



PROJECT MRU/GEF « ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVATION AND INTERNATIONAL WATER RESOURCES OF MANO RIVER UNION»

Report of the 3rd Regional Steering Committee Meeting in Freetown

9th April 2019, Freetown

Prepared by: Mano River Union Secretariat April 2019

Introduction

The third Session of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the MRU/GEF Project "Ecosystem Conservation and International Water Resources Management of the Mano River Union", was held on 09 April 2019 at the **Golden Tulip Essential Kimbima Hotel** in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

This third Session recorded the effective attendance of the Statutory Members of the Regional Steering Committee including:

- The statutory members of the four member states of the MRU;
- The MRU Secretariat;
- The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), implementing Agency;
- The Representative of the West Africa Bio-Diversity for Climate Change (WABiCC) program;
- The representative of RSPB, implementing partners in the landscape;
- The representative of the UNDP Sierra Leone;
- The Regional Project Management Unit and the four National Project Coordination Units.

The attendance list is attached to the report.

The workshop focused on the following points (see agenda in Annex):

- Opening remarks;
- Election of officers for the Session;
- Presentation of Sessions followed by discussions;
- Adoption of Recommendations.

1. Setting up of the High Table

In accordance with the practical arrangements agreed upon for the functioning of the Regional Steering Committee of the Project, the Officers for the Session are as follows:

- **Chairperson:** Dr. Edward H. SANDY, Deputy Minister representing The Minister of Water Resources of Sierra Leone
- **Vice Chairperson:** Amb. Mrs. Medina A. WESSEH, The MRU Secretary General
- **Rapporteurs:** Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone supported by the Mano River Union (MRU) Secretariat.

2. Proceedings of Sessions

2.1. Items of the agenda

The Session began with the presentation of the Agenda by the Chairperson of the Session, which was adopted as follows:

- Presentation of the level of execution of the recommendations of the second session of Regional Steering Committee held in Monrovia in April 2018;
- Presentation of the results of the aide memoire of the Supervision mission;
- Presentation and Adoption of 2018 Annual Technical Report of Regional Executing Agency (REA) +4 National Executing Agencies (NEA);
- Presentation and Adoption of the Financial report 2018;
- Presentation and Adoption of Work Plan and Budget for 2019 (REA+NEA);
- Approval of the Report and Recommendations of 3rd session of RSC;
- Closing of session.

2.2. Summary of the discussions

Discussions were focused on the presentations of the documents to be submitted for approval and the deliberation of the RSC.

These presentations were followed by questions, comments and suggestions by the Steering Committee Members. The main issues highlighted were:

- Low level of technical execution of the project;
- Coordination with implementing partners on the project sites;
- Mechanism to be put in place to boost project implementation;
- Packaging of activities to attract consultants;
- Difficulties related to disbursement of funds for Cote d'Ivoire;
- Level of representation of statutory members of countries at the RSC meeting.

In response to the concerns raised, the RSC made some suggestions and recommendations.

Concerning Cote d'Ivoire, the NEA should open a new bank account in a Commercial bank like the others national agencies.

The RSC adopted the financial and technical annual report 2018 and validated the general annual work plan 2019 and instructed the REA and NEAs to work closely with the implementing partners working in the landscapes to come out with a proper operational work plan and to revise the annual work plans according to the reality on ground.

2.3. Recommendations

Having reviewed the recommendations stated in the aide-memoire from the supervision mission, and the pending recommendations of the second regional steering committee, the third session of the RSC adopted the following recommendations:

- Having reviewed the recommendations adopted during the 2nd session of the RSC, it was recommended that the REA pursue the execution of recommendations that have not been implemented.
- Having observed the absence of representatives of ministers amid the statutory members according to the rules of the RSC of the project, the 3rd Session of the RSC recommends to the Regional Executing Agency to take necessary measures for their effective participation in the next RSC session.
- The REA and NEA will work together to ensure that revised work plans are provided to IUCN for no-objection not later than 30 April 2019.
- Consultancies for regional activities are regrouped in order to achieve bigger impact and results, and attract more interest from service providers than numerous small interventions
- REA will ensure that reports and studies produced by the project are promoted in support to decision making for national and regional sector planning (Transboundary Forest and Water Management).
- NEA and REA will ensure that committees and platforms established inform Governments and Regional bodies planning and activities.
- All results and outcomes achieved by these activities will be reported accordingly based on the templates discussed during the supervision mission. The REA will finalize these templates and make them available to all countries no later than end of April 2019.
- Activities are planned in coordination with relevant partners on the ground, in particular co-financing partners.

Conclusion

In her closing remarks, Amb. Mrs. Medina A. WESSEH, the Secretary General of Mano River Union, thanked Dr. Edward H. SANDY, Deputy Minister of Water Resources of Sierra Leone, Mr Dominique ENDAMANA the Representative of IUCN, the partners WABiCC and UNDP, the participants from the four member states for their participation in the third Regional Steering Committee meeting. She also thanked the GEF/IUCN-Mano project Regional Coordinator and his team for his tireless efforts in ensuring that the RSC meeting attained its set objective. She hopes to see the work plans revised reflecting the true spirit of a proper well-coordinated work plan in order to maintain the forest cover of our sub region. In conclusion, She expressed her gratitude to the Government of Sierra Leone and Mano River Union Secretariat for supporting the organization of this third RSC.

The chairperson of the meeting, the Deputy Minister of Water Resources also thanked everybody present for their time and contributions. In the absence of other issues to be discussed the third session of the Regional Steering Committee meeting ended at 17.20.

SESSION [1] INTRODUCTION TO RSC			
8:00 – 9:00	Registration of participants	Document the list of participants	Participants
9:00 - 9:30	Welcome speech	Welcome Speech	National Focal Point of the Host Country
	Speech (MRU) - SG	Welcome Speech	
	Minister of Water Resources, Sierra Leone	Opening word	
	Introduction of participants Presentation and adoption of the agenda	Validate the agenda of the 1st RSC	National Focal Point of the Host Country
9 :30 – 9 :40	Governance body	Put in place the high table	National Focal Point of the Host Country
Session [2] REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE PROGRESS REPORT			
9 :40 – 09 :50	Presentation of the results of the aide-memoire of the supervision mission	Approval of the results	REA/MRU Secretary-General
09:50 – 10: 15	Discussions		Chairperson of the high table
10: 15 –10: 40	Coffee-Break and Group photo		
Session [3] – REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF 2018 ANNUAL TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS			
10:40 – 11: 00	1.1 Presentation of the 2018 Annual Technical Report	Review and approval	REA/SG MRU
11:00 - 11:10	1.2. Presentation of the financial report 2018		
11:10 – 11:30	Discussions	Recommendations	Chairperson
Session [4] REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND BUDGET 2019			
11: 30 -11 :50	1.1 Presentation of the Work plan REA 2019 Budget of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Validation of AWP and Budget for REA and NEA 	RPMU and NPCU
11:50 – 12:10	1.2 Presentation of the Work plan NEA 2019 Budget of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the Consolidated 2018 Budget of the Project 	NEA
12 :10-13: 30	Discussions	Formulation of recommendations	Chairperson

13:30-14: 30	LUNCH Break		
14:30 – 16:15	Drafting of the report of the 3rd session		
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee-Break		
SESSION [5]	APPROVAL OF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF 3RD RSC		
16:30 – 17:30	Presentation of the report and recommendations	Adoption of the Steering Committee Report and recommendations	Secretariat of RSC
CLOSING SESSION			
17 : 00	Closing Remarks S.G MRU		MRU SG

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

Freetown Sierra Leone, 09 April 2019 / Freetown Sierra Leone, 97 Avril 2019