CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

Organization's Legal Name:	West Africa Civil Society Institute
Project Title:	Strengthening Civil Society Organizations' Capacities for Effective Stakeholder Engagement in Biodiversity Conservation
Grant Number:	CEPF-109203
Hotspot:	Guinean Forests of West Africa
Strategic Direction:	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
Grant Amount:	$300,000.23
Project Dates:	January 01, 2020 - February 28, 2022
Date of Report:	July 01, 2022

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

- In-country resource persons: The project team engaged a pool of resource persons (one consultant per country) to provide timely and continuous onsite support to the mentees in the implementation of their respective organisational action plans.

- Techsoup: WACSI partnered with TechSoup to strengthen the communication and technology infrastructures of the mentees based on needs identified and expressed throughout the capacity strengthening engagement. Through the Techsoup donation programme the mentees were provided with Microsoft packages including office 365 setups for up to 25 users, domain names, and professional email addresses. In addition, Techsoup West Africa team ran three online training sessions for the mentees as part of End-user training for Office 365 key applications and features.

- Techport Solutions: a website development company that supported the configuration of domains, the hosting of servers, and the installation of WordPress templates and themes. They equally designed the development of websites for 11 mentees. An onboarding session was organised to hand over the newly built websites to the 11 mentees.

- Media: The project worked closely with several local, national, and regional media houses including Modern Ghana, Development Diaries, News Ghana, AllAfrica, Africa pulse, Newscenter, Mainnews among others to amplify objectives of the project through publication of press releases and articled about the project activities.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
21 biodiversity organisations have adequate capacity to significantly contribute to champion biodiversity conservation in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot by 2025	17 organisations have benefited from the capacity support (6 in Cote d'Ivoire, 6 in Guinea and 5 in Sierra Leone). As a result of their participation in the capacity strengthening project, the mentees have taken steps to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of their organisations through the development and institutionalisation of relevant organisational policies, systems, and processes. The increment of capacity was clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the CEPF Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) tool. A total of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 scored higher on CSTT. The total score of all the 17 participating organisations has significantly increased from 904.5 (baseline assessment) to 960 (final assessment). The support provided to the 17 organisations has strengthened their systems, processes and resilience's for much impactful interventions and their ability to effectively engage and advocate for the development and implementation of national frameworks, policies and regulations for climate change mitigation and adaptation at large.

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
At least 75% of target organisations have compelling organisational vision and mission statements	Prior to the support, some of the organisations had clear organisational vision and mission statements. This specific support was focused on organisations with poorly formulated vision and mission statements. A total of 8 (47.05%) mentees out of 17 have reviewed/developed their strategic plans, organisational visions, and mission statements with support from WACSI under the auspice of the project.
At least 75% of the target organizations score higher capacities on CEPF civil society tracking tool (CSTT)	The increment of capacity was clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the CEPF Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) tool. A total of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 scored higher on the CEPF civil society tracking tool (CSTT). This result demonstrated an increase in capacity. The total score of all the 17 participating organisations significantly increased from 904.5 (baseline assessment) to 960 (final assessment). The mentees' CSTT average score was respectively at the beginning and end 56.53 and 60. This is an increment of 3.47 on the average score. In Sierra, 4 out of the 5 participating organisations (IslandAid did not complete the tool, all attempts to get them

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	over the last 3 months have been unsuccessful), the mentees average score was respectively at the beginning and end 60.38 and 60.63. In Cote d'Ivoire, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 52.08 and 57.67 while in Guinea, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 58.42 and 61.92.
At least 50% of target organisations develop and operationalise at least 2 out of 4 proposed policies	A minimum of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 were guided to develop at least 2 policies and relevant organisational tools including strategic plans, board charters, intern, and volunteers' policies, safeguarding policies, human resource policies, gender policies, financial management policies, among others to further strengthen the organisational resilience and sustainability. The policies have become central part of the organisational structure of the mentees. All the 14 organisations which developed their policies have started implementing them.
Strengthened capacity of at least three women-led conservation and development organisations to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing	Two women led conservation organisations; Femme Cote d'Ivoire Expérience (ONG FCIEX) from Côte d'Ivoire and Muloma Women's Development Association (MUWODA) from Sierra Leone were selected and benefited from the capacity support. MUWODA went further to secure a CEPF small grant to strengthen the conservation of the Yawri Bay KBA in Bumpeh chiefdom, Moyamba District, through the development of sustainable income generating activities. This is a clear indication of the value added of the capacity support.
80% of participating organisations submit a minimum of 3 proposals to potential funders with a success rate of at least 10%	A poll of 100 proposals have been submitted by mentees throughout the project period with an overall 42% success rate. Mentees from Cote d'Ivoire submitted 52 proposals with a success rate of 42%. Conservation des Espèces Marines (CEM) recorded the highest of 4 over 4 winning grants amounting to a total of $1 Million. In Guinea, mentees submitted 34 proposals with a success rate of 47%. Développement Pour Tous (DPT) raised $125.000 and IBGRN secured about $110.000 grant funding over the project period. Mentees in Sierra Leone submitted 14 proposals with a success rate of 29%. With GREENLIFE raising about $118.000 and MUWODA about $225.000.
About 60% of beneficiary organisations have an enhanced online presence and visibility	The project has strengthened the communication infrastructure of the mentees toward more impactful communication. Apart from the training on communicating impact, all the mentees were supported with tools and skills to develop a communication strategy/plan for a more effective communication. In addition, websites were

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	developed and deployed for 11 organisations (65%) who did not have websites prior to the project. Furthermore, the project team assisted 06 organisations to open their organisational social media pages including Facebook pages and YouTube accounts.
At least 60% of beneficiary organisations develop and use relevant financial management tools	Through the engagement with the mentees – it came to the fore that financial management was done in an ad hoc manner, purely project based with the absence of the relevance of financial management systems and of finance persons for some. The capacity support has helped the mentees appreciate the importance of having sound financial management as key ingredients of the credibility of the organisation. As a result, 4 of the organisations have hired a finance person each, within the project period to support with the deployment of relevant financial management systems. In addition, 07 organisations (41.17%) have developed and institutionalised financial management tools such as chart of accounts and financial manuals.
At least 60% of beneficiary organisations develop and use relevant monitoring and evaluation tools	Organisational M&E was an acute challenge for all the 17 mentees. Their M&E systems/approaches were mostly project centred and responded primarily to donor requirements. Only one organisation had a M&E function within its organogram prior to the project. With the support from this project, all the organisations have appreciated the importance of M&E in driving their growth and resilience. The results recorded on this matter are that 5 participating organizations (29.41%) initiated organizational M&E systems processes and dedicated a person in charge of M&E though not necessarily an M&E officer.

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?
Under the dark cloud of the pandemic, WACSI adopted a dual delivery approach. Some of the training modules and technical support were provided through virtual means while, where feasible, in-person support was provided. However, due to the internet penetration and tech-savviness of some of the mentees, (at the local level with limited access to internet) having good and stable internet connection was a challenge as well as mentees not being too familiar with some modern technology tools. Hence, the sessions were recorded and made available to all participating organisations beneficiaries to ensure that mentees who faced connection challenges during some live sessions did not miss out on anything. The mentors opted for phone calls and asynchronous communication in some cases during the mentoring phase.

The political situation (related to elections) in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea presented challenges including internet blackouts during our engagements with mentees from these countries within that brief period of turmoil. In response, we postponed the series of virtual training modules for about 10 days as requested by the mentees to ensure that no mentee is left out.

The technical support from the in-country resource person to mentees in Guinea was delayed due to the ill-health of the resource person. Hence, the onsite coaching in Guinea was postponed and conducted in January 2022 instead of November 2021 as planned to provide ample time for the mentees to institutionalise key gains from operational trainings including (1) Advocacy and Communication and (2) Financial Management.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:
Over the two years project period, the 17 participating organisations from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone were taken through four stages of the project which include (1) training; (2) mentoring and coaching; (3) support to apply for small grant proposals; and (4) documentation of change stories and lessons learnt. As a result of their participation in the capacity strengthening project, the mentees have taken steps to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of their organisation through the development and institutionalisation of relevant organisational policies, systems, and processes. These policies and frameworks included: board charters to guide the functioning of their respective boards, strategic plans, staff appraisal mechanisms, communication strategies/plans, M&E tools, and sound financial management systems, among others.

The increment of capacity was clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the CEPF Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) tool. A total of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 scored higher on the CEPF civil society tracking tool (CSTT). This result demonstrated an increase in capacity. The total score of all the 17 participating organisations significantly increased from 904.5 (baseline assessment) to 960 (final assessment). The mentees' CSTT average score was respectively at the beginning and end 56.53 and 60. This is an increment of 3.47 on the average score. In Sierra, 4 out of the 5 participating organisations (IslandAid did not complete the tool, all attempts to get them over the last 3 months have been unsuccessful), the mentees average score was respectively at the beginning and end 60.38 and 60.63. In Cote d'Ivoire, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 52.08 and 57.67 while in Guinea, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 58.42 and 61.92.

A poll of 100 proposals have been submitted by mentees throughout the project period with an overall 42% success rate. Mentees from Cote d'Ivoire submitted 52 proposals with a success rate of 42%. Conservation des Espèces Marines (CEM) recorded the highest of 4 over 4 winning grants amounting to a total of $1 Million. In Guinea, mentees submitted 34 proposals with a success rate of 47%. Développement Pour Tous (DPT) raised $125.000 and IBGRN secured about $110.000 grant funding over the project period. Mentees in Sierra Leone submitted 14 proposals with a success rate of 29%. With GREENLIFE raising about $118.000 and MUWODA about $225.000.

It is noteworthy to highlight that the support has also strengthened the communication and technology infrastructures of the mentees based on the needs identified and expressed throughout the capacity-strengthening engagement. Microsoft office 365 licenses, domain names, and professional email addresses were provided to all the 17 mentees. In addition, a total of 11 websites were developed and deployed for organisations that previously did not have websites. Social media accounts and pages were also opened for those mentees who previously did not have these accounts. Mentees will have to renew their domain subscriptions at 100-120 (yearly cost) after this initial one year subscription which the project paid for.

o Sierra Leone: Islandaid SierraLeone (https://islandaid-sl.org/); Muloma Women'sDevelopmentAssociation (https://muwoda-sl.org/); Foundation For Integrated Development (https://fidsl.org/)

  o Guinea: Seeking To Equip People (https://stepguinee.org/); Initiative de Base pour la Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (https://ibgrnguinee.org/); Réseau Émergence Guinée (https://regui.org/); Carbone Guinée (https://ongcarboneguinee.org/); Développement Pour Tous (https://dptguinee.org/)

  o Cote d'Ivoire: Jeunes Volontaires Pour l'Environnement Côte D'ivoire (https://jvecotedivoire.org/); Femmes Cote d'Ivoire Expérience (https://fciex.org/); Environnement Cadre de Vie (https://ongecv.org/)

A vivid example of the relevance of this specific support was JVE-Cote d'Ivoire (a mentee from Cote d'Ivoire) that leveraged the newly built website to amplify the outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) through the publication of daily newsletters posted on the website (https://jvecotedivoire.org/cop15-eco-newsletter/). Their intervention could not be this effective without a website that serves as a repository of the newsletter and other key knowledge productions.

In Sierra Leone, 100% of the organisations recorded a significant improvement in their way of working. For example:

 o Conservation Society of Sierra Leone developed and reviewed the following policies: Strategic plan 2021 – 2025, condition of service policy, safeguarding policy, gender policy, human resource policy etc. The new elaborated strategic plan was approved by the board members. They also finalised the development of the interns and volunteer policy.

 o Muloma Women's Development Association (MUWODA) in Sierra Lone reviewed the organogram, restructured the organisation, and developed a board chapter. A new strategic plan was developed. In addition, the staff appraisal has been institutionalised with periodic staff appraisals conducted as a formal process. Several policies have been developed and are yet to be approved by the board members including gender policies, the intern and volunteer management policy, staff recruitment policy, safeguarding and procurement HR (Human Resource) handbook.

 o GREENLIFE in Sierra Leone developed a gender policy and recruitment and management of interns and volunteer policy. In addition to that, relevant M&E tools needed to support the operationalisation of their M&E plan and system were developed.

In Guinea, 66,66% of the organisations demonstrated a significant improvement in institutional capacity. STEP-Guinée developed a strategic plan, a procedure manual, a communication plan, a resource mobilization plan, and a human resource policy. All the policies developed have been approved by the board put in place within the auspice of this project.

In Cote d'Ivoire, 83,33% of the organisations recorded an improvement in capacity. SOS-Forets and Initiatives pour la Développement Communautaire et la Conservation de la Forêt (IDEF) developed a board charter to bolster the role of the board. In addition, the operation manuals of both organisations have been revised. They developed a gender policy and an intern and volunteer management policy., Staff appraisal has been institutionalised.

Results for each deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	**Description**	**#**	**Description**	**Results for Deliverable**
1.0	Selection of the participating organisations (Mentees)	1.1	At least 21 organisations (from Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone) selected for the programme with signed MoU	The project received in total 18 applications after three postponements of the deadline, followed by extensive follow-up phone calls and emails. After eligibility and due diligence checks, 17 organisations (6 from Cote d'Ivoire, 6 from Guinea and 5 from Sierra Leone) were selected as participating organisations for the capacity development project. MoUs were signed between WACSI and the 17 participating organisations with clear roles and obligations of each party defined and elaborated upon.
2.0	Organisational capacity needs assessment and in-country project meeting	2.1	21 needs assessment and baseline reports (based on CSTT and GTT)	The CSTT and GTT forms were administered to all interested organisations as key criteria for the selection. A total of 17 completed CSTT and GTT equalling the number of selected organisations were collected. The analysis of the information collected from tools inform the areas and content of the training. The lower capacity score from mentees were recorded in the areas of organisational M&E, resource mobilisation, governance, financial management. The results amplified the needs for significant supports in aforementioned areas.
2.0	Organisational capacity needs assessment and in-country project meeting	2.2	Three of in-country project meeting Reports	Due to the restrictions introduced in March by most West African governments to stem the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the organisation of face-to-face engagements

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				were limited, therefore, the project team opted for virtual induction meetings. The first induction meeting was held on 9th July for Anglophone participating organisations. While the induction meeting for Francophone participating organisations was held on 10th July. The proceedings of both meetings were documented in narrative reports.
3.0	Institutional mentorship preparation	3.1	Three in-country (institutional trainings) learning needs assessment reports	Before the training, an online learning needs assessment questionnaire was administered to the participants to ascertain their learning needs and objectives to effectively respond to them during the training. The needs collected during this assessment informed the training content including slides, handouts, exercises, group discussion and case studies. The responses from the participants were compiled into one report instead of three separate reports.
3.0	Institutional mentorship preparation	3.2	Institutional training modules /curriculum	The institutional training modules (curriculum) were developed based on the outcome of the civil society capacity tracking tool and learning need assessment conducted. The curriculums were developed both in English and French.
4.0	Institutional mentorship delivery	4.1	Three in-country institutional training narrative reports	The training was facilitated through a virtual platform (Zoom) in English for the five (5) participating organisations in Sierra Leone, and in French for the twelve (12) participating organisations in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea as one class to optimise time and efforts. At the end of the sessions, two narrative reports

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				have been formulated (Francophone and Anglophone groups).
4.0	Institutional mentorship delivery	4.2	Six post-training (institutional) evaluation reports	At the end of each training module, an online post-training evaluation questionnaire was shared with the participants to evaluate their overall impression, the relevance, content delivery and methodology of the training, and their satisfaction rating of the knowledge, skills and information acquired during the training. The responses have been compiled in four (4) different reports (one per training module). The analysis of participants' overall impression on the training showed that 92.86% of the participants were very satisfied and 7.14% satisfied with the resource mobilisation and sustainability training. 66.67% of the participants were very satisfied and 33.33% satisfied with the project management training. The monitoring and evaluation training recorded 57.14% very satisfied and 42.86% satisfied. While 50% were very satisfied with the organisational governance, 25% satisfied and 25% not satisfied.
4.0	Institutional mentorship delivery	4.3	21 Organisational Action Plans (institutional challenges)	The project team developed an organisational action plan template and worked with each mentee through virtual working sessions (a minimum of two working sessions per mentee) to outline relevant actions to take to respond to their identified respective institutional (governance, M&E, project

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				management and resource mobilisation) challenges/gaps. A total of 17 institutional action plans have been developed, corresponding to the number of mentees being supported under the framework of the project.
4.0	Institutional mentorship delivery	4.5	Mentees' institutional documents	82.35% of the mentees were supported to develop and/or review relevant organisational policies and process including board charters to guide the functioning of their respective boards, development of strategic plan, staff appraisal mechanisms, and sound financial management systems, among others.
5.0	Post-mentorship support	5.1	Quarterly in-country mentoring update report	The project team designed a mentoring report template to receive quarterly updates from the in-country resource persons on (1) the key achievements, (2) what has worked well, (3) challenges and (4) recommendations for the project team towards the effective achievement of the project's objectives. All quarterly reports were duly submitted by the in-country resource persons.
6.0	Operational Mentorship preparation	6.1	Three in-country (operational trainings) learning needs assessment reports	Before the operational trainings, an online learning needs assessment questionnaire (of each module) was administered to the participants to collect their learning needs and objectives to effectively respond to their needs during the training. The needs collected helped to develop the training content including handouts, exercises, group discussion and case studies. The responses

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				from the participants were compiled into one report per module. Hence a total of six reports.
6.0	Operational Mentorship preparation	6.2	Operational training modules /curriculum	The operational training modules (curriculum) were developed based on the outcome of the civil society capacity tracking tool and learning need assessment conducted. The curriculums were developed both in English and French.
7.0	Operational mentorship delivery	7.1	Three in-country operational training narrative reports	Two reported were formulated at the end of the operational training sessions. Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire (Francophone countries) training reports were combined into one report due to the similarity of the contents to optimise and efforts.
7.0	Operational mentorship delivery	7.2	Six post-training (operational) evaluation reports	At the end of each training module, an online post-training evaluation questionnaire was shared with the participants to evaluate their overall impression, the relevance, content delivery and methodology of the training, and their satisfaction rating of the knowledge, skills and information acquired during the training. The responses have been compiled in six (6) different reports (one per training module leading to two per countries). The analysis of participants overall impression on the training showed that 80% of the participants were very satisfied and 20% were satisfied with the Introduction to Advocacy and Communication training; and 70,59% were very satisfied and 29,41% were satisfied with the Financial Management training.

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7.0	Operational mentorship delivery	7.3	21 Organisational Action Plans (operational challenges)	The project team worked with each of the mentees through the training sessions and virtual working sessions to outline relevant actions to take to respond to their respective operational (Advocacy, Communication and Financial Management) challenges/gaps identified. The mentees were assisted to develop communication plans, advocacy strategy and to further strengthen their financial management by developing or reviewing their financial management policies.
7.0	Operational mentorship delivery	7.4	Mentees operational documents	The project team worked with each of the mentees through the training sessions and virtual working sessions to outline relevant actions to take to respond to their respective operational (Advocacy, Communication and Financial Management) challenges/gaps identified. The mentees were assisted to develop communication plans, advocacy strategy and to further strengthen their financial management by developing or reviewing their financial management policies.
8.0	Documentation of change stories and lessons learnt	8.1	Endline appraisals of mentees based on CSTT and GTT	The project team worked with each of the mentees to complete the endline appraisal forms (CSTT and GTT). Out of the 17 participating organisations, 16 have completed the final CSTT and GTT tools. IslandAid Sierra Leone (Mentee from Sierra Leone) is yet to complete the tools - all attempts to get them get to complete the forms over the last 3 months have not been unsuccessful.

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8.0	Documentation of change stories and lessons learnt	8.2	At least 7 success stories documented and published	During the onsite coaching sessions, seven (7) success stories (2 from Sierra Leone, 3 from Cote d'Ivoire and 2 from Guinea) and testimonial videos were documented. The success stories and video testimonials have been published on the Institute's communication platforms. The seven (07) success have been compiled into a success story magazine.
				
				Organisations Videos
				- SOS-Forets:
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hdsng4T4FVY
				- IDEF:
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFfPe1PC_68&t=27s;
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FW1Ys6Jlxk;
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is4s7nzAzG0
				- ECV:
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLug-vkssLE
				- JVE:
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKB70iLC7MQ
				- FCIEX:
				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6K0KA_L5Gw

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#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				- IslandAid: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VsMk_eHQx0&t=154s - CSSL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYovLHiewHE - GREENLIFE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otztJNH2TQc&t=65s - FID: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9jgT1sBy9s - MUWODA: https://youtu.be/4WKFaU1zfYY Organisations Success Stories - SOS-Forets: https://bityl.co/CCE7 - IDEF: https://bityl.co/CCDh - CEM: https://bityl.co/CCE5 - Carbone Guinée: https://bityl.co/CCDp - IBGRN: https://bityl.co/CCDo - FID: https://bityl.co/CCDj - GREENLIFE: https://bityl.co/CCDz
9.0	CEPF Project management and monitoring compliance	9.1	Monitoring of WACSI's capacities and understanding of gender issues, as evidenced by comparison of Civil Society and Gender Tracking Tools' scores at project start and end	The Institute completed the CSTT and GTT at the beginning of the project (baseline) and completed the tool at the end to ascertain progress on the various highlighted in the tools.
9.0	CEPF Project management and monitoring compliance	9.2	Stakeholder engagement plan implemented	A stakeholder engagement plan was developed prior to the start of the project and

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				guided the engagements between stakeholders throughout the project period.
9.0	CEPF Project management and monitoring compliance	9.3	Project progress monitored and impact documented and shared	Various tools were deployed by the project team to monitor project including (1) budget monitoring tool to track project expenses, (2) post training evaluation, (3) organisational action plan to guide the technical support to the mentees, (4) action plan tracking table to monitor action plan implementation, (5) GTT and CSTT to ascertain how the support has contributed the growth of each mentee as well as (6) onsite coaching exercise to document significant impact and lessons learnt from the project.
10.0	Project team's capacity in biodiversity conservation	10.1	In-country study visit report by project team	The project team could not hold the study visit due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease. Instead, the project team (including all WACSI staff) held two learning sessions of about two (02) hours each on Wednesday 21 October 2020 and Wednesday 11 November 2020 with biodiversity experts on conservation-related theme(s). The sessions sought to keep the team abreast with the trending issues pertaining to conservation that are worth noting by an organisation like ours that works closely with other organisations operating in the sector. The proceedings from the session were documented in the form of a report.
10.0	Project team's capacity in biodiversity conservation	10.2	Learning session report	The proceedings from the learning sessions were documented in the form of a report.

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10.0	Project team's capacity in biodiversity conservation	10.3	Report compiling relevant knowledge shared on biodiversity conservation from national/international events.	In addition, to the session with biodiversity experts on conservation-related theme and in line with the project team's commitment to continuous learning throughout the project period, the project team attended the Global Network of civil society organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) Digital Global Summit from 6th October 2020 to 22nd October 2020 . The session expatiated on the Great Green Wall Initiative/ biodiversity conservation. The session sought to promote evidence-based decision-making using strengthened local community environment and disaster structural systems that involve all stakeholders. The online session further encouraged the transition to inclusive green economies and to adopt sustainable consumption and production action plans. It was an opportunity for the project to share its ongoing work related to biodiversity conservation.
10.0	Project team's capacity in biodiversity conservation	10.4	List of potential donors for biodiversity conservation with their funding priorities	The project team put together a draft list of potential donors for biodiversity conservation including (1) type of donor (financial or technical), (2) programme areas, (3) focus, (4) funding requirements, (5) funding cycle, (6) funding size, and (7) contact person. Additional names were suggested by CEPF RIT that were incorporated, finalised, and shared with the mentees for their consideration.

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:

Methodology: The in-country support from resource persons throughout the project period was instrumental in ensuring that organisations took actions to address the weaknesses identified from the assessment stage.

Tool: Another key element was having an action plan that guided the support. The post-training Action plan (PAP) developed by the mentees articulated specific actions and systematic steps to achieve positive results. The PAP served as the basis of the technical support.

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
4b	Number of civil society organizations, including at least 10 Indigenous People?s, women?s and/or youth groups, demonstrate improvements in organizational capacity (target: At least 50).	15	At least 75% of the beneficiaries' organizations score higher capacities on CEPF civil society tracking tool (CSTT)	14	17 organisations have benefited from the capacity support (6 in Cote d'Ivoire, 6 in Guinea and 5 in Sierra Leone). As a result of their participation in the capacity strengthening project, a total of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 scored higher on the CEPF civil society tracking tool (CSTT). This result demonstrated an increase in capacity. The mentees' CSTT average score was respectively at the beginning and end 56.53 and 60. This is an increment of 3.47 on the average score. In Sierra, 4 out of the 5 participating organisations (IslandAid did not complete the tool, all

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					attempts to get them over the last 3 months have been unsuccessful), the mentees average score was respectively at the beginning and end 60.38 and 60.63. In Cote d'Ivoire, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 52.08 and 57.67 while in Guinea, the average score was respectively at the beginning and end 58.42 and 61.92.
4.1	Number of 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 (target: At least 50).	12	At least 60% of the beneficiaries' organisations had developed and implemented relevant financial management tools and M&E tools, as well as operationalised at least 2 out of 4 proposed policies.	14	The capacity support has helped the mentees appreciate the importance of having sound financial management as key ingredient of the credibility of the organisation. As a result, 4 of the organisations have hired a finance person each, within the project period to support the deployment of their relevant financial management systems. In addition, 07 organisations (41.17%) have developed and institutionalised financial management tools such as charts of accounts and financial manuals.

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					A minimum of 14 participating organisations (82.35%) out the 17 were guided to develop at least 2 policies and relevant organisational tools including strategic plans, board charters, intern, and volunteers' policies, safeguarding policies, human resource policies, gender policies, financial management policies, among others to further strengthen the organisational resilience and sustainability. With the support from this project, all the organisations have appreciated the importance of M&E in driving their growth and resilience. The results recorded on this matter are that 5 participating organisations (29.41%) initiated organisational M&E systems processes and dedicated a person in charge of M&E though not necessarily an M&E officer.
4.2	Number of women-led conservation and development	3	Strengthened capacity of at least 3 women-led	2	Two women led conservation organisations; Femme Cote d'Ivoire

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	organizations, associations and networks are established and strengthened to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing (target: At least 20).		conservation and development organisations to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing		Expérience (ONG FCIEX) from Côte d'Ivoire and Muloma Women's Development Association (MUWODA) from Sierra Leone were selected and benefited from the capacity support. MUWODA went further to secure a CEPF small grant to strengthen the conservation of the Yawri Bay KBA in Bumpeh chiefdom, Moyamba District, through the development of sustainable income-generating activities. This is a clear indication of the value-added of the capacity support.
4.3	Number of local civil society organizations demonstrate increased communication capacity in ways that support the delivery of their mission (target: At least 20).	15	At least 75% of targeted organisations have compelling organisational vision and mission statements, as well as, an enhanced online presence and visibility.	17	17 organisations have benefited from the capacity support (6 in Cote d'Ivoire, 6 in Guinea and 5 in Sierra Leone). the support has also strengthened the communication and technology infrastructures of the mentees based on the needs identified and expressed throughout the capacity strengthening engagement. Microsoft office 365 licences, domain names and professional

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
					email addresses were provided to all the 17 mentees. In addition, a total of 11 websites were developed and deployed for organisations who previously did not have websites. Social media accounts and pages were also opened for those mentees who previously did not have these accounts. The support included strengthening the capacities of mentees to effectively communicate impact and success stories. the support has also strengthened the communication and technology infrastructures of the mentees based on the needs identified and expressed throughout the capacity strengthening engagement. Microsoft office 365 licences, domain names and professional email addresses were provided to all the 17 mentees. In addition, a total of 11 websites were developed and deployed for organisations who previously did not have websites. Social media

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
					accounts and pages were also opened for those mentees who previously did not have these accounts.

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion

*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
77	46	(1) Resource Mobilisation and Proposal Writing and Sustainability (2) Organisational Governance (3) Project Management (4) Advocacy and communication (5) Results Based Monitoring & Evaluation (6) Financial Management and Grants Reporting

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits

Benefits to Communities

View the **characteristics** column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the **benefits** column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the **topics** column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics														
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

"Other" Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment

Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted

Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose

Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/ Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?

Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Mentee organisations which had the lead persons involved in the project achieved more in terms of outcomes resulting from their engagement in the mentorship project in comparison to the organisations without the involvement of leaders in the process.

2. Organisations who could not secure the CEPF grants lost momentum/interest in the mentorship project. We recommend for future similar support that the CEPF grant should be awarded in last phase of the mentorship programme and/or rather award as an incentive for all organisations who were committed to the process to keep the momentum high across the various phases of the capacity support.

3. The virtual trainings were less impactful compared to face to face in terms of conveying relevant knowledge and skills. This was demonstrated by post training assessment with the face-to-face training recording the highest rate of satisfaction from participants. However, the technology assessment conducted before the virtual training was informative and helpful in assessing mentee organisations' technological capacity to receive virtual training. To address the concerns of some mentees expressed during the questionnaire the sessions were recorded and shared with the participants. This not only ensure everyone had access to the course but that there was an opportunity to revisit the course material at any given time.

4. The face-to-face trainings were much impactful mainly due to the approach/methodology adopted. The sessions were very practical, interspersed with extensive group works, case studies and experiences sharing.

5. For future similar support it would be more effective to organise the training outside of the city - where most of the organisations are based to limit potential distractions and get the full attention of participants during the training sessions.

6. The support received from the in-country resource persons were instrumental in driving changes within the various organisation, even though the political instability in Guinea (Election and Coup d'états) and Cote d'Ivoire (election related violence) limited some of the engagement with the in-country resource person.

7. Strong technology and communication infrastructure is a vital instrument in driving the resilience and sustainability of civil society organisations. Organisations that embrace it could easily scale up/optimise their interventions. The technical support provided to the mentees organisations was a major innovation under this capacity support project.

8. Due to the limited number of organisations targeted for this capacity support's s call for application, the selection process of mentee organisations was much inclined toward more need based than merit based. We recommend that we future similar support, the pool of targeted organisations in widened to ensure a strong balance of "need based" and "merit based" in the selection process.

9. Include "onsite organisational assessment" as the starting phase for the project to have better understanding of the mentee's context and situation prior to the support. This could also be part of the selection process.

10.This is a major generic problem articulated by all the participating organisations. Lack of funding was stated as a major hindrance and limitation to the execution of some activities that were documented in their action plans. Funding challenges reflected in the following

experience, inability to hire consultants to help in designing suitable accounting systems and hire an independent accounting firm to conduct annual financial audits (a key requirement to secure external donors' grants). The funding challenge also affects the organisation ability to hire key staff for relevant position including dedicated M&E, communication, and financial personnel. We recommend the award of core of fundings to highly committed organisations over a long-term period to help sustain institutional growth's gains secured over the last two years and even further expand it.

11. Mentors should be involved in the award granting process under the framework of the capacity support to ensure that CEPF capitalised from the gains of the support. In addition, there is a need for CEPF/Birdlife to institutionalise "co-creation" principle in their engagements with local partners/mentors.

12. The organisational Action Plan developed by the mentees with clearly articulated specific actions and systematic steps to achieve positive results would continue to guide their capacity support journey beyond this project.

13. We recommend the review of CEPF/birdlife grant making process and system to reflect the context of operations of the targeted organisations. For example, limit the quantum of engagements between community stakeholders and potential grantees in the application process to defuse frustrations in situation of rejection.

14. The self-assessment tools (GSTT) has its limitation. From our engagements with the mentees we noticed that the baseline assessment scoring does not reflect the accurate status of the organisations. Most of the organisations tend to score themselves higher. We would recommend that the self-assessment completion process is blended with onsite/virtual engagement with the mentees.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

The organisational Action Plan developed by the mentees and articulated specific actions and systematic steps to achieve positive results would continue to guide their capacity support journey beyond this project. It highlights what has been achieved under this project and what remains for future future capacity support from the same/other partners. In addition, it would also contribute to internal learning culture.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

A stakeholder engagement plan was developed prior to the start of the project and guided the engagements between stakeholders throughout the project period.

The project team put together a press release that highlighted the project context and rational. It was published on major news websites in the targeted countries and beyond to educate the general populace on the consequences of the growing loss of the Upper Guinean Forest hotspot as well as the benefits of promoting behaviours that safeguard biodiversity ecology.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)	
Breakdown of Additional Funding	

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

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