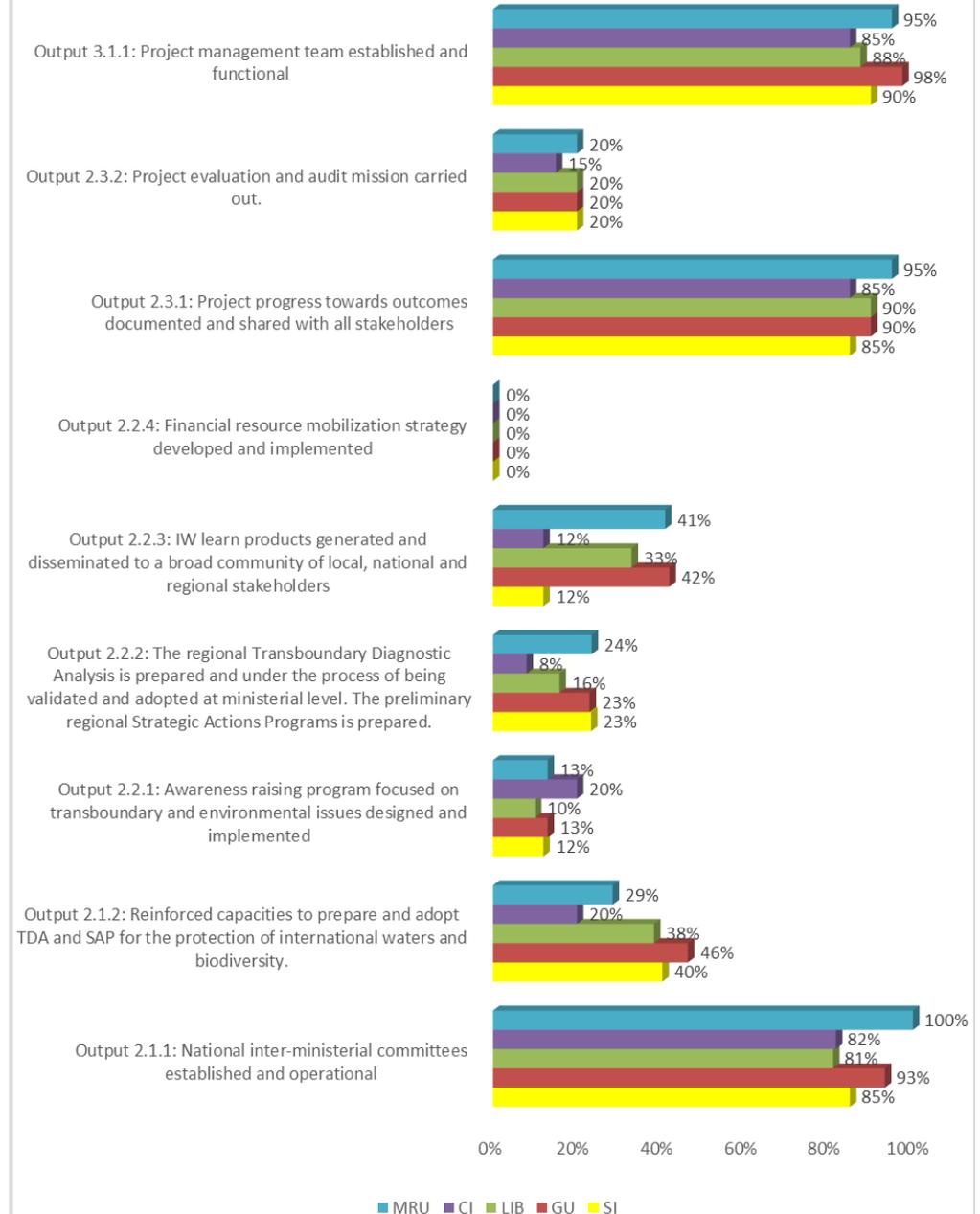
In general, the technical implementation rate for component 2 is 43%, nine points higher than component 1 which is 34%. The overall rate of technical progress is 38%.

The levels of achievement of the outputs of each component are presented in the graphs below....

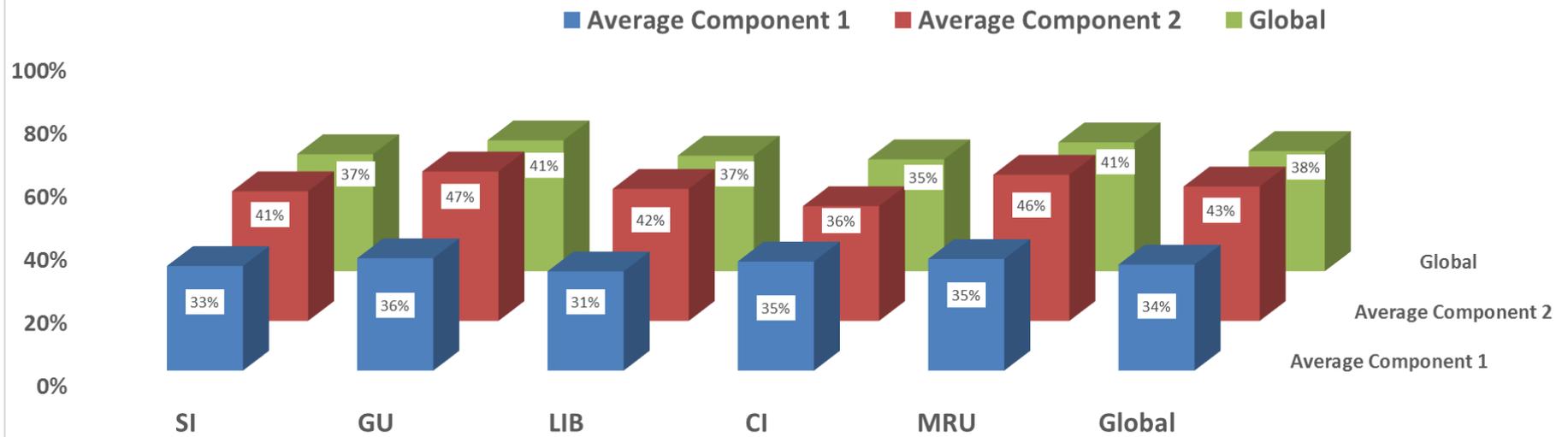
Component 1: Technical rate by output and Executing Agency



Component 2: Technical rate by output and Executing Agency



Average technical rate by component and by Executing agency at 4rd Quarter FY 2019



3 PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

3.1 MAJOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The main activities carried out in 2019 in terms of communication permitted to inform national stakeholders in MRU member states about the project. The local communities living in the vicinity of the 3 river basins, the technical implementing partners working in the same landscapes of GEF MANO project were told about the project objectives and outcomes through the activities implemented and web site. It offered an opportunity to share information on the activities and to identify synergy of action with others projects.

In Liberia, the project webpage is www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr and Liberia E-mansion communication have been used to disseminate information about the project activities and major vacancy announcements.

At the MRU secretariat, the project webpage www.mru.int have been used to disseminate information about the project activities at the regional level.

3.1.1 Skype conference IUCN-PACO – REA - NEAs

Nine (9) Skype conferences were held between the UICN-PACO, REA and NEAs to discuss about **challenges including those revealed during the supervision mission**, concerns and the progress achieved in project implementation and made recommendations and proposed solutions to improve the execution of the activities. This also targeted the improvement of communication between IUCN and the Executive Agency in terms of reviewing the progress of the project. **Based on the tool proposed by IUCN, the tracking of the recommendation of the supervision mission is done regularly during the conference call.**

3.1.2 Development of website;

The MRU and the FDA have their website available. The one of the Centre Forestier de NZEREKORE (CFZ) www.cfzguinee.org which started on 16th September 2019. The process of the development of this website is almost completed.

3.1.1 Design of a Roll up and Billboard;

For the visibility of the project, Rolls up and Billboards were designed. The Billboards will be used for the different landscape in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

3.1.2 PACO News, TV, Radio and Local press report

Five (5) press releases to be published have been sent to PACO NEWS. These press releases relate to:

- **The establishment of the Local Consultative Committee of Gola in Liberia,**
 - o The community radio (Radio Bomi which covers the Comte of Bomi, **193 200 ha** and populated by **84 119 inhabitants**) in the site of Gola National Park covered the establishment of Local Consultative Committee, with interviews of resource persons from the said committee.



Local Consultative Committee of Gola Forest , March, 04 2019, Liberia

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- **The Inception and Capacity Development workshop for Forest Landscape Restoration and ROAM attended in Monrovia, Liberia.**
 - The Inception and Capacity Development workshop for Forest Landscape Restoration and ROAM was also covered by **five (5) media organs of Liberia**: Liberia National Television (LNTV) covers the all country (**4,732 millions inhabitants**) and **four (4) newspapers**: The People, In Profile, The Inquirer, New Democrat. These newspapers are printed at more than **2000 copies per day**.



Inception regional workshop on ROAM process, 25th Feb to 1st March 2019, Monrovia

- ***3rd Regional Steering Committee***

This Regional Steering Committee, which brought together around the same table, the different project management units as well as several partners, including WABICC, UNDP, was the subject of media coverage, TV, radio, print media. For example, two TV reports produced by SLBC TV and AYW

(covers all the country), an article by AWOKO Sierra Leone Newspaper (printed at more than **2000 copies per day**) and a Radio report by Radio Democracy (98.1) (covers Freetown, **1,056 million inhabitants**) and a communication note for publication in Paco News.



Family Photo : 3rd Regional Steering Committee, April 6th, 2019, Freetown

- ***Supervision Mission***

A communication note has been produced and sent to PACO News for publication. This note reported on the results of the supervision mission organized by IUCN from 1st to 5th April 2019.



- Family Photo : Supervision Mission April 1-5, 2019, Freetown

- ***The establishment of the National technical advisory team for TDA/SAP process and the local consultative platform of Great & Little Scarcies in Sierra Leone,***

- The SLBC TV covered the establishment of Local Consultative Committee, with interviews of resource persons.



Family Photo: *local consultative platform of Great & Little Scarcies river basin, 22nd Aug 2019, Kambia Sierra Leone,*



Family Photo : *National technical advisory team for TDA/SAP process, 23rd Aug 2019, Kambia, Sierra Leone*

- ***The establishment of the Liberia National Advisory Team for TDA/SAP process***
 - o The establishment of this activity was also covered by **two (2) media organs** of Liberia: Liberia National Television (LNTV) covers the all country (**4,732 million inhabitants**) and one (1) newspaper: The Daily Observer printed at more than 2000 copies per day.



Photo group National Technical Advisory Team September 26, 2019, Liberia

- ***The establishment of the national technical advisory team of Guinea and the establishment of the Transboundary committee of the basins for Kolente/Great Scarcies and Kaba/Little Scarcies, Guinea – Sierra Leone***
 - The establishment of these committees was also covered by National Television of Guinea which covers all the country.



Family Photo, *the national technical advisory team of Guinea, in Kindia Sep. 10, 2019*



Family Photo Transboundary committee of the basins for Kolente/Great Scarcies and Kaba/Little Scarcies (sierra Leone- Guinea), Kindia, Sep. 11, 2019

- ***The establishment of the Local Consultative Platform of Sierra Leone and the transboundary committee of Water users of the Moa River Basin Liberia-Guinea-Sierra Leone***
 - The SLBC TV/ Radio which cover all the country and AWOKO News (most read in Freetown and the major town of the country) covered the establishment of the national consultative platform of water users.



Transboundary committee of Moa/Makona river basin, Guinea-Liberia-Sierra Leone. Nov 15, 2019

3.1.3 Project reporting : Presentation of the project results to the Project Monitoring Committee of the Ministry of Water and Forests of Cote d'Ivoire

The National Coordinator presented the progress of the project, on Friday, December 6, 2019, to the Project Monitoring Committee of the Ministry of Water and Forests of Cote d'Ivoire. At the end of this presentation, the Committee sent its encouragement to the Secretariat of the MRU and the National Project Coordination Unit for the efforts made.

3.1.4 Bulletin d'informations : "GEF Mano Infos

Four edition of the newsletter of the project are available on the website of FDA (<http://www.iwrm.fda.gov.lr>) and the MRU (www.mru.int)..

3.1.5 Social Media Pages

A twitter account (@GefIucn) and a Facebook page (@GefIUCNManoproject) and youtube account (Mano River Union) have been created. These tools, in addition to those already existing, will help improve the visibility of the project among project targets on these networks.

3.1.6 June 5th, International Environment Day

Sierra Leone: The national project coordinator has raised awareness among listeners and viewers of SLBC TV and SLBC Radio on the issues of ecosystem conservation and international water resources management. These TV and radio sets served as a framework for presenting the objectives and results of the project. SLBC TV and RADIO cover the whole country. The population of Sierra Leone is estimated to **7 794 974 (2018) inhabitants.**

Guinea: the national coordination has raised the awareness of 100 persons in comprising pupils and teachers of Malweita primary school on environmental issues and demonstrates how from the GEF Mano project, they can fully contribute to the preservation of the environment.

3.1.7 The Mano River Union transboundary forest landscapes radio drama and call-in show series design and validation workshop in Monrovia

USAID, through the WABICC program, organized from 10 to 12 September in Monrovia, Liberia, a workshop for theatre-radio design for the Transboundary Forest Landscapes of the Mano River Union. It is a program of **24 radio programs** that will be produced and translated into **seven (7) languages** for the first stage. This radio drama program deals with the following themes: poaching, artisanal mining, shifting cultivation and logging.

This meeting mobilized about **fifty participants (including fifteen women)** from these different landscapes, including journalists and radio agencies.

The Secretariat of the Mano River Union was represented by the National Coordinator of Liberia and the Communication Specialist of the GEF Mano Project.

3.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The baseline study has been completed. The monitoring and evaluation framework and the project tracker have been finalized. The data collected during the study were used to update the tools. The regional M&E Specialist is filling the M and E frame work and project tracker with data and information coming from project activities. This is showing the progress in the achievement of the indicators. The M& E Specialist will populate among the 4 national coordination units the M&E tool.

4 PARTNERSHIP

4.1 ELABORATION AND VALIDATION OF ZIAMA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Centre Forestier of N'Zérékoré is supported by 3 partners project (GEF MANO project, Program WABiCC/USAID and European Union /UNOPS program) for the development of Zياما management plan. To develop the plan, GEF Mano project, supported the CFZ by contributing to the consultation process through financial and technical supports. It facilitated the holding of the community consultation workshop which brought together the representatives of all the neighboring villages, the Prefectural, Sub-prefectural and community authorities, the decentralized technical services of the area as well as the organization of the national validation workshop. This contribution is in line with one of the results of the GEF Mano project, which is the sustainable management of transboundary natural resources in Upper Guinea's forest ecosystems, while involving local communities.

Community conservation, the restoration and regeneration of landscapes, an approach advocated by the GEF Mano project and included in the PAG de facto translates that the current status of this transboundary forest landscape requires governance shared with the communities. In addition, within the framework of the implementation of this plan, it will be a question of privileging the trilogy “to do with, by and for the communities”. This would facilitate the certification of products (examples: coffee, palm, etc.) with the training of farmers aiming to improve their management practices to respond to the certification programs developed within the framework of the GEF Mano project, for mention only this point.

Since the validation of the PAG and the signing of the Bilateral Management Agreement by the governments of Liberia and Guinea in October 2019, CFZ is seeking funds to implement the plan.

Indeed, CFZ submit to project t GEF Mano a request to fund the Business Plan of the PAG which will contribute to the mobilization of the financial resources.

4.2 *BILATERAL AGREEMENT FOR THE MANAGEMENT ZIAMA - WONEGISI - WOLOGIZI LANDSCAPE*

The Centre Forestier of N'Zérékoré and the Forest Development Authority (FDA) were supported by 3 partners project (GEF MANO project, Program WABiCC/USAID and European Union /UNOPS program) to prepare the bilateral agreement with purpose to promote the management of transboundary forest landscape of Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi "ZWW" between Guinea and Liberia which is one of the priority landscapes of the Mano River Union. Since February 05-06th, 2019 at Voinjama, in Liberia the draft of this bilateral agreement was validated between the two managers, the FDA and the CFZ. The signing of this strategic document, which will serve not only to support the sustainable management of the ZWW landscape but also allow Guinea and Liberia to honour their national, regional and international commitments, was held in Conakry by the Guinean Ministry of Forestry in October 2019

5 FINANCIAL EXECUTION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2019

During the year 2019 no funds were disbursed to the REA and NEAs. However, activities were financed with unspent balances brought forward from the year 2018 totaling US\$1,021,000 for the REA and NEAs. The year 2019 saw an acceleration of the implementation of activities at the level of the NEAs. Total expenditures for the year 2019 summed up to US\$734,109, representing a year-on-year increase of 57% compared to 2018 which stood at US\$314,399. Cumulative expenditure for the project stands at US\$1,048,508 with unspent balances of US\$286,873 within the project special accounts (REA & NEAs) as of 31st December 2019. The cumulative expenditure represents execution rates of 79% of the total funds transferred to the REA and NEAs and 17% of the total budget for the REA and NEAs. Of the aforementioned cumulative expenditure, Component I constitutes 59% (\$1,048,508/\$615,821); Component II 29% (\$1,048,508/\$304,694) and Component III 12% (\$1,048,508/\$127,993) respectively. However, considering the budget execution, Component I & II, budget execution rates stand at 15% each, while Component III is at 42%, respectively. It is worth mentioning that Component III is moving at a faster pace than the other components. There is a risk that funds under Component III, which are for administrative and overhead costs may be exhausted with outstanding activities under the other components. See tables below for details.

5.1 SUMMARY:

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	4,000,000	843,611	3,156,389	517,087	615,821	227,790	73%	15%
Component 2	2,034,633	356,107	1,678,526	173,164	304,694	51,413	86%	15%
Component 3	301,731	135,663	166,068	43,858	127,993	7,670	94%	42%
TOTAL	6,336,364	1,335,381	5,000,983	734,109	1,048,508	286,873	79%	17%

5.2 BREAKDOWN BY EXECUTING AGENCY:

i. Regional Executing Agency (Mano River Union)

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	138,267	21,216	117,051	19,088	21,207	9	100.0%	15.3%
Component 2	301,086	109,386	191,700	43,602	109,227	158	99.9%	36.3%
Component 3	188,691	58,634	130,057	13,785	58,625	9	100.0%	31.1%
TOTAL	628,044	189,236	438,808	76,475	189,059	176.9	99.9%	30.1%

ii. Cote d'Ivoire National Executing Agency:

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	178,588	23,563	155,025	17,842	22,942	621	97%	13%
Component 2	433,387	24,218	409,169	9,002	19,302	4,916	80%	4%
Component 3	28,260	11,429	16,831	4,213	8,764	2,665	77%	31%
TOTAL	640,235	59,210	581,025	31,057	51,008	8,202	86%	8%

iii. Sierra Leone National Executing Agency

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	1,227,715	252,630	975,085	147,885	170,642	81,988	67.5%	13.9%
Component 2	433,387	87,499	345,888	47,938	71,415	16,084	81.6%	16.5%
Component 3	28,260	22,180	6,080	10,694	21,330	850	96.2%	75.5%
TOTAL	1,689,362	362,309	1,327,052	206,516	263,387	98,923	72.7%	15.6%

iv. Guinea National Executing Agency

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	1,227,715	263,467	964,248	171,060	218,031	45,436	82.8%	17.8%
Component 2	433,387	79,246	354,141	39,468	57,477	21,769	72.5%	13.3%
Component 3	28,260	19,615	8,645	7,417	16,912	2,703	86.2%	59.8%
TOTAL	1,689,362	362,328	1,327,034	217,944	292,420	69,908	80.7%	17.3%

v. Liberia National Executing Agency

Component	Budget	Funds Received	Budget Balance	EXPENDITURE		Balance Project A/C	% fund received	% Budget
				Jan to Dec 2019	Cumulative Expenses			
Component 1	1,227,715	282,735	944,980	161,211	182,998	99,736	65%	15%
Component 2	433,387	55,758	377,629	33,155	47,273	8,485	85%	11%
Component 3	28,260	23,805	4,455	7,750	22,363	1,442	94%	79%
TOTAL	1,689,362	362,298	1,327,064	202,116	252,634	109,664	70%	15%

5.3 REA & NEAS EXPENDITURE YEAR-ON-YEAR

No.	Agency	2019					2018				
		Component 1	Component II	Component III	TOTAL	% By Agency	Component 1	Component II	Component III	TOTAL	% By Agency
1	REA/ MRU	19,088	43,602	13,785	76,475	10%	2,119	65,626	44,839	112,584	36%
2	Cote d'Ivoire	17,842	9,002	4,213	31,057	4%	5,100	10,300	4,551	19,951	6%
3	Guinea	171,060	39,468	7,417	217,944	30%	46,971	18,009	9,495	74,476	24%
4	Sierra Leone	147,885	47,938	10,694	206,516	28%	22,757	23,477	10,636	56,870	18%
5	Liberia	161,211	33,155	7,750	202,116	28%	21,787	14,118	14,613	50,518	16%
	TOTAL	517,087	173,164	43,858	734,109	100%	98,734	131,530	84,135	314,399	100%

6 CONSTRAINTS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The project before its start-up, was more than 15 months behind schedule which created a major concern in the implementation of field activities within the time frame set out in the initial project document. In addition, the delay in recruiting experts and the replacement of RainForest alliance at the regional level to coordinate field activities was a major handicap in the implementation of the activities, especially in the start of work to implement ROAM activities due to the regional aspect of the project.

Key **implementing partners** identified during project maturation did not fulfil their commitments. This explains why results on the ground have not been achieved. It is essential that partners involved on the ground in the landscapes (e.g.: WA-BICC, RSPB, GRCLG) are consulted in the design and implementation of the activities. This is relevant in particular to partners who are supposed to provide co-financing, such as WA-BICC and its partners on the ground.

Thus, during the supervision mission in April, it was noted that project implementation rate on the ground was very low. In particular, the implementation rate of component 1 (forests management) and 2 (IWRM) was approximately 8%. The supervision mission did recommendations approved by the third Regional Steering Committee to improve the project implementation rate.

The respect for contractual delays by the **consultants to deliver** is a constraint to attain the achievement. Consultants with the requisite experience to undertake research work on ecosystem conservation and international water resources management are hard to come by. It was not easy to start the ROAM study because the consultant that was expected to undertake the study was not available. It was only after contacting IUCN that an international consultant

was made available. Then the ROAM process was planned to be completed by end of September after an extension of contract for all consultants from June 2019 to September 2019 in order to be realistic. But the inexperience of national consultants on RAOM approach and the lack of the presence of the international consultants on the field to work on pilot site at least for better understanding of national consultant, led to some gaps in the expected final products

Some of the main challenges encountered during the **ROAM process** are related to establishing a clear Theory of Change for degraded and deforested landscapes, and the associated spatial analysis needed to assess degradation, map FLR objectives and the opportunities for restoration. The initial reports and maps produced had some important elements missing. As a result of this, the International Consultant and the GIS Specialist had to spend extra time with the consultants in order to review the reports and maps.

The consulting firm that was retained to undertake the research on the project indicators has submitted the final report of the research. During this reporting period, Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant attended an evaluation sessions in Freetown and N'Zerekore of the key funding of this research where he captured main points that he has utilized to complete the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Project Tracker that he has shared with the DM and E Specialist at IUCN.

The **metadata and the report on the methodology** used for mapping is still missing in some landscapes – guidance was provided by e-mail on what to include in this two documents. Consultants still need to provide IUCN with this information. In some instances, the information was created without considering the 5km buffer as stated in the MRU project document – therefore IUCN created these 5 km buffers for each transboundary landscape, and shared them with the countries by e-mail and uploaded in the google drive for their use.

At the Transboundary level, the challenges are related with the **access and use of the information** produced by the countries, and the diversity of approaches used to generate maps

The **different methodologies applied hampered the combination of national maps into transboundary maps** – using only global datasets available online a degradation map was created for the MRU-level landscape, as well as 2 objectives maps and priority map. In the next steps efforts should be made to explore how national teams can collect information to enhance and better contextualize these maps

For the whole of 2019, **communication** between RPMU and NPCU was a major constraint encountered in the implementation of project activities where inability of the MCUs was observed to respond in a timely manner to requests from the RPMU on the implementation of activities as it indicated in the operational plan. This largely affected the implementation of activities on time.

During 2019 one major achievement was the **establishment of project websites**. Below are details related to the development of websites in the different basins, especially in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

For Sierra Leone, the delay of the realization of the website is attributable to the National Coordinator of the project, who since 7 months did not give support for the achievement of

this indicator. The Communication Specialist advises to develop a web site for NPAA (Sierra Leone), from which a webpage of the project can be created and the information of the project disseminated. But since then, the communication Specialist is still negotiating with the National Coordinator for her to facilitate the development of the website.

The Management team of the CFZ (Guinea) **suspended the finalization of the website**, due to the preparation of the validation workshop of the Zيام Biosphere Management Plan which was held on October 23-24 at Conakry. The process of development of the web site started in August 2019.

The NEA of Côte d'Ivoire **has no funds** for the development of the web page. An agreement was reached in August 2019 with the Communication Officer of the Ministry of Water and Forests to disseminate information on project activities at national level. But since then, the Communication Officer does not allow the publication on the website of the Newsletter of the Project. The final option accepted by the NPCU is to create a website for DGPPE (Direction de la gestion et de la protection des ressources en eau, Ministère des Eaux et Forêts). The NPCU started the process of recruitment of the webdesigner.

Apart from Cote d'Ivoire which provides regular information of their activities to the Communication Specialist, the other Agencies are reluctant to provide TV and Radio reports, copy of press articles published by media houses, even photos of their activities to facilitate the work of the Communication Specialist. Even though these points have been mentioned several times during the skype meetings between UICN, the NEA and the REA, they still have not reacted in favour of establishing the web page.

The Secretariat General of the MRU, since 4 months, has requested the **suspension of any access to social media** from the internet connection from the office. This decision makes it difficult to update the social pages designed as part of the project (tweeter, Facebook, YouTube) by the Communication Specialist. The updating of these pages was done at the expense of the Communication Specialist. The monthly installments of a connection amounts to 550 000 Leones (55 USD).

The **financial situation of RPMU and NPCU** of Cote d'Ivoire is a constraint to carry out regional activities where the two agencies involved. Indeed, the recruitment of regional or international consultant will be a challenge to draft his contract and modalities of the payment.

6.1 STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

The recommendations validated by the supervision mission and approved by 3rd RSC are being implemented. 14 recommendations were accomplished during the reporting period as follows:

1. The REA and NEA worked together to ensure that revised work plans are provided to IUCN for no-objection by 19 April 2019. The Technical Execution Rate for this activity is 100% as the revised work plans were sent to IUCN as stated. Consultancies for regional activities have been regrouped in order to achieve bigger impact and results, and attract more interest from service providers than numerous small

interventions. Terms of References have been developed combining two activities as follows:

Component 1:

- a) Activities 1.7 and 1.8 regrouped.
- b) Activities 1.3 and 1.13 regrouped
- c) Activities 1.5 and 1.15 regrouped.

Component 2:

- a) Activities 2.4 & 2.5 regrouped
 - b) Activities 2.13 & 2.9 regrouped
2. The studies are in progress, the provisional reports are validated by the Technical Multisectoral Committees.
 3. The meeting reports are disseminated by NEA
 4. For the first Semester, REA and the 4 NEA filled the templates for reporting.
 5. Activity 2.8 will be carried out with the support of the BRIDGE Project.
 6. The work plans of the NEA and the REA have been adapted by changing the reporting template
 7. The REA developed an attendance sheet that was shared with the NCUs to be used by consultants during their meetings.
 8. During workshops stakeholders coming from the public sector, communities and local authorities are mobilized to participate,
 9. The activities involving the recruitment of Regional or International Consultants are transferred under the responsibilities of REA
 10. All the NEAs and the REA were to renegotiate the fees with the Banks by end of May 2019; including looking at other Banks. During Skype Meetings updates have been given to IUCN on this. In Guinea the team decided to retain the same bank due to the insignificant difference in bank rate with other banks. In Sierra Leone, the discussion continues with the bank to reduce the rate from 1.5% to 1%. The NCU in Liberia has completed the discussions and arrived at 0.75 % retaining rate. In Côte d'Ivoire the project team has completed the process of opening an account in a commercial bank for future transfers to implement project activities.
 11. A list of activities has been merged.
 12. In case of Component 2, the activities 2.13 & 2.9 have been merged and advertised.
 13. NEA requested Non Objection for any activity to be implemented
 14. Procurement plan was developed and shared with the 4 NEAs

In 2019, the external audit execution was in progress as the Terms of Reference was published and applications received and candidates shortlisted and sent to IUCN for No objection. The audit evaluation process has been completed and the audit excise was due to start in the first quarter of 2020.

7 LESSONS LEARNED

In 2019 there were bottle necks in accessing funds from the project account at the National Treasury for Côte d'Ivoire. Based on the recommendation of the Steering Committee, the MTC strongly advised the National Executing Agency who made frantic efforts during this reporting period in completing the process of opening an account at a commercial bank

(ECOBANK) for future transfers for the implementation of activities. With the opening of account at commercial bank it is expected that the team will have easy access to funds and be able to implement activities within timeframe. Generally the national executing agencies are autonomous entities with their own procedures (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). These 3 NEAs have flexibility on financial procedures with regard to procurement processes; which is not the case with Côte d'Ivoire at the beginning of the implementation of the project because the team in Côte d'Ivoire depended on the administrative procedure of the ministerial department to access funds in the project account at the national treasury.

In the implementation of regional activities whose funds are deposited in the accounts of National Executing Agencies, it has been experienced that the regional team usually encountered delay in the disbursement of such funds. Therefore in future in order to accelerate the implementation of such activities, the funds in question should be remitted into the account of the regional agency.

Project teams usually gain time if they undertake the establishment of the National Technical Advisory Team during the same workshop organized for the establishment of National Consultative Platforms for Water Users. This has proved to be cost effective and time saving rather than organizing a separate workshop for the establishment of the National Technical Advisory Teams.

In order to accelerate the implementation of project activities, the National Coordinating Units that are slow either due to the lack of the appropriate expertise will have to catch up from the other National Coordinating Units that are knowledgeable and moving ahead of the others by allowing them to share Terms of References developed by those moving faster with those that are slow but bearing in mind that they will have to review such terms of references to suit their situational contexts.

During the course of the ROAM research, it has been observed that not all the national consultants were familiar with the process and in most part of the region internet connectivity has been a problem in either downloading reports into the google drive or even linking up the International Consultant for clarifications on some issues. Consequently, the contracts for this research were extended because more time was required to complete the job. If the International Consultants had been within the region, this could have helped enormously in resolving issues on the ground in a timely manner. To this effect there are plans to have a practical demonstration workshop on one or two landscapes by the International Consultants to further reinforce the capacities of the national consultants engaged in the ROAM research for them to effectively and efficiently accomplish the task.

The Regional Coordinator has advised the National Coordinators to ensure that the project nurseries are established at the beginning of the raining season so that the transplanting can ideally take place during the raining season in order to hit the target. If the nurseries are not established at the right time the project may not end at the expected time.

The research work on the maps should be accelerated because it is only when the maps are ready that some followed-up activities of the ROAM process will be undertaken

8 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2020

The preparation of the AWPB 2020 and its validation by the MTC will be presented to the fourth session of Regional Steering Committee for approval.

Once the AWPB2020 is approved, the executing agencies will undertake the implementation of the project activities.

The first draft of AWPB 2020 for the 5 executing agencies is annexed to the current report.

Methodology of implementation of the project should follow Theory of Change. The implementation should follow Result Based Management, not by activities.

The activities should be by packages and by levels

- Level 1: The group of activities contributing to the Generation of knowledge, study and data collection
- Level 2: The group of activities contributing to Capacity building, training and social communication
- Level 3: The group of activities contributing to Implementation of best practices, Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA), Strategic Action Plan (SAP) adoption, and Fundraising.

The first quarter of 2020 will see the continuation of the implementation of the ROAM activities.

CONCLUSION

Most of the recommendations formulated by the supervision mission and adopted by the third regional steering committee have been achieved; indeed NEAs and REA combined efforts to increase the overall implementation rate from 18% to 38%. Specifically, the financial analysis during the 4th Quarter 2019 showed a total execution rate stands at 80% of the funds received.

However the procurement process to hire national consultants for new activities linked knowledge generation and field work is critical. From the 3 NEAs involved (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), only Guinea made tremendous a progress. The others are prone to carry out activities related to meetings which consume few resources.

Continued collaboration with other organizations and institutions on the ground for a better synergy for actions is required; like what UNOPS, WA BiCC and the European Union has demonstrated. This will prevent having parallel structures and even avoiding the duplication of functions in the Ziama and other reserves.

The year 2019 permitted project staff to make some progress with governance entities:

The **establishment of key transboundary, national and local entities** involved in the implementation of the project to insure the transparency and the accountability s affected. The establishment of the national consultative committees for water users, as well as the advisory committees and above all the establishment of two transboundary committees for the priority basinsr Great / Little Scarcies Kolente Basin and the Moa /Makona Basin .

The replacement of the RainForest Alliance by “**IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Programme**” was negotiated with UICN PACO. This initiative helped to commence the ROAM research process.

The achievement of the **baseline studies with the establishment of the ME Tools** for the tracking of the project performance

APPENDIX 1: National Annual reports

GUINEA

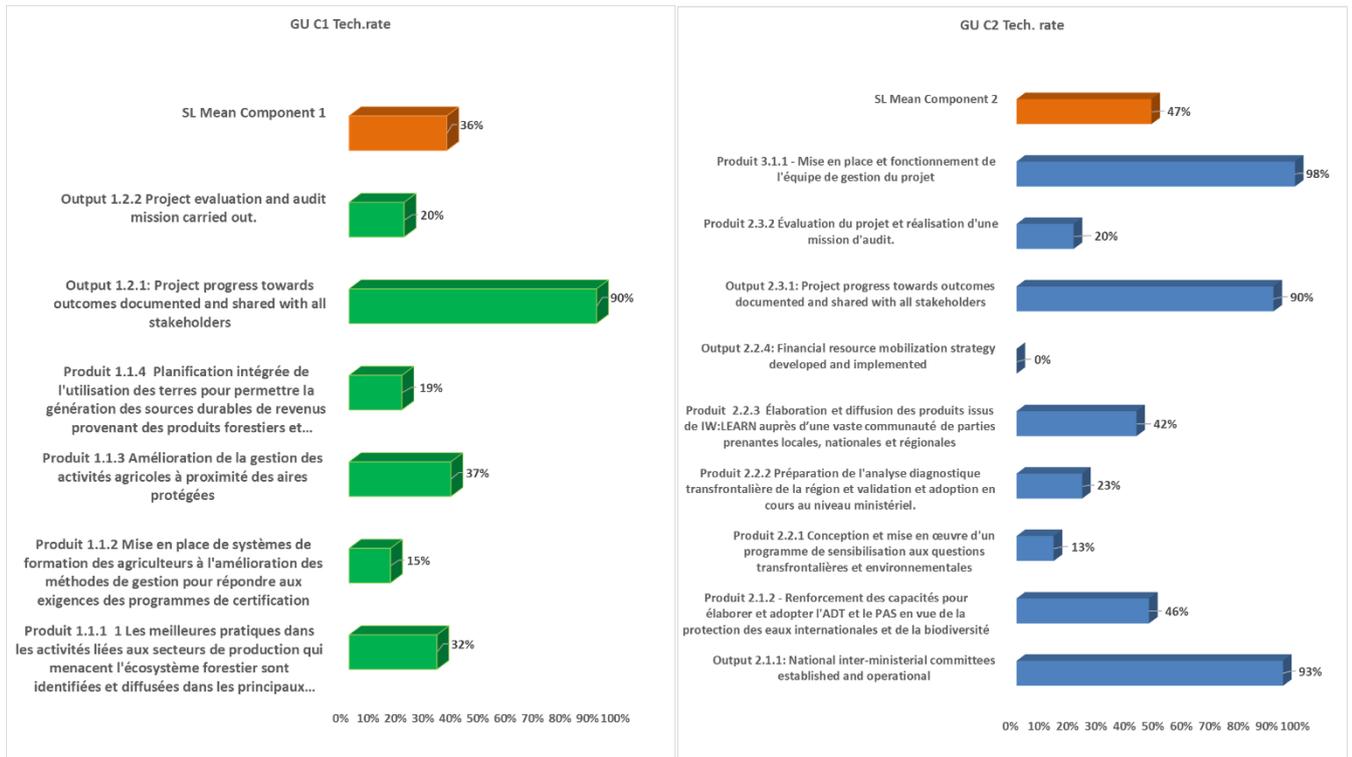
SIERRA LEONE

LIBERIA

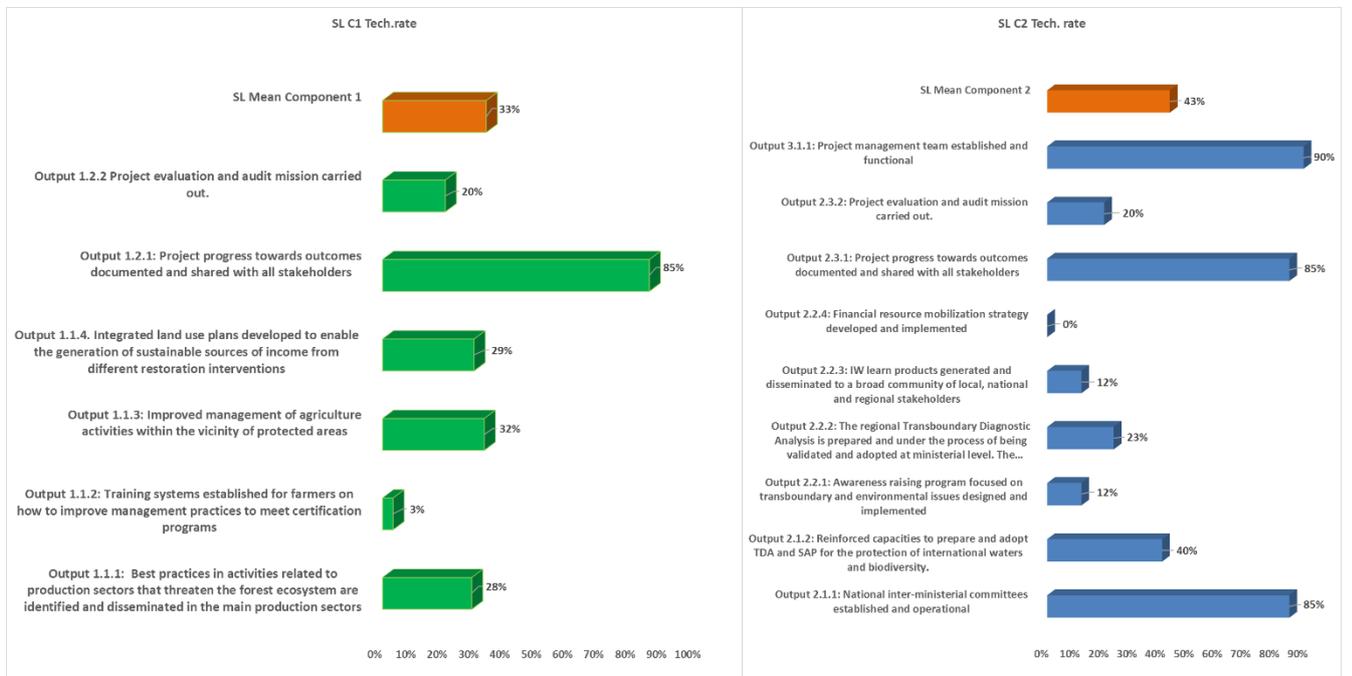
COTE D'IVOIRE

APPENDIX 2: Figure of technical rate in each country

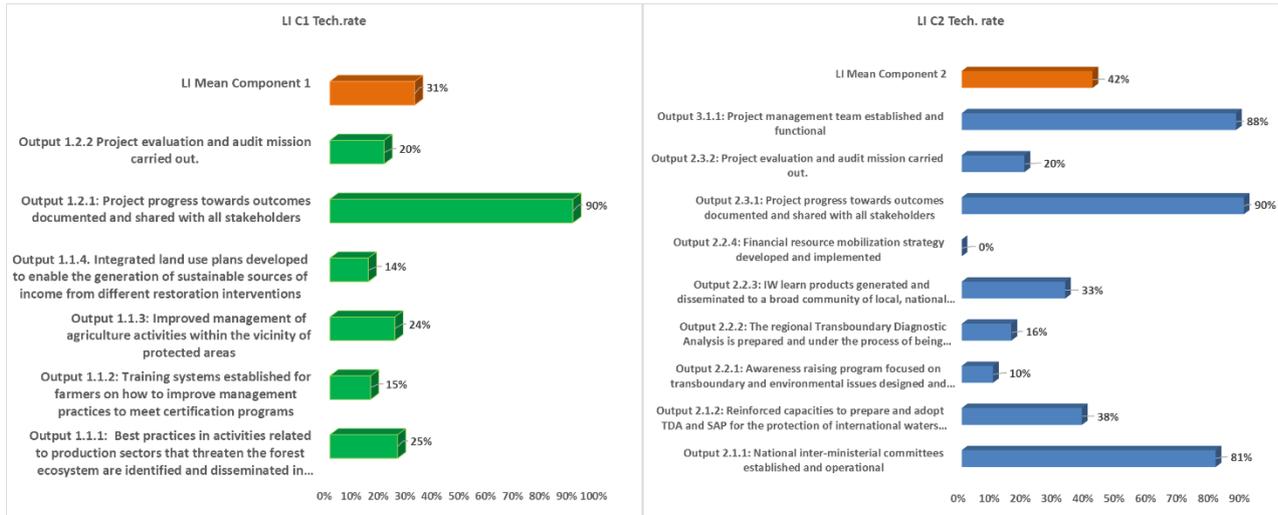
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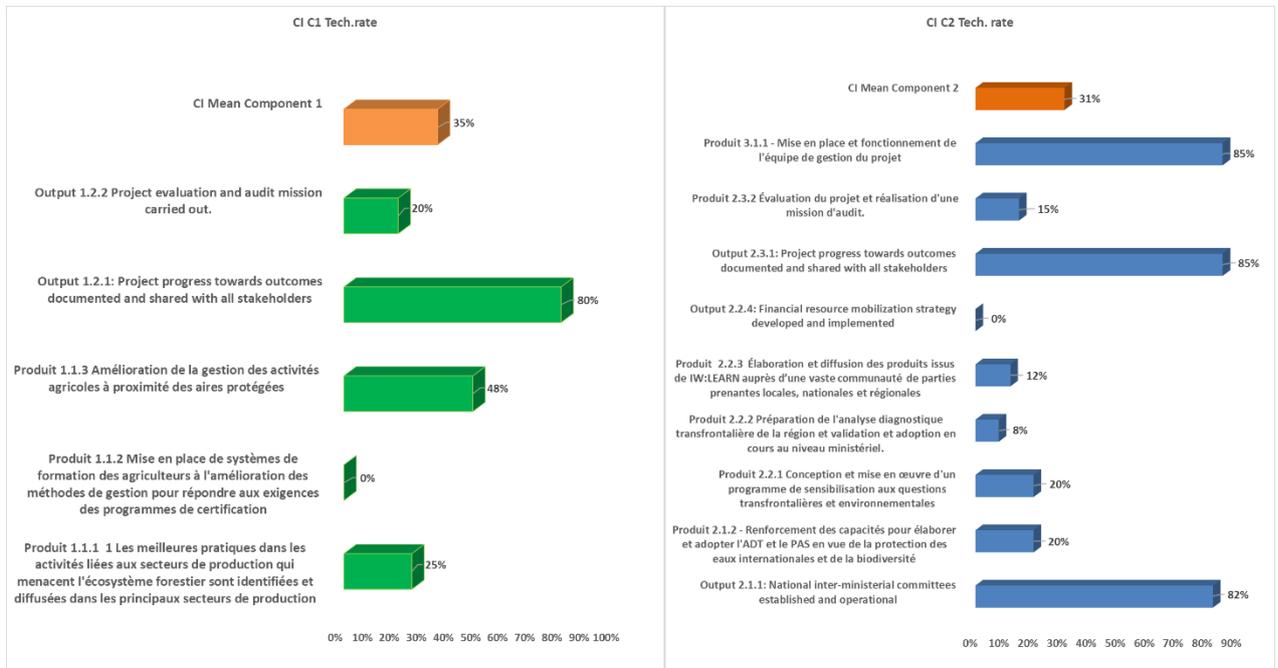
SIERRA LEONE



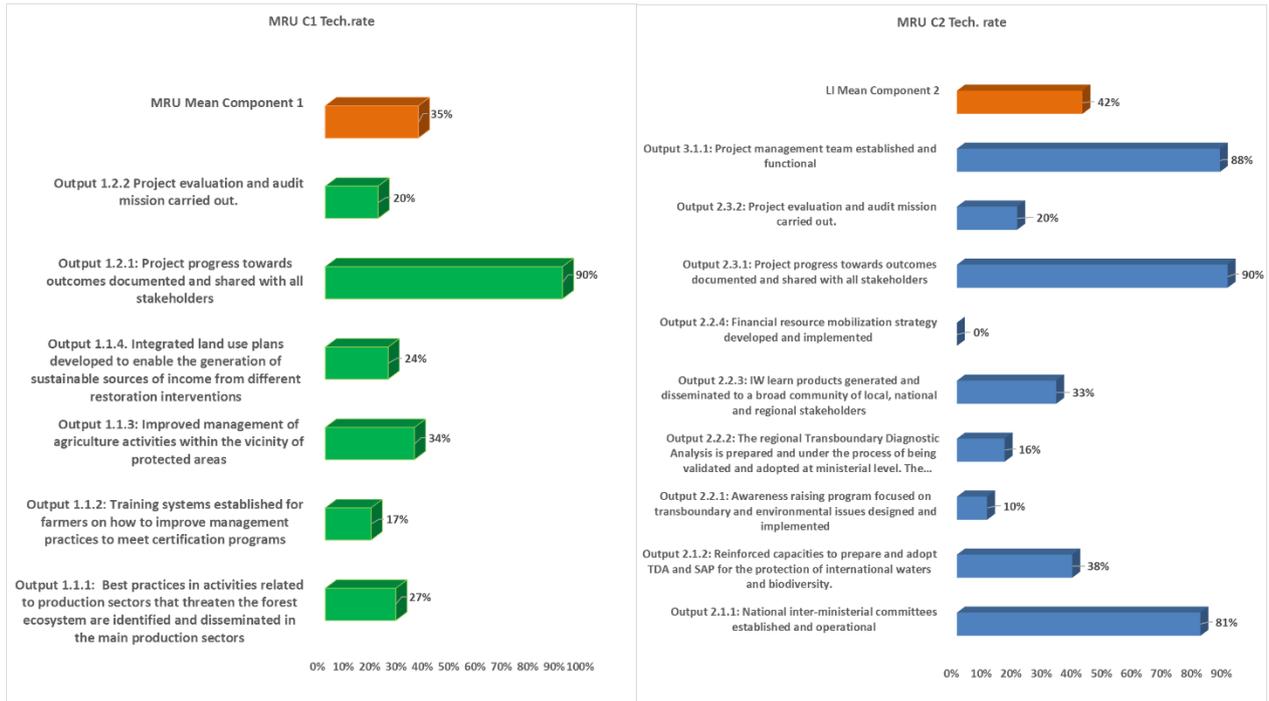
LIBERIA



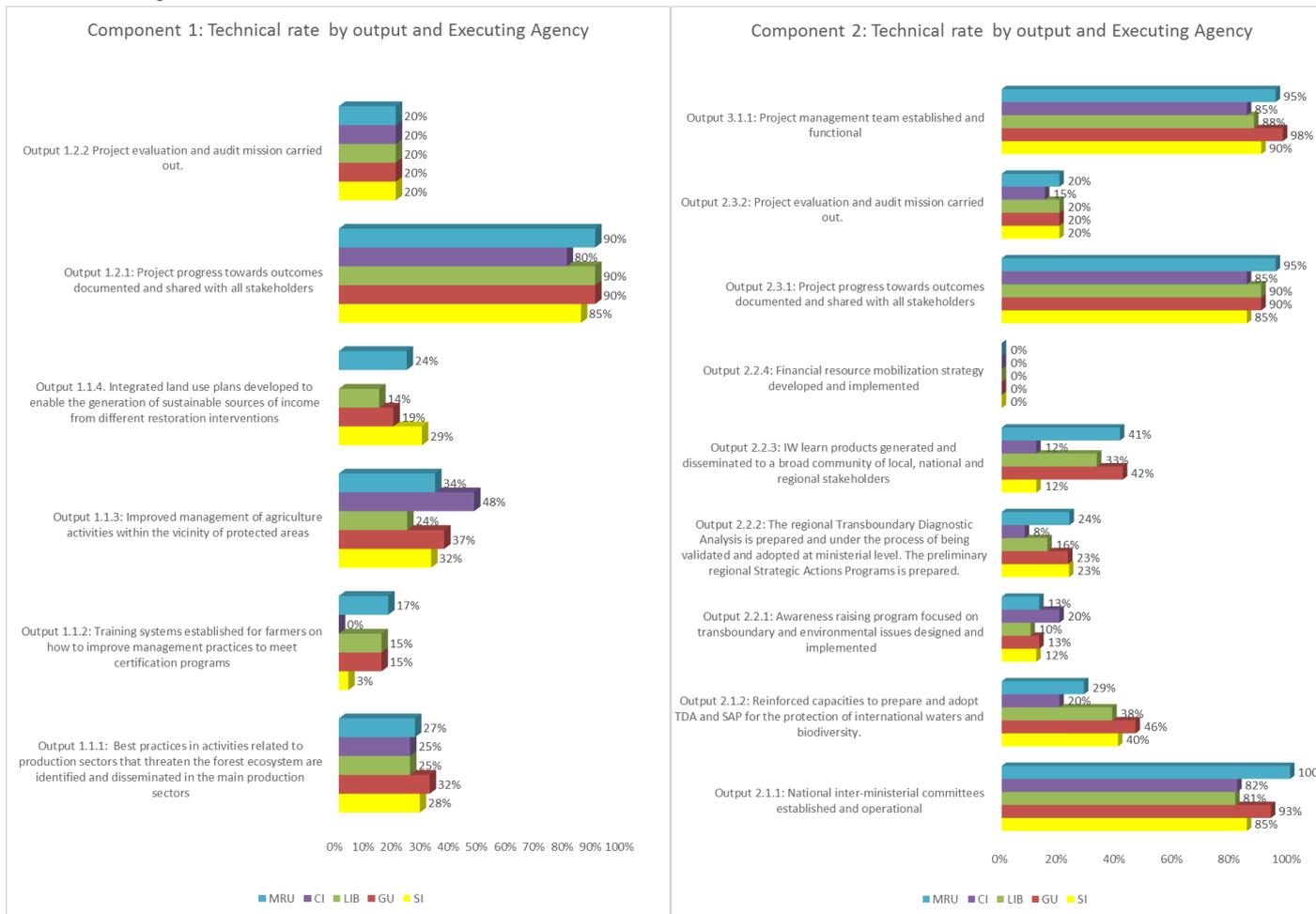
COTE D'IVOIRE



MRU



Overall Project



APPENDIX 2 : Operational plan implementation at decembre 31st,2019 (see attached)

APPENDIX 3 : Consolidated Annual Work Plan and Budget 2020 (see attached)

APPENDIX 4 : Operational Plan 2020 (see attached)