

BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL AFRICA PARTNERSHIP
(West Africa Sub-Regional Office)



Project Title: Across the River - a Transboundary Peace Park for Sierra Leone and Liberia

Project duration: 4 years (1 April 2009 – 31 March 2013)

Region/Country: Sierra Leone and Liberia

Protected Area: The proposed Transboundary Peace Park will comprise of 72,000ha of Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone, and the proposed 98,000ha Gola National Park in Liberia which are joined by potentially 50,000ha of cross-border corridors of forest, forming a continuous block of forest within the Upper Guinea Forests.

Donors: European Commission (EC) with additional funding from Vogelbescherming (VBN), BirdLife International, USAID, US Forest Service International Programs, Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia, Jensen Foundation, STEWARD, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF).

Implementing Partners: Forestry Division (FD) in Sierra Leone, Forestry Development Authority (FDA) in Liberia, Conservational Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), the Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL) and RSPB of UK.

Total Project Budget: Euros 3.18 million (of which Euros 2.45 million funded by EC)

Project Status: Ongoing

Project Description:

Overall Goal: The Upper Guinea Forest estate in West Africa is protected in critically threatened and important cross border areas and managed effectively by national institutions and authorities with the active collaboration of local communities.

Purpose: To secure the long-term conservation benefits of forests, their biodiversity and global carbon storage through national and international partnerships for improved forest governance across the Sierra Leone – Liberia border.

Rationale: The Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem is one of the world's priority biodiversity conservation areas due to a high and unique degree of species endemism, and the key ecological functions it provides to support and sustain the life and livelihoods for millions of West Africans. However, centuries of human activity have resulted in a loss of 70% of the original forest cover. The remaining 420,000 km² is highly fragmented, restricting habitats to isolated patches and threatening the unique species of flora and fauna.

The project will address factors leading to further fragmentation in these forests across the Sierra Leone and Liberia border and advocate appropriate land use, reinforce biodiversity conservation efforts including securing critical wildlife corridors, and address the threat of over-exploitation, which is increasing risks of local extinctions of key species of flora and fauna.



Main Activities:

- Build government and national Civil Society Organisation (CSO) capacity in transparent and accountable forest governance, management and monitoring.
- Build capacity of CSOs and local communities to lobby for and monitor compliance with Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan.
- Facilitate development of mechanisms to ensure effective and transparent implementation of FLEGT. Engage the government of Sierra Leone in a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) to FLEGT and the formalization of Liberia's VPA.
- Work with stakeholders to assess biodiversity values to identify and agree on corridors boundaries, socio-economic and cultural importance and threats of cross border corridor areas and disseminate findings.
- Establish and maintain effective project management framework that enables governments and CSOs to collaborate.
- Identify and fill gaps in knowledge of the forest, its uses and its traditional and current management.
- Develop a management plan for the transboundary peace park and promote the wise use and conservation of the resources on which the forest edge communities depend.
- Support stakeholders in both countries to increase funding available for forest protected area networks through global carbon markets and other sustainable financing options.
- Support local communities in the project area to participate in protected area management and provide training in natural resource management and livelihood development schemes.

Contact Us

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