

Guinean Forests of West Africa

Ecosystem Profile Summary





Cover photo left to right: Boy carrying water, Liberia © Conservation International/photo by John Martin East Nimba Nature Reserve, Liberia © Conservation International/photo by Bailey Evans

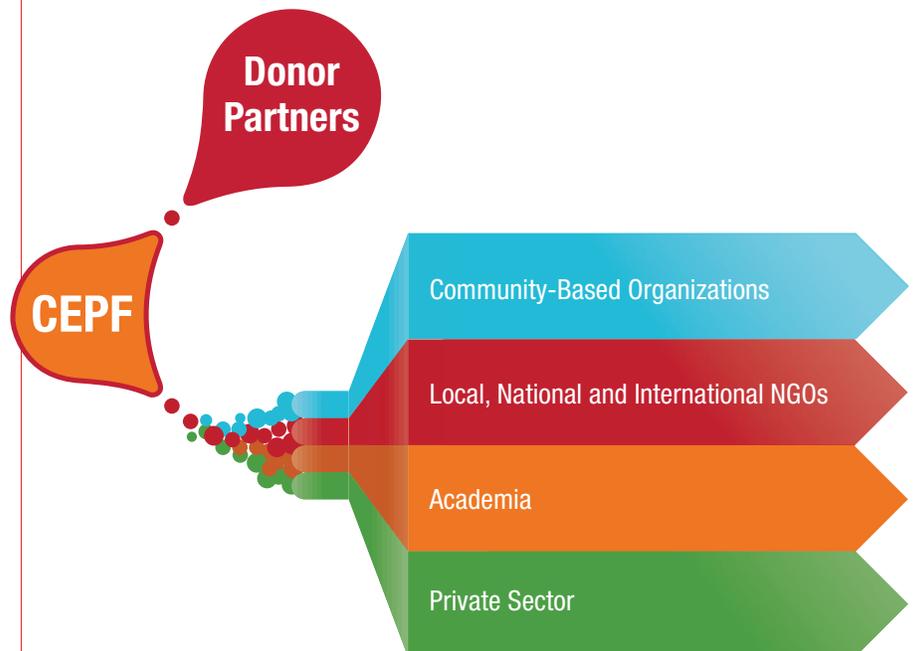
^ Woman in Liberia © Conservation International/photo by Mike Matarasso

About CEPF

Established in 2000, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.

CEPF brings together global institutional donors and nongovernmental organizations working in the world's biodiversity hotspots to protect the biological diversity humanity depends on. Together, we strengthen local conservation leadership and implement strategies to safeguard some of the most important ecosystems for the future of life on Earth.

How CEPF Works



The Hotspot

The Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot extends across the southern part of West Africa and into Central Africa north of the Congo High Biodiversity Wilderness Area, covering part or all of 11 countries.

At least 936 species of plants and animals found in the hotspot are globally threatened, and this number is likely to increase as more species are assessed. The region is considered a priority for primate conservation: 92 percent of the hotspot's 30 primate species are found nowhere else in the world, and almost all are globally threatened. These include the Critically Endangered western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) and Endangered drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*).

Some 85 million people live in the region, and though the countries within the hotspot are experiencing unprecedented economic growth, large sections of rural populations still live in poverty and depend on subsistence agriculture and natural resources—often including the consumption of bushmeat. Therefore, any efforts to protect biodiversity must, in tandem, strengthen local livelihoods.

CEPF previously invested USD\$8.3 million in the upper sub-region of the hotspot between 2001 and 2011. By the end of 2012, the entire hotspot was scheduled for future investment, but the Ebola outbreak in 2014 delayed these plans by one additional year. The new CEPF investment of USD\$9 million began in 2016 and will continue until 2021.



Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot

Biological Importance

of the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot

Nearly one quarter of the mammal species native to continental Africa are represented within the hotspot.



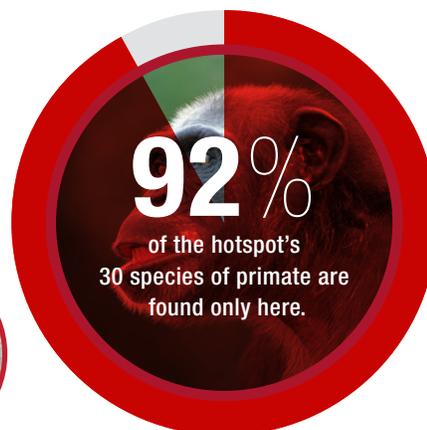
The hotspot contains many ecological features that render it globally unique:

- The delta of the longest and largest river in West Africa, the Niger
- The second largest swamp forest on the continent, the Niger Delta swamp
- The largest mangrove stands in Africa, third largest in the world, the Central African Mangroves
- One of the largest rivers in West Africa, the Volta
- The Western Equatorial Crater Lakes ecoregion, considered globally outstanding
- The offshore volcanic islands with their high endemism

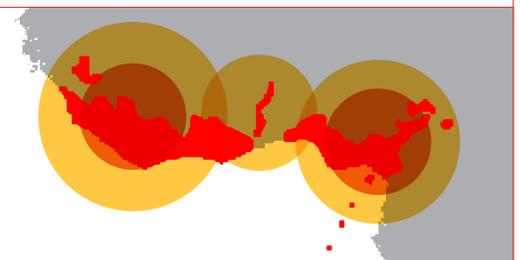
Threatened species in the hotspot include:

- Western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*)
- Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*)
- Endemic pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*)
- Several species of small forest antelope, such as Jentink's duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*)

The hotspot is one of the top global priorities for primate conservation due to both high levels of endemism and threat:



Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*)
© Conservation International/photo by John Martin



The hotspot's forests contribute to mediating climate change processes and maintaining biodiversity at the global scale.

They also provide the hotspot countries' combined population of 282.4 million with timber and other building materials, fuel for cooking, food, and medicines.



Around half of the 1,030 plant species in the hotspot so far assessed for the IUCN Red List are threatened.



* Photo left to right:
Western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) © imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo
Pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) © Alexander Kondakov/Alamy Stock Photo
Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*) © imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo

Developing the Ecosystem Profile

Before providing funding to a hotspot, CEPF develops an “ecosystem profile” that informs its investment strategy. More than 160 governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders in the region were consulted over a period of 18 months for this in-depth analysis, helping to develop a shared strategy from the outset. To read the complete ecosystem profile, visit cepf.net/GFWA/profile.

Men paddling canoe upstream, Volta River, Ghana
© Mint Images Limited/Alamy Stock Photo



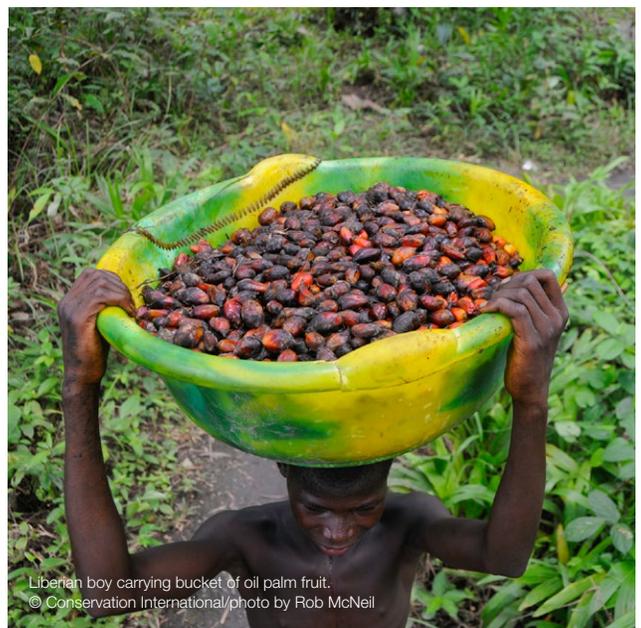
Iron ore mining: Liberia
© Conservation International/photo by Jbdodane/jbdodane.com

Threats

More than 85 percent of the native vegetation cover in the hotspot has been lost, largely resulting from agricultural expansion. Forests have been, and continue to be, cleared or degraded for subsistence agriculture and commercial crops, as well as for urban expansion, industry and infrastructure.

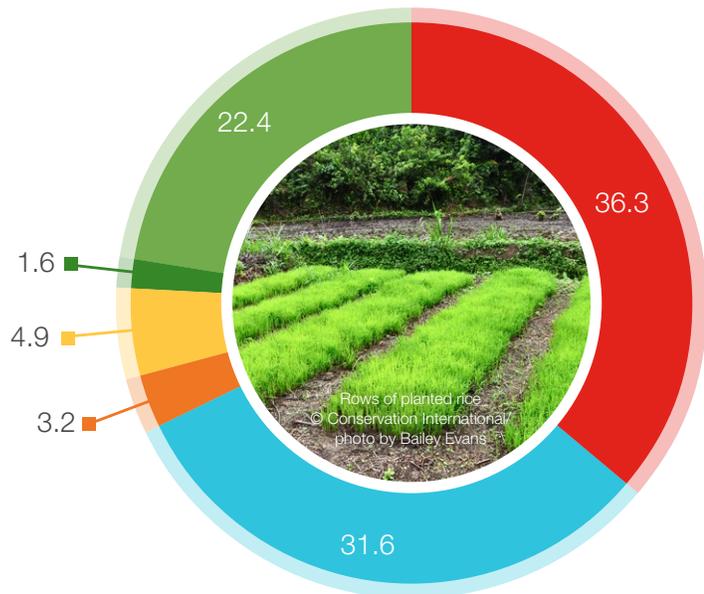
Other threats include unsustainable logging and fishing; hunting and trade of bushmeat; industrial and artisanal mining; industrial development; climate change; and pollution.

Many of the threats to biodiversity in the region are linked, either directly or indirectly, to a high incidence of poverty, political instability and/or civil conflict.



Liberian boy carrying bucket of oil palm fruit.
© Conservation International/photo by Rob McNeil

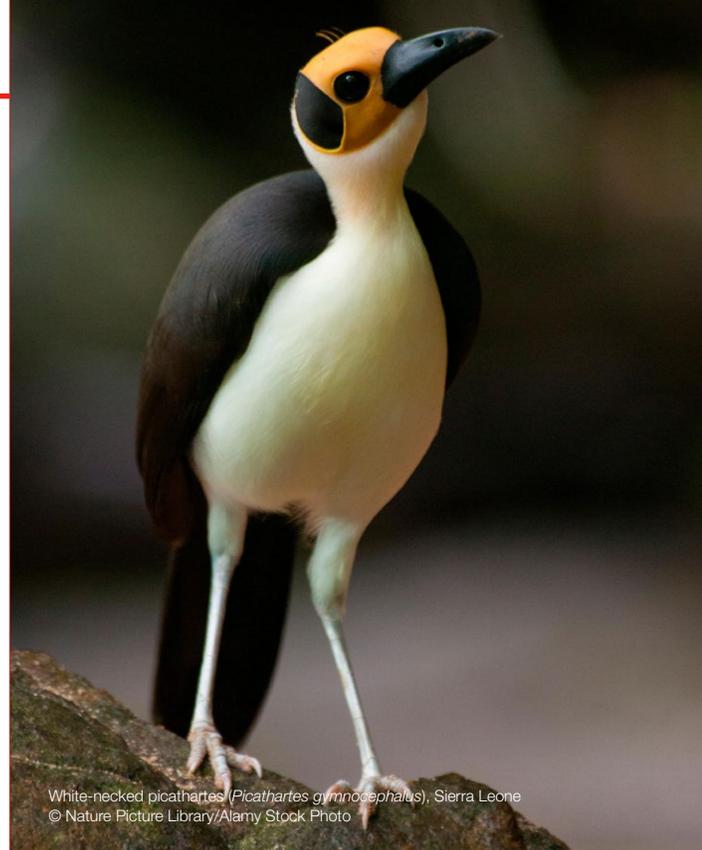
Current Investments



- MULTILATERAL
- NGOS
- PRIVATE SECTOR
- BILATERAL
- FOUNDATIONS & TRUSTS
- LOCAL & NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

There is significant funding for biodiversity conservation projects and programs across the hotspot from numerous international donors—Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), European Union, Fonds Français pour l’Environnement Mondial, Global Environment Facility, KfW Development Bank and United States Agency for International Development among them. The distribution of this funding, however, is patchy. Many important conservation sites and corridors have received limited or zero investment. In addition, much of the funding has been directed toward governments, regional institutions and international nonprofit organizations.

National and local nonprofit organizations in the hotspot struggle to secure funds that cover their core running costs and support their own priorities. In addition, there are almost no initiatives in the hotspot with a sufficient long-term perspective and the funding to ensure the achievement of successful, durable transboundary initiatives.



White-necked picathartes (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*), Sierra Leone
© Nature Picture Library/Alamy Stock Photo

CEPF Niche

Through previous investments in the region, CEPF demonstrated that, with appropriate support—not just funding but also through mentoring, development of partnerships and innovative communication strategies—and guided by a common plan of action, civil society groups can contribute meaningfully to conservation efforts. Increases in capacity and on-the-ground conservation results require considerable time to be achieved and secured; therefore, longer-term engagements by CEPF and other funders in the hotspot are essential.

With this new investment phase, CEPF will provide resources and capacity to civil society organizations at the grassroots, regional, national and international levels to establish long-term partnerships across sectors and borders. Grantees will demonstrate models for reconciling biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development agendas in the hotspot. CEPF will concentrate on terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems as well as coastal areas.

CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities

1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Empower local communities to engage in sustainable management of 40 priority sites and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- 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
- Promote preparation and implementation of participatory management plans that support stakeholder collaboration in protected area management
- 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 non-timber forest products, sustainable agriculture, etc.)

2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector practice in the nine conservation corridors, at local, sub-national and national levels

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- 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
- 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
- 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

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Safeguard priority globally threatened species by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Support the implementation of Conservation Action Plans for Critically Endangered and Endangered species on the IUCN Red List
- Update the Key Biodiversity Area 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

4

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Build the capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People's, women's and youth groups, to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations in financial, institutional and project management, organizational governance, and fundraising
- Establish and strengthen women-led conservation and development organizations, associations and networks to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing
- 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

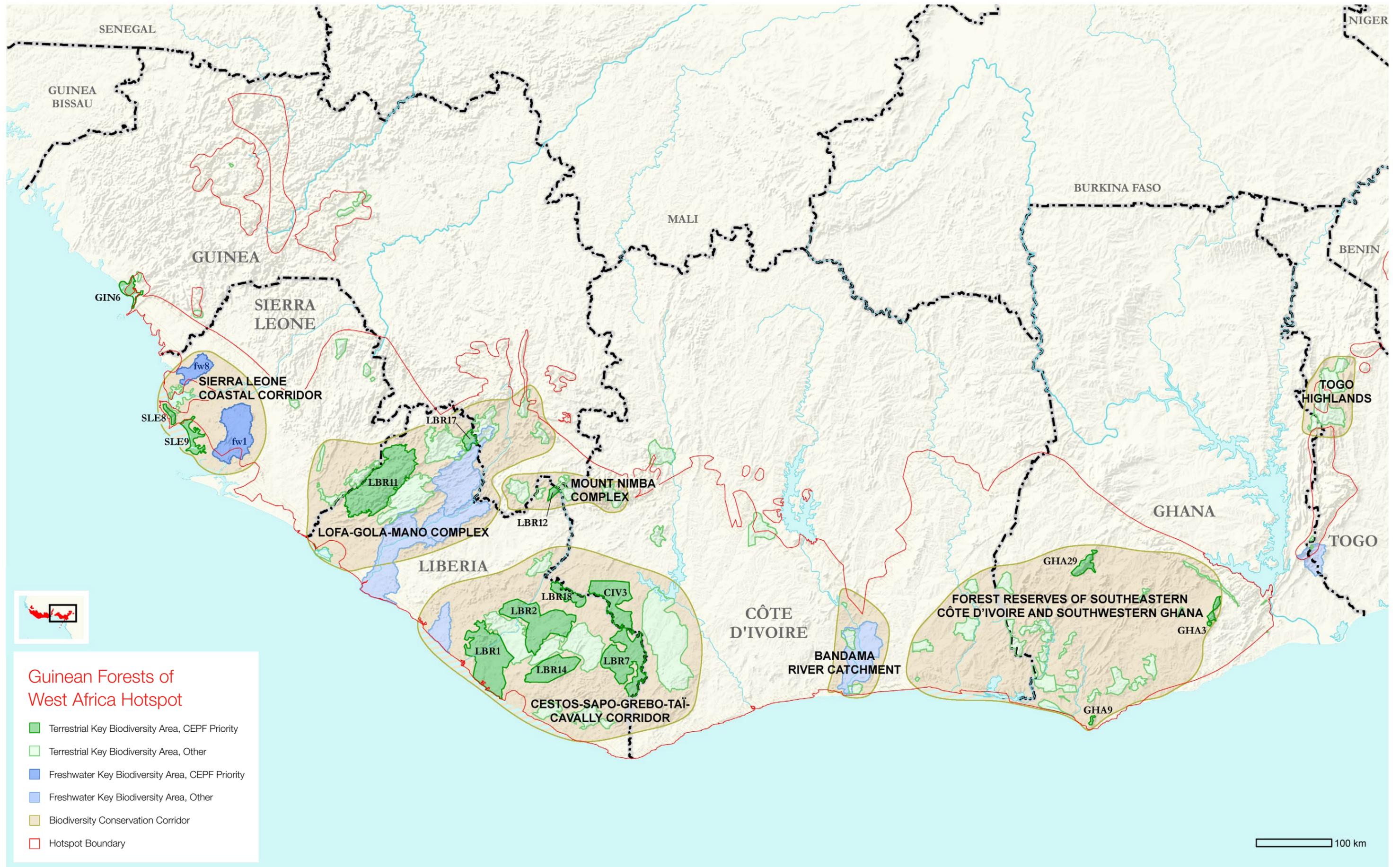
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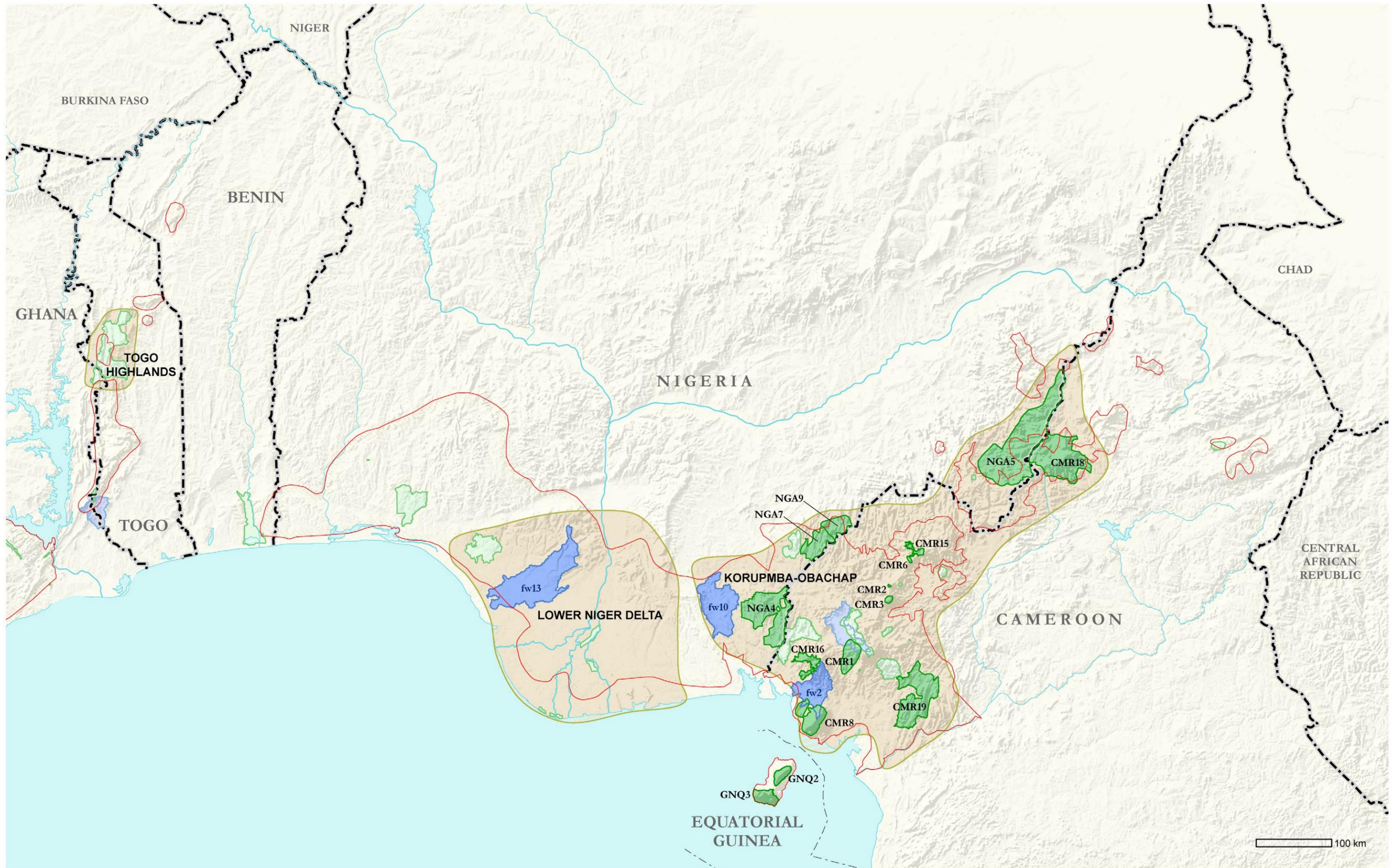
STRATEGIC DIRECTION

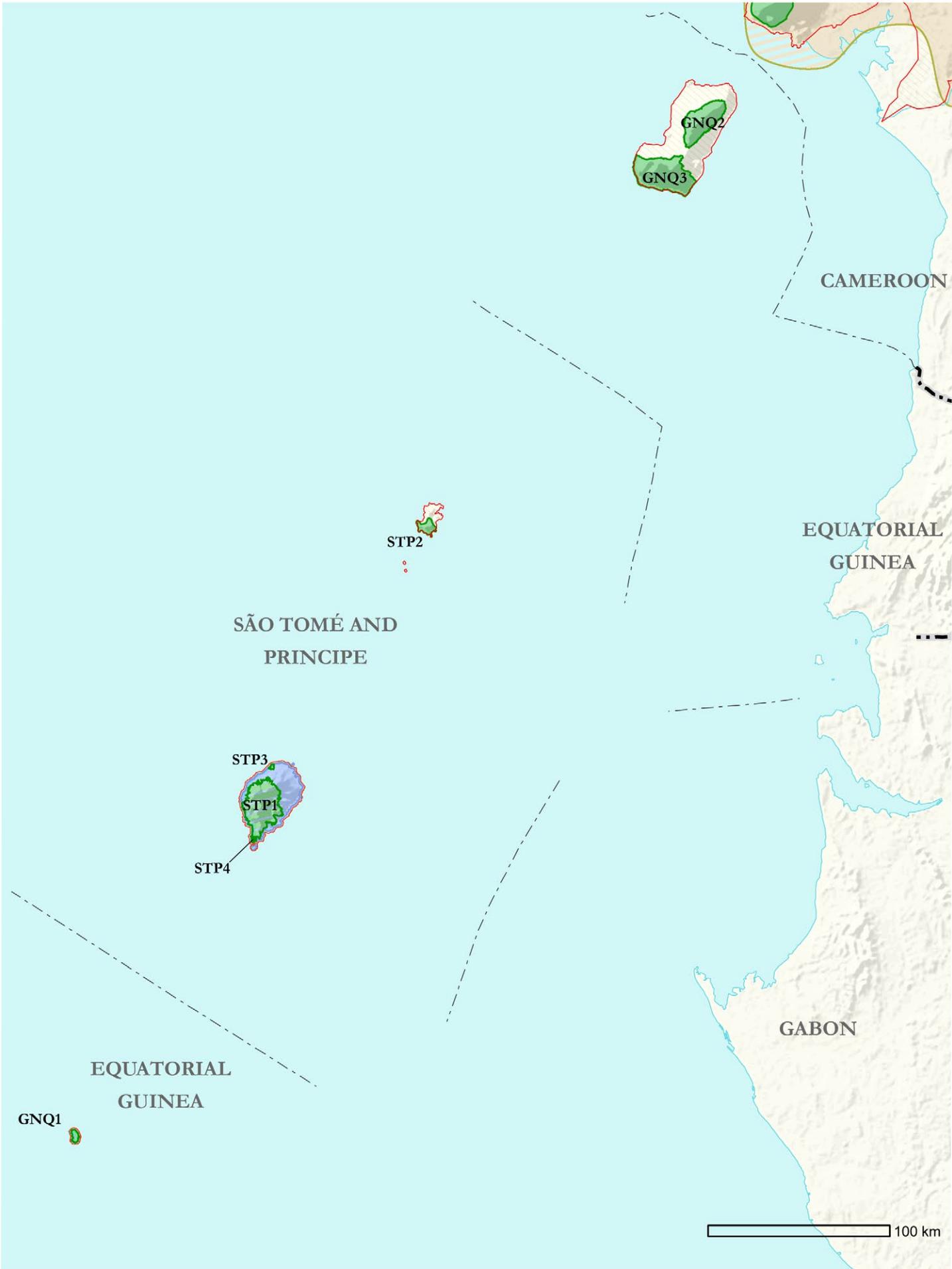
Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a regional implementation team

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Operationalize and coordinate CEPF's grant-making processes and procedures to ensure effective implementation of the investment strategy throughout the hotspot
- Build a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries to achieve common conservation objectives







MAP CODE	PRIORITY SITE
	CAMEROON
CMR1	Bakossi Mountains
CMR2	Bali-Ngamba Forest Reserve
CMR3	Bamboutos Mountains
CMR6	Mbi Crater Faunal Reserve - Mbingo forest
CMR12	Mount Cameroon and Mokoko-Onge
CMR15	Mount Oku
CMR16	Mount Rata and Rumpi Hills Forest Reserve
CMR18	Tchabal Mbabo
CMR19	Yabassi
fw2	Lake Barombi Mbo and surrounding catchments
	CÔTE D'IVOIRE
CIV3	Forêt Classée de Cavally et Goin - Débé
	EQUATORIAL GUINEA
GNQ1	Annobón
GNQ2	Parque Nacional del Pico de Basilé
GNQ3	Reserva Científica de la Caldera de Lubá
	GHANA
GHA3	Atewa Range Forest Reserve
GHA9	Cape Three Points Forest Reserve
GHA29	Tano-Offin Forest Reserve
	GUINEA
GIN6	Konkouré
	LIBERIA
LBR1	Cestos - Senkwen
LBR2	Cestos/Gbi Area
LBR7	Grebo
LBR11	Lofa-Mano Complex
LBR12	Nimba mountains
LBR14	Sapo National Park
LBR17	Wonegizi mountains
LBR18	Zwedru
	NIGERIA
NGA4	Cross River National Park: Oban Division
NGA5	Gashaka-Gumti National Park
NGA7	Mbe Mountains and Cross River National Park: Okwangwo Division
NGA9	Obudu Plateau
fw10	South East Niger Delta - near Calabar
fw13	West Niger Delta

MAP CODE	PRIORITY SITE
	SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE
STP1	Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé e Zona Tampão
STP2	Parque Natural Obô do Príncipe
STP3	Zona Ecológica da Praia das Conchas
STP4	Zona Ecológica dos Mangais do Rio Malanza
	SIERRA LEONE
SLE8	Western Area Peninsula Non-hunting Forest National Park
SLE9	Yawri Bay
fw1	Gbangbaia River Basin
fw8	Rhombe Swamp and Mouth of Little and Great Scarcies Rivers





www.cepf.net

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Male mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*)
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