

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

February 18, 2019

CEPF Grant 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 18, 2019

8. Introduction:

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-Senkwen 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. Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities:

Since the conception of the project ideas, FEE has taken the following stakeholders engagement activities as follows: 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-Senkwen landscape of Rivercess County; Further consultations were held with elders and key stakeholders of the proposed six selected communities to get their buy-in for the project. After the approval of the project by CEPF, there were another sets of 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.

10. Project Stakeholders:

Key project stakeholders: the Conservation Department staff at the Forestry Development Authority; Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL); World Resources Institute (WRI); the Ministry of Mines and Energy; the National Fisheries Authority; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Safe my Future Foundation; Superintendent and local officials of Rivercess County; four project communities namely: Po River, Jaster, Gbarboe town, Neegba; important sub-groups within those communities including the chiefs, youth groups and their leaders, women groups and their leaders; elders; farmers; miners; bushmeat and sea turtles hunters; mangrove harvesters; and fishermen; traditional authorities for the project area (Paramount Chief, Acting Paramount Chief, Clan Chiefs); government authorities for the project area (District Commissioner, County Superintendent, Statutory District Superintendent)

11. Stakeholder Engagement Program:

Friends of Ecosystem and the Environment (FEE), as a participatory stakeholders focused institution intends to 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. FEE's goal for stakeholder's involvement at all levels of the project stance from the backdrop of ensuring

the long-term success of the project and project activities through the active support of all stakeholders. 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.

12. Consultation methods:

As indicated above, FEE will continue employing multiple methods of stakeholder engagement ranging from town hall meetings with the selected four communities at the district and village levels; focus group discussions with specific groups; town hall meetings (participatory rural appraisal and rapid rural appraisal); discussions with the FDA, SCNL, County authorities, WRI staff, and all identified stakeholder groups and organizations; informal discussions with community members; workshops, etc.

13. Other Engagement Activities:

As indicated above, FEE is a stakeholder centered institution which has got a record of implementing all of its past projects with the full involvement of key stakeholders, especially those affected project communities and the national political institutions. FEE has already established excellent relationship with the local county authority who have assigned the County Inspector as their focal person on the project. The project will also be developing/establishing different tiers of stakeholders group for the purpose of ensuring the successful implementation of the project. In addition, FEE intends to establish conservation clubs in schools in the project area and also train the leadership of communities to effectively manage their natural resources, which are their endowments

14. Timetable:

As indicated above, stakeholder engagement has been and will continue to be an integral part of the entire project implementation. It is therefore worth informing the CEPF that all phases of this project implementation have and will involve stakeholders participation and consultation to the end of the project. As the project inception phase has ended, the next phase which is expected to have our technical and project teams in the field for the entire duration of the project is on as our team members have already began with our team developing information collection approach and conducting discussions with community stakeholders and collecting basic project related information. This process will continue with the holding of several planned meetings with key project stakeholders; training in conservation awareness, nursery establishment, and data collection (Manual & Handouts); development of Manuals (Conservation Awareness, Nursery establishment and data collection on biodiversity) with the full involvement of key stakeholders; conduct of livelihood assessments; among others. These activities are expected to be undertaken during the life span of the project. We are not attaching dates as a result of unforeseen

administrative delays in financial disbursements for field implementations but nevertheless, some of these activities are already ongoing.

15. Resources and Responsibilities:

As FEE continues to emphasize the importance of stakeholders' engagement throughout the project implementation, it is important to note that our staff at all levels will carry out stakeholder engagement relevant to their particular areas of responsibility. The Project Coordinator and Team Lead is responsible to lead on the planning and overall implementation of all stakeholder engagement activities at both the national and county levels and will form a part of all town hall and other consultation meetings. The Community Mobilization Officer is responsible to carry out various meetings, assessments, surveys in the four project communities while the field supervisor will supervise the activities of the community mobilization officers. It is worth noting that as part of FEE's strategy, we intend to recruit local field staff from the communities who will work with our project staff to ensure the successful implementation of the project. FEE also intends to hire the services of two monitoring and evaluation officers who will routinely work with our team in the implementation of the project.

16. Grievance mechanism:

As indicated earlier and repeatedly, FEE as a stakeholders 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 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.

17. Monitoring and Reporting:

As part of FEE's project monitoring and reporting strategy, we intend to ensure continuous monitoring beginning with a baseline of the situation that led FEE to developing the project, quarterly project monitoring by FEE staff, conduct of focus group discussions and/or questionnaires with participants in all livelihoods training activities; before and after self-assessments of FEE Staff by external evaluators of their ability to support community livelihoods activities and other community-based natural resource management and woodlots

establishments; mid-term evaluation by external evaluators; end-of-project evaluation by external evaluators, among others.