CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

FINAL ASSESSMENT: CEPF INVESTMENT IN THE GUINEAN FORESTS OF WEST AFRICA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT 2016-2022

July 2022

Updated in June 2023

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1. Introduction

The Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA) Biodiversity Hotspot extends across the southern part of West Africa and into Central Africa north of the Congo Wilderness Area (as in Figure 1). The hotspot covers 621,705 km^2 and can be divided into two subregions. The first subregion, referred to as the 'Upper Guinean Forests', stretches from Guinea in the west, through Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and, marginally, into Benin. The second subregion, the 'Lower Guinean Forests', covers much of southern Nigeria, extends into southwestern Cameroon and includes São Tomé and Príncipe and the offshore islands of Equatorial Guinea.

Figure 1 – Boundaries of the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot

The Guinean Forests support impressive levels of biodiversity, having high levels of species richness and endemism. Approximately 9,000 species of vascular plant are believed to occur in the hotspot, including 1,800 endemic species. The hotspot also supports an exceptional diversity of other terrestrial species. There are 416 mammal species (representing nearly a quarter of the mammals native to continental Africa), 917 bird, 107 reptile and 269 amphibian species within the hotspot boundary, of which 65 mammal, 48 bird, 20 reptile and 118 amphibian species are thought to be endemic to the hotspot. Additionally, the hotspot is among the world's top priorities for primate conservation, with five Critically Endangered and 21 Endangered species. The GFWA is a unique but threatened biodiversity hotspot.

Several ongoing threats to biodiversity in the hotspot have resulted in the loss of more than 85 percent of the native vegetation cover. These threats include agricultural expansion to provide for the needs of an expanding population in rural and urban areas, unsustainable logging and fishing, hunting and trade of bushmeat, industrial and artisanal mining, industrial development, climate change and pollution, among numerous others. Threats in the region are linked, either directly or indirectly, to a high incidence of poverty, political instability and/or civil conflict.

This report aims to assess the performance of the GFWA portfolio towards the goals set out in the ecosystem profile and to summarize lessons learned arising from the grant portfolio over the 2016-2022 investment phase. It draws on experience, lessons learned, and project reports generated by civil society organizations implementing CEPF grants. In addition, it builds upon previous Annual Portfolio Overview reports, the 2019 Mid-Term Assessment report as well as the findings of the final assessment workshop, held in Accra, Ghana, from 6 to 9 June 2022. The workshop was attended by 83 participants, including donor partners, governmental agencies, media and 53 representatives of CEPF grantees.

2. CEPF Niche and Strategy

The CEPF niche of this phase of CEPF investment in the GFWA hotspot was to provide civil society organizations (CSOs) at grassroots, national and international levels with the tools, capacities, and resources to establish and sustain multi-stakeholder partnerships that demonstrate models for sustainable, pro-poor growth and achieve priority conservation outcomes. At the local level, the investment was focused on demonstrating practical solutions to conservation and development challenges that have the potential for wider replication. At the national level, the emphasis was on empowering civil society to influence conservation policies and private sector business practices in ways that positively affect biodiversity conservation, through partnerships and dialogue.

The investment phase had an initial budget of US$9 million and was intended to last from July 2016 to June 2021. Implementation started as planned with an award to BirdLife International under Strategic Direction 5, to act as the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) and to coordinate a small grants mechanism of US$1.5 million, which made grants of up to US$50,000. Thanks to additional funding from l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the overall budget was raised to US$ 10.1 million, and the implementation period extended until June 2022. The funds were initially distributed following the investment strategy of the ecosystem profile. When the additional funds were secured, these were distributed based on an

assessment of gaps and strengths in the CSOs in the hotspot, as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of the financial ventilation of the CEPF investment in the GFWA Hotspot

	Initial Budget Allocations (US$)	**Updated Budget Allocations (US$)**
Investment period	*July 2016 - June 2021*	*July 2016 - June 2022*
Budget Strategic Direction 1	3,000,000	3,000,000
Budget Strategic Direction 2	2,000,000	2,000,000
Budget Strategic Direction 3	1,200,000	1,535,370
Budget Strategic Direction 4	1,300,000	1,747,160
Budget Strategic Direction 5	1,500,000	1,835,370
Total budget	**9,000,000**	**10,117,900**

To ensure that CEPF funding was not spread too thinly and was thus able to deliver significant and sustained impacts, a set of priority sites, from among the full list of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the hotspot, was selected during the ecosystem profiling to receive targeted investment. As described in the ecosystem profile, a list of 40 KBAs was prioritized for the implementation of Strategic Direction 1, which aimed at engaging local actors in conservation action.

A set of nine conservation corridors was also defined and incorporated into Strategic Direction 2, which adopted a landscape-scale approach to mainstream biodiversity conservation into public development policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks, as well as the business practices of private sector companies (focusing on the agriculture, forestry and mining sectors).

Species conservation actions funded under Strategic Direction 3 focused on the most highly threatened species across the hotspot and were guided by available species conservation action plans. Grantmaking under Strategic Direction 3 also supported the analysis of newly available data and targeted research to fill in critical gaps.

Strategic Direction 4 supported the capacities and resources of local civil society to advocate for biodiversity conservation across the hotspot. As such, funds were made available to enable local CSOs to play an increasingly important role in conceiving, implementing, monitoring, and communicating conservation projects in the region.

Finally, Strategic Direction 5 provided for the RIT. The Strategic Directions and their investment priorities are presented in Annex 1.

3. Regional Implementation Team

In the GFWA Hotspot, CEPF selected BirdLife International to be the dedicated RIT and provide strategic leadership for the investment in the hotspot. The team operated from the BirdLife West Africa Sub-Regional Office (WASRO) in Accra, Ghana, under the supervision of the BirdLife Africa Secretariat, in Nairobi, Kenya, and oversight from the Global Secretariat in Cambridge, UK.

The role of the RIT supported the delivery of the full suite of strategic directions. The RIT operationalized and coordinated CEPF's grantmaking processes and procedures, while building a broad constituency of civil society groups working across international and political boundaries, all towards achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile. To deliver on these general objectives, the RIT Terms of Reference were structured in nine components, summarily presented in Figure 2 below.

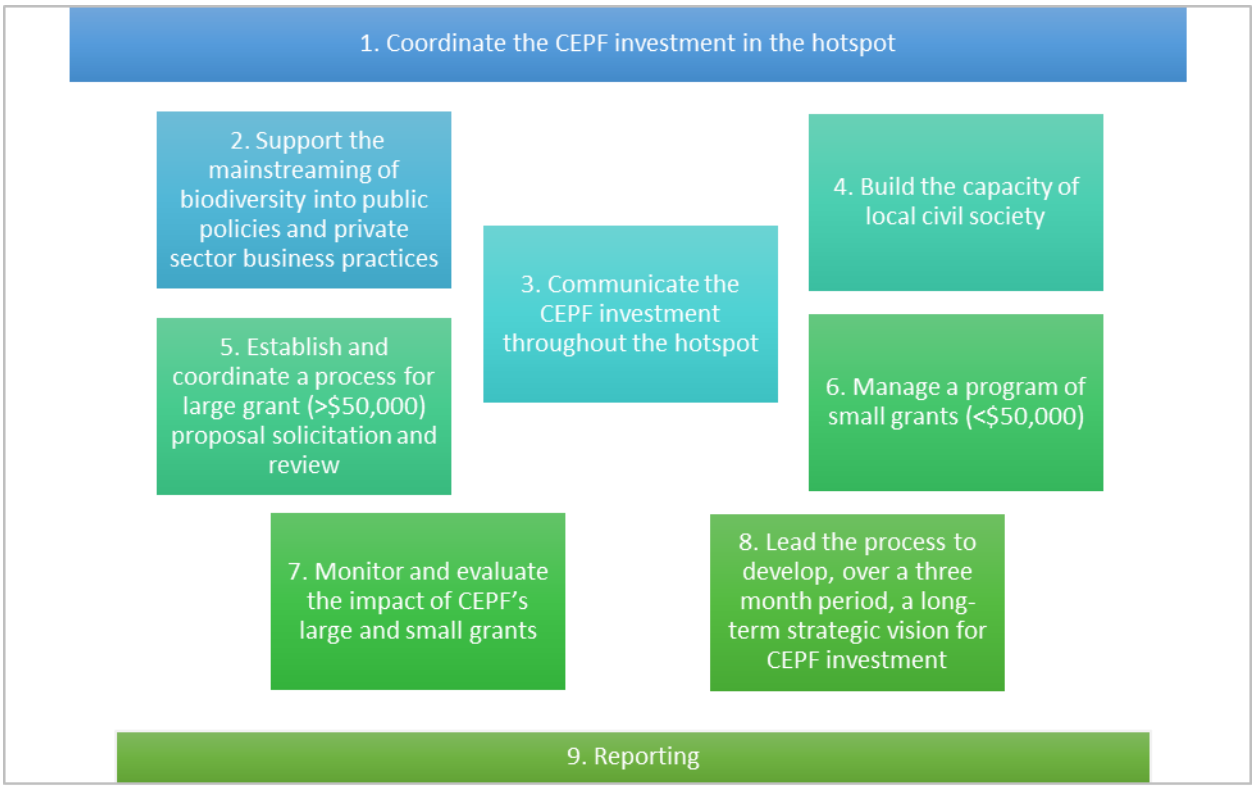

Figure 2: Components of the RIT Terms of Reference

The RIT composition underwent changes from the beginning of the implementation phase until the end. The setup of the RIT in 2016 and changes made up until the end of the investment phase in 2022 are described in more detail in Annex 2.

Overall, the RIT composition was primarily made up of:

- A Team Leader, responsible for the day-to-day management of the team and the workplan, while being the principal point of contact for CEPF.
- A Small Grants Manager, responsible for: (i) administration of the programmatic, administrative and financial aspects of the small grants mechanism with the local support of the sub-regional program officers; (ii) implementation of the small grants components of the RIT Terms of Reference; and (iii) coordination, monitoring and reporting back to the RIT and CEPF on the development of a coherent portfolio of small grants.
- Four Sub-Regional Program Officers, responsible for in-country coordination in the 11 countries of focus to promote stakeholder engagement and ensure successful implementation of the portfolio. There was one program officer for the Gulf of Guinea Islands (São Tomé and Príncipe and the islands of Equatorial Guinea), one for Nigeria (and Cameroon too at times), one for Ghana, Cameroon, Benin and Togo, and one for Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.
- A Financial Officer, responsible for: (i) production of detailed annual budgets, financial reports and accounts; (ii) facilitation of the purchase of project equipment; (iii) implementation of all agreed project financial management procedures; (iv) preparation of quarterly financial reports to CEPF; (v) supporting the review of small grants applications and reports in compliance with CEPF finance and administrative procedures; (vi) contracting and disbursement of funds to small grants; and (vii) building finance management capacity among grantees.
- A Communications Officer, on an irregular basis, responsible for the development of a communications strategy and the establishment of systems and processes for its delivery.
- Several auxiliary roles to support or provide overall management of the team in achieving its main functions as per the RIT Terms of Reference.

4. Impact Summary

As at the Final Assessment workshop in June 2022, 42 grants were still pending closure (64 percent of them only ended that month), which meant that the portfolio impacts presented there were underestimated. By the end of the investment period, a total of 79 grants, excluding the grants for the RIT and the small grant mechanism,

had been awarded, to 63 organizations. Of these, 19 international organizations received US$4.4 million and 46 local organizations received US$3.9 million. Five grants were terminated, out of which two were terminated for insecurity concerns in the project areas and three for fraud. A brochure[1], designed by the RIT in 2022, presented each project of the portfolio. Infographics presenting the CEPF investment in the hotspot during 2016-2022 can be found in a document designed by the RIT in 2022, available in English and French.

Sections 4.1 to 4.4 below present the aggregated impacts of the portfolio. These are based on results presented at the final assessment workshop in June 2022, updated in June 2023 after all grants had closed or been terminated. Annex 3 summarizes the aggregate impacts of the grant portfolio against the targets in the logical framework from the ecosystem profile.

4.1 Biodiversity impacts

CEPF promoted local interventions toward research and conservation of globally threatened species in the hotspot, through 16 grants (seven large and nine small).

Species

- Information on the global conservation status of 1,047 freshwater species and 305 plants species was updated on the IUCN Red List. These data highlighted that 14 percent of all native freshwater species assessed are globally threatened with extinction with substantial variability between taxonomic groups. Also, 77 percent of plants found in São Tomé and Príncipe and within the Lofa-Gola-Mano and Nimba complexes were assessed as globally threatened.
- 23 globally threatened species have stable or increasing populations at project sites as a result of CEPF-supported conservation projects.
- Priority actions identified in conservation action plans for 40 Critically Endangered and Endangered species were implemented across the hotspot.

Sites

- 27 KBAs directly benefited from conservation intervention thanks to CEPF-funded projects.
- Four new protected areas were created, representing 283,166 hectares, with one national marine protected area in Côte d' Ivoire (the first of its kind for the country) and three community forest reserves (one in Côte d' Ivoire and two in Nigeria).

[1] The financial figures presented in this brochure are as of June 2022 and do not reflect any subsequent changes due to disallowances and/or deobligations.

- All 13 freshwater KBAs located in the hotspot received indirect conservation actions via scientific inventories and biodiversity assessment. Part of one of them (Southeast Niger Delta near Calabar - FW10) benefited from direct conservation actions, such as restoration and improved community-based management.
- 495,793 hectares within 35 production landscapes benefited from strengthened management for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use. This was achieved by communities, through the establishment of community structures, such as forest management committees, community eco-guards, forest management plans, and by-laws, as well as through the diversification of agricultural production and adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices. Some of these impacts were also achieved by the private sector, through for example the adoption of improved mitigation measures in favor of primate conservation, or the adoption of oil palm recommendations agreed upon during a national policy dialogue.

4.2 Strengthening civil society

- The RIT supported an analysis carried out by a group of M.Phil. students at the University of Cambridge, using Civil Society Tracking Tools (CSTTs) filled in by CEPF grantees and Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METTs) available for protected areas in the hotspot. The results suggested that the biggest capacity challenges faced by local CSOs are related to human resources (particularly staff retention and staff experience) and financial resources (especially diversifying their sources of income and achieving financial sustainability). Organizational profile and strategic planning were also identified as common weaknesses among grantees. Several major threats to protected areas were found to not yet be addressed by CSOs, for instance on biological resources in Togo or invasive species in Nigeria. Recommendations were made for capacity support to CSOs in West Africa.
- CEPF and the RIT conceptualized a mentorship program to help build CSOs' capacities in the hotspot. For the 65 mentees who completed the CSTT and the Gender Tracking Tool (GTT), they saw a weighted average increase of 17 percent of their capacities, particularly on their financial management and resources, and on their strategic planning, as well as a weighted average increase of 38 percent of their understanding and integration of gender.
- 66 CEPF grantees (some of which were also mentee organizations), including three women-led organizations, increased their capacity (by 9 CSTT points on average). The average score of the final CSTT assessments was 68 (out of 100), ranging from 19 to 93; nine CSOs reached a total score of 80 or more, for the first time, during the period of CEPF support.

- A total of 41 new networks were formed among civil society, government and private sector actors to facilitate capacity building, avoid duplication of effort and maximize impact of conservation activity in the hotspot.

4.3 Socio-economic impacts

- 53 local communities received support to initiate and advocate for land tenure and forestry reforms in relation to management of community and private reserves and concessions.
- 174 local communities were targeted by sustainable livelihood/ job creation activities or benefit-sharing mechanisms, such as providing training and equipment for groups of farmers to start up bee farming for the sale of premium honey, domestication and sales of non-timber forest products, and payment to community eco-guards for patrolling community forests and adjacent protected areas.
- 7,827 men and 6,171 women received structured training in sustainable fishing techniques, assessment of ecosystem services, soil fertility management, sustainable non-timber forest products harvesting methods, financial management and records keeping, alphabetization, cooperatives leadership, etc.
- 2,986 men and 3,519 women received increased income and/or other cash benefits due to activities such as ecotourism, solar salt production, handicraft production, non-timber forest product harvesting and increased yields of cacao.

4.4 Enabling conditions

- 11 conservation-related policies of national governments were informed by advocacy, and outreach. One example was the development of a framework for effective Environmental Social Impact Assessment compliance monitoring, which enabled the Nigerian government to improve enforcement of environmental compliance by oil palm concessions.
- Seven community by-laws were enacted or updated by communities to frame their land-use management related to hunting, mining, fishing and/or use of natural resources.
- 16 private companies adopted new management practices consistent with biodiversity conservation in the conservation corridors. These included: adoption of best practices in agriculture; establishment and management of a riparian buffer zone; good chemical handling that adheres to global standards; signing of a conservation agreement formalizing and strengthening biodiversity-friendly practices for cacao and coconut production in Ghana; adding value to green commodity production; and improving conservation practices at a hydroelectric project in Côte d'Ivoire

resulting in improved long-term monitoring to understand impacts on freshwater biodiversity and regulation of water flows.

5. Implementing Strategy

5.1 Collaboration with CEPF's donors and other funders

Stakeholders and donor-roundtable workshop

In January 2017, CEPF and the RIT organized a two-day stakeholders and donor-roundtable workshop, addressing financing, management and implementation of biodiversity conservation programs in the GFWA Hotspot and the wider West Africa region. The workshop was attended by representatives of key donors and their executing agencies (Development Institute, ACDI/VOCA (ASI Group), WABiCC, Tetratech (PROSPER), GEF/SGP, GEF/SGP/Sierra Leone, GEF/SGP/Ghana, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN-Netherlands, ERM Foundation, MAVA Foundation, AFD, IUCN-France, Partnership for Forests), private companies (Palladium-P4Y, Kasa Ghana, Civic Response, Portal Forest Estate, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ghana) and CSOs currently supporting and/or implementing biodiversity conservation programs in the region.

The discussions were guided by the following key objectives:

- Sourcing of relevant information from key stakeholders to enable mapping of the priorities of various donors and other actors supporting biodiversity conservation work in the region, to determine their thematic and geographic areas of focus.
- Discussion and agreement on practical steps for coordination among stakeholders, to guide on how to use the map for more effective and efficient grant-making.
- Identification of the main challenges/obstacles to building, strengthening and/or sustaining the institutional and operational capacities of CSOs working in the region.
- Discussion and prioritization of practical steps for addressing the identified capacity needs, including agreeing on the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders to this end.

The workshop participants agreed on a set of practical and implementable solutions to the challenges identified in four key areas: human resources; private sector; capacity to influence public policy; and coordination among stakeholders. This workshop also paved the way for the emergence of an alliance around implementation of the Programme des Petites Initiatives (PPI) in the region.

Alliance around the Programme des Petites Initiatives

In 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed for PPI, by AFD (acting in the framework of the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)), the French committee of IUCN, the IUCN Central and West Africa Programme, Conservation International (acting in its capacity as host of the CEPF Secretariat), the MAVA Foundation, and IUCN Netherlands. This MoU was established as a general framework for cooperation among these donors acting in the region to enable CSOs active in the protection of biodiversity to benefit from the alignment of their initiatives and synergies. In practical terms, the MoU resulted in: (i) the co-funding of three projects between CEPF and PPI; (ii) the provision of advice and support with review by the PPI team and the MAVA Foundation for the CEPF mentorship concept; (iii) the external review of applications to PPI by CEPF; (iv) the participation of CEPF at a 2017 partners' meeting to discuss organizational development approaches for CSOs; (v) the participation of the RIT and the PPI team in a 2018 workshop on good governance promoted by the MAVA Foundation; and (vi) adoption by PPI of the CEPF CSTT and GTT, in 2018 and 2022 respectively. In April 2022, a new MoU was discussed to reflect changes in the panorama of donors in the region and to reaffirm commitments towards a collaborative effort among them.

Program ECOFAC in São Tomé and Príncipe, BirdLife International

In 2018, BirdLife International secured a grant from the program Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (ECOFAC), funded by the European Union. The grant was to support the management of the Natural Parks of São Tomé and Príncipe. Since the inception of this program, coordination with the CEPF investment in the country was promoted and ensured. CEPF-funded projects complemented the ECOFAC program, particularly for underfunded priorities such as revision of mangrove management plans, promoting increased knowledge about and protection of threatened and endemic species, and investigating potential sustainable financing mechanisms for forest resources. This close collaboration reached another level in 2021, when additional resources from UNDP-GEF were secured, allowing the position of a part-time RIT focal point for São Tomé to be covered until the end of the CEPF investment phase. The role of this position was to provide support to the RIT's Sub-Regional Program Officer for the islands with close on the ground monitoring of projects and coordination among local stakeholders.

Other contacts and collaborations

Regular updates about the CEPF grant portfolio were communicated to the GEF focal points across the region. CEPF and the RIT also engaged with AFD and EU local

representatives whenever possible, including by paying visits during supervision missions.

In 2021, the RIT published a newsletter focused on COVID-19 and the resilience of local CSOs and their supporters during 2020. This was published in collaboration with PPI, the MAVA Foundation and the BIOPAMA Program. It also presented the results of a survey conducted by CEPF to understand how much the COVID-19 pandemic had affected biodiversity conservation and grantees' work in the GFWA Hotspot. It also shared the perspectives of some of the donors investing in the region on how to build a more resilient future for people and biodiversity in Africa.

Key stakeholders in the region (IUCN-Netherlands, PPI/IUCN-France, GEF, Re:Wild, Environmental Foundation Africa) were also invited by the RIT to be on the Advisory Board for the development of the Long-Term Vision for the hotspot (see Section 10 for further details).

5.2 Resource allocation

By the close of the investment phase, the CEPF grant portfolio in the GFWA Hotspot, including the grant under Strategic Direction 5 for the RIT, comprised 80 grants. The portfolio comprised 49 small grants, under US$ 50,000 in value, and 31 large grants, over that amount, for a total amount of US$ 10,012,837 (Table 2).

Table 2: Resource allocation by Strategic Direction, as of June 2023

Strategic Direction	Updated Budget Allocation (US$)	Contracted Grants			Over or Under-Budget (US$)	% Used
		Total Amount (US$)	No. Large Grants	No. Small Grants		
1. Empower communities	3,000,000	2,411,341	7	20	588,659	80
2. Mainstream biodiversity	2,000,000	2,186,922	12	2	(311,727) (186,922)	109
3. Safeguard species	1,535,370	1,945,534	7	9	(410,164)	127
4. Build CSOs capacities	1,747,160	1,633,671	4	18	113,489	94
5. RIT	1,835,370	1,835,370	1	0	0	100
Total	**10,117,900**	**10,012,837**	**31**	**49**	**105,063**	**99**

During the first two years of the investment phase, CEPF and the RIT had to get traction and become more comfortable with the grantmaking process in 2018-2019. During 2016-2017, four calls for proposals (two for large and two for small grants) were opened to all eligible countries in the hotspot (Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea

only became eligible to receive CEPF funding in time for the second call). Both calls covered Strategic Directions 1, 2 and 3, while Strategic Direction 4 was opened to applications for large grants under the first call. All applications under Strategic Direction 4 under this call ended up being rejected due to a lack of innovation and/or misalignment with the ambition of CEPF. A clear approach regarding capacity development was then deemed necessary prior to releasing any further call for this strategic direction. Hence, a targeted call for Strategic Direction 4, comprising a combined mentorship/training approach, was published in July 2018, in consultation with some key donor partners as mentioned under Section 5.1.

Based on feedback received during the mid-term assessment, a biodiversity mainstreaming strategy was developed. A call for proposals for large grants was published in line with this strategy in early 2020. This sixth call specifically aimed at addressing the portfolio gaps under Strategic Direction 2, which previous calls had failed to fill. A seventh call for proposals, restricted for small grants under Strategic Direction 4, was then published in November 2020. Only open to CSOs enrolled in the mentorship program, it was a rolling call, which closed at the end of March 2021. A subsequent call for small grants was opened for mentee organizations in Cameroon and São Tomé and Príncipe, in May 2021, as the implementation of the strategy in these countries had accumulated some delays.

It should also be noted that, in addition to grants awarded under the competitive calls, 10 grants by invitations (seven small grants and three large grants) were awarded to selected organizations to cover specific, persistent gaps in the portfolio. In particular, eight of these grants were awarded under Strategic Direction 4, to: (i) strengthen the ability of grantees to communicate conservation impacts; and (ii) establish a network to increase the effectiveness of CSOs in West Africa at conservation of marine turtles and their coastal habitats.

The remaining two grants by invitation were linked to Strategic Direction 2, to support the production of a Theory of Change (ToC) for biodiversity mainstreaming in private practices and public policies across the GFWA hotspot. This provided the basis and the rationale for actions and partnerships with the private sector. It also served as a guide that assisted in facilitating partnerships among local communities, private sector, and government to develop models for best practices in mining, sustainable forestry and sustainable agriculture by private companies. The ToC was a blueprint for the RIT and CSOs/NGOs in delivering on the Strategic Direction 2.
In summary, over the six-year investment period, eight calls for proposal (four for small and four for large grants) were published. These resulted in a total of 176 eligible applications for small grants and 239 eligible applications for large grants (Table 3).

Table 3: Calls for proposals and grants by invitation from 2016 to 2022

Year	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*
Small Grants							
Call for proposals	1	1			1	1	
Received applications	63	145			41	12	
Eligible	23	111			31	11	
Contracted	8	15				19	
Grants by invitation				2	1	1	3
Large Grants							
Call for proposals	1	1		1	1		
Received applications	35	148		39	94		
Eligible	23	121		33	62		
Contracted		6	5	6	3	7	
Grants by invitation			1			2	

The grants awarded cover nine of the 11 countries of the hotspot and are generally well spread across the hotspot eligible areas (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Geographic distribution of CEPF projects in the GFWA Hotspot

Figure 4 presents the number of grants as well as the budget allocation per local versus international organizations. Forty-three small grants were awarded to local CSOs and only six to international CSOs. For the large grants, 11 were awarded to local CSOs, with 20 going to international CSOs, including the RIT grant of US$1,835,370. This represents a total of US$6,268,467 to international organizations and US$3,744,370 to local organizations.

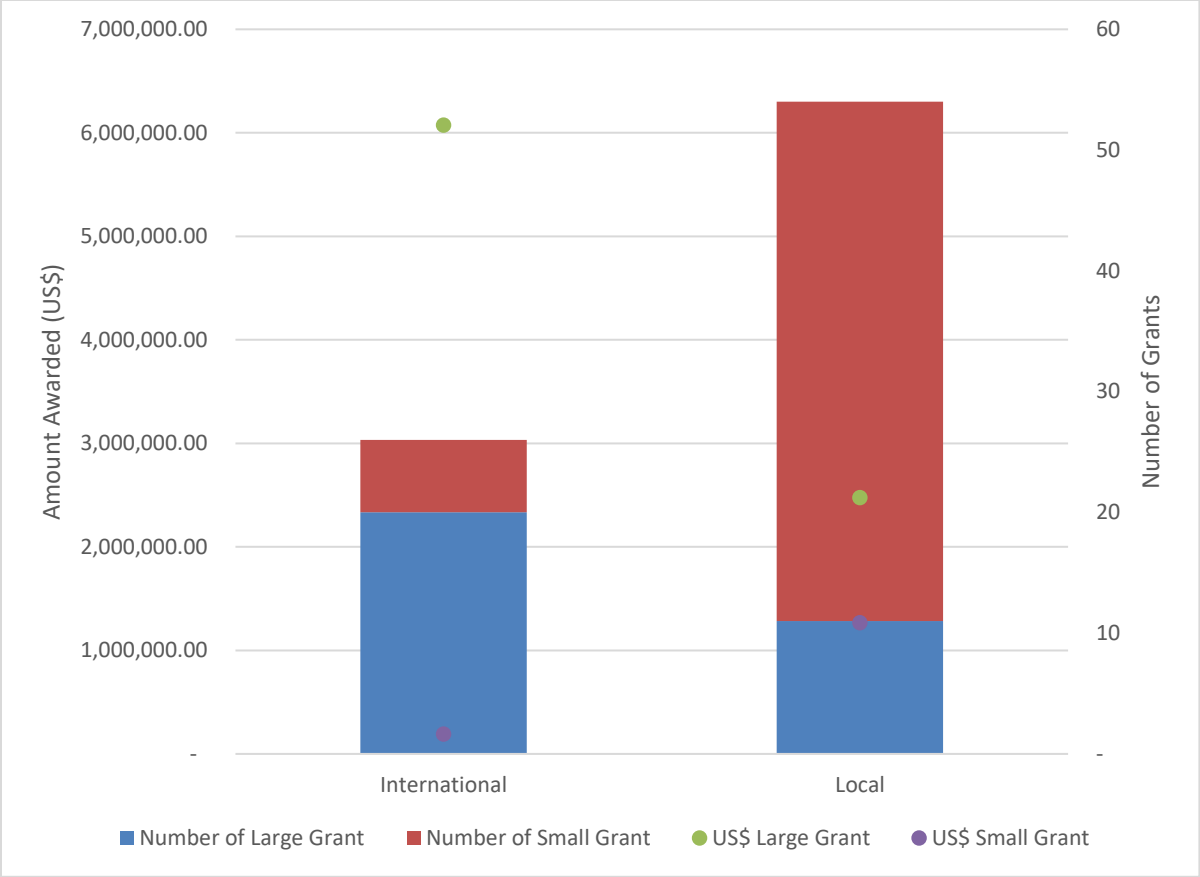

Figure 4: Grant awards by type of grant and organization

There was a reasonably good balance in the distribution of country-specific grants between local and international CSOs, with the exception of Cameroon, Ghana and Sierra Leone, where all grants were awarded to local CSOs, suggesting a greater level of organization of civil society and/or stronger national engagement in these countries (Figure 5). Excluding the RIT grant, the top three countries with the most grants awarded were, in order, Nigeria (with 14 grants), Cameroon and São Tomé and Príncipe (with nine grants each). This was anticipated, since Nigeria, Cameroon and São Tomé and Príncipe were not part of the previous CEPF investment phases and there was a wish to put more emphasize on these countries. A similar pattern can be seen in the total grant amount awarded per country (Figure 6). Excluding the grant of US$1,835,370, to the RIT, which brings the total sum of US$4,240,671 awarded to the international CSOs, there is a reasonable and fair balance in the distribution of funds granted to local versus international CSOs.

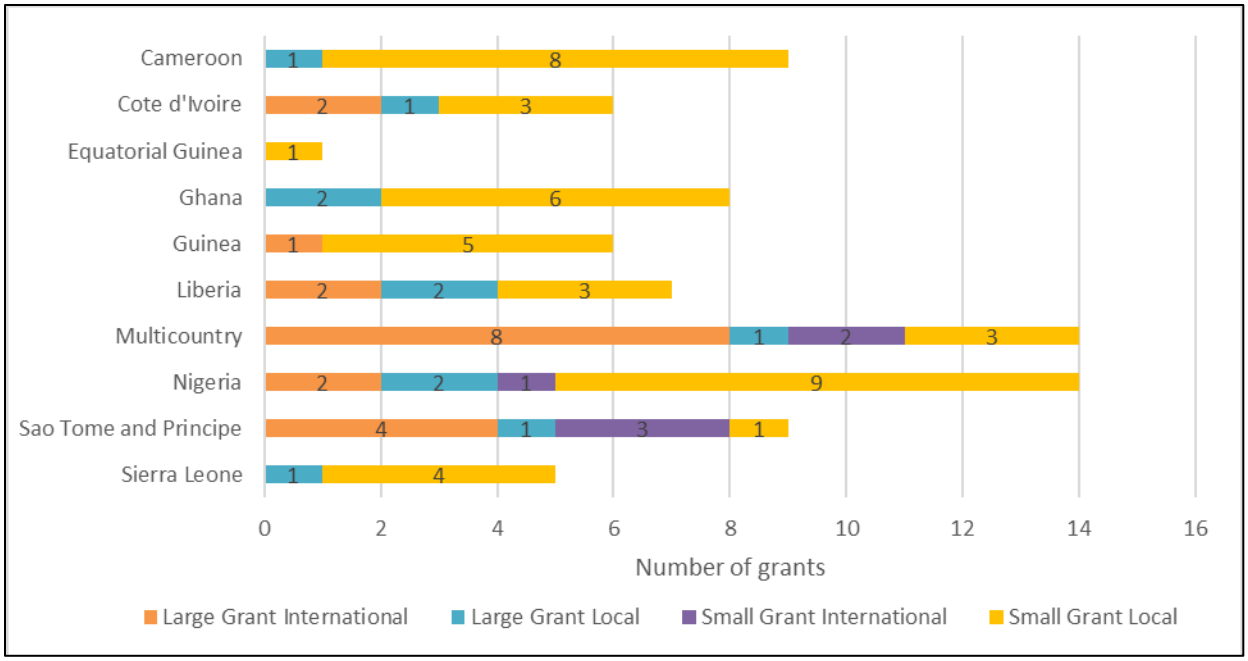

Figure 5: Grant-Making by Country, referring to Number of Grants and Type of Organization

Regarding the sum of funds awarded per country, excluding the RIT grant, Liberia, Nigeria and São Tomé and Príncipe are, respectively, the three countries with the largest amount, with around US$ 1.1 million each (Figure 6).

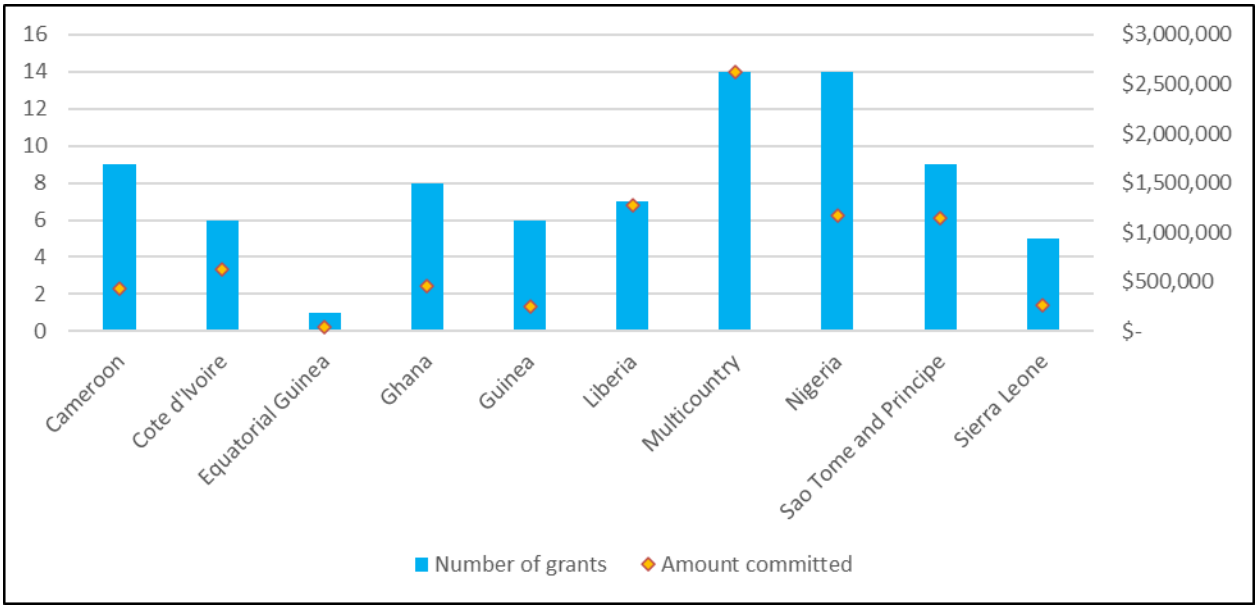

Figure 6: Grant Allocation per Country, referring to Total Amount and Number of Grants

Liberia, which holds the largest blocks of forests in the hotspot, is a strong candidate for CEPF funds. For Cameroon however, the late endorsement of the ecosystem profile by the GEF Focal Point delayed the investment by one year and, soon afterward, the security situation in parts of the country worsened, which required a more conservative approach from a financial point of view (early termination of two grants and a focus on small grants versus large).

Fourteen multicountry grants were awarded, including grants to address information gaps with respect to key species and to support capacity development across the hotspot, making these grants comprise the largest share of the investment with 31 percent of the total funds awarded (or 44 percent if including the RIT grant).

Some countries were underrepresented, namely Equatorial Guinea and, to a lesser extent, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Despite the RIT's efforts to engage civil society stakeholders in these countries, the number of applications was, on average, lower than for most of the other countries.

For Togo and Benin, only one multicountry large grant to IUCN covered activities on identification and validation of freshwater KBAs. Other than this grant, no grants were awarded in these two countries, mostly due to the limited extent of the hotspot in these countries.

The full list of projects supported by CEPF grants is presented in Annex 4.

5.3 Portfolio investment description by strategic direction

Strategic Directions 1 (empower communities) and 4 (build CSOs capacities) demonstrated the greatest engagement and strongest proposals across the hotspot with, respectively, 27 and 22 grants awarded. Furthermore, under Strategic Direction 1, CSOs demonstrated their commitment and capacities in working and supporting communities in priority areas. Similarly, there was a substantial number of good quality and important proposals submitted under Strategic Direction 3, which focused on species conservation and data gaps, demonstrating the strong focus of CSOs on science-based conservation. However, due to a more limited budget allocation under this strategic direction, a number of good-quality proposals had to be turned down.

During the mid-term assessment, two main gaps were identified in the grant portfolio. One related to Strategic Direction 4. The proposals for this strategic direction received under the first call for large grants were all turned down, as they did not reflect lessons learned from the previous investment phase, which had highlighted that conventional once-off trainings had yielded low to no increase in capacity, due to recurrent staff turnover and lack of hands-on practice. For this reason, CEPF and the RIT developed a strategy to implement Strategic Direction 4

through a mentorship scheme for local CSOs (some pre-identified by demonstrating interest in the CEPF program) spread across the hotspot countries. Following a dedicated call for proposals launched in 2018, three mentor organizations covering nine countries were selected and subsequently engaged with 79 local mentee organizations. In conjunction with this mentorship program, the two specific calls for proposals targeted mentees, allowing 19 of them to apply their newly acquired skills in designing and implementing small grant projects.

The other identified gap related to Strategic Direction 2 (mainstreaming biodiversity), which had fewer projects submitted despite repeated calls, and for which the target indicators and financial allocation were far from being met. It was observed that most of the CSOs across the hotspot did not yet have the capacity, understanding and/or tools to engage with either (or both) the public and the private sector. Mainstreaming biodiversity into public policies and private sector practices is essential to ensure the sustainability of biodiversity conservation in the region. CEPF and the RIT decided to take mainstreaming as a focal theme of the mid-term assessment workshop. Together with Fauna & Flora International (FFI), through a small grant by invitation, the constraints and challenges faced by CSOs were analysed at the workshop and a strategy was subsequently built based on a ToC exercise and on feedback from the participants in a training during the workshop. This approach led to the selection of seven projects under a call for large grants published in 2020. Four of these grants went to local CSOs.

6. Biodiversity Conservation Results

6.1 Globally threatened species

Conservation action needs a solid scientific basis to be efficient. Sixteen of the CEPF grants resulted in increased knowledge and/or improved protection of threatened species. Monitoring of species was also included in these grants as a scientific management tool for conservation action. For example, a project by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Nigeria contributed to the implementation of a number of priority actions identified in the regional action plans for Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla ssp. diehli*) and Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ssp. ellioti*), respectively, including improving law enforcement effectiveness, creating awareness, and changing attitudes and behaviors, while supporting sustainable local livelihoods. Work done by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation–Liberia contributed to improved protection of West African chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ssp. verus*), thanks to patrolling and awareness raising. A comparison of annual monitoring reports shows that, from 2020 (when the community eco-guard teams started patrolling) to 2021, the number of observed illegal activities (in particular, hunting) reduced by 42 percent.

CEPF also supported scientific research on the biology and/or assessment of the conservation status of species, providing information to guide conservation planning and action. For example, research carried out by FFI on the biodiversity of Príncipe island provided technical and editorial contributions to the revised management plan of Príncipe National Park (PNP), and the establishement of monitoring protocols for Príncipe thrush (*Turdus xanthorhynchus*) and Obô giant snail (*Archachatina bicarinata*), both endemic and threatened species. In Ghana, a project by Presbyterian University College investigated the number and distribution pattern of diurnal primates and their anthropogenic threats that exist in three forest reserves in Ghana: Cape Three Points (51km2), Atewa Range (232km2) and Tano-Offin (402km2) forest reserves. The following species were monitored: Lowe's monkey (*Cercopithecus lowei*); spot-nosed monkey (*C. petaurista*); Roloway monkey (*C. roloway*); white-thighed colobus (*Colobus vellerosus*); white-naped mangabey (*Cercocebus lunulatus*); olive colobus (*Procolobus verus*); and West African chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ssp. verus*). Results were presented through training workshops to 45 law enforcement agencies, 33 leaders of school clubs, 200 community based organizations, 120 people in villages and 20 bushmeat dealers. Awareness raising /education activities were carried out via road marches and durbars, while bill boards were erected at vantage points, to draw the public's attention to the need for primate and biodiversity conservation.

A specific set of grants focused on freshwater biodiversity were also awarded. They supported an IUCN-led freshwater biodiversity assessment at regional level and a cutting-edge environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis led by NatureMetrics. This analysis first monitored freshwater biodiversity in the Bandama River catchment and generated indices of freshwater ecosystem and rivers health in Côte d'Ivoire, and then, extended to include sites in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which were identified by IUCN's work.

Additional work was also undertaken by Missouri Botanical Garden to assess plant diversity and identify key threatened plant species according to IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria at the national level, in São Tomé and Príncipe, but also, at regional level, in the Lofa-Galo-Mano complex and the Mount Nimba complex, providing baseline data for conservation planning.

Other projects that were focused on particular animal species were supported to help understand population dynamics and propose adequate management measures. This was the case for the first national assessment of status and threats to African Grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) populations across 28 sites in Nigeria, the monitoring of the poorly understood Príncipe thrush, a Critically Endangered endemic bird, and the work by Alisei ONG, that led to the first conservation action plan for Obô giant snail, mentioned above.

6.2 Conservation planning in corridors and production landscapes

Strengthening management of biodiversity in productive landscapes is an important element of conservation strategies. This is especially true for the GFWA Hotspot, where human activities (agriculture, seasonal grazing, harvesting of wild products, etc.) are expanding at an accelerated rate, critically affecting many of the most threatened terrestrial and freshwater species and their habitats. CEPF, therefore, supported a wide range of projects and/or activities targeting natural resource users and landowners for the promotion of sustainable, biodiversity-friendly practices, resulting in an improvement of management of productive land on a surface area estimated at 495,793 hectares.

A project led by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), resulted in 30,000 hectares of rainforest being officially designated as two community forests, according to an approved community forest management agreement, based on a land-use plan. The Tonglay and Normon communities were able to improve land tenure through the establishment of legally-recognised community forests on their customary lands. Members from these two communites, were also provided with the skills and materials to adopt rainforest-friendly and climate-smart income-generating activities via the production of shade cacao, groundnut, lowland swamp-rice, and honey.

Development Concern (DEVCON) implemented a project that contributed to the sustainable management of the Cross River National Park's Oban Division by strengthening local people's capacity to manage 20,000 hectares of community forest contiguous to the park, through the organization of the community and improvement of the institutional capacity of its representatives, the development of non-timber forest products and ecotourism businesses with management planning, implementation and education, and the development of other alternative sustainable livelihoods.

Through a project implemented by ResourceTrust Network, 18 smallholder farmers from six communities with plantations close to Cape Three Point Reserve in Ghana adopted the buffer zone system in their individual farms, while maintaining existing riparian and forest buffers. These farmers were provided with hives, smokers, and protective clothing to practice beekeeping in the landscape.

As well as monitoring the number of hectares with strengthened biodiversity management, CEPF tracks project impacts at the corridor level through interventions influencing public policies and/or private sector business practices to incorporate

provisions for biodiversity conservation. CEPF grants helped to mainstream biodiversity conservation into policies and/or business practices in eight of the nine corridors across the region (with the exception being the Mount Nimba Complex).

In the Ghana-Togo conservation corridor, under a project led by Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS), three District Assemblies (Atwima Mponua, East Akim/Abuakwa, and Ahanta West) had successfully revised their planning guidelines to ensure that they would take ecosystem services and the Man and Biosphere Reserve concept into account when preparing their medium-term development plans. Ghana Rubber Estates Limited (GREL) was also formally engaged with an existing memorandum of understanding (MoU) to upgrade its conservation practices through capacity building of rubber outgrowers. This established a foundation for trials to be conducted on rubber plantations within off-reserves and transition areas of Cape Three Points Forest Reserve to promote conservation agriculture. The MoU also spelled out the activities and assistance that each partner would provide to ensure sustainable forest management practices towards biodiversity conservation at Cape Three Points Forest Reserve. The Ghana Integrated Aluminium Development Corporation (GIADEC) Act, which is supposed to facilitate the establishment of a corporation to manage the extraction of bauxite and any related activities, was passed by parliament. GWS engaged in the process and ensured that the necessary environmental and social safeguards were secured to protect nature and people.

In the Sierra Leone Coastal Corridor, Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) engaged six private salt and fish processing companies in Yawri Bay (Chung Ghang Fishing Company, Two Brothers, Ricma, Korean Fishing Group, White Pole and the California-based salt-producing company SALVEST-LTD) into a conservation agreement with communities and other relevant government institutions. Throughout these engagements, these companies expressed interest to further incorporate conservation measures into their business plans. The project succeeded in increasing advocacy on this through consultation meetings, and radio and television programs. Also, by the end of the project, both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) had reviewed and amended their acts with the NPAA's Acts now having the conservation and management of wetlands included in it and with the EPA's Acts now incorporating a provision for maximum protection of the environment, including marine and coastal ecosystems.

6.3 Creation, expansion and improved management of protected areas

Few projects in the GFWA Hotspot focused specifically on improved management and/or creation or expansion of protected areas. No specific strategic direction was developed for this purpose, nor were any investment priorities defined as specific

targets for this phase of CEPF investment. Nevertheless, a CEPF small grant to Conservation des Espèces Marines led to the creation of the first marine protected area in Côte d'Ivoire, spreading across 272,375 hectares along 50 km of coastline in the region of Grand Bereby, with the main purpose of protecting marine turtles, such as hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*).

For 12 protected areas across the hotspot, where CEPF supported CSOs to implemented conservation action, the grantees were asked to monitor changes in the management effectiveness using the METT. Overall, 10 baseline and final METTs were received, providing a good overview of the evolution of management effectiveness at these protected areas (Table 4).

Table 4: Baseline and final METT scores for protected areas in the hotspot

Country	Site Name	Baseline Assessment		Final Assessment		Difference in Score
		Year	Score	Year	Score	
Liberia	Sapo National Park	2018	44	2021	64	20
São Tomé and Príncipe	Parque Natural do Principe	2019	41	2020	46	5
	Parque Natural Obo do Sao Tome	2018	40	2022	40	0
Nigeria	Cross River National Park: Okwangwo Division	2018	67	2021	72	5
	Mbe Mountains	2018	65	2021	68	3
	Afi Mountains Wildlife Sanctuary	2018	37	2021	45	8
	Okomu National Park	2021	54	2022	65	11
Ghana	Tano Ofin Forest Reserve	2017	50	2018	33	-17
	Cape Three Points	2017	53	2018	31	-22
	Atewa Range Forest Reserve	2017	50	2018	34	-16

For seven of these protected areas, the actions supported by CEPF grants resulted in strengthened management. For example, the increased METT score by 20 points for Sapo National Park can be attributed to training provided by SCNL to eco-guards, Forestry Development Authority (FDA) rangers and Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) field staff (the national and local authorities), resulting in a collaborative effort and patrols by these parties. For Okomu National Park (increase by 11 points), a forest cover assessment of the park fed into the review of its management plan. Also, the Okomu Biodiversity Stakeholders' Platform was established, which brought together 12 communities, Okomu National Park, the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, the A. G. Leventis Foundation, government

security agencies and Okomu Oil Palm Company. The improvement noted in the METT score can be attributed to this joint approach to the protection of the park .

The three sites that reported a decrease in management effectiveness are all in Ghana. These were the focus of activities implemented under two small grants, which were limited in size and scope and not, therefore, expected to have a direct impact on site management (scientific study, awareness-raising activities, etc.).

The main findings of these METTs is that the average score, at the end of the investment period, was between 50 and 57 points. This is still quite a low score, which further demonstrates the need for additional and more targeted support. This also echoes the outcomes of the assessment carried out by UN Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) under the RIT grant and which assessed the management effectiveness, forest cover change and threats in the hotspot. The assessment had the following key findings:

- Management effectiveness: more focus is needed on improving the delivery of conservation objectives in protected areas (tentative conclusion as METT scores over time are highly influenced by external factors, such as the assessments being conducted by different persons or groups who have different understandings of the current and baseline situation).
- Forest cover: no substantial difference in forest loss was found when comparing protected areas that received CEPF funding in the last five years with non-funded sites.
- Threats: most threats either stayed the same or became more significant with time.

While the results indicate accelerated degradation of protected areas, it is important to recognize that these are the most threatened sites. This reinforces the importance of intervening in these sites, considering the following recommendations:

- Increase regular protected area effectiveness assessments through capacity building (IMET, METT, etc.).
- Invest in coordination mechanism to support data collection and analysis (communication and coordination in the process of data collection and analyses).
- Invest in projects that help to address threats, particularly hunting, such as by investing in projects to promote sustainable resource use and help address human-wildlife interactions.
- Invest in the protection of hotspots of deforestation; vulnerable KBAs that continue to have a substantial forest cover can still be priorities for protection.

7. Strengthening Civil Society Results

7.1 Type of organizations supported

Excluding the RIT, CEPF supported 63 organizations, through 79 grants (eight small grantees and three large grantees received more than one grant (usually two):

- 68 percent of grants were awarded to local organizations from nine of the 11 eligible hotspot countries (Figure 7).
- 80 percent of the grants allocated to local organizations were small grants.
- In terms of funds, 47 percent were awarded to local organizations (Figure 8), noting that, in many cases, international organizations worked closely with national and local partners to implement CEPF funded projects.

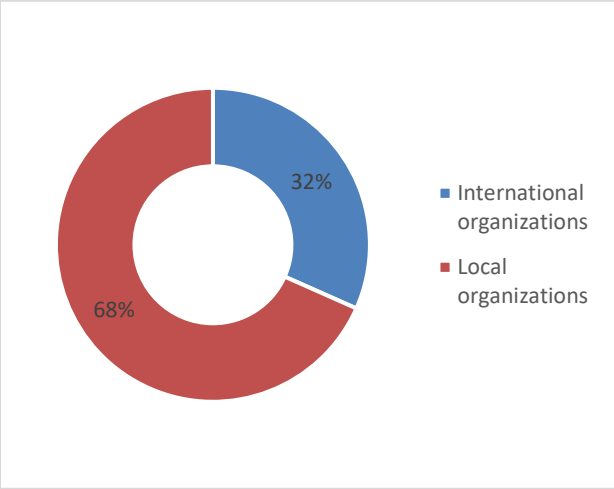

Figure 7: Share of number of grants awarded per type of organization

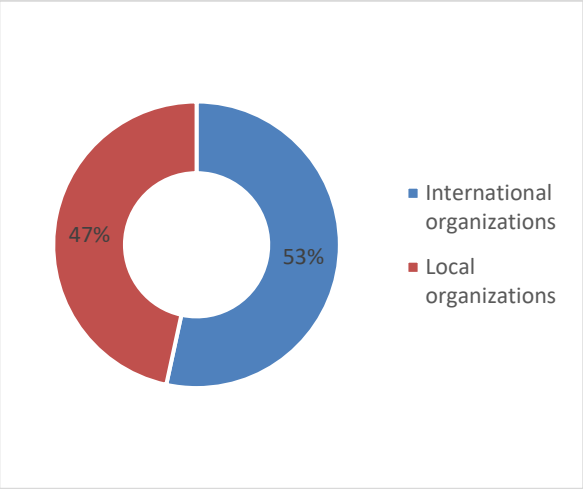

Figure 8: Share of funds awarded per type of organization

Work with universities and research institutes was also encouraged and supported, with four projects receiving funding. CEPF purposefully supported the "breaking down of institutional walls", to encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships that demonstrate models for sustainable growth, target the poorest populations and achieve priority conservation outcomes.

7.2 Trainings provided

Training of individuals is distinct from capacity building for organizations. Training, the imparting of skills to individuals to approve their ability at a particular task, can be understood in multiple ways:

- Training given by grant recipients to stakeholders. For example, Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch trained members of 11 communities living around Kilim Ljim forest in honey production. In Nigeria, WCS trained local community eco-guards and national park rangers in Spatial Monitoring and

Reporting Tool (SMART) patrol techniques in the Mbe and Okwangwo Divisions of Cross River National Park. The total number of people who received structured training across the CEPF portfolio as a whole was 13,998 (6,171 women and 7,827 men).

- Training undertaken by any of the 63 grant recipients themselves to improve their own abilities to implement their projects or manage their organizations. This is captured by the organizations themselves in their CSTTs, as discussed in Section 7.3.
- Training provided directly by the RIT. This included: technical and financial training in reporting to meet the standard required by the donor; institutional capacity training to ensure grantees adhere to and have policies that support their day-to-day operations; and a "masterclass" for applicants to help them with designing projects, measuring impacts, engaging stakeholders, mainstreaming gender, and budgeting and financing.
- The training provided by three mentor organizations, Tropical Biology Association (TBA), West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and FFI, through the CEPF mentorship program. This two-year program consisted of three large grants to the mentors, which, in turn, provided training and mentorship to 79 mentee organizations. The mentees included CEPF grantees and non-grantees, and included 10 women-led organizations. The mentors trained a total of 322 people (62 percent men, 38 percent women). The program resulted in increased capacities of the mentee organizations as previously mentioned.

7.3 Analysis of individual CSTTs

CEPF monitors the impact of its investments on the organizational capacity of CSOs by means of the CSTT: a self-assessment tool that each local organization fills in at beginning (baseline) and end (final) of the period of their grant. The CSTT is organized around five dimensions of capacity: human resources; financial resources; management systems; strategic planning; and delivery. Baseline and final CSTTs were collected for 73 CSOs (including non-grantee mentees), comprising 63 local and 10 international organizations.

Changes in organizational capacity are difficult to discern across different types of grantee. For example, included in this sample are:

- Large grant recipients for which CEPF funding generally represented a small proportion of their overall budget but which may have faced some internal difficulties (due to fundraising or internal governance).
- Small grant recipients, often working in difficult environments or relying on a limited number of key people. This type of recipient, often grassroot

organizations, is susceptible to volatility in its CSTT score, whenever their situation changes (e.g., staff turnover).

Conversely, there were organizations for which CEPF may have been trajectory-altering. For instance, groups receiving:

- CEPF funds for the first time; that is, money tied to the technical, administrative, and financial requirements of established international donors, which, thereby, moved these recipients onto another level of compliance and organization.
- Funds of a magnitude dramatically greater than they had ever received before, or for a technical scope greater than they had undertaken in the past. Once again, these recipients often had quickly to scale up their staffing arrangements and monitoring/ adaptative management.
- CEPF funds with a significant part allocated to the scaling up of the recipients' capacities with the idea to position them as a key national players alongside public and private sectors.

In all three such cases, this is an indication of CEPF's drive to invest in the organizational capacity of these groups.

A different way to look at these data is among those organizations that received some form of targeted support suggesting they should have an increase in capacity. These include recipients that:

- Attended a masterclass in project design and management, led by CEPF and the RIT.
- Received purposeful on-the-job training by a mentor organization (see Section 7.2).
- Transitioned from being a sub-grantee to a direct recipient of funds.

Figure 9 illustrates the changes in average baseline and final scores across the five dimensions of the CSTT. The 73 organizations showed, on average, a slight improvement of their capacity in all five dimensions but slightly more on financial resources and strategic planning.

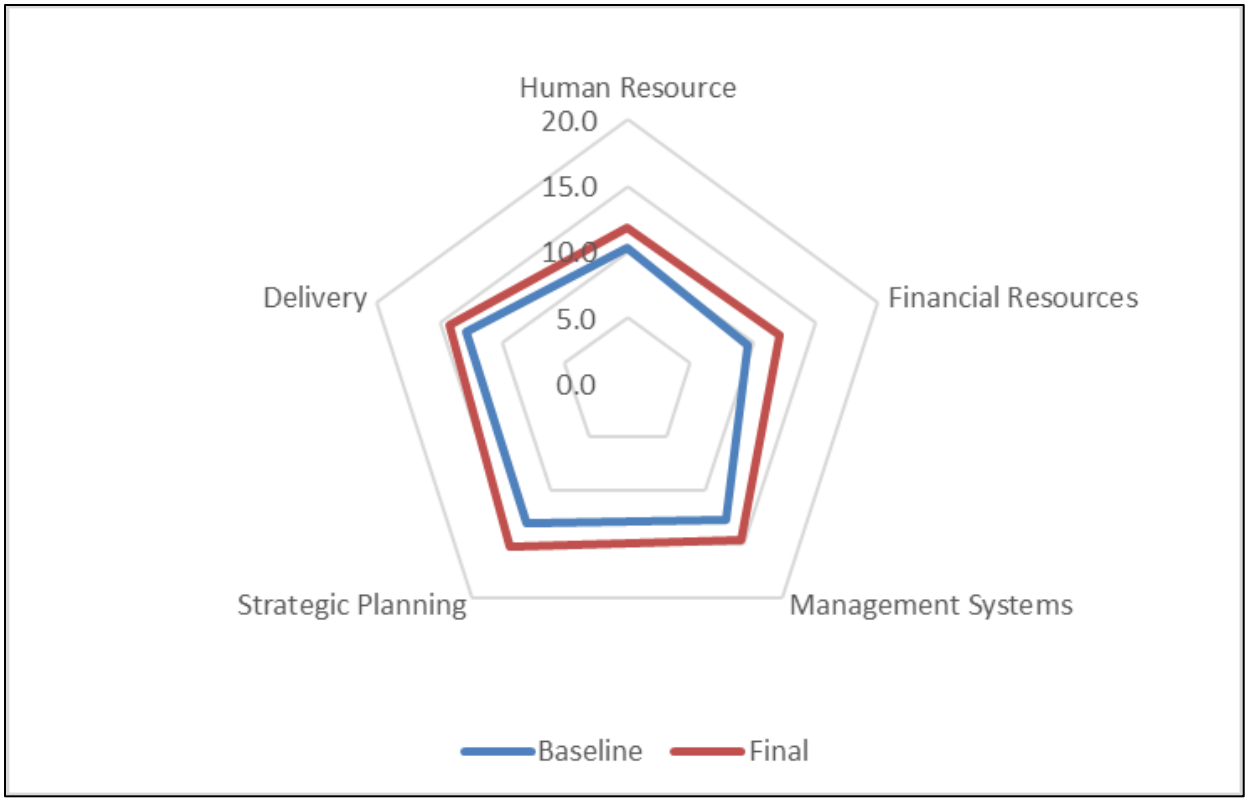

Figure 9: Average change in CSTT scores over the period of CEPF support

Overall, the analysis of the CSTTs shows that 90 percent of organizations increased their scores but with a great variability (between 1 and 43 points), while the remaining 10 percent (seven organizations) saw a reduction of between 1 and 5 points:

- 25 organizations (34 percent) reported an increase in their score by more than 10 points, reflecting improvements throughout their organization.
- Nine organizations (all but one of which were local) reached a score above 80 points, joining an initial group of six organizations (half of which were international) that already had a score above 80 points.
- The 63 local organizations reported a 12 percent weighted average increase in tracking tool score, while the 10 international organizations only reported a 4 percent weighted increase, as can be expected.
- The 12 large grantees with a complete assessment displayed a 12 percent weighted average increase in their score, while the 55 mentees (13 of which were also small grantees) had a weighted average increase of 23 percent, which further demonstrates the efficiency of the mentorship approach.
- Of the six organizations that showed an increase of more than 25 points, four were part of the mentorship program.

These results highlight the efficiency of the mentorship program as compared to the more limited standard capacity building approach of CEPF and the RIT. They also demonstrate that, in just a few years (two years for the mentorship program and around three to four years for the remaining large and small grants), CSOs' capacities in the hotspot can be raised significantly.

8. Human Wellbeing Results

8.1 Communities benefiting

Community-based approaches were at the core of all projects on livelihoods and improved land management of priority sites (community forest reserves, private concessions, protected areas, etc.). This required, in general, an extensive consultation process to secure community understanding, support, and ownership as a key element of the long-term sustainability of livelihood initiatives or alternatives economic activities favourable to biodiversity conservation. To ensure that the organizations worked "with" and not "against" local communities, CEPF required all grantees to adhere to stakeholder engagement plans and social safeguards policies.

Forty-three projects, implemented by 39 CSOs, worked in 384 communities across the region positively affecting more than 108,829 people (50 percent men, 50 percent women). The vast majority (81 percent) of these communities were engaged in a subsistence economy (forest dwellers) or small landowners (farmers). The benefits received by those 384 communities can be understood as environmental (i.e., increased access to clean water, energy, food security, resilience to the impacts of climate change, or some other sort of ecosystem service) or social (i.e., increased access to public services, land tenure, recognition of traditional knowledge, engagement in governance processes).

Forty-nine percent of the beneficiary communities had improved access to ecosystem services by the end of the investment phase, which went hand in hand with improved food security (44 percent). Thirty-nine percent of the communities benefitted from improved recognition of traditional knowledge and decision-making processes. This was a particular focus of the CEPF investment. While not an explicit focus of this investment phase, 154 communities (40 percent) benefitted from increased resilience to climate change , reflecting the interests of CSOs in responding to the impacts of climate change. CEPF-supported projects dealing directly with land tenure issues ended up improving land tenure for 109 communities (28 percent) through mapping, community forest registration, boundary delineation, or zonation. These results reflect the type of work that conservation and development CSOs typically undertake with local communities: diversified and focused on present and future environmental issues.

8.2 Gender

While adopting a gender-sensitive approach to the design and implementation of individual projects was a hallmark of the CEPF investment program, a systematic monitoring system was designed by CEPF only in 2016 and was not applied for the first investment phase in the Guinean Forests (2001-2011). Hence, throughout the second phase (2016-2022), gender was addressed more systematically, as follows:

- Grants (and the overall portfolio) focused on improving the lives of women and girls as the beneficiaries of projects, or on ensuring equity in outcomes across gender.
- Grants focused on incorporating gender into the design of projects from the outset.
- Grants incorporated changing the way in which grantees themselves behaved operationally.

Furthermore, CEPF and the RIT systematically integrated gender into the grant award cycle (for large and small grants), by requesting all grantees to complete a Gender Tracking Tool (GTT) at the beginning (baseline) and end (final) of their projects. Thus, by the time of the final assessment event in Accra, CEPF had already monitored the impact of its engagement on 74 recipients (eight international and 66 local organizations), which submitted their baseline and final GTTs. Briefly, the analysis of these GTTs shows that 60 of these organizations (81 percent) improved their understanding of and commitment to gender issues. The results, which cover a range of situations, are summarized as follows:

- Three CSOs (four percent) reported a decrease in their GTT score by six points on average, often due to staff turnover, whereby expertise on gender was lost to the organization which resulted in no gender-disaggregated data being collected and reviewed anymore.
- 11 organizations (15 percent) reported that their GTT score remained stable (no change).
- 60 organizations reported an increased GTT score, of which 23 organizations saw a significant increase in their score (six points or more), reflecting significant efforts to integrate gender into their organization's programs and governance.
- The average baseline score among the 74 respondents was nine out of a maximum score of 20, with the average final score rising to 13, showing an average increase of 39 percent.

Considering the seven specific questions in the GTT, the trend in terms of increased score is summarized in Figure 10 and as follows:

- On average, the highest increases in score were related to whether an organization had a written policy on gender integration (question 1) and staff trained on gender issues (question 2).

- Organizations also reported that they had allocated more financial resources to incorporate gender into their work (question 7) and, as a consequence, were able to designate staff responsible for gender issues (question 2).
- The least progress was seen in relation to monitoring, collecting and analysing gender data (questions 6, 5 and 4, respectively), although this can be explained as the areas where organizations were already quite active on gender (hence, higher average baseline scores).

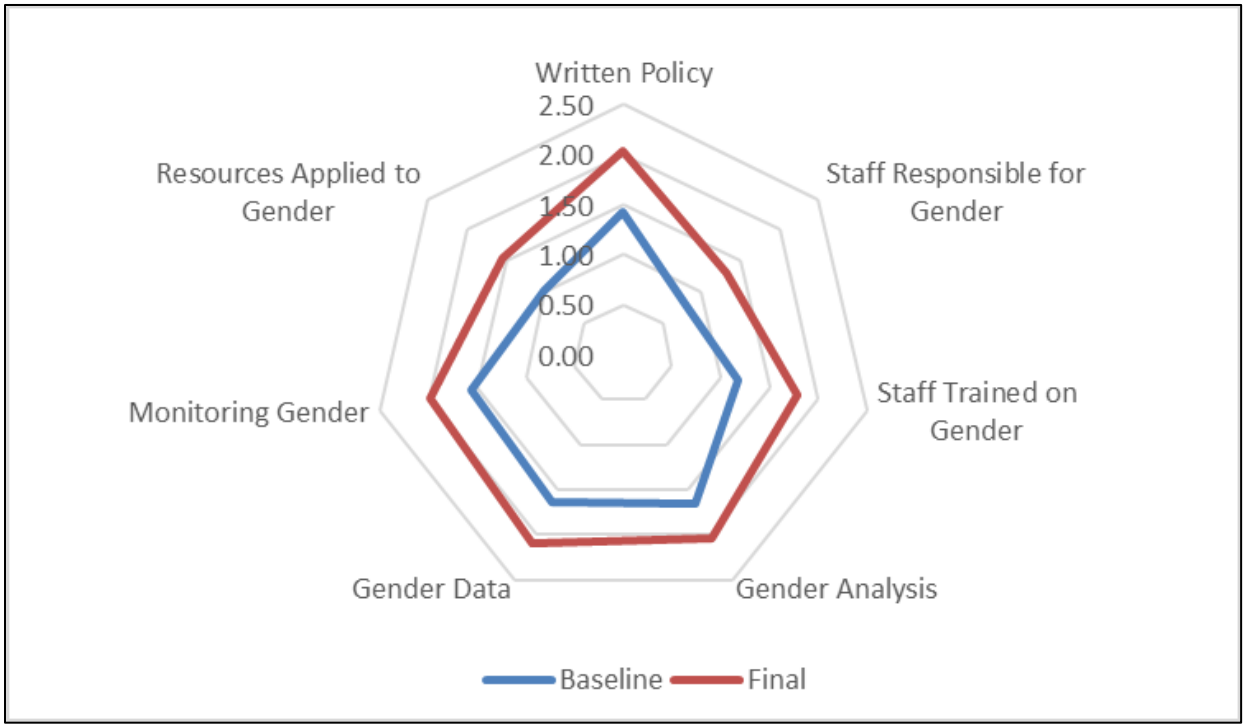

Figure 10: Average change in GTT scores over the period of CEPF support

One other notable example of CEPF commitment to equitable inclusion of women into conservation projects was the mentorship program implemented by TBA in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Liberia, which targeted 10 women-led organizations. While the training focused on leadership, support was also given for the establishment of networks of women-led CSOs. This CEPF-funded program received lots of interest, with a high number of demands from women-led organizations to benefit from this training. There appears to be, therefore, good potential to support women-led, conservation-focused CSOs become conservation leaders in the hotspot.

8.3 Livelihood improvement

As reflected in Investment Priority 1.4 (livelihood/job creation activities or benefit-sharing mechanisms) and in concert with CEPF's global goal of improving human well-

being, the grant portfolio reflected the fact that conservation without local economic development would overlook poverty as a driver of threats to biodiversity. As a result, CEPF made grants that allowed individuals and households to:

- Increase their knowledge, through structured training, such that they were more employable or better able to make a living.
- Increase their income through some form of employment or enterprise.
- Increase their agricultural productivity.
- Increase their efficiency in using natural resources (fuelwood, charcoal, etc.) or time (processing of cassava, groundnut, honey, etc.).

Although training is only an intermediate step towards an improved livelihood, it was nevertheless an important element of grantees' work. Grantees trained beneficiaries, including community members, staff of partner government agencies, elected representatives of local government, and students, so they could implement livelihood interventions. For example, several grantees trained community members in sustainable agriculture techniques, such as reduced use of agrichemicals, techniques to reduce soil erosion, permaculture, and intercropping. The results of this training were reflected in the indicators related to area of production landscapes or KBAs under improved management. Furthermore, some of these trainees (but not all) reported increases in agricultural productivity through adoption of climate-smart techniques.

A good illustration of this was an integrated community forest project in Liberia implemented by SCNL, which supported:

- A small loan program, which reached 130 women. There were three rounds of loans, with an increasing loan size in each round and a very impressive repayment rate (98 percent). Women reported a significant impact on their lives by being able to cover costs, such as sending a child to school or paying for food when their husbands could not do so.
- 320 farmers (261 men) to participate in 10 cacao farmer field schools, which mainly promoted shade cacao to improve production; 194 farmers (154 men) achieved the minimum attendance required for graduation.
- 110 families to establish lowland rice plots at 11 communal sites. They enjoyed harvests of 100-133 kg per site, roughly two to five times the typical harvests of upland rice and a 30percent increase in yield over lowland rice planted traditionally.
- 180 women to develop intensive groundnut plantations. This activity was only a partial success, due to problems with rodents, but over half of the women continue to grow with this cash crop.
- 187 beekeepers (161 men) to manage 449 hives.
- Adult literacy, to support all these livelihood activities. A total of 288 community members (194 women) participated in the classes, of whom

195 (122 women) graduated. These community members also acquired basic numeracy and bookkeeping skills.

CEPF grantees systematically collected data on the number of men and women receiving cash benefits. These benefits were derived either from employment (such as projects where people were hired to work in plant nurseries or work as eco-guides) or from small-scale alternative livelihoods (such as handicraft, coconut oil, coffee or cacao production, sale of vegetables and honey, and tourism). CEPF grantees reported that 2,986 men and 3,519 women received cash benefits.

9. Enabling Conditions Results

9.1 Policy improvement and implementation

Several CEPF grantees worked towards the improvement of policies in favor of biodiversity conservation, demonstrating the important role of civil society in influencing decision making. The achievement of these objectives followed different approaches, sometimes combined into one project. CSOs: gathered data and evidence for policy makers; proposed alternative development scenarios; organized citizen consultations; raised public awareness to build a constituency in favor of or against some regulations; and organized visits and exchanges for elected local officials.

During the CEPF investment phase, many avenues to mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into development decision making were explored, depending on the local political context. In total, 10 projects influenced the revision and/or enactment of seven policies with a local scope, and 11 policies with a national scope. The list of the revised and/or enacted policies supported by CEPF projects is presented in Figure 11 below.

Of the 18 policies enacted, seven were related to management plans (six community by-laws in various countries and one national protected area management plan in Príncipe), four policies were related to the creation of protected areas (a marine protected area and a community forest in Côte d'Ivoire), three integrated KBAs and freshwater KBAs into national policies (one in Ghana and two in Sierra Leone), two were related to mining (one local community by-law in Liberia and one national law in Ghana), and two national laws targeted the conservation of bees and Príncipe thrush in São Tomé and Príncipe.

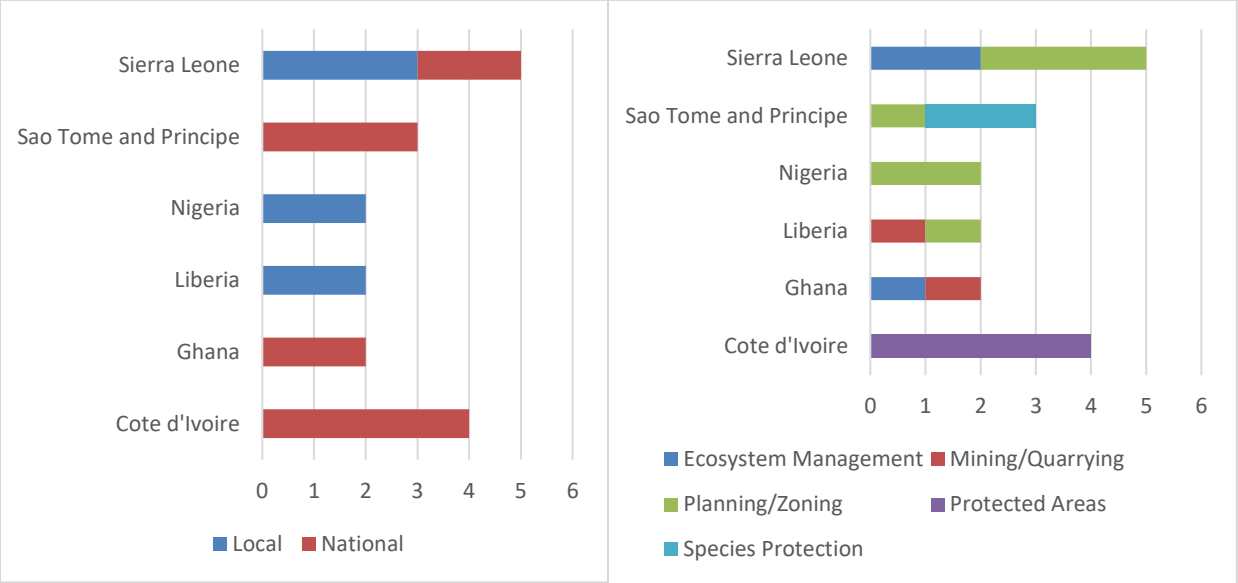

Figure 11: Local and national policies revised or enacted with support from CEPF projects

9.2 Partnerships and linkages / hotspot-wide initiatives

CEPF's approach considers that collaborative action multiplies the power of civil society. This takes two related forms: (i) creation or strengthening of collaborative approaches between organizations for the implementation of a specific project or activity (i.e., "partnerships"); and (ii) creating or strengthening more broad-reaching "networks" of multiple groups with a common purpose. Collaboration was not only between CSOs but equally often with government partners, communities, and the private sector. These collaborations were sometimes created by design, but they also occurred as a byproduct of the work: the result of exchange visits, mentoring, and recognition that working together created advantages for both parties.

Overall, 21 partnerships were established and/or strengthened among civil society, government, private sector and community institutions to promote best practices in mining, sustainable forestry and agriculture, over the life of the CEPF investment. The influence of CSOs can also be seen among private compagnies reforming their practices in ways that mitigate their impacts on biodiversity. This is different to the types of financial donations that many companies make within the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which can be valuable for conservation but does not necessarily require a change to underlying business practices. An illustrative example of partnerships with private companies is the one resulting from the project implemented by Noé – Man & Nature. Working in the Ankasa-Tano rainforest in the Western Region of Ghana, Noé created relationships with two different private businesses, namely Yayra Glover Ltd, a pioneer licensed organic cocoa producer and buyer, and Savannah Fruits Company, a sustainable producer and exporter of hand-

crafted oil and butter. Noé worked with them to sign two conservation agreements with the Ankasa-Tano Community Resource Management Area (CREMA), whereby the companies provided technical support to the community's cacao and coconut farmers and processors (organization, capacity building, certification) along with a premium price, and, in return, the farmers adopted sustainable, organic and conservation-friendly practices, while the CREMA carried out conservation of natural resources.

In addition, through the implementation of 19 grants, 41 networks were formed and/or strengthened among civil society, government and private sector actors to facilitate capacity building, avoid duplication of effort and maximize conservation impact. For example, the Okomu Biodiversity Stakeholders Platform was formed thanks to a project of Society for Sustainability and Conservation Education for Rural Areas (SCERA) among Okomu National Park stakeholders (local communities represented by men and women, CSOs, park authorities and natural resource companies). This platform enabled effective communication and fostered constructive dialogue for the management of the park and its surrounding areas.

Additionally, 25 women-led conservation and development organizations, associations and networks were established and strengthened to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing. For example, a small grant awarded to the Organization for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria (OPSCN) allowed it to establish a network for women in conservation with over 103 members in three mangrove and forest communities in Cross River State. The network was registered as a legal entity with the Cross River State government. Similarly, in São Tomé and Príncipe, Fundação Príncipe was able to officially launch, through its small grant project, one official national network of women working for the sustainable development of the country. These and similar networks strengthened local and regional capacities to foster gender equality in natural resource management and increase networking among women whereby they can access continual support.

The diverse networks and partnerships, some of them also between CEPF grantees working in the same country or on the same topic, are expected to increase sustainability beyond the end of the CEPF investment phase, as they provide for mutual support, knowledge exchange, peer learning, and joint advocacy.

9.3 Leveraging additional resources

As shown in Annex 5, from the approximately US$10.1 million allocated by CEPF to the GFWA Hotspot, 34 grantees leveraged a combined US$3.9 million in in-kind contributions and co-funding from government partners, other donors, and other NGOs. Nineteen of these grantees were small grant recipients and reported co-

financing and/or in-kind allocations totaling around US$1.2 million (including around US$128,000 in in-kind contributions), while 15 large grantees reported leveraging US$2.7 million (including around US$198,000 of in-kind contributions).

Grantees were able to secure, on average, US$60,000 in co-financing from the key funders operating in the region (GEF, PPI, Mohammed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Darwin Initiative, AFD, EU, etc.), as well as from a great variety of smaller funding sources, including zoos, private foundations, international programs, and larger CSOs.

In addition, as the RIT, BirdLife International was able to leverage additional funds for the region. As discussed in Section 5.1, BirdLife secured a grant from the ECOFAC program funded by the European Union. In 2021, BirdLife secured further funding from the GEF, via UNDP as the Implementing Agency, to build on the ECOFAC outcomes. This allowed the position of the part-time RIT focal point in São Tomé and Príncipe to be covered. BirdLife also leveraged additional funding over the period of the CEPF investment phase, aligned with the priorities set in the ecosystem profile, including US$3.9 million from the EU-PAPFor project for the protection of biodiversity and priority forest ecosystems in the Gola-Foya Landscape.

10. Progress Toward Long-term Conservation Goals

Progress towards CEPF's long-term conservation goals (Annex 6) was assessed by a group of stakeholders at the start of the investment and, again, during the final assessment workshop in June 2022.

CEPF is not intended to be a permanent presence in any biodiversity hotspot. Rather, it supports efforts toward an end point at which local civil society shall attain a level of independence with sufficient capacity to be able to access other resources and credibility to respond to future conservation challenges. Experience to date shows that, in most hotspots, reaching a point at which civil society can "graduate" from CEPF support will take more than five years (the typical duration of a CEPF investment phase). Consequently, CEPF prepares long-term strategic visions, which establish what the end point for its investment in a hotspot looks like and determine how to get there. To achieve this objective, a common and harmonious approach among partners, whereby complementarity and synergies are maximized, must be implemented for greater impact. With this purpose in mind, CEPF supported the preparation of a Long-Term Vision for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot, through a participatory process.

The Long-Term Vision aims to guide future investments of CEPF and its partners working on biodiversity conservation in the hotspot and reflects the idea that "graduation" can be determined when five conditions are met, related to conservation priorities, civil society capacity, sustainable financing, public policy, and the ability to respond to new issues. Each condition has five criteria, yielding a table with 22 criteria as can be found in the document.

The design of the Long-Term Vision for the GFWA hotspot consisted of:

- Taking stock of the current situation pertaining to forests and biodiversity conservation in the 11 eligible hotspot countries.
- Identifying ongoing and upcoming investments from partners, and their future priorities/strategies.
- Compiling lessons learned and good practices from previous investments.
- Identifying future investment priorities and opportunities for complementarity.

Based on this analysis, graduation criteria, targets and timelines were defined for the conservation-focused CSOs in the hotspot countries to become less reliant on CEPF and other donors' support. Priority actions were identified, thereafter, to guide CEPF and partners towards achieving these targets. The methodology to develop the Long-Term Vision included the creation of an Advisory Group that met monthly, a review of literature, 38 one-on-one consultations with CEPF partners, consultations with CEPF grantees through an online platform and during the final assessment workshop in June 2022, and the consolidation of the Long-Term Vision report.

With 11 countries in the hotspot and in alignment with the timeline necessary to reach the targets of each of the graduation criteria, it is estimated that 15 years of coordinated and targeted investments are needed to enable conservation-focused CSOs to become enduring and effective agents of forest and biodiversity conservation, independently from the support of CEPF and its partners. Not only does this represent a lot of work over a long period of time but it also suggests a significant amount of funds. The exercise estimated the cost of meeting all these measures at US$45.2 million (or around US$3 million annually), which would come from multiple sources, not only CEPF.

Overall, the Long-Term Vision document provides a useful projection for future needs and measures and an assessment of the situation in 2022 in comparison to the time of the ecosystem profile in 2015. Tremendous progress has been made regarding increasing capacity of civil society groups in each country and government institutions have grown significantly, improving policies, raising public and communities' awareness, establishing and managing protected areas, and supporting the adoption of nature-based sustainable livelihoods. However, knowledge gaps, capacity

strengthening needs, weaknesses in the policy and institutional frameworks, non-capitalized public and private financial opportunities for conservation, among others, still remain. These impede CSOs' ability to influence decision making and behaviors towards the mainstreaming of forests and biodiversity conservation efforts in their respective countries.

11. Lessons Learned from the Portfolio

Lessons learned during the implementation of the investment phase were documented in three main ways:

- From the grantees themselves, via their final completion and impact reports, surveys, and at the mid-term and final assessment workshops.
- From the Long-Term Vision consultations with CEPF partners conducted by an independent consultant in early 2022.
- From routine monitoring, field visit and supervision mission of individual projects, carried out by CEPF and/or the RIT over the investment phase.

Geographic focus

Political change, economic uncertainty and instability affected the implementation of the CEPF investment phase in a few hotspot countries, and these factors are likely to continue to affect some countries in the future. Spreading grantmaking across multiple eligible countries, with flexibility in terms of timing and scope of calls for proposals, maximized CEPF's ability to take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing the risk of failure to meet portfolio-level targets due to political or security problems in particular countries. Looking forward, there are likely to be similar opportunities to support CSOs in post-conflict situations over the years to come. CEPF has an established track record of supporting CSOs in post-conflict countries (e.g., Cameroon, Guinea, Sierra Leone), where minimal funding can make a major difference to the resurgence of a CSO community and to integrating environmental concerns into plans for reconstruction and social and economic recovery. The risks and merits of any such engagement in the case of post-conflict countries in the GFWA Hotspot need to be carefully considered.

Regarding the number of sites (i.e., KBAs) that should be prioritized for CEPF support, the experience from this portfolio suggests that it is helpful to select a list of potential additional priority sites for CEPF support, which could be prioritized for investment if any of the original list of priority sites are no longer suitable, because:

- It is not always possible to invest in sites initially prioritized, due to security reasons, evolution of the political situation or lack of endorsement by the national authorities.

- Even when investment in a country is possible, it can happen that no suitable, competitive proposals are received under open calls, due to lack of interest or low capacity among local organizations.
- Investments at some priority sites might not result in direct conservation impacts. In particular, this can be the case for sites where there has been little or no previous conservation investment, thus requiring CEPF to focus on preparatory actions that do not translate into measurable impact during the life of the investment phase.
- The constantly evolving donor landscape can make CEPF investment at some priority sites no longer relevant. For instance, another donor may make a major investment at a site prioritized for CEPF funding, leading CEPF to decide not to invest at that site, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

The operating environment for CSOs in some hotspot countries requires significant flexibility during implementation to allow for impactful investment. CSOs working at CEPF priority sites were scarce, while several established CSOs were unable to apply for CEPF funding because no priority sites had been selected in the districts where they were established.

Additionally, during all consultations regarding the mid-term and final assessment, and the Long-Term Vision, there was a broad consensus among civil society, donor and government representatives that CEPF should continue to focus attention on sites that had already received support from the fund, in order to build on successes. They advocated including "continuity of action" as a criterion for prioritizing sites for CEPF investment during future investments.

Management of the CEPF grant portfolio

Across the hotspot as a whole, few funding sources exist for local and national CSOs wanting to engage solely in nature conservation, making CEPF a crucial source of support to these organizations. Within the overall CEPF portfolio, larger, higher capacity organizations have an important role to play as "mentors", engaging local and grassroots CSOs through sub-grants, providing hands-on capacity building and supporting them to applying to small grant mechanisms. Projects of these organizations should be designed more systematically to include such a mentoring approach.

There were several examples in the CEPF portfolio of "clustered" grant-making, where clusters of grants were made to CSOs with complementary skills to address the conservation of the same site. This proved to be an effective approach to leveraging the complementary skills and experience of different CSOs, in contexts where no

single organization has all the necessary capabilities. Going forward, CEPF could build on the experience from previous investment phases by continuing to place an emphasis on forging alliances/partnerships among existing and new grantees, facilitating communication among partners across sectors, and stimulating common areas of work. This will be a particular focus of the RIT's role and require the RIT to take a strategic view of building a mutually reinforcing community of CSOs at local, national and regional level that becomes less reliant upon external technical and financial support over time. One way for the RIT to do this is to continue strategically encouraging collaborative projects involving two or more organizations from the proposal design stage.

Another key lesson was that continuity of funding over several years proved to be very important. This was achieved, in some cases, by extending the timeline of grants, allowing grantees more time to utilize grant funds, or approving cost-extensions to grants, where additional funds were needed to consolidate or build on success. In other cases, it was achieved by awarding consecutive grants to the same institution, to support different phases of a program of work. Ensuring continuity of funding appears to have been very important in allowing grantees to fully achieve their objectives and increase the sustainability of the results. It was also essential for initiatives involving protected area establishment or strengthening, for which three-year appeared to be the minimum implementation period necessary. Extending the duration of CEPF support also allowed grantees to develop new activities related to experience sharing and capitalization of lessons learned.

Capacity building

Exchange of experience proved to be important for building the capacities of individual CSOs, as well as for developing a stronger "conservation community", able to influence policy making and private sector business practices. While social media and electronic mailing lists proved to be useful means of disseminating reports and analyses, stakeholders' surveys underlined the importance of face-to-face exchanges. CEPF grantees found national/regional workshops bringing together all CEPF grantees (and other stakeholders) working on conservation in a region to be particularly useful and suggested that such workshops be organized in each country or at least regionally on an annual basis.

Peer-to-peer learning (and mentoring) has shown great potential as the most efficient experience sharing and capacity building method. It would achieve more impactful results if established at the beginning of an investment phase, to maximize CSOs' capacity to access grants and successfully implement projects. It is necessary to couple organizational strengthening with receiving a grant in a more systematic manner, in order to enable learning by doing.

Stakeholder engagement

Considering the prevalence of poverty in the hotspot countries, livelihood development must be at the core of any approach for forest and biodiversity conservation. Working towards increasing the connectivity among KBAs will require substantial incorporation of livelihood components across projects. Local communities must be empowered to choose their own sustainable economic alternatives rather than resorting to accepting short-term benefits from private companies (e.g., mining, logging, plantations), which are limited (and sometimes do not materialize) and will likely have a negative impact on their environment and wellbeing.

The above would go a step further if it was accompanied by cross-sectoral support. As seen during this investment phase, supporting cooperatives and farmers/ producers' committees with capacity building (for basic financial management, marketing, organization, monitoring and management of sustainable supplies, business models and market-surveys) can make a critical contribution to the success of livelihood initiatives and access to markets. Similarly, literacy courses should continue to be an integral part of project design, when illiteracy is a limiting factor to entrepreneurship. Moreover, considering the success of the few micro-loans supported during the investment phase, and seeing how they paved the way to greater interest from the communities toward working with conservation-focused organizations, future investments should consider supporting these mechanisms. Also, supporting CREMAs, traditional chiefs and community representatives in (re)defining their core, buffer and inhabited zones with clear and well maintained demarcation on the ground, along with adaptative annual action plans to ensure core zones remain no-go areas, would provide a clearer geographic framework for local authorities to grant rights of access and use for livelihood development.

Lastly on communities' engagement and cross-sectoral approach, strong collaboration between conservation-focused organizations and health, education and food security organizations should be established for future conservation investments. Increased access to family planning and education, particularly for women and youth, would increase the sustainability of conservation actions.

Another clear lesson is the importance of focusing on site-based action first. If local CSOs are to achieve policy impacts and reach policymakers, they need first to demonstrate the efficiency of multi-stakeholder, integrated approaches at the local level. Upscaling these approaches and influencing policymakers to incorporate key aspects into policies and plans happens only when local CSOs have gained the necessary skills and credibility at the local level. Ensuring impacts on policy also

requires creative collaboration between local CSOs and organizations experienced in policy influence, which may come from other development sectors than environment. This calls for innovative partnerships and reaching beyond established audiences of conservation-oriented organizations.

Compared with influencing local and national government, the experience of grantees with the private sector was even more limited. This will require specific attention and efforts in the coming years. Based on the experience from the CEPF portfolio, it appears important to:

- Start at the local scale, with businesses that are rooted in the community and landscape.
- Seek opportunities to promote the image of the industry at the same time as delivering conservation benefits through the development of sustainable value chains, whereby producers are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices.
- Gather data that demonstrate to business the financial benefits of conservation action.
- Be creative in seeking opportunities for in-kind support from the private sector (e.g., meeting venues, assistance with transportation) or co-financing contributions towards conservation interventions using carbon credits, biodiversity offsets and payments for ecosystem services, among others.

Monitoring changes over time

From the project design phase, grantees recognized that an intervention needs to be based on data and current facts, in order to provide solid evidence of the effectiveness of conservation actions. As such, adequate time and resources must be invested at the onset of each project to ensure that the set of indicators to be monitored are well defined and the baseline value is adequately quantified for each indicator. Many of the baseline data may already be available, starting from globally shared databases, but findings need to stay embedded in the community (i.e., something that communities own, as opposed to information gathered by outsiders and stored in far-away laboratories and libraries).

Further, recognizing that impacts may occur years after project completion, grantees learned of the need for long-term impact evaluations and for relating projects explicitly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Aichi targets on biodiversity conservation.

12. Conclusion

Biodiversity hotspots, by definition, are under threat. The overall level of threat in the GFWA Hotspot did not abate between 2016 and 2022. Indeed, based on current trends, it will grow worse over time. In response, stakeholders at the final assessment workshop in June 2022 in Accra, Ghana, contributors to the Long-Term Vision report, and leading NGOs and donor partners in the hotspot made recommendations for the future, which can be summarized as follow:

- Peer-to-peer learning is a powerful capacity building approach that should be maximized.
- CSOs must be encouraged to join forces, including across sectors (health, education, finance, etc.), rather than compete for funding.
- Grassroots organizations require tailormade and medium-to-long-term support, which requires the synchronization of different funding sources.
- Conservation interventions cannot be successful and/or sustainable without communities' ownership. Securing access rights to natural resources and empowering communities must, therefore, be at the core of all investments.
- Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) may be an increasingly effective means of conserving biodiversity over the next decade.
- The support of government authorities is crucial to the success, maintenance and upscaling of conservation interventions, strong relationships must, therefore, be built with relevant authorities at the onset of all investments.
- The private sector must be further engaged in conservation through adopting and supporting more sustainable practices, contributing financially to conservation and demonstrating return on investments.
- Landscape-level collaboration between governments, facilitated by CSOs, must be established to enable a regional harmonized approach to achieve substantial conservation results.
- Multiple knowledge gaps on best conservation practices and their impacts are still an issue. As such, the establishment of long term and rigorous monitoring systems is urgently needed.
- Regular meetings of the donors investing in the hotspot would enable opportunities for complementarity and synergy to be identified continually, and maximize knowledge sharing on good practices.

These recommendations will be taken into account for the next CEPF investment in the GFWA Hotspot. Detailed options and recommendations are outlined in the Long-Term Vision report. As the 2016-2022 investment phase and its portfolio of projects

have shown, with a relatively small amount of money, CSOs can achieve significant results, not only at the site scale, but also at national (policy) and regional (networks) scales. Engaging CSOs in this hotspot on any of the above would be a positive step for biodiversity conservation in the future.

Annex 1: CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot

Strategic Directions	Investment Priorities
1. Empower local communities to engage in sustainable management of 40 priority sites and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale	1.1 Strengthen the elaboration and/or implementation of land-use planning, land tenure and forestry reforms to facilitate good governance in the management of community and private reserves and concessions
	1.2 Promote preparation and implementation of participatory management plans that support stakeholder collaboration in protected area management
	1.3 Demonstrate sustainable livelihood/job creation activities for local communities that will act as incentives for the conservation of priority sites (e.g., domestication of wildlife species, sustainable logging from locally-controlled forests, harvesting of NTFPs, sustainable agriculture, etc.)
2. Mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector practice in the nine conservation corridors, at local, sub-national and national levels	2.1 Conduct policy-relevant research, analysis and outreach that informs and influences the development of national government conservation policies, including on protected area management, payment for ecosystem services, REDD+ and ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change
	2.2 Generate locally-relevant information on natural ecosystems (e.g., economic valuations of ecosystem services) to influence political and economic decision-making in favor of their conservation
	2.3 Facilitate partnerships among local communities, private sector and government to demonstrate models for best practice mining, sustainable forestry and sustainable agriculture by private companies
3. Safeguard priority globally threatened species by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps	3.1 Support the implementation of Conservation Action Plans for Critically Endangered and Endangered species on the IUCN Red List
	3.2 Update the KBA analysis by incorporating recently available data, including on Alliance for Zero Extinction sites and global Red List assessments and by conducting targeted research to fill critical knowledge gaps

Strategic Directions	Investment Priorities
4. Build the capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People's, women's and youth groups, to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity	4.1 Strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations in financial, institutional and project management, organizational governance, and fundraising
	4.2 Establish and strengthen women-led conservation and development organizations, associations and networks to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing
	4.3 Strengthen the communication capacity of local civil society organizations in support of their mission and to build public awareness on the importance of conservation outcomes
5. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a Regional Implementation Team	5.1 Operationalize and coordinate CEPF's grant-making processes and procedures to ensure effective implementation of the investment strategy throughout the hotspot
	5.2 Build a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries to achieve common conservation objectives

Annex 2: Composition of the Regional Implementation Team during the CEPF investment of 2016-2022

a. RIT Team Leader (TL):

Responsible for the day-to-day management of the team and the workplan and the contact person with CEPF:

i. **Tommy Garnett** –had 100 percent of his time dedicated to the RIT and was based in Freetown Sierra Leone. He was instrumental in setting up the RIT, train and start the team off with implementing and delivering on the CEPF workplan. His work within the RIT was always meant to be temporary so it ended in March 2018.

ii. **Mariana Carvalho** – took over the TL role in April 2018. She relocated around that time from Mozambique to Portugal and then to Cambridge where BirdLife International is headquartered. She kept her role as sub-regional program officer (SRPO) covering the Gulf of Guinea Islands while being the TL. As the TL & SRPO, she successfully lead the team to deliver on the workplan, with great results and outputs. She resigned in late May 2022. She however volunteered her time to support the team for the final assessment workshop, in June 2022, to ensure a seamless close of this CEPF investment phase.

iii. **Jean-Baptiste Deffontaines** - took over the role of TL in June 2022. With the no-cost extension till August 2022, he assisted the team with the closing out, specifically focused on the long-term vision strategy. In parallel he was also the current Head of BirdLife West Africa Sub-regional Office (WASRO), based in Dakar, Senegal.

b. RIT Team Supervisor:

Responsible for the management oversight of the RIT, major recruitments, ensuring backstopping on management and technical issues, linking the RIT project team into the wider BirdLife staff:

i. **Thandiwe Chikomo** – was the then Head, BirdLife WASRO, based in Accra, Ghana, with 20 percent of her time dedicated to the RIT. She worked with the TL to ensure a smooth start of the RIT, and a seamless project implementation of the workplan. She supported recruitment and provided backstopping on management and technical issues regarding the RIT, as the job role indicated. She handed over the role upon her relocation to Dakar, Senegal, to Julius Arinaitwe in February 2020.

ii. **Ademola Agabe -** the Director of BirdLife Africa Division Secretariat, based in Nairobi Kenya supported the Team Supervisor position. He was instrumental in backstopping for the role during the transition and handover between Team Supervisor.

iii. **Julius Arinaitwe -** took over the role of the RIT oversight in Feb 2020 and kept it until the end of the investment. He moved to Cambridge and was the line manager of the TL.

c. Small Grants Manager:

Responsible for i) administering the programmatic, administrative and overall financial aspects of the small grants program with the local support of the three SRPOs, ii) contributing to the successful implementation of the small grant component of the RIT Terms of Reference, iii) coordinating, monitoring and reporting back to the RIT and CEPF on the development of a coherent portfolio of small grant projects.

i. **Muyang Achah:** joined in September 2016. She was based in Accra, Ghana, with 100 percent of her time dedicated to the RIT. She was the main anchor for the widely dispersed team, and a key point of contact for the grantees in the hotspot. She also was the SRPO for Ghana, Togo, and Benin. She resigned in December 2017.
ii. **Mariana Carvalho:** acted as the interim small grants manager up until April 2018.
iii. **Ruth Akagu:** took over the role of the small grants manager in May 2018, with 100 percent of her time dedicated to the RIT combined with the role of the SRPO for Nigeria. Initially based in Calabar, Cross River, Nigeria, she relocated to Accra, Ghana in April 2019. She built on the work from her colleagues to ensure the delivery of the objective and goal of the small grant mechanism. She was also the focal point on Gender, liaising with CEPF and the focal point for BirdLife's Network and Capacity Development.

d. RIT Sub-Regional Program Officers:

Responsible for in-country coordination in the 11 countries of focus to promote stakeholder engagement and ensure successful implementation of the CEPF's GFWA Hotspot portfolio.

i. **SRPO – Gulf of Guinea Islands.** Mariana Carvalho was the SRPO covering Gulf of Guinea Islands (50 percent time on this role). She was responsible for country coordination and promoting the engagement of civil society in São Tomé e Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea islands. A role she was still responsible for, alongside her role when she took over the role of the TL.
ii. **SRPO – Nigeria/Cameroon.** Ruth Akagu was the SRPO for Cameroon/ Nigeria, with 50 percent of her time dedicated to this role, form September 2016 to April 2018, based in Calabar Nigeria. She later on took the position of the small grants manager, which was reviewed to include the role of the SRPO for only Nigeria. She also held up on the role of the SRPO for Ghana, Cameroon, Benin & Togo in the interim pending the recruitment of a new SRPO at that time.

iii. **SRPO – Ghana, Cameroon, Benin & Togo.** Paul Ngafack joined the team as the new SRPO in October 2018, being responsible for coordinating the projects in Cameroon, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, with 100 percent of his time dedicated to the RIT. Initially based in Cameroon, he relocated to Accra, Ghana, to support the small and large grantees in his region, covering all technical and logistical aspects of monitoring projects in these countries. He was key to the development of a monitoring framework for the RIT, and resourcefully also supported communications and all the other components of the workplan and the team. He resigned in Feb 2022. His role was split among the small grants manager, the TL and the SRPO for the Upper GFWA.

iv. **SRPO – Upper GFWA (Manu River Union):** Francois Phopho Kamano joined the team in September 2016. He coordinated the engagement of civil society in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire, with 50 percent of his time dedicated to the RIT. He was initially based in Liberia and then relocated to Accra, Ghana. He supported the grantees in delivering projects, aligning well with the RIT's deliverables. He also took up some of the duties of the communication officer, as it relates to the RIT, upon the resignation of the then Communication Officer, a role he delivered to the best of his ability before his resignation. He resigned in August 2019. Following his resignation, the duties/responsibilities for the role were split among the small grants manager, the TL & the SRPO until the recruitment of a new SRPO.

v. **SRPO – Upper GFWA (Manu River Union):** Emmanuele Mahe took over the position of the SRPO for the Upper GFWA in 2020, dedicating 100 percent of her time to the RIT. Based in Accra, Ghana, she held her position till June 2022. She supported the RIT immensely in delivering on the workplan. Supporting grantees in delivering on their projects, ensuring good reporting among other deliverables. Leading to a successful close out on the CEPF investment phase in the GFWA. She was the focal point for BirdLife's Conservation unit, linking the CEPF work with the wider BirdLife program, coordinating with the Key Biodiversity/Important Bird Area (KBA/IBA) Team. She took up the responsibility of the M&E and successfully helped deliver the final results of the portfolio indicators. She supported the communication component of the RIT work, ensuring the production of newsletters and their dissemination.

e. Communications officer:

Responsible for the development of a communications strategy and the establishment of systems and processes for its delivery. The position was supported by the BirdLife Communications Officer in Africa and the global Communications team in Cambridge.

i. **Obaka Torto** – he supported the RIT from inception, from 2016 up until 31 Dec. 2017, when he left BirdLife. Being the Communication Officer (Africa), he held sway and delivered on this role before the engagement of the RIT's Senior Communication Officer. Based in Accra, Ghana, he dedicated 10 percent of his

time to support in delivering on the communication component of the RIT. He was instrumental in the production of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials for the RIT as well as the quarterly newsletters. He also supported the drafting of the RIT communication strategy and its implementation. Obaka took up a consultancy service in 2017 and 2019 to support the RIT with the designing/developing and dissemination of the quarterly newsletters.

ii. **Jude Fuhnwi** – he joined the RIT as the Senior Communication Officer in January 2017. Based in Accra, Ghana, he dedicated 80 percent of his time to the RIT in support of the communication component of the RIT's Terms of Reference. He developed the communication strategy and led its implementation, as well as the production of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials for the RIT and the quarterly newsletters, with the support of the Communication Officer (Africa). He resigned in December 2018. This position was not filled. However, the role was covered by multiple members of the RIT as explained above.

f. Finance Officer (FO):

Responsible for the production of detailed annual project budgets and reports/ accounts; for supporting/ facilitating the purchase of project equipment; for implementing all agreed project finance management procedures (to comply with both BirdLife and CEPF requirements); for preparing financial project reports to CEPF, with support from the RIT Unit and other BirdLife Finance staff in Accra, Nairobi and Cambridge; for supporting the reviews of small grants applications and reports in relation to CEPF finance and administrative procedures; for contracting and disbursing funds to small grants; and building finance management capacity among grantees.

i. **Evans Siaw -** as the Finance and Administration Officer he provided support to delivering on this role, from Accra Ghana, with 10 percent of his time which was later on increased to 40 percent. Upon the recruitment of the FO, he continued with providing support and backstopping, up until the end of the investment.

ii. **Alessandra Cappelli and Chris Wuestner -** both Financial Controllers based in Cambridge, provided oversight of the RIT budget. They assisted with reviewing and supervising finance and legal procedures, and ensure adequate controls are instituted and followed. They specifically helped to review grant agreements, budgets, financial reports, request for payment to grantees, and advise on control mechanisms to prevent They joined the team from November 2016 to December 2018 and July 2016 to October 2016 respectively and dedicated 7 percent of their time.

iii. **Dela Seshie** – joined the team in November 2016, with 100 percent of his time dedicated to the RIT, as the FO and later, in 2018, the role was, reviewed to

include the administration of the RIT. He was based in Accra, Ghana working closely with the Team, especially the small grants manager and was instrumental in training and supporting grantees with their financial reports, as well as supporting the RIT with all matters related to Administration. He left in March 2020.

iv. **Emmanuel Amankwah-Boateng** –joined in March 2021 and was based in Accra, Ghana, with 100 percent time dedicated to the FO role. He left at the end of his contract in June 2022 after he provided day to day finance & admin function to the team. He supported in reviewing and closing out on some of the grants before his departure.

g. Other auxiliary roles:

Other auxiliary roles consisted in the support provided by:

i. **Agymang Opoku -** as the Site Intern, responsible for providing regional support to BirdLife Partners regarding Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) monitoring and updates, and Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) nomination. This took the form of training, identifying data sources, and data entry into the World Biodiversity Database (WBDB) and World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA). He joined the RIT Team in January 2020 and dedicated 10 percent of his time to the RIT. He worked with the CEPF GFWA grantees to make them and other stakeholders aware of the KBA process and to involve them in the process of accurately collecting information that they can then use to populate the KBA nomination form. This added value to the CEPF granting process, in contributing an essential element (identifying and safeguarding KBAs) to the work of the grantees, as well as providing a quantitative system of assessing work done by grantees. Upon the completion of his Internship, he left the Team in February 2022.

ii. **Samuel Temidayo Osinubi -** as the Birdlife, Conservation Programs Coordinator in Africa, he joined the RIT in October 2019 and dedicated 10 percent of his time to supporting the delivering of the KBA work component as the line manager of the Site Intern while providing technical guidance and support to the RIT The work on KBA lead to the collation of accurate information on some of the KBAs, e.g., Atewa, which is supporting the re-nomination of the site as a KBA. He left the RIT team in February 2021.

iii. **Maria Conceica -** during the first semester of 2020, a new RIT focal point was contracted under the ECOFAC/GEF[2] BirdLife led project (see Section 5.1) on a part time basis to assist the RIT with project monitoring and implementation support in São Tomé and Príncipe until the end of the program.

[2] From the program Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (ECOFAC) funded by the European Union (EU) and from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

iv. **Marion Tafani -** from March 2022, Birdlife's Sao Tome Technical Advisor and Capacity Development Officer supported the RIT 50 percent of her time, in promoting CEPF investment's results and/or impacts in the hotspot among the grantees and other stakeholders.

Annex 3: Progress towards the targets of the logical framework in the ecosystem profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot

Outcome	Indicator	Logframe target	Achieved, as of June 2023	Notes
Outcome 1: Local communities are empowered to engage in sustainable management of 40 priority sites and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale	At least 15 local land use plans elaborated and implemented to facilitate good governance in the management of community and private reserves and concessions	15	39	CSOs working with local communities elaborated, developed and implemented 39 local land-use plans, as well as facilitated good governance in the management of community forests.
	At least 10 local and indigenous communities are trained to initiate and advocate for land tenure and forestry reforms in relation to management of community and private reserves and concessions	10	53	53 local communities were trained and equipped, and were able to advocate for land tenure and forestry reforms to manage their forest reserves.
	At least 10 participatory management plans that support stakeholder collaboration in protected area management are prepared and implemented	10	20	CSOs, in collaboration with protected area managers, with key stakeholders, such as the communities living within and around the protected areas, prepared and implemented 20 management plans.
	At least 30 local communities targeted by sustainable livelihood/ job creation activities or benefit-sharing mechanisms show tangible wellbeing benefits	30	174	174 communities benefited from livelihoods and job creation activities implemented by CSOs with the support of CEPF grants. These initiatives included sustainable fishing, fish smoking and solar salt production techniques, and value addition to agricultural products.

Outcome 2: Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into public policy and private sector practice in 9 conservation corridors, at local, sub-national and national levels	At least 5 conservation-related policies of national governments are informed or influenced by research, analysis and outreach supported by CEPF grants.	5	11	Following the research, analysis, and reviews of some conservation-related policies of national governments, CSOs working with the respective institutions influenced 11 conservation-related policies during this investment period. For example, a project led by Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS) advocated for the passage of the wildlife resource management bill in Ghana. In Côte d'Ivoire, Conservation des Espèces Marines (CEM) led to the adoption of a decree on the development, protection and integrated management of the coastline through creation of a marine protected area.
	Locally-relevant information on natural ecosystems is generated for at least 20 Key Biodiversity Areas and used to influence political and economic decision making in favor of their conservation	20	58	Locally relevant information on natural ecosystems was generated for 58 KBAs in the GFWA, and was used to influence political and economic decision-making in favor of their conservation. An IUCN-led project identified 87 planning units representing gaps in the current network of KBAs and protected areas, and 22 irreplaceable sites representing the only known localities of 39 threatened freshwater species. It concluded that, in addition to formal protected areas, these sites can be used to (i) ensure greater management focus on the unique freshwater biodiversity elements at these sites; (ii) target identification of KBAs and designation of protected and conserved areas; and (iii) safeguard these critical sites for freshwater biodiversity. Recommendations for the next steps required for each of the 13 freshwater KBAs in the GFWA Hotspot to date were disseminated to key policymakers in the region.

	At least 20 partnerships are formed or strengthened among civil society, government, private sector and communities to promote best practices in mining, sustainable forestry and agriculture by private companies.	20	21	21 partnerships were formed or strengthened to promote best practices in mining, sustainable forestry and agriculture. A project implemented by Centre d'Etudes, Formation, Conseils et Audits (CEFCA), for example, led to the signature of a partnership between TOUTON (private sector) and CAEZ (local cooperative) to formalize and strengthen their biodiversity conservation friendly practices program for cacao production.
	At least 5 private companies adopt new management practices consistent with biodiversity conservation at operations in the conservation corridors.	5	17	Thanks to large grants (and one small grant), 17 private companies adopted best management practices for biodiversity conservation. In April 2023, after months of engagement, Fondation d'Entreprise Biotope pour la Biodiversité (BIOTOPE) finally signed a contract with the Winning Consortium Simandou Railway (WCSr) to design and implement a Biodiversity Offset Management Plan for the Simandou iron ore project in Guinea. This includes looking for offset sites where to implement six community conservation agreements.
Outcome 3: Priority globally threatened species are safeguarded by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps.	Priority actions identified in Conservation Action Plans are implemented for at least 15 Critically Endangered and Endangered species.	15	40	14 projects (including four small grants) contributed to the implementation of priority actions for the conservation of 40 CR and EN species in the hotspot. Baseline research and community sensitization activities were implemented as priority actions for the Conservation Action Plans for Chimpanzees in West Africa by Presbyterian University College in Ghana and Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) in Liberia. A project by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Nigeria contributed to the implementation of a number of priority actions identified in the regional action plans for Cross River gorilla and Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee such as awareness raising, patrolling and diversification of local livelihoods as incentive to

				forest conservation. Associação Programa Tatô implemented priorities identified in the action plan for the conservation of hawksbill (CR) and green (EN) sea turtles on the island of São Tomé. By strengthening the reconversion process of women through professional productive groups of reusable menstrual pads among other diversification of products, the project prevented these women from returning to their illegal activities of sea turtle trading and consumption of these species.
	The inventory of Key Biodiversity Areas in the hotspot is updated to fill critical information gaps, particularly with regard to the lower Guinean Forests sub-region, and freshwater ecosystems.	N/A	58	Nine projects contributed to the inventory of 58 KBAs. A project led by the Presbyterian University College in Ghana updated the inventory of three KBAs (Atewa, Cape Three Points and Tano Offin Forest Reserves). The IUCN-led freshwater biodiversity assessment, already mentioned, produced one inventory at the regional level. Additional work was undertaken by Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) to assess plant diversity and identify key threatened plant species according to Red List Categories and Criteria at the national level in São Tomé and Príncipe, and also in Lofa-Galo-Mano complex and Mount Nimba complex, providing baseline data for conservation planning.
	The global conservation status of at least 100 species from poorly assessed taxonomic groups is updated or assessed for the first time on the IUCN Red List.	100	1,353	The major contributors to this impressive total of 1,353 species of poorly assessed taxonomic groups was the project led by IUCN on freshwater assessment throughout the hotspot, (1,047 species) followed by two projects implemented by MBG on plants (154 and 151 species, respectively). The work of Alisei ONG led not only to the first assessment of the Sao Tome giant endemic snail, the Búzio-d'Obô, but also to the development of a Conservation Action Plan for this species.

Outcome 4: Capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People's, women's and youth groups built to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity.	At least 50 local civil society organizations, including at least 10 Indigenous People's organizations, demonstrate strengthened capacity with regard to financial, institutional and project management, organizational governance, and fundraising.	50	94	12 grantees (seven small grantees and five large grantees) strengthened the capacities of 94 local organizations in the hotspot, including 22 women-led organizations. These included 66 CSOs (including 10 women-led organizations) that were part of the mentorship program implemented by three mentor organizations.
	At least 20 women-led conservation and development organizations, associations and networks are established and strengthened to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing	20	25	25 women-led organizations, associations and networks were created and/or strengthened. These include a mentorship program implemented by Tropical Biology Association (TBA) in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, which targeted 10 women-led organizations. All 10 organizations were linked to existing international women's networks. This strengthened their capacity to foster gender equality in natural resource management and increase women's networking. Three women's groups also received support from Initiative de Base pour la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (IBGRN), a small grant recipient, to draft their articles of association, internal regulations and apply for approval from the administrative authorities in Guinea to officially register them.
	At least 20 local civil society organizations demonstrate increased communication capacity in ways that support the delivery of their mission.	20	153	153 CSOs received increased communication capacity. Most of this impact happened as a result of the mentorship program, which covered 74 organizations and had a dedicated focus on raising the capacities of mentees in terms of communication. Other CSOs benefited from a small grant to the Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation (GIFSEP), which provided training in media engagement for 58 CSOs, as part of the final assessment.

Annex 4: List of awarded Grants

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
A Rocha Ghana	Protecting Atewa Critical Ecosystem through Biodiversity Assessments and Participatory Monitoring	Ghana	189,220	3/1/2021	6/30/2022	SD2
A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute	Forest Fragmentation: Causes, Ecological Implication, and Impact on Threatened Species	Nigeria	10,373	9/30/2018	10/5/2020	SD3
African Research Association	Sustainable Actions for Conservation of Obudu Plateau (SACOP), Nigeria	Nigeria	208,045	6/1/2019	7/31/2021	SD1
Ajemalebu Self Help	Enforcing Community-led Conservation Leadership around Ebo forest.	Cameroon	25,000	10/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Alisei ONG	Save the São Tomé Giant Snail: Learning and Teaching to Preserve	São Tomé and Príncipe	24,840	9/30/2018	8/31/2020	SD3
Associação Programa Tatô	Muala Kandja (Mulher Luz): Promover o Empoderamento Feminino em prol da conservação do meio ambiente na Ilha de São Tomé	São Tomé and Príncipe	24,898	10/1/2021	3/31/2022	SD4
Biakwan Light	Restoring the degraded Afi Mountain Sanctuary in Buanchor-Boki, Nigeria	Nigeria	29,678	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Biodiversité - Environnement et Développement Durable	Femmes et Gestion Durable de la Biodiversité à Tchabal Mbabo	Cameroon	24,346	10/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4
Biodiversity Preservation Centre	Determining Distribution, Density and Connectivity of Threatened Tortoises in Nigeria	Nigeria	32,115	6/1/2017	1/31/2020	SD3
BirdLife International	Regional Implementation Team for Guinean Forests Hotspot	Hotspot-wide	1,835,370	7/1/2016	8/31/2022	SD5

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch	Apiculture for Mount Oku Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Improvement	Cameroon	38,087	9/30/2018	4/3/2020	SD1
Centre d'Etudes, Formation, Conseils et Audits	Strengthen Ivorian Cocoa Stakeholder Landscape Management Capacity to Foster Conservation	Côte d'Ivoire	297,472	7/1/2018	12/31/2021	SD2
Ciltad Coastal TV	Building CSOs communication skills to enhance better engagement with the public to respond to biodiversity conservation challenges	Ghana	11,053	8/1/2020	1/30/2021	SD4
Community Assistance In Development	Enhancing Protection of Threatened Wildlife species in Ebo forest (Yabassi KBA)	Cameroon	25,000	11/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Conservation des Espèces Marines	Création de la Réserve Naturelle Volontaire gérée par les communautés locales de Grand Béréby en Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	44,819	6/1/2017	10/30/2020	SD3
Conservation des Espèces Marines	Création de la Première Aire Marine Protégée en Côte d'Ivoire dans la zone bordant l'embouchure de la Dodo	Côte d'Ivoire	20,958	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	Conserving the Yawri Bay Ecosystem in Sierra Leone's Coastal Corridor	Sierra Leone	4,500	9/1/2017	11/30/2017	SD4
Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	Planning and Partnership Consolidation for Biodiversity Conservation in the WAPNP	Sierra Leone	169,590	3/1/2021	6/30/2022	SD2
Cross River State Environment and Carbon Emission Board	Empowering Women and Youths to Restore Watershed in Obudu plateau.	Nigeria	39,996	9/30/2018	10/30/2020	SD1

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Development Concern	Community Based Action to Save Iko-Esai Rhoko Forest	Nigeria	49,995	9/30/2018	10/4/2019	SD1
Development Concern	Strengthening Communities' Indigenous Coalition for Effective Forest Governance	Nigeria	24,728	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4
Développement Pour Tous	Consolidation de la bonne gouvernance environnementale locale du fleuve Konkouré	Guinea	20,000	9/30/2018	8/8/2019	SD1
Développement Pour Tous	Renforcement des Capacités du Groupement de Femmes Productrices de Sel à Dubreka	Guinea	24,822	9/1/2021	4/15/2022	SD4
Environmental Governance Institute	SHARPening Local - Agro-industries Partnerships in the Mount Cameroon and Mokoko-Onge Landscape	Cameroon	11,533	9/30/2018	10/1/2019	SD2
Fauna & Flora International	Developing Liberia's Capacity for Effective Conservation of the Pygmy Hippopotamus	Liberia	259,907	8/1/2017	3/31/2021	SD3
Fauna & Flora International	From Bee-burners to Beekeepers: Supporting Community Beekeeping Organization in Príncipe	São Tomé and Príncipe	198,891	7/1/2017	11/30/2019	SD1
Fauna & Flora International	Implementing the Action Plan for the Critically Endangered Principe Thrush	São Tomé and Príncipe	99,351	7/1/2018	3/31/2021	SD3
Fauna & Flora International	Country-specific Mentoring and Training to Strengthen West African Civil Society Organizations, Liberia and São Tomé and Principe	Liberia; São Tomé and Príncipe	249,916	11/1/2019	2/28/2022	SD4
Fauna & Flora International	Capacity and tools for Biodiversity Mainstreaming in the GFWA	Hotspot-wide	36,131	9/10/2019	11/30/2019	SD4

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Fauna & Flora International	Learning Exchange in the GFWA – CSO capacity and networks workshop	Hotspot-wide	49,726	9/10/2019	11/30/2019	SD4
Fondation d'Entreprise BIOTOPE pour la Biodiversité	Mainstreaming Opportunities for Operationalizing business contributions to Nature in the Mano River Union countries	Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia	342,895	2/1/2021	7/31/2022	SD2
Forêts et Développement Rural	Projet d'Appui à la vulgarisation des KBA au Cameroun	Cameroon	239,950	1/1/2020	12/31/2021	SD1
Forêts et Développement Rural	Projet d'appui à la conservation et la gestion participative du Massif forestier de Tchabal Mbabo (COGESPA-Tchabal Mbabo)	Cameroon	23,989	10/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4
Friends of Ecosystem and the Environment	Community Led Coastal Biodiversity Management in Cestos -Senkwen	Liberia	44,100	9/30/2018	3/31/2020	SD1
Fundação Príncipe	Changing local mindsets through Women's Hands	São Tomé and Príncipe	29,017	9/1/2021	3/30/2022	SD4
Ghana Wildlife Society	Mainstreaming Site-Scale Ecosystem Values into Local Decision-Making in Ghana	Ghana	93,664	8/1/2017	1/31/2019	SD2
Global Initiative For Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation	Showcasing CEPF investments: Project assessment, knowledge sharing and lessons from the GFWA	Cameroon Equatorial Guinea; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; São Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone	12,861	7/1/2022	8/31/2022	SD4

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Global Initiative For Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation	Showcasing CEPF investments: Strengthening conservation knowledge and networking among journalists and civil societies in the GFWA hotspots	Cameroon Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; São Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone	50,000	4/1/2022	6/30/2022	SD4
Global Initiative For Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation	Celebrating 6 years of CEPF investment in the Guinea Forests of West Africa Hotspot – A documentary	Cameroon Equatorial Guinea; Ghana; Guinea; Nigeria; São Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone	50,000	4/1/2022	6/30/2022	SD4
Greening Economies, Environments and Lives in Fifteen States of West Africa-Sierra Leone	Using Apiculture to Improve Livelihood of the Gola Rainforest Communities	Sierra Leone	24,996	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Guinée Ecologie	Mobilisation des Communautés locales pour la Conservation de la Biodiversité à Touguissoury	Guinea	41,800	6/1/2017	11/30/2018	SD1
Hen Mpoano	Implementing the participatory management plan for primate conservation in cape three points, Ghana	Ghana	39,977	9/30/2018	10/5/2020	SD3
Hen Mpoano	Enhancing Participatory Planning and Management of Cape Three Points Key Biodiversity Area	Ghana	24,960	9/1/2021	2/28/2022	SD1
Initiative de Base pour la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles	Soutien aux associations locales des Monts Nimba dans leurs missions de sensibilisation	Guinea	24,968	6/1/2017	1/28/2018	SD4

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Initiative de Base pour la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles	Renforcement de la capacité des populations de Bossou, N'Zoo et de Tounkarata dans la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles des Monts Nimba	Guinea	24,973	9/1/2021	4/15/2022	SD4
International Union for Conservation of Nature	Identification and validation of West African Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas	Hotspot-wide	219,664	7/1/2018	9/30/2021	SD3
Korup Rainforest Forest Conservation Society	Tackling Threats to Endangered Species through Community Empowerment in Korup National Park	Cameroon	11,218	9/30/2018	4/3/2020	SD3
Missouri Botanical Garden	Caractérisation de la flore menacée de São Tomé et Príncipe.	Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia; Sierra Leone	244,458	5/1/2019	5/31/2022	SD3
Missouri Botanical Garden	Updating Key Biodiversity Areas within the Lofa-Gola-Mano and Nimba complexes.	São Tomé and Príncipe	227,643	5/1/2019	11/30/2021	SD3
Muloma Women's Development Association	Promoting sustainable livelihoods as incentives for conservation of Yawri Bay	Sierra Leone	34,903	9/30/2018	3/31/2020	SD1
Muloma Women's Development Association	Demonstrate Sustainable Livelihood in Communities for conserving Yawri Bay Area	Sierra Leone	24,775	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
NatureMetrics	Improving Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation in Côte d'Ivoire Using DNA-based Monitoring	Côte d'Ivoire	180,485	2/1/2021	7/31/2022	SD2

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Noé - Man&Nature	Demonstrate how Economic Development can boost Community-based Trans-border Conservation	Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana	428,000	8/1/2017	12/31/2021	SD2
Non-Governmental Organization Coalition for Environment	Community-based Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Action (CoPSFoMA)	Nigeria	29,954	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Oikos - Cooperação e Desenvolvimento	Gestão participativa dos mangais de Malanza e Praia das Conchas	São Tomé and Príncipe	206,906	5/1/2019	3/31/2022	SD1
Organización No Gubernamental Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial	Elaboración Plan de Manejo Participativo del Parque Nacional Pico Basilé	Equatorial Guinea	48,985	9/30/2018	12/30/2020	SD1
Organization for Positive Sustainability Culture in Nigeria	Building Capacity and Sustainable Network of Women for Conservation in Akpabuyo LGA, Nigeria	Nigeria	36,300	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4
Presbyterian University College Ghana	Promoting Endangered Primate conservation in three forest reserves in Ghana	Ghana	44,259	6/1/2017	10/31/2018	SD3
Rainforest Alliance, Inc.	Provide Technical Assistance to Strengthen Ivorian Cocoa Stakeholder Landscape Management Capacity to Foster Conservation	Côte d'Ivoire	55,005	7/1/2018	8/31/2020	SD2
Re:wild	West Africa Team for Critical Habitat Protection (WATCH) of Primates	Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia; Sierra Leone	63,140	4/1/2021	3/31/2022	SD2
Réseau des acteurs de la sauvegarde des tortues marines en Afrique Centrale	Structurer les réseaux nationaux et régionaux pour la conservation des tortues marines et de leurs habitats en Afrique Atlantique	Cameroon	33,953	11/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Resourcetrust Network	Providing Additional Income Initiatives to Promote Smallholder Conservation Practices	Ghana	34,975	9/30/2018	4/30/2020	SD2
Resourcetrust Network	Supporting Implementation of Best Management Practices in Smallholder Plantations	Ghana	25,000	9/1/2021	2/28/2022	SD1
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	Expanding Guinea's Protected Area Network including Important Plant Areas	Guinea	117,772	3/1/2021	7/31/2022	SD2
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Building Networks for Key Biodiversity Area Monitoring and Protection in the GFWA	Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone	88,125	11/1/2021	6/30/2022	SD4
Rset - Associação Técnico-Científica Para O Desenvolvimento	Participatory Management for Community-based Avoided Deforestation in São Tomé Obô Natural Park	São Tomé and Príncipe	296,000	7/1/2018	12/31/2021	SD1
Skills and Agricultural Development Services	Sustainable Development of Non-Timber Forest Products in Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area	Liberia	24,944	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD1
Society for Environmental Conservation	Strengthening Community Capacity for Sustainable Land-Use Plan in Zwedru/Cavally	Liberia	40,383	9/30/2018	3/31/2020	SD1
Society for Sustainability and Conservation Education for Rural Areas	Building Capacity and Sustainable Partnerships for Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Nigeria	Nigeria	180,000	2/1/2021	7/31/2022	SD2
Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia	Communities as Environmental Stewards of the Largest Guinea Rainforest Block	Liberia	479,554	11/1/2017	6/30/2022	SD1

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
Society for Women and Vulnerable Group Empowerment	Ukpom-Okom community mangrove restoration and tree planting project, Nigeria.	Nigeria	24,539	6/1/2017	3/31/2020	SD1
SOS-Forêts	Implication des Communautés Locales dans la Gestion durable du Parc National d'Azagny	Côte d'Ivoire	24,895	9/1/2021	4/30/2022	SD4
Tropical Biology Association LTD	Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation Capacity of Civil Society Organizations	Ghana; Nigeria	484,491	11/1/2019	6/30/2022	SD4
United Purpose	Integrated Mangrove Forest Management and Livelihoods in Nigeria (IMFOMALN) Project	Nigeria	143,944	7/1/2018	6/30/2021	SD1
University of Coimbra	Herbário Nacional: Referência para o Conhecimento e Conservação da Diversidade das Plantas de São Tomé e Príncipe	São Tomé and Príncipe	41,474	9/1/2017	6/30/2019	SD3
Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa	Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Community Forestry in Liberia	Liberia	23,170	2/1/2021	6/30/2022	SD2
West Africa Civil Society Institute	Strengthening Civil Society Organizations' Capacities for Effective Stakeholder Engagement in Biodiversity Conservation	Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Sierra Leone	299,981	1/1/2020	2/28/2022	SD4
Wild Chimpanzee Foundation	Creating Liberia's Largest Protected Area for Critically Endangered Chimpanzees	Liberia	280,081	4/1/2019	12/31/2021	SD3
Wildlife Conservation Society	Saving Cross River Gorillas from Extinction in Nigeria	Nigeria	349,997	7/1/2017	3/31/2021	SD3

Account Name	Project Title English	Countries	Amount (US$)	Start Date	End Date	SD
World Parrot Trust	Safeguarding Globally Endangered Grey Parrots in Lower Guinean Forests	Nigeria	15,358	9/30/2018	12/31/2020	SD3

Annex 5: Leveraging data for the hotspot

Countries	Grantee	Project Title	Leveraged Funding (US$)
Cameroon	Ajemalebu Self Help	Enforcing Community-led Conservation Leadership around Ebo forest.	73,500
São Tomé and Príncipe	Alisei ONG	Save the São Tomé Giant Snail: Learning and Teaching to Preserve	21,440
São Tomé and Príncipe	Associação Programa Tatô	Muala Kandja (Mulher Luz): Promover o Empoderamento Feminino em prol da conservação do meio ambiente na Ilha de São Tomé	5,905
Cameroon	Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch	Apiculture for Mount Oku Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Improvement	34,000
Côte d'Ivoire	Centre d'Etudes, Formation, Conseils et Audits	Strengthen Ivorian Cocoa Stakeholder Landscape Management Capacity to Foster Conservation	25,600
Côte d'Ivoire	Conservation des Espèces Marines	Création de la Première Aire Marine Protégée en Côte d'Ivoire dans la zone bordant l'embouchure de la Dodo	558,752
Côte d'Ivoire	Conservation des Espèces Marines	Création de la Réserve Naturelle Volontaire gérée par les communautés locales de Grand Béréby en Côte d'Ivoire	52,807
Sierra Leone	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone	Conserving the Yawri Bay Ecosystem in Sierra Leone's Coastal Corridor	167,946
Nigeria	Cross River State Environment and Carbon Emission Board	Empowering Women and Youths to Restore Watershed in Obudu plateau.	25,000
Nigeria	Development Concern	Community Based Action to Save Iko-Esai Rhoko Forest	10,555
Liberia	Fauna & Flora International	Developing Liberia's Capacity for Effective Conservation of the Pygmy Hippopotamus	180,006
São Tomé and Príncipe	Fauna & Flora International	From Bee-burners to Beekeepers: Supporting Community Beekeeping Organization in Príncipe	20,911
São Tomé and Príncipe	Fauna & Flora International	Implementing the Action Plan for the Critically Endangered Principe Thrush	82,910
Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia	Fondation d'Entreprise BIOTOPE pour la Biodiversité	Mainstreaming Opportunities for Operationalizing business contributions to Nature in the Mano River Union countries	10,000
Liberia	Friends of Ecosystem and the Environment	Community Led Coastal Biodiversity Management in Cestos -Senkwen	14,000
São Tomé and Príncipe	Fundação Príncipe	Changing local mindsets through Women's Hands	5,162
Ghana	Ghana Wildlife Society	Mainstreaming Site-Scale Ecosystem Values into Local Decision-Making in Ghana	7,500
Guinea	Guinée Ecologie	Mobilisation des Communautés locales pour la Conservation de la Biodiversité à Touguissoury	30,600
Ghana	Hen Mpoano	Enhancing Participatory Planning and Management of Cape Three Points Key Biodiversity Area	6,756

Countries	Grantee	Project Title	Leveraged Funding (US$)
Ghana	Hen Mpoano	Implementing the participatory management plan for primate conservation in cape three points, Ghana	1,381
Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia; Sierra Leone	Missouri Botanical Garden	Updating Key Biodiversity Areas within the Lofa-Gola-Mano and Nimba complexes.	42,550
São Tomé and Príncipe	Missouri Botanical Garden	Caractérisation de la flore menacée de São Tomé et Príncipe.	20,000
Sierra Leone	Muloma Women's Development Association	Demonstrate Sustainable Livelihood in Communities for conserving Yawri Bay Area	32,000
Côte d'Ivoire	NatureMetrics	Improving Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation in Côte d'Ivoire Using DNA-based Monitoring	20,800
Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana	Noé - Man&Nature	Demonstrate how Economic Development can boost Community-based Trans-border Conservation	387,335
Nigeria	Non-Governmental Organization Coalition for Environment	Community-based Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Action (CoPSFoMA)	3,266
Equatorial Guinea	Organización No Gubernamental Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial	Elaboración Plan de Manejo Participativo del Parque Nacional Pico Basilé	6,500
Ghana	Presbyterian University College Ghana	Promoting Endangered Primate conservation in three forest reserves in Ghana	35,000
Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea; Liberia; Sierra Leone	Re:wild	West Africa Team for Critical Habitat Protection (WATCH) of Primates	675,000
Cameroon	Réseau des acteurs de la sauvegarde des tortues marines en Afrique Centrale	Structurer les Reseaux Nationaux et Regionaux pour la Conservation des Tortues Marines et de Leurs Habitats en Afrique Atlantique	43,773
Ghana	Resourcetrust Network	Supporting Implementation of Best Management Practices in Smallholder Plantations	229,225
Ghana	Resourcetrust Network	Providing Additional Income Initiatives to Promote Smallholder Conservation Practices	4,200
Guinea	Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	Expanding Guinea's Protected Area Network including Important Plant Areas	57,867
Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Building Networks for Key Biodiversity Area Monitoring and Protection in the GFWA	22,877

Countries	Grantee	Project Title	Leveraged Funding (US$)
Nigeria	Society for Sustainability and Conservation Education for Rural Areas	Building Capacity and Sustainable Partnerships for Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Nigeria	21,106
Liberia	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia	Communities as Environmental Stewards of the Largest Guinea Rainforest Block	256,000
Liberia	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation	Creating Liberia's Largest Protected Area for Critically Endangered Chimpanzees	302,496
Nigeria	Wildlife Conservation Society	Saving Cross River Gorillas from Extinction in Nigeria	410,503
Nigeria	World Parrot Trust	Safeguarding Globally Endangered Grey Parrots in Lower Guinean Forests	17,000
		TOTAL	**$3,922,229**

Annex 6: Progress toward long-term conservation goals

Goal 1: Conservation priorities

Criterion	Baseline 2016		Final 2022		Notes
i.***Globally threatened species.*** Comprehensive global threat assessments conducted for all terrestrial vertebrates, vascular plants and at least selected freshwater taxa.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	There has been significant progress particularly on big taxonomic groups. A national forest inventory was undertaken in Liberia in 2018/2019. A national inventory of flora species is ongoing in Nigeria, but no other national inventories have been identified in the hotspot countries. A regional assessment of freshwater species has now been done. Some local inventories have been undertaken (e.g. in São Tomé and Príncipe and within the Lofa-Gola-Mano and Nimba complexes). Information on the global conservation status of 1,047 freshwater species and 305 plants species was updated on the IUCN Red List. There are still important knowledge gaps on the impact of climate change on wildlife and habitat. Some areas have never been assessed (e.g. in Guinea). There are important knowledge gaps remaining on plant species across the hotspot.
ii.***Key Biodiversity Areas.*** KBAs identified, covering, at minimum, terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	A comprehensive analysis of terrestrial KBAs was conducted in 2015, as part of the ecosystem profiling process. By 2022, an analysis of freshwater KBAs had been undertaken for the hotspot. National KBAs' coordination groups have now been established in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea while the KBA working group in Nigeria has also received some support. However, existing KBAs need to be re-assessed against the new standard, which has more rigorous thresholds and documentation requirements. A total of 144 KBAs exist in the hotspots' countries. At least 39% of existing KBAs need to be reviewed urgently. Other KBAs will need to be reviewed shortly after. The need for new KBAs is unknown but some potentially rich areas are not recognized as KBAs and don't have any form of protection (e.g. Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire).
iii.***Conservation corridors***. Conservation corridors identified in all parts of the region where contiguous natural habitats extend over scales greater than individual sites, and refined using recent land cover data.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	A system of conservation corridors was defined across the hotspot during the profiling process in 2015. At least four of these nine corridors have broad-based support through transboundary collaborations (Tai Grebo, Lofa-Gola-Mano, Mount Nimba and Forest Reserves of Southeastern Cote d' Ivoire and Southwestern Ghana). The corridors have not been recently refined.

iv.***Conservation plans.*** Global conservation priorities incorporated into national or regional conservation plans or strategies developed with the participation of multiple stakeholders.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	NBSAPs of the hotspot's countries have all been developed between 2011 and 2016, and need to be updated except for Liberia's NBSAP that is running until 2025, and Sierra Leone's NBSAP that is running until 2026.
v.***Management best practices.*** Best practices for managing global conservation priorities (e.g., participatory approaches to park management, invasive species control, etc.) are introduced, institutionalized, and sustained at priority KBAs and corridors.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Several formal coordination platforms including part of the hotspot exist (Mano River Union, ECOWAS, COMIFAC). None of them at hotspot's level. Several international organizations are working on centralizing information on Protected Areas and conservation (e.g. data on biodiversity, threatened species, climate change, demographics) linked to biodiversity conservation in the region (e.g. EU/BIOPAMA/OBAPAO and IUCN/MOLOA). All the landscapes targeted under WABICC/WABILED have a management plan including the development of sustainable livelihoods. Several organizations are testing sustainable management planning systems locally (e.g. WCS, EU, WCF, RSPB).

Goal 2: Civil society capacity

Criterion	Baseline 2016		Final 2022		Comments / Justifications
i.Human Resources Local and national civil society groups collectively possess technical competencies of critical importance to conservation.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	90 percent of the organizations which provided a baseline and a final CSTT saw their capacities improve during the investment, especially on human resources (from 10 points to 12 out of 20). There is also a general impression that, collectively, CSOs in the hotspot have highly committed staff members with very strong skills in terms of species conservation and engagement with local communities. However, their average capacity in terms of human resources is still at 58 percent (90 percent is required to reach level 2) with important gaps in terms of climate change mitigations, mainstreaming and communication.
ii.Management Systems and Strategic Planning Local and national civil society groups collectively possess sufficient institutional and operational capacity and structures to raise funds for conservation and to ensure the efficient management of conservation projects and strategies.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	It is estimated that at least 50 percent of CEPF priority KBAs have had at least one local, national, or international CSO dedicated to their conservation with satisfactory institutional and operational capacity. While it was also demonstrated that management systems and strategic planning capacities of grantees and mentees have increased to 71 percent and 76 percent, respectively, it was already noted that the list of CEPF priority KBAs should be complemented by a "stand-by" list of additional priority KBAs in order to cater, among others, for the absence of suitable organizations to work with.

iii.Partnerships Effective mechanisms exist for conservation-focused civil society groups to work in partnership with one another, and through networks with local communities, governments, the private sector, donors, and other important stakeholders, in pursuit of common objectives.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Many organizations ended up being involved, one way or another, in some sort of partnerships related to conservation in their geographies, regionally or internationally. These organizations were capable of creating partnerships with the government and private sector for environmental awareness raising, sustainable local-level supply chains, engagement of traditional peoples and communities, management of protected areas via councils, and species protection. However, these partnerships have often not (yet) been officially institutionalized and have not reached the necessary scales (public sector at national level and key agents of change in the private sector) to really allow for coordinated conservation and development actions at KBAs and/or landscape level. CSOs are still not visible enough and therefore are still not perceived as a strong third pillar alongside the public and the private sectors.
iv.Financial Resources Local civil society organizations have access to long-term funding sources to maintain the conservation results achieved via CEPF grants and/or other initiatives, through access to new donor funds, conservation enterprises, memberships, endowments, and/or other funding mechanisms.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	While it was acknowledged that CSOs have been successful in leveraging additional fundings and from diversified sources, most KBAs are still not benefiting from stable funding sources for conservation. Most CSOs' financial resources are still project specific and the final average CSTT score for this category was still among the lowest (58 percent). Long-term sustainable mechanisms are still drastically missing in the hotspot for conservation or have not yet been deployed a lot by CSOs (like REDD+ for example).

v. Transboundary Cooperation In multi-country hotspots, mechanisms exist for collaboration across political boundaries at site, corridor and/or national scales.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Almost all the local organizations don't work in a transboundary matter and even international organizations have struggled meeting their commitment in that field. Therefore, the criterion is still not met.

Goal 3: Sustainable financing

Criterion	Baseline 2016		Final 2022		Notes
i.***Public sector funding*** Public sector agencies responsible for conservation in the region have a continued public fund allocation or revenue-generating ability to operate effectively.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	The Ministries of Environment in the hotspot's countries receive less than 1% of government's budget annually. It is far from being sufficient to cover their operational costs and interventions. Some institutions have received support to develop long-term financial plans (EPA Liberia supported by UNDP to develop a 4-year budgeted workplan). Several countries have an Environmental Fund integrated in the policies, but it hasn't been established (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone). No operational environmental fund has been identified in the hotpot's countries
ii.***Civil society funding*** Civil society organizations engaged in conservation in the region have access to sufficient funding to continue their work at current levels.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	The large majority of the CSOs in the hotspots remain reliant on projects and have no or very limited unrestricted funding. Access to financial resources was identified as a big challenge for CSOs (low CSTT score) particularly the diversification of funding sources, and financial sustainability (unrestricted funding).
iii.***Donor funding*** Donors other than CEPF have committed to providing sufficient funds to address global conservation priorities in the region.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	There are lots of investments across the hotspot with multiple donors (USFWS, GEF, EU, AFD, Rainforest Trust, TNC, etc.) and international organizations (IUCN, BL, RSPB, Noe, UNDP, FAO, FFI, WCS, UNEP-WCMC, CI, Re:wild, WCF, etc.) supporting conservation in the hotspot. This includes some large investments projects such as WABiLED and expected projects under GEF-8, NaturAfrica, and funds such as IUCN SOS, Great Ape Conservation Fund and Rainforest Trust. However, there is limited collaboration and coordination between these initiatives which reduced efficiency towards addressing conservation priorities.
iv.***Livelihood alternatives*** Local stakeholders affecting the conservation of biodiversity in the region have economic alternatives to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Local communities have limited to no access to economic alternatives to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. The situation has somewhat improved by 2022, with an increasing number of initiatives delivering income-generating activities that provide alternatives to unsustainable natural resource use. The private sector is having an increasing interest in sustainable fairtrade and organic products (including non-timber forest products) and supply chains. However, the structuration of the supply chains and access to market remain limiting factors, along with basic entrepreneurship skills. Tourism, especially national tourism, remains an under-valorized potential alternative livelihood resource. Overall capacity building is still strongly required.

v.***Long-term mechanisms*** Financing mechanisms (e.g., trust funds, revenue from the sale of carbon credits, etc.) exist and are of sufficient size to yield continuous long-term returns for at least the next 10 years.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	There is one long-term financing mechanism (carbon credit market) established in Gola Forest in Sierra Leone and another one (PES) in STP. One long-term funding mechanism (biodiversity offset) is under establishment in Guinea. In Liberia, CI initiated the Liberia Conservation Fund in 2018. In Benin, a CSR system is currently starting. In Nigeria, a CSR system was established by the government to fund reforestation interventions. However, in terms of delivery of continuous funds, none have been sufficient to support long-term conservation actions in their respective countries and/or to support the running costs of protected areas' or community-based forest reserves' management.

Goal 4: Enabling environment

Criterion	Baseline 2016		Final 2022		Notes
i. ***Legal environment for conservation*** Laws exist that provide incentives for desirable conservation behavior and disincentives against undesirable behavior.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	The countries' legislative framework is well aligned with international commitments (except for some improvement needed in São Tomé and Príncipe to better integrate biodiversity protection). Most countries have adequate policies to protect their forests and their environment, but their enforcement is an issue. However, some policy updates are needed to support the implementation of integrated approaches and promote good practices. Environmental and Impact Assessment /Social and Environmental Assessment policies need to be improved in most countries. Some improvements of the land and/or natural resources tenure policies to enable community-based management systems would be needed in several countries such as Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana though, it is worth mentioning that a National Policy Review was undertaken and led to significant policy improvements.
ii. ***Legal environment for civil society.*** Laws exist that allow for civil society to engage in the public policy-making and implementation process.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	In all countries, local CSOs are legally allowed to convene, organize, register, receive funds and engage in conservation activities. On average, there are currently one or two leading CSOs in each country and one to eight strong (stable and active) organisations working at least partly in conservation (3.5 per country on average). The governments have different levels of democracy and openness though. This has a direct impact on the influence of CSOs on governments' decisions. CSOs have some level of influence in Ghana and Nigeria and partly in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin for instance. There is also some overlap, unclarity and/or partitioning in the mandate of environment-related institutions – particularly those responsible for Protected Areas' and forest resources' management – in several of the hotspot countries (e.g. São Tomé and Príncipe, Nigeria) which hinders efficient collaboration and integrated approaches with CSOs.
iii. ***Education and training*** Domestic programs exist that produce trained environmental managers at secondary, undergraduate, and advanced academic levels.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Several countries have a Masters' programme or professional training in biodiversity conservation (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone), but environmental and social education is poorly integrated in the curricula of the targeted countries. There are several good initiatives of environmental programmes ongoing in schools (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia), but many children in the hotspot's countries do not attend formal schools and receive informal education at village level. There is also a need for leadership training.

iv. ***Transparency.*** Relevant public sector agencies use participatory, accountable, and publicly reviewable process to make decisions regarding use of land and natural resources.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Forest and biodiversity conservation are poorly integrated into the strategies and plans of key development sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, mining, infrastructure and energy in the hotspot countries. As a result, open consultation and transparency are limited, if even existing in some countries. Again, some laws exist for public consultation in some countries, but are not widely/ commonly used or implemented. This is especially true in connection with the mining and forestry industries. There is a general lack of accountability in public administration, and especially in the environmental sector. CSOs face restrictions on access to information held by public agencies. Where consultation and transparency may be the strongest is at the site level around some protected areas. CSOs have been effective at establishing good and transparent contacts with institutional staff in these areas. Yet these consultations are not formalized and can change with changes of staff. Things might have improved slightly due to the perceived reputational risk for public and private actors. With social media, instant and international transfer of information, these institutions feel slightly more under scrutiny, hence enforcing on them a more transparent approach. Most energy, extractive, and associated infrastructure projects require financing, which presents a point of influence for the conservation community. Project financing may come with conditionalities of environmental and social safeguards, which can dictate environmental and social performance. For example, the International Finance Corporation and the Equator banks must adhere to the IFC Performance Standards. In January 2019, the IFC took the unprecedented step of requiring clients to consult with the IUCN SSC, Primate Specialist Group's Section on Great Apes for any projects impacting great ape habitat. This clause opened up a tremendous opportunity for the conservation community to engage with governments, industry and banks, to avoid and reduce impacts on critical habitat.
v. ***Enforcement*** Designated authorities are clearly mandated to manage the protected area system(s) in the region and conserve biodiversity outside of them, and are empowered to implement the enforcement continuum.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	As previously mentioned, law enforcement is an important issue across the hotspot and the mandate for enforcement isn't always clear among institutions. The majority of the required policies for forest and biodiversity a exist but their enforcement on the ground is very limited. Corruption is also an important issue in several areas. This is generally because of insufficient human and financial capacities of sectoral government institutions. Often this is where CSOs can and do play an important role by supporting Community Ecoguard Programs for example to address this enforcement gaps in some Protected Areas. There has been no improvement within the hotspot from a governmental institution view point and too many protected areas remain "paper parks".

Goal 5: Responsiveness to emerging issues

Criterion	Baseline 2016		Final 2022		Notes
i. ***Biodiversity monitoring*** Nationwide or region-wide systems are in place to monitor status and trends of the components of biodiversity.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	No government-based national M&E system on forests and biodiversity, and/or on the impact of conservation practices was identified in the hotspot's countries. M&E interventions are linked to projects and often led by international institutions. METT or IMET are used to monitor several National Parks but governments have not yet adopted it as a monitoring tool for Protected Areas nationally. Integrated decision-making tools (e.g. Landscape Outcome Assessment Methodology – LOAM, Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool – IMET) have not yet been adopted by the hotspot's countries. Several initiatives are proposing or have proposed common monitoring indicators on specific themes (migratory birds by RSPB, great apes in Côte d'Ivoire by WCF). BIOPAMA also provides grants for training on a set of international M&E tools. So, although the situation was felt to have slightly improved, there are still a lot of challenges.
ii. ***Threats monitoring*** Nationwide or region-wide systems are in place to monitor status and trends of threats to biodiversity.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Systems are in place to monitor certain threats (e.g. land conversion) at the international level but it is unclear whether they exist at national level in some countries. For most threats, it is probably fair to say that nationwide or regionwide data are not available and/or insufficient and not accessible for the wider use. Again, this is where CSOs are and will likely continued to be of assistance.
iii. ***Ecosystem services monitoring*** Nationwide or region-wide systems are in place to monitor status and trends of ecosystem services.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Same as above, but even worse because CSOs are not actively involved in this type of monitoring yet. More capacity building is needed.

iv.***Adaptive management*** Conservation organizations and protected area management authorities demonstrate the ability to respond promptly to emerging issues.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	There are a few examples of conservation organizations adapting their strategies to respond to emerging issues, such as agro-industrial plantations and mining. At the same time, there are other emerging issues, such as climate change, that conservation organizations have not yet really responded to or integrated into their missions. Being still project driven as mentioned earlier, CSOs would certainly gain momentum on this major emerging issue should it become an explicit focus of the donor community. It is likely to happen in the near future. At protected areas level, there seems to be little to no adaptive management.
v.***Public sphere*** Conservation issues are regularly discussed in the public sphere, and these discussions influence public policy.	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	0	Not met = 0 Partially met = 1 Fully met = 2	1	CSOs and journalists in the hotspot's countries, maybe to a lesser extend in Ghana and Cameroon, have difficulties to communicate and convey clear and impactful conservation messages especially due to the fact that environmental matters are not often in the front line and are not well known. It is believed that the capacity building of journalists on key environmental issues, as well as of CSOs to clearly and simply communicate on their work, could make a significant and rapid change. The Final Assessment workshop has been an opportunity to test this approach with a focus on communication and media outreach. It resulted in delivering a transformative discourse on how conservation practices, solutions and issues are communicated, in building lasting connections and cooperation between journalists and CSOs and in articulating locally generated conservation lessons. With just this part of the workshop, nine articles were published, contributing to building public awareness on CEPF-funded projects and missions in the hotspot and the importance of conservation. This demonstrates that media coverage of conservation outcomes can be improved relatively easily and help CSOs and journalists be more impactful in leveraging interest from decision makers to sustain conservation and management of globally important biodiversity across the hotspot.