



**MANO RIVER UNION FOREST ECOSYSTEM AND INTERNATIONAL
WATER MANAGEMENT**

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS:.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS ACHIEVED	4
INTRODUCTION	6
2. PROGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH OUTPUTS.....	7
3 PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION	12
3.1 MAJOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES.....	12
3.1.1 Launch of the Project at National Level	12
3.1.2 Skype conference IUCN-PACO, and NEAs.....	12
3.1.3 MRU Web Site Creation.....	12
3.1.4 Design of a poster;.....	13
3.1.5 Draft of the outline of elaboration of awareness program. Activity 2.10.....	13
3.1.6 Workshop Training on communication storytelling and skill café	13
3.1.7 PACO News, Press release	13
3.1.8 Workshop On Good Practices In Freshwater Governance Ninth GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC9) Marrakech 2- 10 November 2018	14
4 PARTNERSHIP	15
4.1 With BRIDGE/IUCN	15
4.2 With WABICC.....	15
4.3 With GIZ.....	15
5.1 5 FINANCIAL EXECUTION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2018.....	16
5 CONSTRAINTS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED	16
6 LESSONS LEARNED.....	17
7 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR 2019	17
CONCLUSION	18
6 APPENDIX 1 :.....	19
TABLE OF CONSULTANCY SITUATION BY NEA (FY 2018).....	19
SITUATION OF NO OBJECTION FOR CONSULTANCIES (FY 2018).....	19
LOGISTICS REQUIREMENTS (FY 2018)	19
TABLE : SITUATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES BY LANDSCAPE	20
7 APPENDIX II: ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2019.....	21

ACRONYMS:

AfDB	African Development bank
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation, Ltd.
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
IUCN - PACO	International Union for Conservation of Nature Program Afrique du Centre et de l'Ouest
IW-LEARN	International Waters-Learning Exchange And Resources Network
MRU	Mano River Union
MTC	Multisectoral Technical Committee
NEA	National Executing Agency
REA	Regional Executing Agency
M.E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NO	Non Objection
NPCU	National Project Coordination Unit
ROAM	Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology
RPMU	Regional Project Management Unit
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SARA	San Antonio River Authority
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNECE	Union Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNOPS	United Nation Office Project
WABiCC	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
ZWW	Ziama - Wologesi - Wonegisi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

The main results obtained during 2018 contributed to the implementation of outputs of Components 1, 2 and 3 of the project as follow:

Component1 Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management

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

The progress made for this output concerned (**Activity 1.1**) recruitments of 07 technical assistant to implement project in the field as follow: 02 for Guinea, 04 for Liberia and 01 for Sierra Leone. The second progress with this output was procurement for logistic. Guinea received no objection to purchase 02 motorbikes and 01 vehicle. No objection for Liberia and Sierra are awaited.

The **output1.1.1, Output 1.1.3** and **Output 1.1.4** concern ROAM process. This concerns specifically engagement of national partners Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea recruited 5 national consultants. The same process is ongoing in Sierra Leone and Liberia where the contracts of consultants recruited are in negotiation. At the regional level, MRU has received the favourable agreement of IUCN PACO to lead the ROAM process by providing the international consulting services.

The progress made for **output 1.1.3** concerned **Activity 1.12** : the establishment of 8 local consultative committees of the landscapes: in Liberia (Wonegizi, West Nimba and East Nimba Reserve), Guinea (West Nimba, Diecke, Zياما) Sierra Leone (Gola Forest) and Cote d'Ivoire (Nimba Reserve , Tai Parc). Their mandate and the organizational framework adopted under the supervision of the representative local government.

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

The work focussed on:

Output 2.1.1 – Activities 2.1&2.2 were fully implemented by Establishment of 4 National Multisectoral Technical Committees (MTC) with adoption of their mandate and organizational framework under the supervision of the representative of the national government. The indicator is attained.

Output 2.1.2: (Reinforcement capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity) . Consultants were recruited to carry out **Activity 2.4** (conduct and Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins) and **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). The Regional Project Coordinator attended a preconference workshop on good practices in freshwater governance and the 9th GEF Biannual International Waters Conference held in Marrakech (Morroco, Oct. 2018) which presented lessons learned in TDA and SAP process from IW-LEARN. These conferences also aimed at strengthening participants in good practices in freshwater governance across two themes: the water-food energy nexus and legal and institutional frameworks.

Output 2.3.1: Project progress towards outcomes documented and shared with all stakeholders

(**Activities 1.20 & 2.20**) The second regional steering committee was held on April 6 in Monrovia, Liberia. During the session, the progress report of the project, the consolidated Annual work plan and Budget for 2018 of the project were validated. The Terms of Reference of the Regional Steering Committee were reviewed and approved by the RSC. Recommendations were addressed to IUCN, the

Regional Implementation Agency and to the Regional and National Executing National Agencies (MRU and Member states) for the smooth implementation of the project.

REA recruited a consultant to finalize the result framework of the project and to put in place the monitoring & evaluation plan.

Component 3: Project management

The executing agencies were fully staffed with the recruitment of the regional communication and Monitoring and Evaluation Experts and the recruitment of Technical Assistants. They conducted procurement process for equipment and logistic acquisitions, the hiring of consultancy services, holding regional, national and local consultative meetings, the strengthening of partnership with other implementing agencies through the principles guiding the project implementation such as legality and legitimacy, etc..

In term of cofounding activities, the project pursues partnership and synergy with WABiCC. The 4 National Executing Agencies and the Regional Executing Agency participated in several activities such as the launching of the Wologesi-Wonegisi-Ziama project of WABiCC and the 5th Bilateral Steering Committee meeting of the Tai - Grebo – Sapo and Khran landscapes. The participation of GEF Mano River Project in these activities aimed at promoting synergy among partners operating in the same landscapes, further strengthening the network among partners for the transboundary collaboration. It also promoted GEF / Mano project visibility among partners.

INTRODUCTION

During the year 2018 the main outputs focussed on the implementation of activities related to the development of ToR package, the staffing of REA and NEAs, the establishment of local consultative committees for forest landscapes, the holding of second regional steering committee in Monrovia April 6, 2018, the procurement for goods and services and the installation of the four (04) Multisectoral Technical Committees.

The implementation of the activities were based on following principles : (i) legality; (ii) legitimacy, (iii) promoting a strong local communities empowerment; (iv) MRU playing regional executing agency role; (v) project working with existing or recent initiatives of projects; (vi) learning by doing and (vii) communication and awareness raising about IWRM, forest conservation, etc.

This report 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) partnership (v) financial execution as at December 31, 2018, (vi) constraints and difficulties encountered; (vii) lessons learned (viii) planned activities for year 2019 and (ix) conclusion.

1. PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN YEAR 2018

For FY2018, eleven activities were planned 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 1.9** Produce initial maps of tree-based restoration opportunities, prepare reports on findings and ground survey needs.
- **Activity 1.12:** Establish local Consultative Committees and transboundary platforms and hold their meetings.
- **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 1.20:** Organise project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions.

Component 2: Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters

- **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 2.20:** Organize project annual reporting, review and planning including M&E missions.

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 2018 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	<p>Procurement committee was put in place by each execution agency and through transparent and legal principles, the acquisition of goods and services were carried out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sierra Leone: One Technical Assistant recruited and contract signed. The procurement process for the purchase of one vehicle 4x4 completed. The NO from IUCN is awaited. - Guinea: Two Technical Assistants recruited and contract signed and the NO for the purchase of one vehicle 4x4 is given. - Liberia: The recruitment of one (01) senior and three (03) junior Technical Assistants have been achieved and contracts signed. The procurement process for the purchase of 4 motorbikes and vehicle 4x4 achieved. No Objection from IUCN is awaited. <p>The achievement of these tasks should strengthen the capacities of NEAs to undertake field activities.</p>
	Activity 1.2 Conduct a survey and compile data on best practices...	<p>The call for expression of interest for these consultancies was advertised in July but was relaunched by lack of proposal in August. Applications for national consultants were received by National Executing Agencies, meanwhile, for international consultant the offers received did not meet the requirements. MRU sent a letter to IUCN- PACO requesting the recruitment of a consultant to conduct the studies.</p> <p>In Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, the evaluation of proposals send by national consultants has been completed. Consultants were retained through a transparent and legal procedure in each NEA. The situation is presented in a table in the Appendix</p> <p>Concerning the recruitment of the International consultant, The REA requested IUCN PACO to provide an international consultant to conduct the ROAM process. In return IUCN PACO proposed the IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Programme as international consultant</p> <p>Financial negotiation and signing the contracts are ongoing except for NEA ⁷</p>

		Guinea
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	Idem to 1.2
	Activity 1.12: Establish local Consultative Committees	<p>During this year, NEA of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia organised missions. The objective of these missions was to inform the representatives of the riparian communities in a buffer zone of 5km of Gola (Sierra Leone), Diecke, Nimba West and Ziama (Guinea) and Wonegisi and Nimba East (Liberia, Cote d' Ivoire) Tai (Cote d'Ivoire) forests about the objectives and results of the project, set up local consultative committees and to adopt the text of creation of the local consultative committees. 58 villages were involved and 97 members of local community participated in this process (see table in annex. People chose democratically their representatives. Finally six (06) (without Sierra Leone) local consultative committees were created :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local consultative Committee of Gola was established on April 19, 2018, in Kenema; composed of twenty - seven (27) statutory members of which seven (7) were women (26%) from 7 chiefdoms. • The local Consultative Committee of proposed Ziama forest (Guinea) was established on May 29, in Sérédou (Ziama); composed of twelve (12) statutory members of which one (1) was woman (8%).from 5 districts. • The local Consultative Committee of proposed Nimba forest (Guinea) was established on May 31, in Sereingbara (Monts Nimba); composed of twenty (20) statutory members of which eleven (11) were women (55%) from 10 districts • The local Consultative Committee of proposed Diecke reserved forest (Guinea) was established on June 2, in Diecké; composed of ten (10) statutory members of which seven (7) were women (70%) from 4 districts • The local consultative committee of Proposed Wonegizi protected area was established on December 10th, in Konia, Zorzor district comprising of thirteen (13) statutory members of which five(5) women (38%) coming from 13 villages. • The local consultative committee for the GBA Forest (Nimba West) and East Nimba Natural Reserve (ENNR) was established on December 12th 2018 , in Sanniquellie (Nimba County) comprising sixteen (16) statutory

		<p>members of which five (05) were women (31%) coming from 14 villages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On March 4th 2019, the National Executing Agency conducted a workshop in Than Town, Gola, Konneh District and established a local consultative committee for the Gola Forest National Park comprising eleven (11) statutory members of which five (5) were women (45%) coming from 9 communities. • Local consultative committees of Tai and Nimba (Côte d’Ivoire) were established for Côte d’Ivoire from August 22 to August 31st. Base on the existing committee in the Nimba reserve a local consultative committee was created comprising 12 advisory committee members of which 5 were women (42%) from 6 villages Base on the existing committees, the local consultative committees of TAI was also created comprising 15 advisory committee members of which four (4) were women (27%) form 5 cantons. <p>Local consultative committees aim to strengthen transboundary cooperation and synergies and insure the participation of the local communities in the project activities in the protected Forest Landscape, in particular during the implementation of the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) for landscape planning and restoration; and prepare communities for the negotiation of the integrated land use plans.</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	Idem act 1.2
	Activity 1.17 Negotiate integrated land use plans	With the exception of NEA Côte d’Ivoire, the other 3 NEA proceeded to the recruitment of consultants (idem act 1.2) (see 4 th Quartely report). Financial negotiation and signing the contracts are ongoing except for Guinea that has completed the signing of contracts.
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	Idem act 2.20
	Activity 1.21 Organise project steering committee meetings	The second regional steering committee was organized in Monrovia on 6 April 2018. This committee validated the 2017 annual report, the 2018 annual work plan and budget, as well as the validation of the mandate, the action plan and the organizational framework of the regional steering committee,

		Also, the research for the establishment of baseline indicators, for the monitoring and evaluation tool has commenced.
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 established and operational		Not applicable for this period
Output 2.1.2: Reinforced capacities to prepare and adopt TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity.		
	Activity 2.4 Develop a detailed stakeholder analysis of the water sector in the targeted transboundary basins.	<p>The call for expression of interest for these consultancies was advertised in July but was relaunched in August by lack of proposal. Applications for national consultants were received by National Executing Agencies, meanwhile, for regional consultant only one proposal was received. This situation is pending. Meanwhile the regional consultant has the competence and skill to conduct the process. The decision should be taken for national consultants to work independently. At the end the process one of the national consultant could be assigned to consolidate the 4 national reports or the regional consultant will consolidate the national reports.</p> <p>Consultants were retained through a transparent and legal procedure in each NEA. The situation is presented as follow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cote d'Ivoire: Process is completed. Financial negotiation is under review and contract is in preparation. - Guinea: The process is completed and contracts signed. - Liberia: The process is completed the evaluation reports have been submitted. The contract is being prepared - Sierra Leone: The process has been completed. Financial negotiation is under review and contract is being prepared. <p>The studies that should have started in November will now begin in February 2019. This is simply because NEAs delayed in sending to the regional office information about the recruitment process. The achievement of this activity will support the establishment of a transboundary committee in the (i) Moa-Makona, (ii) Cavally, (iii) Great Scarcies-Kolanté basins respectively.</p>
	Activity 2.5 Determine training needs of the regional, national and local stakeholders involved in the TDA and SAP	<p>Idem act 2.4</p> <p>This activity was merged with activity 2.4. The achievement of this activity will permit to elaborate a training program for the actors in the TDA and SAP process.</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	The consulting firm recruited to conduct the studies on the project indicators

	reporting, review and planning including M&E missions	<p>had skype conference with the RPMU during which issues were discussed around the budget for the regional validation workshop. The consulting firm sent an inception report and comments were forwarded for a review and the report finalized.</p> <p>The inception report include the specific objective of the study, expected results, number of days scheduled for the research, the project indicators the research will focus, list of target groups / individuals, research methodology and strategy for the validation of key findings at both national and regional levels. It also includes a matrix specifying for each indicator the tools for data collection.</p> <p>This led to the engagement in processes for the payment of the first tranche of the contract. The consultant is currently revising the activity calendar since there were complications at the receiving bank in Côte d'Ivoire for the transfer of the first tranche. The activity calendar once revised will be shared with the National Executing Agencies across the 4 project countries for the research</p>
Component 3 Project management		
Outcome 3.1: The project is implemented		
Output 3.1.1: Project management team established and functional		
	Activity 3.1 Appoint the project management and coordination units at regional and national levels	<p>Since September 2018, the regional project management team has been fully staffed with the hires of the monitoring and evaluation expert and the communication specialist. This facilitated the preparation of terms of reference for interdependent activities, including the hiring of consultants and the signing of contracts related to the activities of components 1 and 2.</p> <p>The recruitment of different consultants to carry out the various studies was done, except that of ROAM, for which IUCN has provided the regional consultant to conduct the study.</p>
	Activity 3.2: Procure office equipment to the project management and coordination units	MRU Sierra Leone Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea have received NO from IUCN for the purchase of IT equipment. Liberia has just started the process

3 PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

3.1 MAJOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The activities carried out in 2018 in term of communication permitted to inform national stakeholders in MRU member states, the local communities living in the vicinity of the forest landscapes, the technical implementing partners working in the same landscapes of GEF MANO project objectives and outcomes. It offered opportunity to shared information on the activities and identified the synergy of action with others projects.

3.1.1 Launch of the Project at National Level

The NEAs of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia organized the national launch of project respectively on February 15-16, March 14-15, March 20 and 02-03 April 2018. More than one hundred sixty (160) participants attended of which 25 women. The general objective of the launching workshop is to inform national stakeholders about the project and expected results of the project implementation plan and to review and engage national partners identified in the countries during the project's development, and to establish officially MTC, to present and validate to Annual Work Plan and Budget 2018.

The wide media coverage of these events by the print media, the online press, the national TV, the national and community radio of these different countries has increased the visibility of the project. We know that in these countries, the rate of penetration of the media in the population is growing rapidly and that the audience rate of the traditional media, television and radio in particular, knows a very high peak when it is a subject that affects the present or future of people, especially the issue of the ecosystem and water resources. If we do not have the results of an audience study with these press organs or specialized institutes during the dissemination of information on the project, we can nevertheless estimate at least one million (1,000,000) people who have heard about the project, out of a population of 41,800,000 inhabitants (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, source : (UNHCR, 2012, MRU, 2011)).

3.1.2 Skype conference IUCN-PACO, and NEAs

Several Skype conferences were held between the UICN-PACO, REA and NEAs to discuss about challenge 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.

3.1.3 MRU Web Site Creation

On October 15, 2018, the terms of reference for the establishment of the website was prepared by the Communication Specialist and submitted to the General Secretariat of the MRU. The development of the website started in December 2018 and it is expected to be completed before the end of the first quarter of 2019. The website will help improve the visibility of the project through the dissemination of newsletters, experience notes and the Communication Plan of the project.

The development of the Communication Plan for the project, initiated in December 2018, will be submitted to IUCN for validation in February 2019. This plan will be accompanied by models of tools that will be used in the implementation of project activities (kakemonos, banner, vehicles display, etc.) to promote project visibility.

3.1.4 Design of a poster;

On the occasion of the 9th GEF Biannual International Waters Conference 2018 , in Morocco, a poster of GEF Mano project was designed on October 26, 2018, and exposed in the conference hall where various participants at this international meeting visited.

3.1.5 Draft of the outline of elaboration of awareness program. Activity 2.10

In relation to activity 2.10, a draft of the outline of elaboration of awareness program was developed in November 2018.

3.1.6 Workshop Training on communication storytelling and skill café

The Liberia National Coordinator, the Technical Assistant, and the Communication Specialist of the GEF–IUCN/Mano project attended a workshop on communication storytelling and skill café organized by WA-BiCC, from 3rd to 5th December 2018 at Millennium Afrikland Hotel, Monrovia, Liberia.

The objective of this training had direct link with the following activities for the GEF Mano project: **Activity 2.10**, and **Activity 2.17**.

This training allowed participants to show how to interact with social networks and internet, radio programs and skits to effectively reach the awareness raising objectives of the population. Also, with regard to activity 2.17, the training allowed participants to improve their ability to take pictures that will inform project website.

3.1.7 PACO News, Press release

Since the launch of the project, eight (8) press releases have been published by PACO NEWS. These press release relate to:

- The national launch of Project,
- The establishment of six (6) Local Consultative Committees (Sierra Leone, Guinea & Liberia),
- The coordination meeting of the technical and financial partners of Ziama-Wonegezi-Wolegisi, Nzerekore, in Guinea. A national press network was also created in the bid to improve project visibility for the GEF MANO project in Guinea.

These press articles were produced by the Regional Coordination with the support of the national coordinators for the launch of the project and the establishment of the local consultative committees of Sierra Leone and Guinea. As for the press articles on the establishment of local committees in Liberia and the coordination meeting of Ziama - WoneGizi - Wolegizi technical and financial partners, they were produced by the communication specialist.

These press articles were produced by the regional coordinator with the support of the national coordinators for the launch of the project and the establishment of the local advisory committees of Sierra Leone and Guinea. As for the press articles on the establishment of local committees in Liberia and the coordination meeting of Ziama - WoneGizi - Wolegizi technical and financial partners, they were produced by the regional communication specialist.

The establishment of local consultative committees was also covered by community radios in the sites concerned, with interviews of resource persons from the said committees and the project Regional Coordinator. The radio reports were broadcast three (3) times by each of the invited radios. In total, seven (7) community radios covered the establishment of seven local consultative committees. When setting up local consultative committees, took part one hundred and twelve (112) members of statutory committees, of which 41.26% are women.

3.1.8 Workshop On Good Practices In Freshwater Governance Ninth GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC9) Marrakech 2- 10 November 2018

IWC9 convenes about 300 participants—comprising GEF IW project managers, representatives of beneficiary countries, non-governmental organizations, transboundary management institutions, GEF Agencies, international investment Banks and the private sector. Collectively, the participants represent 84 active GEF IW projects, 80 countries and the various GEF Agencies. In this regards, the Regional Coordinator attended this meeting.

The GEF MANO project outcomes and outputs were presented and a poster installed in the conference hall.

The outputs of the meetings are in line with the following Project outputs:

Output 2.1.2: Capacity-building for the design and adoption of TDA and SAP for the protection of international waters and biodiversity

Output 2.2.2: The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis is prepared and under the process of being validated and adopted at ministerial level

Output 2.2.3: IW learn products generated and disseminated to a broad community of local, national and regional stakeholders

Beside the technical sessions, the regional coordinator met some partners and exchanged on following points.

a) Twinning of Mano River Basins And San Antonio River Basin

Discussion with representatives of the RiverSymposium Foundation based in Australia and the *San Antonio River Authority* (SARA) to develop twinning with MRU on the Moa and Makona Basins. The discussion focused on how SARA could assist MRU in the following area :

- Building capacity for water quality monitoring
- improving water quality conditions based on problems caused by mining interests and agricultural practices
- local stakeholder engagement and public environmental policy implementation
- Exchange visit between MRU and SARA

Regional coordinator proposed to San Antonio River Authority, the collaboration in the area of capacity building on managing water pollution in the Mano and Makona basins which will contribute to the project results framework and implement “**Outcome 2.2. Strengthened government agencies and institutions for transboundary water resource management**, specifically” “**Output 2.2.1. Awareness raised on transboundary and environmental issues**” (Indicator 2.2.c: Number of people in the Mano basin reporting awareness on water quality and riparian ecosystem management).

a. United Nations Economic Commission For Europe (UNECE)

Discussion with UNECE to support the four member states in the process of preparation and adoption of the Convention on international water of 1992 on the international water. The four member states have already engaged the process but individually, the GEF MANO project should be an opportunity for MRU Secretariat to coordinate the process with the assistance of the UNECE.

b. African Development Bank

A discussion was held with the representative AfDB in charge of Climate Change on the support to GEF MANO. Noting the insufficient of resources for the project to impact the livelihood of the communities living in the project intervention areas and considering the recommendation of the first regional steering committee to seek additional resources, the matter of mobilize fund from AfDB was

proposed, in return, The representative of the Bank, requested to submit a note relative to the needs of the project as soon as possible.

a) IUCN- Headquarters

Discussion with the Director of International Water on the GEF MANO Project was focused on the performance and how to improve the implementation. The Director requested what are the needs of the project in term strengthening the capacity of the executing agencies

4 PARTNERSHIP

The 4 National Executing Agencies and the Regional Executing Agency participated in several activities which aimed at promoting synergy among partners operating in the same landscapes to further strengthen the networking among implementing partners for the transboundary collaboration.

4.1 WITH BRIDGE/IUCN

The national coordinators of the GEF project were invited by the Project BRIDGE/IUCN to attend its regional meeting in Monrovia, Liberia from July 17 to 20, 2018. The expected result of this participation is to contribute to the Strengthening government agencies involved in the implementation of GEF project on the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the establishment transboundary committees for river basins.

4.2 WITH WABICC

The GEF MANO project and WABiCC program met 4 times to operationalize the synergy between them:

During the second regional steering committee in Monrovia on April 6, the two programs shared their Action Plan where many similarity were highlighted.

During the launch of the Wologesi-Wonegisi-Ziama project, WABiCC invited GEF MANO represented by Regional Coordinator, the national coordinators of Liberia and Guinea and the representative of UICN PACO. A coordination meeting of the implementing partners (FFI, UNOPS, EU) in Ziama landscape to harmonize their work plans and further strengthened synergies for project implementation. It was also an opportunity that they utilised to promote GEF Mano project visibility.

The National coordinator of Liberia was invited by FFI to attend a meeting on proposed protected area Wonegisi landscape. The Coordinator used this opportunity to work on consolidating the project work plan.

Beside the launch of ZWW, a technical session was held with the manager of WABiCC in Nzerekore to concretize the collaboration in term of sharing information and participation in any activity conducted in the landscape by the other party.

4.3 WITH GIZ

The Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and Liberia National Project Coordinator also attended the 5th Bilateral Steering Committee meeting of the Tai - Grebo – Sapo and Khran landscapes shared by Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire that was held in October in Abidjan. The M.E should work with the implementing partners of this landscape to come out with a consolidated work plan. They also utilized this opportunity to promote project visibility to partners that attended the meeting.

5.1 5 FINANCIAL EXECUTION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2018

The Grant Agreement signed between the MRU Secretariat and IUCN for an amount of Six million three hundred and thirty six thousand three hundred and sixty four United States Dollars (US\$6,336,364) which encompasses US\$ 624,044 for the REA operations and the US\$ 5,708,320 for the 4 countries (Sierra Leone US\$1,689,362, Liberia US\$1,689,362, Guinea US\$1,689,362 and Cote d'Ivoire US\$624,044). Total funds disbursed by IUCN at the date to the REA and NEAs summed up to US\$1,360,738.

The cumulative expenditures summed up to US\$312,468 with an execution rate of 22% of funds received from IUCN. See the table below for details.

No	Agency	Budget (A)	Fund Received from Partner (B)	Balance with Partner (C=A-B)	Expenses (Q4, 2018) (D)	Cumulative Expenses (E)	Balance (F=B-E)	% (G=E/B)
1	MRU - REA	628,044	214,541	413,503	48,273	138,039	76,502	64%
2	CI - NEA	628,044	59,210	568,834	937	20,734	38,476	35%
3	SL - NEA	1,689,362	362,329	1,327,033	10,899	32,762	329,567	9%
4	Guinea - NEA	1,689,362	362,329	1,327,033	31,362	72,072	290,257	20%
5	Liberia - NEA	1,689,362	362,329	1,327,033	20,439	48,861	313,468	13%
	TOTAL	6,324,174	1,360,738	4,963,436	111,910	312,468	1,048,270	22%

By taking into account the pending expenditure related the ongoing contracts, the expected balance is showing as follow :

Cote d'Ivoire	USD35495 for expenditures	balance USD35936
Sierra Leone	USD105807 for expenditures	balance USD223760
Guinea	USD100, 204 for expenditures	balance USD190053
Liberia	USD105,000 for expenditures	balance USD208468

5 CONSTRAINTS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

For 2018, the general trend of constrains and difficulties were in line with the slow pace of the implementation of activities. The recruitment of national and international consultants has almost completed but it was going at a slow pace as well as the procurement of project vehicles. The key activities related to ROAM will start in February 2019. Since Rain Forest Alliance withdrew, management has tried to get a replacement for this activity to be undertaken. IUCN is willing to provide the International Consultant that will supervise the ROAM study to be undertaken in the 4 project countries.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the general trend has been the same throughout 2018 in relation to the implementation of the activities. The project team continues to face serious challenges due to the procedures related to the disbursement of funds. There is rigidity of the disbursement process on time under the budget execution based on Côte d'Ivoire national procedure instead of MRU procedures. Another issue is that Côte d'Ivoire does not have national GEF STAR Funds but benefits from the regional funds on the regional activities of component 1 at the same time these regional activities are conditioned by on the ground interventions activities actually beneficial to the 3 countries having pledged national GEF STAR funds. On the other hand, MRU which is coordinating regional activities has no allocations; provision is only made for the 4 executing agencies.

It is still expected that the NEA of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone to formalize the creation of national local consultative committees by an order signed by the competent Authority. It is the same case for the creation of MTC in Liberia and Sierra Leone to be fully formalized by the Authority.

The reminder of the REA was addressed the concerned NEAs to solve the questions.

The establishment of local and transboundary committees of the forest landscapes is delayed in Liberia due to slow pace of NEAs. Liberia shares all the 5 landscapes with other countries and it is important to bring all support to national coordination unit to boost the process.

It should also be noted that the project is working with four local currencies. Some countries have high inflation rate which induced high variability in the pricing of acquisitions. . For example, while in Guinea and Liberia, the purchase of vehicles and motorbikes are identical costing (around US \$ 32,000 for vehicles), in Sierra Leone the cost is 40,359 USD.

Some additional expenditures occurred meanwhile the activities were not scheduled in Prodoc such as Baseline indicator studies which were not initially planned in the project, although important..

The delay in the project implementation, which was supposed to start in February 2017, has started finally a year later, in February 2018 because the first instalments were transferred to Regional Executing Agency in December 2017 and to national executing agencies by January 2018.

During the mid-term supervision, the opportunity for a budget revision is necessary because some activities are their budget lines already exhausted meanwhile others activities have budget lines well allocated . For example, the budget line for activity 1.12 has no longer enough to continue its implementation.

6 LESSONS LEARNED

The institutional arrangement of project presented various typology. The national executing agencies either autonomous entities with their own procedures (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and or depending of the administrative procedure of the ministerial department (Côte d'Ivoire). The 3 NEAs have flexibility on financial procedures with regard to procurement processes; which is not the case with Cote d'Ivoire.

The NEAs of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia opened the project account at Commercial Bank; meanwhile, Côte d'Ivoire has its account in the bank of the national treasury/public moneys. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire decided to transfer all donor funds under treasury. The process to withdraw money is different from commercial banks. The financial controller requests to NEA to present the budget under national template and submit to him. Since the process is subject to many controls, the NEA should work by anticipation or opening a new account in a Commercial Bank to carry out the activities following the chronogram of Annual Work Plan.

The allocation of resources of regional activities to national budget and the dispatching of the regional experts (Communication and M&E) between REA and NEA are affecting clear management of the financial resources.

The Regional Steering Committee, recommended in its second session that NEAs should retrocede these allocation to the REA and request to UICN-PACO to send letter to the NEAs to get their agreement to transfer the identified budget lines.

7 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR 2019

The preparation of the AWPB 2019 and its validation by the MTC will be presented to the third session of Regional Steering Committee for approval.

Once the AWPB2019 is approved, the executing agencies will undertake the implementation of the project activities.

The first draft of AWPB 2019 for 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 2019 will see the continuation of the implementation of the ROAM activities.

CONCLUSION

The year 2018 permitted project staff to make some progress with governance entities and the procurement of equipment:

The establishment of key national and local entities involved in the implementation of the project to insure the transparency and the accountability was effected. The establishment of the four Mutisectoral Technical Committees as governing body at national level, the setting of the Ziama, Wonegisi, Mt Nimba and Diecke and Tai Forests local consultative committees as governing body at the sites level was done.

The strengthening of capacity NPCU for monitoring and reporting of the activities was effected by recruiting technical assistants (Guinea =2; Sierra Leone = 1. Liberia =4).

The issues of procurement for logistic and IT materials and filed equipment through transparent procedures in each NEA were undertaken.

The staffing of the RPMU achieved by the recruitment of the Regional Experts in Communication and for Monitoring and Evaluation to insure the full coordination and monitoring of the project activities.

Concerning the implementation of activities, several tasks have been started related to the generation of knowledge and data collection from, the drafting of ToRs; the call for proposal and their evaluation, the selection of consultants and the drafting of contracts. Thus the TOR of ROAM activities, baseline indicators and the ME system, preliminary studies of TDA were drafted, , the call for proposal and the evaluation of proposal and selection of consultants were done through transparent procedures.

The replacement of the RainForest Alliance by “**IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Programme**” was negotiated with UICN PACO. This is key progress, because RA issue had delayed the ROAM process implementation.

The main outputs obtained during the year 2018 contributed to reinforce the governance mechanism of the project and to inform the Monitoring and Evaluation indicators (outputs 2.1.1 and 3.1.1). the indicator **2.1.b: Number of National Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee (NIC) established** achieved.

The first quarter of 2019 should be determinant in the project delivery with the acquisition of logistic and the effective implementation of the ROAM activities on ground.

6 APPENDIX 1 :

TABLE OF CONSULTANCY SITUATION BY NEA (FY 2018)

National Consultants for GEF Project				
ACTIVITY #	SIERRA LEONE	LIBERIA	GUINEA	COTE D'IVOIRE
1.2	SKY CONSULTING	FACE-GREENLIFE-FORESTORY CRY LIBERIA PARTNERSHIP	Pépé BIAVOGUI	Bois Tropicaux d'Afrique
1.9	INTEGEMS	FACE-GREENLIFE-FORESTORY CRY LIBERIA PARTNERSHIP	ACDEF	Bois Tropicaux d'Afrique
1.14	GREENLIFE WEST AFRICA	FACE-GREENLIFE-FORESTORY CRY LIBERIA PARTNERSHIP	Terre Plante et Vie	
1.17	MOHAPEWA	FACE-GREENLIFE-FORESTORY CRY LIBERIA PARTNERSHIP	Terre Plante et Vie	
2.4	ROWLAND STEVENS	D. Harrison Luo	ASODER-Guinée	Dr Nguessan BI Tozan & Ibo Guehi Jonas
2.5	ROWLAND STEVENS	D. Harrison Luo	ASODER-Guinée	Ibo Guehi Jonas + Dr Nguessan BI Tozan

SITUATION OF NO OBJECTION FOR CONSULTANCIES (FY 2018)

ACTIVITY #	SIERRA LEONE	LIBERIA	GUINEA	COTE D'IVOIRE
1.2	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection
1.9	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection
1.14	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection
1.17	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection
2.4	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection
2.5	Waiting for No Objection	Waiting for No Objection	Recruited consultant has signed contract	Waiting for No Objection

LOGISTICS REQUIREMENTS (FY 2018)

ITEM	SIERRA LEONE	GUINEA	LIBERIA
Vehicle	Waiting for No Objection	Purchase in ongoing	Waiting for No Objection
Motor Bikes	purchased	purchased	Waiting for No Objection

TABLE: SITUATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES BY LANDSCAPE

Countries	Intervention sites	Date LCC formed	Number of villages involved for LCC	Number of members of LCC	Number of members of advisory committee	Number of men designated by local communities	Number of women designated by local communities	Percentage of women
Cote d'Ivoire	Nimba	22nd - 31st August 2018	6	15	12	7	5	42%
	Tai NP	22nd - 31st August 2018	5 (cantons)	18	15	11	4	27%
Liberia	East Nimba National Park (LB)	28th -29th May 2018	14	35	16	11	5	31%
	Wonegisi-Ziama National forests (LB/GN)	28th -29th May 2018	13	26	13	8	5	38%
	Gola National Forest (LB)	4 th March 2019	9	18	11	6	5	45%
Sierra Leone	Gola Rainforest National Park (SL)	19th April 2018	7	27	21	14	7	50%
Guinée	Diecke National forest (GN),	1st & 2nd June 2018	4	15	10	3	7	70%
	Mt.Nimba Integrated Forest Reserves (GN/CI)	30 & 31 May 2018	10	20	20	9	11	55%
	Wonegisi-Ziama National forests (LB/GN)	28th & 29th May 2018	5	12	6	5	1	8%

7 APPENDIX II: ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2019