

**Environmental Impact Assessment  
and  
Environmental Management Plan**

**February 21, 2019**

**CEPF Grant: CEPF-109617**

**Friends of Ecosystem and the Environment (FEE)**

***Community Led Coastal Biodiversity Management in Cestos – Senkwen,  
Liberia***

## **Grant Summary**

1. Grantee organization: Friends of Ecosystem and the Environment (FEE)
2. Grant title: *Community Led Coastal Biodiversity Management in Cestos - Senkwen* .
3. Grant number: CEPF-109617
4. Grant amount (US dollars): **44,100.00**
5. Proposed dates of grant: 24th July 2018 to 30th September 2019
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Liberia
7. Date of preparation of this document: February 21, 2019

### **8. Summary of the project.**

The Cestos Sekwehn Landscape hosts one of Liberia's proposed protected areas with high species diversity and endemism and is one of several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Liberia with globally threatened species. It also hosts a diversity of ecosystem (terrestrial, mangroves, coastal and estuaries), biodiversity and sparse human population and is in Rivercess County, one of Liberia's coastal counties. This unique project aims to contribute and promote the sustainable management of terrestrial and coastal biodiversity along a portion of Liberia's 565 km coastline. As such, mining, unregulated hunting, fishing, mangrove harvesting, and shifting cultivation farming practices are all identified issues that require serious attention in this area.

The goal of this project is to provide critical support to the local inhabitants' efforts to strengthen the terrestrial and coastal protected area systems as well as the conservation of globally significant species and habitats in the proposed Cestos-Senkwhen protected area. To achieve the aforementioned goal, Friends of Ecosystems and Environment (FEE) envisions to undertake the following: to promote sustainable management of the coastal ecosystem; to strengthen national collaboration; to achieve conservation outcomes and livelihood improvement; to influence government decision to improve the status of LBR1; to foster participatory management of the mangrove ecosystem; to assess existing livelihood initiatives and impact on biodiversity; and to promote sustainable livelihood initiatives through long term investment for communities.

The successful implementation of this project will result in the following major outputs: organization of a site management committee and personnel in 4 selected communities in the project area; reduction in human pressure on terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, habitat and endangered and threatened species; training of the local organized groups of the four selected communities in woodlots establishment to serve as alternative fuel-wood and energy source thereby reducing the pressure on the mangroves; restoration and maintenance of at least 2 hectares of degraded areas in the project communities as well as the production of training manuals for woodlots establishment; assessment of livelihood impacts on biodiversity; conduct of ecological, social and attitudinal survey; creation of awareness on the human impacts on the mangrove targeting at least 70% of the local population of RiverCess County; through stakeholder consensus, petition the Government of Liberia for the change in designation of Cestos-Senkwhen from a proposed Nature Reserve to proposed National Marine Protected area; conduct of public awareness on endangered/threatened species and habitats using brochures, radio and TV programs targeting local resource users and decision-makers; and through series of

awareness raising sessions, secure local protected status for endangered and migrant species, key critical, unique and vulnerable coastal, marine and wetland ecosystems and habitats.

**9. Status of area to be impacted:**

The Cestos Sekwehn Landscape hosts one of Liberia's proposed protected areas with high species diversity and endemism and is one of several Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Liberia with globally threatened species. It also hosts a diversity of ecosystems (terrestrial, mangroves, coastal and estuaries), biodiversity and sparse human population and is in Rivercess County, one of Liberia's coastal counties. With the level of endowment in this unique landscape, the biodiversity and ecosystems are currently facing various levels of threats ranging from unsustainable utilization of the natural resources to coastal pollution, among others. This unique project aims to contribute and promote the sustainable management of terrestrial and coastal biodiversity along a portion of Liberia's 565 km coastline. As such, mining, unregulated hunting, fishing, mangrove harvesting, and shifting cultivation farming practices are all identified issues that require serious attention in this area.

Since the conception of the project ideas, FEE has undertaken several stakeholders engagement activities including its initial engagement with the authorities of the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia (FDA) to brainstorm and agree on site selection; field engagements with local county authorities of Rivercess on the proposed idea which resulted in the endorsement and selection of six communities within the Cestos-Senkwhen landscape of Rivercess County. In addition, consultations were held in the field with elders and key stakeholders of the proposed six selected project communities to get their buy-in for the project. After the approval of the project by CEPF, there were additional consultations beginning with a courtesy visit to the Management of the FDA to inform them of the positive outcome of the proposal and planning of field activities; visits to Rivercess county to meet with and inform the local and district county authorities about the success of the project and request their readiness and preparedness to implement the project along with FEE; project launch meetings were held with local leaders in the project area; introductory town hall meetings to finalize on the selection of four, rather than six communities as initially planned. All of these were intended to have a clearer understanding of the project stakeholders, the project environment and all related impacts this project is going to have on the environment, biodiversity and inhabitants of the landscape.

**10. Approach:**

The community stakeholders including local and county authorities will therefore be fully involved in ALL aspects of the project implementation to the extent that copies of the project reports will be shared with all key stakeholders. They will form parts of the training, field data collection, woodlot establishment, among others. FEE intends to ensure that all stakeholders have a good understanding of the project and its intended goal in order to have their contribution in making informed decisions with respect to activities supported by the project. FEE will employ multiple methods of stakeholder engagement ranging from participatory rural appraisal, rapid rural appraisal, interest groups discussions, household interactions, among others.

**11. Anticipated impact:**

Two types of impacts were identified during the inception process as those anticipated during the implement of the project: Economic impact and Environmental impact.

**Economic Impact:** This will positively affect all stakeholders especially those community inhabitants who will work directly for all project operations.

**Environmental Impact:** This will have negative impacts especially in fauna, in the early stages of project implementation and particularly during the woodlot establishment processes and the biophysical assessments including the brushing of the landscape and digging of holes where tree nurseries are going to be planted, etc. However, we anticipate these negative effects to be short in duration after which the landscape will be restored and the trees will begin to grow to have a new equilibrium between the natural flora and fauna. The species to be planted will be selected based on expert experience and advice from professional foresters and botanist from the Forestry Development Authority and the University of Liberia. There is no risk of introduction of invasive species through the project.

#### **12. Mitigation measures:**

Even though we anticipate that the project interventions will have environmental impacts of clearing the land which are already degraded to plant trees, we have also developed planned mitigation measures which will be taken in parallel with the clearing and planting process. We are planning to employ combined biological measures and interventions, including weeding and piling of the grass and leaf litters around the planted species rather than applying fire to burn them. We also intend to prevent soil erosion and stabilize the soil.

#### **13. Actions to ensure health and safety:**

The issue of health and safety has always been paramount to FEE's project implementation since its establishment. This project will be of no exception. We will ensure both our staff and community workers safety during the project activities implementation. The project planned activities are of not any risk of workers health or safety since most of the activities involve awareness and engagement activities with few interventions of tree planting with natural materials and physical assessments. Nevertheless, the workers will be preliminarily instructed of the planned operations and their precaution during their implementation to avoid any risk of health and ensure safety.

#### **14. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Monitoring and evaluation of the project during its entire implementation is key to FEE ensuring success of its projects. We have therefore incorporated in our plan to employ a combination of staff monitoring and evaluation plans of the project throughout the project especially during stakeholder's engagement activities whilst we intend to employ the services of independent consultants/firms to conduct independent mid-term and end of project evaluation of the project as well as our staff's ability to implement the project. In most instances, we intend to have the Forestry Development Authority and the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia on the monitoring teams to keep them up to date with the project implementation

#### **15. Permission of the landowner:**

The Project has preliminarily received the consensus from the management of the Forestry Development Authority, the Rivercess County Authority and that of the local authorities of district in which the project is being implemented. In addition, the project has also gotten the

general blessings of the four selected communities. The sites selected are communities land owned. As per tradition in Liberia, we do not need title deed for the areas to be affected by the project. FEE therefore engaged the county and local authorities including the communities through a participatory stakeholders' engagement process and explained the purpose and benefits of the project during which time the affected stakeholders granted FEE the permission to undertake the project and committed their support to its successful implementation

**16. Consultation:**

Our Institution intends to consult and incorporate key stakeholders in ALL aspects of the project implementation to the extent that copies of the project report will be shared with all key stakeholders. We intend to ensure that all stakeholders have a good understanding of the project and its intended goal in order to have their contribution in making informed decisions with respect to activities supported by the project. FEE will employ multiple methods of stakeholder engagement ranging from participatory rural appraisal, rapid rural appraisal, interest groups discussions, household interactions, among others.

**17. Disclosure:**

FEE intends to disclose all project related documentations to all key stakeholders including members of the selected project communities, local and county authorities as well as the management of the Forestry Development Authority and the SCNL. During the project implementation, FEE will erect bulletin boards in the strategic areas of the project communities where project related information will be display. FEE commits to keeping all stakeholders informed on the project implementation through various media including radio, bulletin boards, town criers, town hall meetings all intended to ensure the application of the disclosure requirements of the Project.

**18. Grievance mechanism:**

As indicated earlier and repeatedly, FEE as a stakeholder focused institution will ensure the provision of means by which concerned stakeholders may raise a grievance with us, the CEPF Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. FEE will outline and inform the local communities and stakeholders of the project goal and objectives and the existence of a grievance mechanism. The email address, telephone number, and physical address of FEE, the CEPF Regional Implementation Team, and the CEPF Grant Director will be made publicly available through announcements at public meetings, through notices placed on community bulletin boards, and via announcement on community radio. FEE intends to share all grievances – and a proposed response with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, we will encourage them to submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at [cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by surface mail. If the claimant is not still satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, we will further encourage them to submit their grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.