



OP8 COUNTY PROGRAM

SGP COUNTRY PROGRAM STRATEGY FOR OP8 LIBERIA

Global Environment Facility (GEF)
Small Grant Programme (SGP)
Operation Phase Eight (OP8)

October 2025



Acronyms	
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
CBA	Community-Based Adaptation
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CPS	Country Program Strategy
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSIA	Climate Smart Innovative Agroecology
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ENNR	East Nimba Nature Reserve
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHGs	Green House Gases
CCAs	Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas
LPMUR	Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve
MWL	Montserrado Wetlands
NAFAA	National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OP4	Operational phase four
OP 5	Operational phase five
OP 6	Operational Phase six
OP 7	Operational Phase seven
OP 8	Operational Phase eight
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutant
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGP	Small Grants Program
SNP	Sapo National Park
TNA	Technology Needs Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Program



OP8 Financial Resources - SGP Country Programme (estimated US\$)¹

Total SGP Grants to date since Country Programme start date (2009)	USD 1,037,812.00
OP8 GEF Core Funds	USD 1,034,812.00
OP8 GEF STAR Funds	USD
Other funds (secured)	USD 3,000
Other funds (expected/to be mobilized)	USD

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eighth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme (SGP OP8) builds on 30 years of successful experience in empowering local civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in designing and leading community driven initiatives that have enhanced household wellbeing, increased awareness and resilience regarding environmental threats, and generated global environmental benefits. With economic development pressures intensifying in many parts of the developing world and the associated rising inequalities, local communities, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are becoming more and more marginalized, unable to cope with threats associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. Lessons learned and experience gained in previous SGP Operational Phases have demonstrated that integrated, landscape-seascape approaches are effective in mobilizing multiple stakeholder collaboration, linking local CSOs/CBOs with enabling partners and achieving mutually supportive livelihood and environmental outcomes at scale.

The objectives of the SGP OP8 is to engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape-seascape approaches across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions and generate global environmental benefits.

The OP8 objectives reflect the key features of GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0, including new approaches to support youth, women and Indigenous Peoples, linking up with complementary mechanisms, such as the Microfinance Initiative and CSO Challenge Programme, cooperating with other GEF Agencies, and leveraging opportunities with GEF strategies, including the delivery of the GEF-8 Integrated Programmes. In addition, OP8 will facilitate opportunities for innovation and scaling up, catalyze multi-stakeholder alliances to test new approaches through CSOs, and leverage its dialogue platforms towards greater impact. OP8 will also align and contribute to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025).

2. COUNTRY PROGRAMME SUMMARY: Key Results and Accomplishments

The Country Program Strategy (CPS) document serves as a reference for country program operations and provides guidance for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Small Grants Program

¹ The level of SGP OP8 resources is an estimated total of: (a) the GEF8 core grant allocation; (b) approved STAR resources; as well as (c) other sources of cost sharing & co-financing (country, regional and/or global levels). SGP countries with remaining OP7 balances that have not been pipelined will be expected to use these balances in line with the OP8 strategic approach in order to be coherent in terms of SGP programming and results expected.



(SGP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Liberia. It also shares the success stories and challenges of GEF - SGP in Liberia.

Liberia joined the SGP member states in 2008. Since then, SGP has supported over 106 projects. It has also supported NGOs and CBOs by providing funding for natural resource conservations in protected areas and landscapes, buffer zones, environmental conservation in protected areas, sustainable use of renewable energy and promoting innovative ideas and capacity buildings wherever possible. The SGP in Liberia has also sought to align the global environmental goals to meet SDGs targets, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and the Pro.Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity of Liberia. This will improve income-generating capacity for the vulnerable population and enhance their livelihoods.

Meanwhile, from 2008 up to present, the GEF SGP in Liberia had undergone four operational phases (OP4, OP5, and OP6 and OP7). In all four phases, a total of more than US\$3.3 million was granted, which funded over 106 projects. These projects focused on the areas of Biodiversity, Chemicals, Climate change mitigation, Community based Adaptation, International waters and Land degradation. The OP5 lasted from January 1, 2011, to 2014 and received US\$ 1.2 million from the SGP mobilized funds. The allocated funds were committed in community-based conservation activities; support for conservation, livelihood and microfinance schemes in Southeast Liberia particularly in Grand Gedeh, Rivercess and Nimba Counties. Among the projects granted include protection for the Pygmy Hippo and its habitat, women empowering through animal husbandry, bees keeping, micro finance schemes and identification of cane rat farming and cassava cultivation. The OP6 lasted from 2016 to 2019 and had an allocation of US\$900,000 which was allocated to different community projects that promoted alternative livelihoods and improved conservation. Two examples of projects were snail rearing and beekeeping. The beekeeping project is doing well across all the communities, but the Snail projects are challenged in some communities. Some of the projects implemented had some difficulties, while others were not sustained. The major challenges faced by the SGP are the number of qualified community-based organizations to implement the thematic areas especially international waters and finding alternative feeds for the cane rat especially acetic acid which is used to break down the feed.

The challenges faced by local NGOs include delay in the allocation of SGP funding to NGOs after signing the contracts/awards which affected cassava production and some agricultural activities for some projects. The OP7 started from 2019-2024. SGP has funded over 106 environmental and capacity developments projects with over 97 civil society organizations, (CSOs) and community groups in Liberia for the phases of its operations.

Past operations (OP5, OP6 and OP7) experience and partnership will serve as a basis of effective use of limited SGP resources in OP8. The SGP implementations required partnerships to strengthen the integrations of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The country programs will seek to maintain and expand existing partnership relations with donors, government, UN agencies, civil society organizations, the private sectors and other key stakeholders. The table below summarizes projects and funds allocated under OP5, OP6 and OP7.



Areas of Interventions for the past GEF/SGP Operational Phases in Liberia									
Focal Areas	OP5			OP6			OP7		
	Projects	Grant, US\$	Co financed (US\$)	No of Projects	Grant, US\$	Co-financed	No of Projects	Grant, US\$	Co-financed
Conservation Of Biodiversity	39		420,010	14	485,500	65,150	15	465,104	46,510.4
Climate Change	15	552,000	177,000	4	107,000	10,700	2	45,000	4,500
International Waters	2	70,000	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capacity Development	1	22,500	10,000	3	100,000	55,000	0	0	0
Chemical and Waste	1	45,000	20,000	1	150,000	25,000	3	55,500	5,550
Climate Change Adaptation	2	87,000	15,000	0	0	0	11	277,600	27,260
Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management	3	100,000	30,000	0	0	0	3	117,696	11,769.6
Social Inclusion: Youth & Persons with Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	55,000	5,500
Total	63	2,162,500.00	6570,010	22	842,500	145,150	37	1,015,900	101,590

3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

3.1 Alignment with national priorities

Table 1. List of relevant conventions and national/regional plans or programmes

Conventions + national planning frameworks	Date of ratification / completion
GEF-8 National Dialogues	2019
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)	2000
CBD National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	2004
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)	2015
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	2002
UNFCCC National Communications	2002
UNFCCC Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)	2013
UNFCCC National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA)	2008
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Accord	2015
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	1998
UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAP)	2029
Stockholm Convention (SC) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	2002
SC National Implementation Plan (NIP)	2024
Minamata Convention (MC) on Mercury	2016

3.2. Gaps and Opportunities

The primary environmental issue in Liberia is the steady decline in national forest and forest resources, mainly due to the harvesting of wood, fuelwood, shifting cultivation, plastic waste, land reclamation in mangrove swamps etc. and the transformation of forest land for other purposes, such as agriculture. This has resulted in resource decline and biodiversity degradation because of over-exploitation of forest land and wildlife. This problem is exacerbated by the inconsistencies and limited or lack of involvement of local communities and civil societies organizations (CSOs) in forest management programs.

As part of the SGP OP8, the CPS will support the implementation of national priorities and the developing and reviving of the community management strategy plans. Following national consultations, special priority will be given to supporting conservation activities in East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR), Lake Piso, Sapo National Park (SNP) and Montserrado wetland (MLWs) and support projects outside these four areas.

Supporting and promoting the involvement of CSOs and community level partners in CPS implementations and community driven approaches to address local and global environmental issues, the SGP will work closely with the EPA, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines and Energy to learn from the ongoing Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) process in Liberia to work on Climate smart adaptation technologies that will also be introduced to support livelihood activities for local Communities to conserve resources, such as carbon trading community projects.

The projects that SGP- OP8 will support based on finding should include: Beekeeping, lowland (Swamp land) cultivation, Snail raring, Chicken poultry, Microloans for small businesses, expand the echo-brigade project around the Lake Piso, Animal husbandry (raising goats, pigs etc), Skill trainings such as (Soap

making, weaving, Tailoring, beads making etc.), Vegetable production, Energy Saving stove, support the revamping of the Fish Monger around Lake Piso, Eco-tourism, working with stakeholders and communities around Montserrado wetland to protect the wetland, provision of safe drinking water for inhabitants of some communities including mining environments around the East Nimba Nature Reserve. Ensuring effective waste management (carbon, plastics and Chemical) and capacity development and work with the government through various line ministries to develop and or enforce policies that will protect these protected areas should be key priority.

3.3 OP8 Strategic Priorities of the SGP Country Programme

Table 2. SGP Country Programme's alignment with SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives and Country Priorities/Project's /Programs

1	2	3
SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives - Global	SGP Country Program's OP8 priorities	SGP Country Program's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects: and programs
Community based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species 1) Improve the effectiveness of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and management through equitable governance systems by recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. 2) Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy approaches (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.). 3) Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species.	• Management of Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands • Protection of Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands Protection of Landscape from Environmental Degradation. • Protection of Forests. • Protection of Wild animals and Birds • Protection of the Coastal Zone and Marine Environment. • Protected Forest Area Network and conservation corridors. • Household and Personal Good Derived from wildlife. • Conservation Protected Animals, Hunting, and trade in wildlife. • Implement sustainable and, where applicable, • alternative livelihood initiatives for forest dependent communities, to enable them to become less reliant on forest resources or to be able to use them in a sustainable way. • ensure technologies and methodologies promoted to farmers through agricultural programs are cognizant of different socio-economic levels (e.g.,ro-poor).	The Community Based Forest Management Project (CBFM) and the Strengthening Agriculture Resilience through Transformational Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA) project

	- Investment and support for artisanal fishery communities, including training, fishing gears and alternative livelihood. - Support the diversification of the livelihood portfolio of communities that are fishery dependent. - Promote ecotourism, conservation and payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) that involve local communities targeted at biodiversity conservation, community benefit (pro-poor and gender and that minimize illegal poaching.	
Low-carbon energy access co-benefits Support implementation of Paris Agreement and the NDCs - Promote renewable and energy efficient technologies providing socio-economic benefits and improving livelihoods. - Promote off-grid energy service needs in rural and urban areas.	Liberia has set her mitigation targets and related activities, which includes: Reducing GHGs by at least 10% by 2030. improving energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2030. Raising share of renewable energy to at least 30% of electricity production and 10% of overall energy consumption by 2030. Replacing cooking stoves with low thermal efficiency (5-10%) with the higher efficiency (40%) stoves. Promote diversification of energy sources including renewable energy sources. Promote and support the development and utilization of community-based off-grids/mini-grids.	Let's Go Green project
Chemicals and waste management - Reduce and promote alternative to mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining - Promote plastics/solid waste management and Circular economy - Reduce/remove use of chemicals in agriculture.	Consider a safeguard policy in mining activities around national parks and biodiversity hotspots; Ensure the use of environmentally friendly chemicals in the mining Sector so as to avoid pollutions and the release of toxic: chemicals that are dangerous to human health and the environment. Management of pesticide, toxic and Hazardous Chemicals and Materials. Prohibition of discharge: of hazardous substances, chemicals and materials into the environment and spillers.	Energy and Environment project



Enhancing social inclusion (mandatory) 1) Promote targeted initiatives 2) Mainstream social inclusion in all projects (e.g. women/girls, indigenous peoples, youth,, and persons with disabilities).	Enhancing social inclusion 1. Promote targeted initiatives 2. Mainstream social inclusion in all projects 3. Mainstream gender (including women, youth, children, and people with disabilities) in planning, decision making and implementation of climate change responses across the landscape of Liberia.	Support projects involved with marginalized groups, women, men, youth and persons with disabilities.
Knowledge Management (mandatory) 1) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities 2) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs 3) Conduct South-South Exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of good practices.	Knowledge Management 1) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities. 2) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs. 3) Conduct South-South Exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of good practices.	
Results Management, Monitoring & Evaluation (mandatory) 1) Administer new strategy in country program and project design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms.	Results Management, Monitoring & Evaluation 1) Administer new M&E strategy in country program and project implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms.	Ensure monitoring of projects from the very beginning to the end.

4. OP8 PRIORITY LANDSCAPES/SEASCAPES & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4.1 Grant making within the priority landscape/seascapes

a) Process for selecting priority landscapes and seascapes



The selection of the priority landscapes and seascapes was initiated through consultations with national authorities and local stakeholders. The selection of the landscapes and seascapes was based on the guidance of the criteria for selection of Landscape and Seascape. The selection was based on four broad categories: Global environmental Characteristics, Socio-economic characteristics, Stakeholder capacities and long-term potential for SGP role. Other factors considered include the available funding for grant-making, niches opportunities, challenges and potential for synergies, as well as based on the public consultation meetings and governmental environmental priorities. Public consultations and discussions were also held at different level of communities and agencies of government. The government ministries and agencies visited include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NAFAA).

The results of the overall discussion and consultation processes led to the selection of eight sites (four for landscapes and four for seascapes) and presented to the SGP national steering committee (NSC) for consideration. At the NSC technical meeting, the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) and the Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve (LPMUR), Montserrado wetland were selected and Sapo National Park a new landscape to be included as a priority landscape based on the following.

ENNR

Important for cross-border biodiversity conservation programme It is rich in biodiversity prioritized as IIBA and KBA and protected area management The biodiversity uniqueness of the reserve has attracted external support for management to sustain conservation interventions there.

Within three years of the dam, a new lake is being formed which is gradually changing the land use activities that are endangering the forest and biodiversity of the landscape area. The habitats of the endangered and threatened wildlife outside the reserve area are being destroyed through shifting agriculture This requires interventions to ensure sustainable livelihood for the growing local human population while at the same time ensuring sustainable management of the habitats of the vulnerable and endangered wildlife species.

The landscape is vulnerable to climate change and variability which is negatively impacting the livelihood systems of the local communities. The landscape needs rapidly and immediate transformation during diverse land uses including agriculture. mining, logging and hunting

LPMUR

- The representatives of all the ecosystems in Liberia, including coastal, forest, mountain, dryland, wetland and agriculture ecosystems. Sustainable biodiversity management in these ecosystems will guarantee the protection of important biodiversity species and habitats in Liberia.
- The site is the only biodiversity-rich coastal protected area in Liberia. The legislative instrument which established the site as a protected area permits settlements there in and allows local people to carry out their customary land-use practices. This is a great challenge to biodiversity conservation and sustainable ecosystem management



- It is rich in biodiversity and a priority conservation area for several important species of flora and fauna such as West African manatee, the Red colobus monkey, chimpanzee, hippopotamus, Nile crocodile, sea turtles and many bird species of international importance
- Limited external interventions for the protection of vulnerable and endangered wildlife species and conservation of their habitats despite the site -relevance to biodiversity conservation in Liberia
- This area is vulnerable to climate change and variability due to uncontrolled and unsustainable land-use practices around the -seascape.
- Unsustainable land-use practices are endangering the livelihood of the local communities and sustaining abject poverty in the site's communities

Mesurado Wetland

- The seascape contains huge biodiversity and fills under the Ramsar Convention and is declared as a protected area under the laws of the Republic of Liberia.
- The site is mostly covered by mangrove vegetation and a hub for many marine fish species and important birds distributed across the wetland.
- The sites,, vulnerable to land reclamation, charcoal production, unsustainable fishing, wood gathering for construction purposes, and firewood gathering.
- Limited or no sustainable livelihood programs are in place for the communities that live near the wetland.
- The impact of climate change through flooding is the increase in surrounding communities adjacent to the wetland.

Sapo National Park

- It is rich in biodiversity and a priority area for several important species of flora and fauna such as West African manatee, the monkey, chimpanzee, hippopotamus, and many bird species of international importance
- Limited external interventions for the protection of vulnerable and endangered wildlife species and conservation of their habitats despite the site -relevance to biodiversity conservation in Liberia
- This area is vulnerable to climate change and variability due to uncontrolled and unsustainable land-use practices around the -landscape.
- Unsustainable land-use practices are endangering the livelihood of the local communities and sustaining abject poverty in the site's communities
- The habitats of the endangered and threatened wildlife outside the reserve area are being destroyed through shifting agriculture This requires interventions to ensure sustainable livelihood for the growing local human population while at the same time ensuring sustainable management of the habitats of the vulnerable and endangered wildlife species.

- The landscape is vulnerable to climate change and variability which is negatively impacting the livelihood systems of the local communities. The landscape needs rapidly and immediate transformation during diverse land uses including agriculture, mining, logging and hunting.

b) Selected Landscapes/seascape for OP 8:

Since 2008-2023, SGP has implemented projects all over Liberia. In 2016 when OP7 was developed, the landscape focused on the ENNR and seascape focused on LPMUR, and Mesurado wetland for the 70% of the grants while 30% was concentrated outside these two areas. The OP8, the same landscape and seascape were re-selected with the addition of Sapo National Park landscape. The re-selection of the three (ENNR, Mesurado and LPMUR) areas were based on the continuous need for the protection and management of the areas. The Sapo National Park was selected due to shifting cultivation, illegal mining, hunting in and around the protected area.

The baseline assessment considered both ecological and socio-economic surveys at the community level. And for the national level, several stakeholder engagements involving heads of institutions of national government and NGOs were carried out. Questionnaire was used to ascertain the socio-economic status of the communities in proximity or surrounding the landscape and seascapes. Questionnaire was used in focus group discussions and individual interviews. For the ecological survey, transect walk was used to collect important ecological information and anthropogenic activities in the landscape and seascapes.



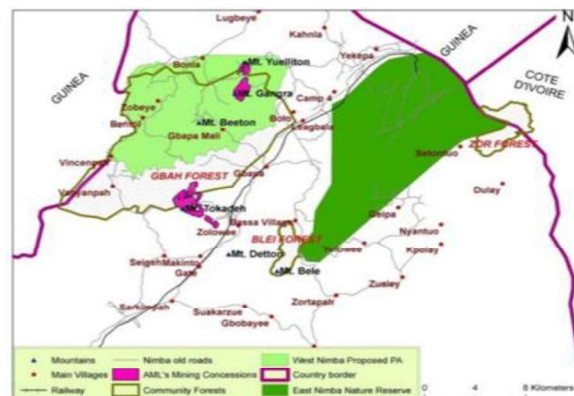
The table below details the community involved in the baseline assessment, the scape type and the coordinates of each of the three selected sites.

Name of the Community	Selected Site	Scape Types	Coordinates
Zoetapa	ENNR	Landscape	N0547919/W0815585
Camp 4-	ENNR	Landscape	N0551989/W0837967
Peace Island	Mesurado Wetland	Seascape	N0308684/W0694008
Fredrick's Island	Mesurado Wetland	Seascape	N0303428/W0697014
Swaggar Island	Mesurado Wetland	Seascape	N0308103/W0697875
Fanti Town	LPMUR	Seascape	N/A PAPI used
Saweeleh	LPMUR	Seascape	N 0240307/W0751065
Sembehun	LPMUR	Landscape	N/A PAPI used
Jalay Town	Sapo National Park	Landscape	N/A PAPI used
Kieh Town	Sapo National Park	Landscape	N/A PAPI used

ENNR

Total Area: 135.70 Km²

A total of area of 175.4 km² (43,300 acres), with 125.4 km² (31,000 acres) in Guinea, and 50 km² (12,000 acres) in Côte d'Ivoire. The reserve covers significant portions of the Nimba Range, a geographically unique area with unusually rich flora and fauna, including exceptional numbers of single-site endemic species, such as Nimba phrynoides (a genus of viviparous toads), the Nimba otter shrew, and multiple species of horseshoe bats. Its highest peak is Mount Richard-Molard at 1,752 m (5,750 ft), which is the highest peak of both countries.



Lake Piso Multipurpose User Reserve

Lake Piso, also known as **Lake Piso** and **Fisherman's Lake**, is an oblong tidal lagoon in Grand Cape Mount County in western Liberia, near the town of Robert sport. At an area of 103 km² (40 sq mi), it is the largest lake in Liberia. Its name originates from a local term meaning "pigeon's hole" a reference to the flocks of pigeons that once came to Lake Piso for water.

Sapo National Park

Sapo National Park is a national park in Sinoe County, Liberia. It is the country's largest protected area of rainforest, was the first national park established in the country, and contains the second-largest area of primary tropical rainforest in West Africa after Tai National Park in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire. Agriculture, construction, fishing, hunting, human settlement, and logging are prohibited in the park.

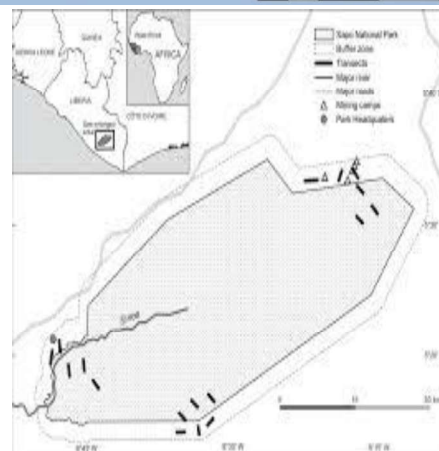
Sapo National Park is located in the Upper Guinean forest ecosystem, a biodiversity hotspot that has "the highest mammal species diversity of any region in the world", according to Conservation International, and in the Western Guinean lowland forests ecoregion, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature's ecoregions classification scheme.



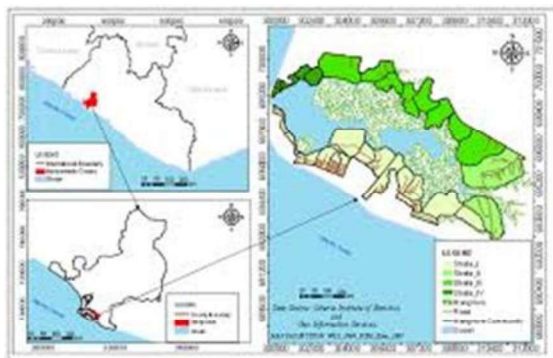
Mesurado wetland

Total area; 6760 hectares

The Mesurado Wetland is a unique wetland area found around the seacoast and is being designated to protect the *Rhizophora harrisonii*, *R. mangle* and *Avicennia africana*



mangrove species in Liberia, found within the Southern Upper Guinea Freshwater Ecoregion, which are threatened by intense charcoal burning and fuel wood collection. In addition to this, the ecological character of the site provides favourable habitat to several species of bird for feeding every season.



c) OP8 Strategic Initiatives in the landscapes/seascapes

The strategic initiatives to be implemented in the landscape and seascapes under OP8 include the followings:

1. **Community based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species**—the focus will be on improving the flow and resilience of agroecological systems to sustain livelihoods (agriculture, fisheries, ect) of local communities within the forest ecosystems of ENNR and SNP and within the various ecosystems (terrestrial forest, mangrove, inland wetlands, savannah and coastal) of LPMUR and Mesurado Wetland.
2. **Low-carbon energy access co-benefits**— promoting sustainable energy in all communities of the project areas and the reduction of Green-House Gas (CHG) emissions in all land-use practices through CSIA at the ENNR, LPMUR, SNP Mesurado Wetland.
3. **Waste and Chemicals Management**- increasing awareness in phase-out, disposal and reduction of release of plastic materials, human wastes, POP chemicals, mercury and other chemicals of global concern in water bodies and land surfaces at ENNR, SNP, LPMUR and Mesurado wetland project sites. In the LPMUR, special focus will be on restriction on release of plastic materials and human wastes in large water bodies (i, e. Lake Piso, Mano River, Maffö River; Mofe River, Manni Rivet and Lofa River). Similar actions will be taken in the Mesurado Wetlands were released plastic materials and dumping of human waste escalating every year.

4.2. Grant making Outside the Priority Landscapes/\$escapes

There are 15 conservation areas that have been declared as protected and proposed protected areas in Liberia including important wetlands declared as Ramsar sites» From the selection and prioritization process, four of these areas were selected to receive 70% of GEF CORE and STAR funds for grant .making under OP8 while 30% of the fund will be used outside the selected landscape and seascapes. From the consultation process, the stakeholders also agreed that 30% should not be restricted to a particular landscape or seascape outside the prioritized areas. However, they named Grand Bassa, Margibi, Montserrado and Bong counties for the 30% to be allocated. The reason for the selection of these areas



was based on the accessibility of the project areas for project monitoring and evaluation especially during the rainy season. Also, they said that the number of projects for areas outside the priority sites will depend on the amount of available funds and the GEF SGP grants policy.

For the landscape and seascapes, the SGP under OP8 will support initiatives that fall in the thematic areas of Biodiversity, Chemicals, Climate change mitigation, Community—Based Adaptation, International waters and Land degradation. Each CSO under OP8 Will receive the maximum grant for the entire operational phase, be it in the prioritized landscape/seascapes or outside.

The SGP will further support 'initiatives outside the prioritized landscape and seascapes as part of its innovative programs and will support projects that Will address issues in the circular economy and blue economy. It will also support the CSO-Government —Private Sector Dialogue Platforms and Social inclusion initiatives such as marginalized groups and persons living with disabilities. Already there are pilot projects to kick start the disability project in Liberia.

a) CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue

The SGP country programme will support establishment of CSO-government-private sectors dialogue platforms aimed at promotion of the role of CSOs and private sectors, uptake of good practices, influence policies and enhance communications. SGP Liberia will enhance the capacities of CSPs and private sectors to engage in national policy analysis and dialogue processes related to environment and sustainable development policies. SGP Liberia will also act as a bridge to facilitate collaborative discussions on identified issues, where the interests of citizens, communities and other stakeholders will be duly represented. This will bring new and innovative ideas to the Government, allow sharing knowledge, best practices and lessons learned from CSO Projects that government can scale, up and integrate into national policy and Planning.

SGP country programme will use experiences and lessons learnt from GEF -7 to inform and influence policy as part of its role as 'Grant-makers in OP8 especially the CSO-Government collaboration to further inform and influence policy at the local; regional and national levels.

The strategic step formulated includes the followings:

- Develop new capacity and skills for gathering data, assessing local governments provision of services and monitoring future service provision and quality over time, as well as identifying bottlenecks in service delivery; this will help them focus and target their advocacy accordingly.
- Strengthen existing CSO Coalitions and developing links with the media so they have more capacity to call county authorities to ensure communities' access to services is fulfilled.
- Increase capacity and skills for developing and managing advocacy campaigns
- Increase technical capacity and skills of CSOs and local communities for engaging policy makers in policy dialogue to ensure the rights of communities to basic services are fulfilled
- Establish platform (Inclusive Policy Dialogue Committees) as a citizen-government interface to enable CSOs and local communities to engage policy makers, participate in policy decision making and advocate for state agencies to be accountable in providing health, water and sanitation services to communities.



- To build the capacity of Civil society organizations working in the field of environment and natural resources to research, monitor and evaluate government progress on service provision.

b) Promoting Social Inclusion, including gender equality and women's empowerment

In recognition of social inclusion as an important priority, affirmative action Shall apply to each project, requiring women, youth, people with disabilities; marginalized and vulnerable groups participate in the project. The four selected areas; The district Yarmiem, that host the East Nimba Nature Reserve has 48.63% female and 51.36% male and the entire county has (LISGIS 2022 NPHC). Montserrado County (Mesurado wetland) is situated in two districts, Greater Monrovia, and St. Paul River with 50.24% female and 49.75% while Grand Cape (Lake Piso) is housed by three districts; Commonwealth, Garwula and Tewor with 48.13% female, 51.86% male and 9% (LISGIS, 2022) Sapo National Park is located in Wacaba Statutory District (Pynes Town District, Wedjah ,Juarzohn, Butaw) with 47.35% Female and 52.64% male (LISGIS 2022 NPHC) The SGP country program focuses on developing capacity for these groups to participate in national dialogue and decision-making. This will include participation in activities that foster leadership, coordination, planning and exchange of experience.

c) Knowledge Management

Knowledge management strategy implies the collection and dissemination of information concerning the experience gained from each individual project and the entire project portfolio across the GEF thematic areas. The Vision of SGP-Liberia programme for OP8 is to strengthen the knowledge center for community-based initiatives that address environmental problems at the local level while achieving significant global environment impacts. At the country level, best SGP practices will be used as an influence mechanism for development and formulation of national policy for implementation of environmental conventions and development agendas. At the global level, examples of tested technologies, comparative advantage and experience of the country programme from OP6, as well as previous phases, will be shared and disseminated through SGP Digital Library of Community Innovations and South-South Community novation Exchange Platform.

The key strategies to achieve knowledge management vision include.

- Data sharing,
- Awareness' creation and capacity building,
- Technology transfer
- The BATNA initiative (Best-Alternative-Negotiation Agreement) and
- Capacity building of targeted groups

5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication strategy focuses on communication and participation with a view to strengthening collaboration and creating partnerships. It ensures that all the lessons learned from the implementation.



of projects are captured, analyzed and shared with key stakeholders to promote learning within and across communities-and counties; and it also help replicate and scale up project impact, as well as to inform policy. The target groups (or "audiences") of the SGP country programme Communication Strategy include: i) CSOs and communities within and outside of the selected landscape zone; ii) government counterparts; iii) private sector; iv) UN Agencies; v) donor community; vi) Liberia diaspora organizations; vii) mass media; viii) direct beneficiaries and: public at large.

To facilitate the uptake of good practices and enhance communications, the above-listed target audiences will be provided with tailor-made, easy to read, up-to-date and eye-catching information on best practices through.

- Publish quarterly e-magazines on the project activities and circulate them widely; Encourage CSOs to initiate weekly radio programs on topical issues on the environment.
- Publish annual case studies of best practices.

6. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

6.1. Secured and planned cash and in-kind co-financing

The programme will continue to prioritize community-based projects that have secured matching funds for implementation and in-kind contribution of not less than 50 percent of the total project cost. The in-kind contribution will cover direct labour, land and use of office resources for the implementation of field activities in the landscape and seascapes.

6.2. Cofinancing Opportunities

Stakeholders categorize two wider programs, community landscape/seascape conservation and climate smart innovative adaptations. Both will draw on approaches that can sustain livelihoods (specifically for women, youth and other vulnerable groups) and address SDGs. Such initiatives can foster synergies, collaborations and cooperation and can draw substantial cofinancing from diverse sources that will cover basic costs of the development needs of the community linked to SGP projects and ensure the project's sustainability in future.

Since Liberia and its global partners have recognized the SGP program in addressing global

environmental problems and the UN 2030 SDGs and meeting community development needs, co-financing mobilization can include bilateral and multilateral organizations within and outside the UN system; international and national charitable foundations and NGOs; regional and national environmental funds; national and local governments; and the multinational and national private sector.

The NSC will continue to assess the need for the SGP to mobilize co-financing activities. The goal of SGP Liberia co-financing strategy is to achieve 1:11 co-financing of GEF grants and to cover certain



administrative costs at program I level. This can be achieved by creating to co-funding partnership at project level through both national and local governments' authorities and other international donors operating in Liberia.

7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Partnership opportunities exist for the SGP in Liberia but there have not been sufficient efforts made over the years. There is potential for creating partnerships with local banks, concessionaires and research institutions in the implementation of projects. The Small Grant Programme can also foster synergies with UNDP Country Office (CO) Programming and Government Programming, including GEF-Funded Full-Sized or Medium-Sized Projects

To effectively align Liberia's GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Country Programme with ongoing initiatives, it's essential to identify synergies between UNDP Country Office (CO) programming, government strategies, and current GEF-funded projects. By integrating the GEF SGP Country Program with these ongoing projects, Liberia can achieve greater environmental sustainability, strengthen community resilience, and ensure alignment with national and global development goals.

In OP8, the Secretariat and the National Steering Committee will take concrete steps towards partnership development.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

9. Table 3. Description of risks identified in OP8

Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
Limited funding for grant making	Medium	Medium	Efforts will be made to mobilize additional funding locally.
Limited capacities of grantees to develop and implement projects under all the initiatives	Medium	Medium	The NSC will organize tailored training workshop for grantees
Impassable roads due to heavy down pull of rain	High	High	Good planning to ensure that critical projects activities are implemented during the dry season



10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

9.1 Monitoring approaches at project and country levels

Liberia SGP will continue to support the improvement of quality and frequency of data by investing more in national statistical capabilities and collaborating with academic and research institutions to ensure reliable information that is disaggregated by gender as well as maintaining a consistent update schedule. To enhance governance within the country program initiative in Liberia, the National Steering Committee (NSC) will continue to serve as a governing body that will adhere to a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan incorporating a coordinated UN method for planning quality control monitoring assessment and reporting purposes. Linkages have been identified between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the plan in place, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) indicators to improve data management and collection practices by incorporating shared indicators whenever possible.

During project implementation stages, the project team will take an approach towards planning and assessing to secure important insights and information for supporting discussions regarding the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will also help in developing a foundation of evidence for conversations, about policies and aiding in evidence-based advocacy efforts and policy formulation. The project aims to establish systems for flexible program supervision by conducting monitoring visits (with greater involvement of UNDP personnel and stakeholders like civil society groups and beneficiaries), random checks and informal interactions with project and partner staff (including CSOs, CBOs etc.) to pinpoint significant risks in terms of content or operations affecting project accountability. Gender Marker will be employed to track and guarantee that 40 percent of program spending reflects substantial gender related contributions.

The initiative aims to leverage Liberia's use of smartphones and social media to develop strategies for engaging the community and enhancing communication channels efficiently and effectively. Funding for data gathering activities well as monitoring and evaluation processes (including impact review) will be covered by allocating a minimum of five percent from the overall program budget. A series of stakeholder discussions spanning years will generate concise papers on policies and relevant topics along with regular progress updates.

Table 4. M&E Plan at the Country Programme level

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Country Programme Strategy elaboration	Framework for action including identification of community projects	NC, NSC, country stakeholders, grantees	A SGP planning grant to engage consultants may be used to update OP8 CPS	At start of OP8
As part of NSC meetings, ongoing review of project results and analysis. This includes an Annual CPS Review	Assess effectiveness of projects, country portfolio; learning; adaptive management	NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office. Final deliberations shared/ analyzed with CPMT colleagues	Staff time, Country Operating Budget	At least one annual CPS review to ensure OP8 CPS is on track to achieve its results and make timely and evidence-based modifications to CPS as may be needed ²
Annual Monitoring Report Survey ³	Enable efficient reporting to CPMT and GEF. It serves as the primary tools to record and analytically present results to donors	NC/PA in close collaboration with NSC. CPMT provides technical guidance support and receives final country submission for further action	Staff time	Once per year in June- July
Country Portfolio Review	Methodological results capture the portfolio at a given point to note impact level change as well as broader adoption. The goal is to support reporting to stakeholders,	NC, NSC	SGP planning grant to engage consultants may be used to undertake previous operational cycles impact review and utilize lessons for both OP8 CPS development and its implementation	Once per operational phase

² It is recommended that the Annual CPS review is done close to AMR submissions for both processes to benefit from each other (suggested timeframe is May- July). Note that OP8 CPS will be regarded as a dynamic document and can be updated by the SGP country team and NSC on a periodic basis to reflect any necessary adjustments to ensure maximum impact.

³ Timely and quality country level submissions to Annual Monitoring Process are mandatory. As a Global Programme, it enables aggregated reporting by CPMT to GEF, UNDP and other stakeholders.

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
	learning, and support to strategic development/ implementation of CPS		Global technical M&E support can be expected	
SGP Database	Ensure recording of all Project and Country Programme inputs in SGP database	NCs, PAs,	Staff time	Throughout the operational phase. Ensure quality assurance and completion of data prior to annual monitoring cycle (May- June of every year)
Audit	Ensure compliance with project implementation/ management standards and norms	External/independent auditors. NC/ PA to provide requisite support.	Global Operating Budget	Annually for selected countries on risk-assessment basis

9.2 CPS Results Framework

Table 5: Results Framework of SGP OP8 Country Programme Strategy

Alignment with SDGs SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15 and SDG 17		
Synergy with UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD): Output 3.2 Market based solutions developed to support green entrepreneurship, renewable energy diffusion, and ecosystem-based livelihoods, with attention to gender inclusion. Output 3.3 Resilience enhanced through improved infrastructure, climate adaptation and mitigation, and benefit-sharing from natural resources.		
OP8 SGP Programme Goal: Engage local CSOs/CBOs in landscape-seascape approaches across the world, providing them access to knowledge and information, capacitating them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and delivering technical and grant assistance for interventions that enhance wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions and generate global environmental benefits.		
1 OP8 SGP CPS Strategic Initiatives	2 CPS Indicators and Targets	3 Means of Verification



<u>Strategic Initiative 1:</u> Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species	2,300 hectares of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (GEF core indicator 4.1 and 4.3) 2,750 hectares of marine protected areas created or under improved management (GEF core indicator 2) 2,750 hectares of marine habitat under improved practices (GEF core indicator 5)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports) Baseline assessment comparison variables (use of conceptual models and partner data as appropriate) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review
<u>Strategic Initiative 2:</u> Low-carbon energy access co-benefits	1,890 tons of greenhouse gas emissions mitigated/avoided (GEF core indicator 6) 15kW increase in installed renewable energy capacity from community-scale systems (e.g., biomass, micro-hydro, solar, etc.) 3 (number of) locally adapted solutions promoting low-carbon technologies (such as new/modified biogas technology, locally developed energy-efficient stoves, innovative uses of solar/wind energy, etc.)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Strategy Review (NSC inputs)
<u>Strategic Initiative 3:</u> Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management	At least 3 policy recommendations or advocacy initiatives related to land-based pollution as a result of SGP project At least 2 waste local companies or CBOs established, or capacity strengthened into chemical and waste management	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports) Strategic partnership with IPEN and Mercury GOLD country partners Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), global database Country Programme Review
<u>Strategic Initiative 4:</u> Enhancing social inclusion	6,000 (of whom 3,000 are female) (number of) people benefitting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (GEF core indicator 11)	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database

	70 (percent of) projects with focused interventions promoting gender equality and women's empowerment 20 (number of) projects that demonstrate models of engaging (a) Indigenous Peoples, (b) youth, and (c) persons with disabilities. 80 (percent of) grants with targeted support for 1) women or women groups; 2) youth or youth-led groups; 3) Indigenous Peoples' groups 827,849.6 (amount of grant funding) of total grant portfolio accessed by 1) women or women groups; 2) youth or youth-led groups; 3) indigenous peoples' groups	Country Programme Review
Strategic Initiative 5: Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Management	80 (percent of) projects with meetings involving local CSOs/CBOs or communities to monitor project results, assess impacts, and identify lessons learned 3 (number of) knowledge exchange/sharing events with participation of local communities 1 (number of) online knowledge repository developed as a result of SGP project 80 (percent of) country/cross-country impact reviews conducted with evidence of SGP impact and lessons learned. 4 (number of) South-South exchanges between communities, NGOs/CSOs, or other partners within or across countries to transfer knowledge, replicate technology, tools or approaches on global environmental issues	Individual project reporting by SGP country teams Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database Country Programme Review



Annex 1: National Steering Committee Endorsement

NSC members involved in OP8 CPS development, review and endorsement	Signatures
Urias A. Taylor, Jr,	
Salimatu Lamin-Gilayeneh	
Mantue S. Reeves	
James B. Seekpee	
Seanei N. Davis	

Note: The signatures of NSC members are required as an endorsement of the complete final CPS duly reviewed and agreed at the National Steering Committee meeting.