



The Republic of Liberia
Ministry of Gender and Social Protection Agency

Environmental and Social Management
Framework (ESMF)

Liberia Women Empowerment Project
(P173677)

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1 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESSs	Environmental and Social Standards
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
LWEP	Liberia Women Empowerment Project
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender and Social Protection
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
GBV	Gender Based Violence
LMP	Labor Management Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
WB	World Bank
PDO	Project Development Objective

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) seeks to institute a consistent and effective environmental and social screening process for application to World Bank-funded projects at the local and national levels in the Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP). This ESMF is prepared to address potential environmental and social impacts and risks, and provide mitigation measures for activities associated with the implementation of the LWEP. The proposed project aims to improve gender equality attitudes and livelihood opportunities for women in project areas while strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government of Liberia to advance gender equality. The project will fund activities that would: (a) enable positive social norms and pilot enhancement to basic social services; (b) build economic and social empowerment opportunities; and (c) strengthen public institutions to advance gender equality. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP). MGCSP/PIU will take an overall responsibility of ensuring the effective implementation of the project, with support from the technical and steering committees (MoA, MoE, MIA and MoH). In addressing other components of the project The Community-based components (1, 2 and 3) of the Project will be implemented within the same communities in a total of 6 [six] counties, targeting an average 750 communities in Liberia comprising Montserrado, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh and/or River Cess. Communities will be selected using targeting criteria that take into account areas of particular need (including comparatively high rates of poverty and high vulnerability to climate change impacts), the presence of existing community groups (women-only groups or mixed groups with a higher percentage of women) that can be strengthened, (in later stages when the project machinery is established, the focus may shift to creation of new groups where necessary), the presence of basic healthcare and education infrastructure, and feasibility of access to multiple communities by project staff in early stages. In later stages the project may prioritize more remote areas. GBV risk screenings will also be conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the social norms approaches to the local communities and that related risks can be mitigated. The project will be implemented in a phased manner during a five-year project period, to allow for adaptive learning and ensure successful scale up. In phase 1 (first 2 years) of implementation), the project will be implemented in two counties (Rural Montserrado and Gbarpolu) in villages/clusters where there is overlap with existing projects, such as the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project, and the Rural Economic Transformation Project.

In fulfillment of the approvals required by the World Bank ESF/ESSs and the Environment Protection and Management Law of Liberia, MGCSP prepared the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) document which comprise of the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), Integrated Pest Management Procedure, Labor Management Procedure (LMP) as well as other relevant safeguard instruments which include the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) . The ESMF has also considered the national requirements and relevant international conventions and protocols for environmental, social and health and safety impacts. Six (6) of the ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) have been screened as relevant to the LWEP. The screening of social risks and impacts is based on discussion with the task team and in consultation with MGCSP, MoA, MoF, EPA and other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The relevant six (6) environmental and social standards of the World Bank environmental and social framework include:

- Environmental and Social Standard 1 (ESS1): Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts;
- Environmental and Social Standard 2 (ESS2): Labor and Working Conditions;
- Environmental and Social Standard 3 (ESS3): Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management;
- Environmental and Social Standard 4 (ESS4): Community Health and Safety;
- Environmental and Social Standard 5 (ESS5): Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement;
- Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10): Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

Furthermore, the project is not expected to impact natural habitats or cultural sites. In addition, all activities financed through the project are subject to the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards. The ESMF will guide the preparation of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) that will contain mitigation measures for addressing negative impacts associated with project activities.

The project will recruit E&S specialists to monitor and manage the E&S risks and impacts of the projects. The main institutions with key responsibilities for environmental and social management under the LWEP is the MGCSP while MoA, MoF, MoH and MoE are all involved as technical partners and serving in the project's technical and steering committees to be instituted. MGCSP is not conversant with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), which will apply to the project and MoA, MoH, MoE all have limited experience and capacity on ESF.

Legal Framework

Several policies, laws, and instruments available to support environmental management and the environmental impact assessment process in Liberia are reviewed in Chapter 2. The Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML) and other legislation are the key instruments that cover environmental management in all the sectors in Liberia. The Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines prescribe the process, procedures and practices for conducting an ESIA and preparing the ESIA reports. In addition to these instruments, there are sector specific policies and legislations that prescribe conduct for managing the environment.

Chapter 2 also describes the institutional framework for environmental issues. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the principal authority in Liberia for the management of the environment and coordinates, monitors, supervises and consults with relevant stakeholders on all activities in the protection of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources. In addition to being responsible for the provision of guidelines for the preparation of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) studies, environmental audits as well as the evaluation and issuance of environmental permits, the EPA is mandated to set environmental quality standards and ensure compliance for pollution control. The main functions of the EPA are as follows:

- Co-ordinate, integrate, harmonize and monitor the implementation of environmental policy and

decisions of the Policy Council by the Line Ministries;

- Propose environmental policies and strategies to the Policy Council and ensure the integration of environmental concerns in overall national planning;
- Collect, analyze and prepare basic scientific data and other information pertaining to pollution, degradation and on environmental quality, resource use and other environmental protection and conservation matters and undertake research and prepare and disseminate every two years a report on the state of the environment in Liberia;
- Encourage the use of appropriate environmentally sound technologies and renewable sources of energy and natural resources;
- Establish environmental criteria, guidelines, specifications and standards for production processes and the sustainable use of natural resources for the health and welfare of the present generation, and in order to prevent environmental degradation for the welfare of the future generations.

Chapter 2 also presents a review of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

It should be noted that each individual sub-project to be conducted under the LWEP must be subjected to environmental screening and environmental assessment conducted using in-house E&S expertise or by hiring external experts.

Environmental and Social Impacts and Mitigation

Chapter 6 describes the potential environmental risks and impacts, as well as measures to mitigate them. During project implementation, sub-projects will be screened to identify site-specific environmental and social risks and impacts in order to develop appropriate mitigation plans in line with ESSs objectives and requirements and national environmental requirements. The purpose of screening is to: (i) determine whether activities are likely to have potential negative environmental and social risks and impacts; and (ii) identify appropriate mitigation measures. For activities with adverse risks or impacts, the mitigation measures are then incorporated into the activity implementation, e.g., through appropriate environmental and social management plans the implementation of which is monitored and reported.

The potential environmental and social impacts that may be associated with the project components/subcomponents can be minimized by adopting proper management practices during farming activities and relying on effective environmental and social monitoring and training to support grantees (project beneficiaries). Several potential mitigation or risks control measures can be recommended to ensure the proposed project and its sub-components are more acceptable, by reducing or eliminating, to the extent possible, many adverse project impacts. Mitigation measures are intended to reduce potentially significant adverse project impacts on the environment, livelihoods and human health. Thus, they are highly dependent on the significance of the predicted impacts, the nature of the impacts (permanent vs. temporary), or the phase of the project (pre-construction, construction vs. operation).

Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

Chapter 6 presents Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be adapted by each subproject. It provides details on: i) E&S measures to be taken during the implementation and operation phases to eliminate or offset adverse environmental and social impacts, or to reduce them to acceptable levels; and ii) the actions needed to implement these measures. The chapter describes the factors that will help the MGCSP and MoA and the contractor in achieving high environmental and social performance. These include understanding environmental and social priorities and policies, ensuring proper management at all levels of the project's operation, knowing the regulatory requirements, and keeping up-to-date operational information. The ESMP is essential to ensure that potential environmental and social impacts are maintained within the allowable levels, unanticipated impacts are mitigated at an early stage (before they become a problem), and the expected project benefits are realized. In the ESMP, the environmental and social objectives should be clearly stated and communicated to all MGC SP and MoA and contractors' relevant staff to provide the necessary cohesion between planning, engineering, collection and operation. The ESMP sets out clear targets, cost/budget and times as well as clearly allocated responsibilities among the different personnel working on the project.

Institutional Arrangements and Framework

Chapter 7 describes the institutional arrangements to manage and monitor ESMP implementation. The main institutions with key responsibilities for environmental and social management of LWEP is the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The role of MGCSP E&S specialists will be to screen for and identify the nature and magnitude of sub-projects' potential environmental and social risks and impacts and ensure the day-to-day activities of E&S works are properly carried out as well as monitor the implementation of mitigation measures incorporated in the ESMP. The team will categorize risks and impacts of each subproject and will be responsible for determining their risk rating in accordance with the risk classification guidelines provided under paragraphs 23-35 of the ESS1. The E & S specialists will also be responsible for supervising the project beneficiaries and/or contractor during implementation of the sub-projects and ensuring that the ESMP is correctly implemented for the sub-projects. This will be done in keeping with the EPML of Liberia and the applicable World Bank Environmental and Social Standards. The E&S Specialists will prepare and submit to the World Bank regular monitoring reports on the environmental, social, health and safety (ESHS) performance of the LWIP including, but not limited to, stakeholder engagement activities, incidents or accidents and a grievances log. The report will also incorporate the status of the implementation of Environment and Social Management Plans (ESMP) and other relevant E&S documents, including , the Labor Management Procedure (LMP), and Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and, Resettlement Action Plan (RAP). These reporting requirements will also be included as part of the project Operation Manual and into relevant contracts.

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

In order to determine the capacity of the implementing agencies to establish the required technical or functional safeguard capacity in place a rapid capacity assessment will be carried out at the MGCSP organizational arrangements are adequate to deliver on ESF/ESSs requirements and can ensure effective implementation of environmental and social mitigation measures. If the assessment determined that

existing capacity needs enhancement, MGCSP A will be required to strengthen functional and organizational safeguards' capacity as part of the project undertaking and as condition to the project effectiveness.

The objective of the safeguards capacity building plan/intervention is to ensure appropriate environmental awareness, knowledge and skills for the implementation of environmental and social management plans as well as environmental and social instruments processing and their implementation monitoring. To strengthen institutional capacity and environmental and social awareness, training sessions should be conducted for individuals from the MGCSP and MoA and other concerned administrative or governmental ministries and agencies - and will be determined by the capacity assessment exercise. Evaluation will be done following every training session for feedback with a view to improving the training program.

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The project has prepared and consulted on a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which defines a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation, throughout the entire project cycle. It also outlines a communication strategy with the project stakeholders, and offers mechanisms for them to raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about project. The SEP is a living document with objectives to:

- Identify all project stakeholders including their priorities and concerns, and ensure the project has ways to incorporate these.
- Identify strategies for information sharing and communication to stakeholders in ways that are meaningful and accessible.
- Specify procedures and methodologies for stakeholder consultations, documentation of the proceedings and strategies for feedback.
- Establish an accessible, culturally appropriate, and responsive grievance mechanism, and
- Develop a strategy for stakeholder participation in the monitoring of project impacts

The social impacts will be mainly observed at the level of project communities. However, giving that the specific project locations have not been identified at this time to enable meaningful consultations at the community level, a focus group consultation was held with key benefiting agencies (MGCSP, MIA, MoA) and CSOs in the proposed benefiting counties. Due to the continued health safety challenges occasioned by COVID-19, this focus group consultation was held via phone calls. A broader and deepened consultation will be held during appraisal and into implementation and the SEP will be revised accordingly.

The main objectives of the consultation meetings were to introduce the proposed project to stakeholders, solicit input from stakeholders, and to gain their support for the project. The main issues or concerns raised by stakeholders from the above-mentioned consultation meetings can be discussed in this chapter.

A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is part of the project ESMF, RPF and SEP and will be established to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective, and efficient manner. The GRM provides complaint or resolving measures for any dispute, appropriate redress actions and avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings. Grievances will be handled at the local community level and at the PIU of the

Project located in the MGCSP via a Grievance Redress Committee to be established at MGCSP including via dedicated hotline to be established.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 COUNTRY CONTEX

Liberia is a country in West Africa, bordering Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoir. Liberia is a fragile and conflict-affected country that has experienced a range of highly traumatic periods and, as a result, remains highly vulnerable to external shocks. Two civil wars between 1989 and 2003 destroyed much of Liberia's basic infrastructure and social services, resulting in poor living conditions for most of the population. There are 15 counties in Liberia and Liberia has sixteen ethnolinguistic groups, and most Liberians are belonging to the Poro and Sande cultural societies which traces its origins to many centuries.

Cultural societies such as the *Sande* (for women) and *Poro* (for men) form an important part of that society and have existed since 1000AD. They shape the way tradition, culture, and spiritual beliefs and rituals are practiced. Majority of Liberians, both in urban and rural areas as well as elites and non-elites, one way or the other, are members of these cultural societies. Traditional, cultural, and spiritual practices have long played an important role in Liberian society and continue to permeate many aspects of Liberians life. The cultural societies are hierarchically organized and operates in large part of Liberia. They have a traditional organizational hierarchy, and their hierarchy is based on secrecy: the higher a person's status, the greater the secret knowledge that is revealed to them. They use the perceived secret power to impart traditional education and life skills and exercise authority over local communities and influence politics and decision making.

Cultural societies leaders lead traditional schools in traditional settings. These cultural societies coach values and thought skills conducive to communal harmony. They prepare children for the difficulties of adulthood. They have historically provided training for young adults in the absence of formal educational structures and have been held in high esteem by Liberians for their role in transmitting values and skills from one generation to the next. These cultural societies, through their leaders, exert significant authority over members and non-members of their respective societies. They use the traditional justice system - which is beyond and above the formal justice system - to punish their members. They also have significant influence over local administration and politics as well as on executive, legislative and Judicial branches of government. They are held in high esteem by the public because of their role in passing on values and skills from one generation to the next.

The chief Poro leader (*zoe*) is the head of the National Council of Chiefs and Elders (NCCE). He is the representative body of traditional authorities in Liberia. The council is "highly influential" and is consulted by state authorities on all matters related to society. The traditional Chief plays an advisory role on internal affairs in the country, and it is mandated to help the government maintain peace. The Ministry Internal Affairs (MIA) is mandated to regulate traditional institutions and issued licenses to traditional practitioners. The Ministry is in fact considered second only to the chief *Poro leader (zoe)* in terms of cultural authority. Two departments oversee cultural societies: the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), which supervises the activities of cultural societies and the NCCE; and the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), which promotes and preserves culture. In terms of social practices that constrains women equity, the Liberia's penal law criminalizes some activities that may be associated with traditional practices. However, there is a traditional system of customary law in Liberia that operates beyond the official justice system with respect to issues involving culture and traditions - signifying the influence of traditional leaders and institutions in Liberia.

Repeated health crises and economic shocks including the COVID 19-pandemic have negatively impacted the Liberian economy, with a disproportionate effect on women. In 2014, the regional Ebola crisis and a sharp drop in global commodity prices disrupted Liberia's recovery, leading to economic contraction and an increase in the poverty rate from 54.1 percent to 61.2 percent. The impact of these shocks was exacerbated by underlying structural weaknesses including inadequate infrastructure, limited workforce skills, weak enforcement of public policy and corruption, all of which slow investment and growth. The global COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these fragilities: real GDP contracted in 2020, and the prevalence of extreme poverty is estimated to have increased from 38.6 percent in 2014 to 51.0 percent in 2020, with high rates of food insecurity. [4] Women have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic, given their concentration in low-paying informal sector work that was most likely to be disrupted by mandated lockdowns and by the related losses in income, social services, childcare and educational opportunities. While economic growth is expected to recover to 3.6 percent in 2021, the impact on poverty, inequality and women's opportunities will be lasting.

Climate change is a threat to livelihoods and social resilience and will impact women at multiple levels. More intense rainfall and challenges in weather patterns are expected to have a significant impact in Liberia, including worsening floods in Liberia's low-lying coastal zone and urban areas, where women are at greater risk of physical harm from disasters. In rural areas, a high reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture poses significant risks to livelihoods and human capital: since women make up the majority of the agricultural labor force and work at the lower ends of the value chain, their livelihoods are at greatest risk from increases in rainfall, floods and erosion, reduced soil quality and crop yields. Household care burdens also increase as clean water and fuel become scarcer; girls' access to education decreases (and with it opportunities) as greater demands are placed on their time. The Government of Liberia has launched the National Policy and Response Strategy on Climate Change (2018), but greater investment in gender-focused climate-smart activities is urgently needed.

Liberia has made notable gains since the end of civil conflict in 2003 but has struggled to translate growth into deep and sustainable reductions in poverty and inequality—gender inequality in particular. Following the end of two decades of war, instability and economic contraction, the country experienced a fragile but sustained postwar recovery, with GDP growth and the consolidation of peace and stability. However,

inequality continues to manifest in acute regional, urban-rural and gender disparities, with poverty in rural areas much higher than in urban ones, and gender inequality consistently high in both settings. Non-monetary poverty indicators such as access to health care, education, infrastructure and public services are also much lower in rural areas, impacting women more severely than men. Today, Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It placed 175th out of 189 countries on the 2020 UN Human Development Index, with a gross national income per capita of \$600 in 2018, and a poverty rate of more than 50 percent in 2016.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Despite the notable gains since the end of civil conflict in 2003, women in Liberia have not shared equally in the dividends of peace and economic growth. Large numbers of women have been excluded from the country's growth by persistently high gender disparities and gender-based violence (GBV). Ranked 156th out of 162 countries on the 2019 Gender Inequality Index, Liberian women and girls are disadvantaged in practically all spheres of society, and inequality is a barrier to advancement from an early age. Women have fewer, less stable and less lucrative job opportunities, and fewer choices about their lives. Gaps in economic opportunity are linked to human capital disparities, with female literacy far behind that of males, and a third of adolescent girls having begun childbearing, one of the highest rates in the world. [2] GBV impacts women and girls across their entire life cycle, from high rates of female genital cutting and early marriage in childhood to endemic intimate partner violence (IPV)—nearly half (45.6 percent) of Liberia women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from a husband or partner within the past 12 months,[3] illustrating the ongoing and urgent nature of the problem. Social norms in Liberia that subordinate women to men are a significant driver of inequality and violence, exacerbated by the limited capacity of the Government of Liberia to address gender issues.

The Government of Liberia (GoL) is committed to reducing gender inequality and GBV as part of its broader development agenda and climate adaptation strategy. GoL has set as one of its core aspirations “a society of gender equity, empowerment and opportunities for all” in its Vision 2030, and has included specific women's empowerment and GBV reduction targets and actions in its Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018-2023 (PAPD), [5] Progress has also been made on key indicators for maternal mortality, girls' primary school enrollment, and laws and policies to address gender equality. However, with a constrained macroeconomic situation and limited budget allocations available to close gender gaps and address climate change, along with the competing demands of repeated health crises, new strategies are necessary to address the economic, social and institutional barriers hindering a demographic dividend for women and girls.

Based on the aforementioned, the Government of Liberia has developed the Liberia Women Empowerment Project which seeks to improve social and livelihood services for women and girls in targeted communities, enable positive social norms and strengthen the government's capacity to advance women and girls' empowerment, while strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government of Liberia to advance gender equality. In order to implement the project, the Government is seeking grant from the World Bank to finance the project which comprises five (5) components. The project will be implemented in six (6) counties in Liberia including Montserrado, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh and/or River Cess.

2.1 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE ESMF

The primary purpose of this Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is to assist MGCSP in examining the environmental and social risks and impacts of the LWEP's subprojects. It guides the MFCSP to assess potential environmental and social risks and impacts of LWEP's interventions when subprojects' locations cannot be determined during project preparation. In absence of detail information on subprojects to be supported by LWEP, this ESMF sets out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures to assess the potential environmental and social risks and impacts. It contains measures and plans to reduce, mitigate and/or offset adverse risks and impacts, provisions for estimating and budgeting the costs of such measures, and information on the agency or agencies responsible for addressing project risks and impacts, including on its capacity to manage environmental and social risks and impacts. It includes adequate information on the area in which subprojects are expected to be sited, including any potential environmental and social vulnerabilities of the area; and on the potential impacts that may occur and mitigation measures that might be expected to be used as per the relevant EPA environmental legislation and the World Bank's safeguards policies.

The specific objectives of the ESMF are as follows:

- a. assess the potential E&S risks and impacts of the proposed project and propose their mitigation measures;
- b. establish clear procedures and methodologies for the environmental review, approval and implementation of projects.
- c. specify appropriate roles and responsibilities, and outline the necessary reporting procedures, for managing and monitoring E&S issues/concerns related to the activities;
- d. determine the environmental and social management capacity building needs for the MGCSP
- e. address mechanisms for public consultation and disclosure of project documents as well as redress of possible grievances;
- f. establish the budget requirements for implementation of the ESMF;
- g. determine the institutional arrangements needed to satisfactorily screen subprojects including identification of the safeguard instruments to be prepared, the hiring of the consultants who will prepare them, and the identification of who will supervise the work of the consultants and contractors;
- h. identify who will be responsible for preparation of the Terms of Reference (TORs) for Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) and Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs);
- i. provide resources for implementing the ESMP.

2.2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Environmental and Social Assessment is multifaceted, requiring many methods and approaches. The preparation of this ESMF was based on a variety of methods as discussed subsequently. Review of project, Project Implementation Document (PID), Project Appraisal Documents (PAD) and Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary. The approach also considered public concerns and recommended mitigation measures at the proposed project locations, a review of the planned project

activities, and scope. Stakeholders (i.e. affected and interested parties, local authorities and communities) were consulted to gather their feedback. Based on the evaluation of the baseline environmental and social conditions of ongoing projects, the safeguard team were able to identify potential environmental and social impacts and propose appropriate mitigation measures) for the project in keeping with local and international guidelines. All relevant available literature on LWEP were duly reviewed.

2.3 SCOPE OF THE ESMF

The ESMF defines how safeguards will be taken into account and managed for all project activities that may have E&S risks and impacts implications, including feasibility studies and activities to be implemented under each component and subcomponent for LWEP. During the implementation phase, project activities with potential safeguard issues will be screened to determine the scope and types of safeguards instruments that would be required.

To ensure that interactions with beneficiaries include relevant measures to safeguard the environment and minimize the potential for negative social consequences, including issues to involuntary resettlement, the ESMF would be part of contractual documents for implementing contractors for which LWEP funds are used to help prepare.

This ESMF identifies the responsibilities of project stakeholders, procedures for environmental and social safeguards screening, review and approval, monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as plans to enhance institutional capacity. Although the planned activities of the LWEP are not expected to require RAP, this ESMF also offers sample terms of reference for carrying out environmental and social impact assessments and framework for carrying out resettlement action plans (RAP/ARAPs) as a measure to mitigate the potential temporary or permanent impacts to services, income and land use. The ESMF serves as an environmental and social safeguards instrument for the LWEP and provides the framework to both the relevant government agencies and the relevant PIUs during the preparation and implementation of specific components and subcomponents.

The ESMF consists of:

- Identification of positive and negative environment and social impacts;
- Identification of environmental and social mitigation measures;
- Baseline data collection on social and environmental conditions of the proposed project areas;
- Screening procedures to be used while screening subproject activities;
- formulation of monitoring, and environmental and social management plans; and
- Capacity building and institutional strengthening for effective implementation of the ESMF.

Based on the information provided in the PAD, the potential environmental and social risks and impacts are likely to emerge from Subcomponents 1, 2 and 3. The associated risks of components 1 and 2 are expected to be mainly social while emanating from activities geared towards changing social norms and building of resilient livelihoods groups. Component 3 will finance interventions to increase gender equitable attitudes and address Gender Based Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence (GBV/IPV). The activities under component 3 to support women's economic opportunities focused on investments to enhance agricultural productivity, value chains and access to markets (although with strengthening social skills, voice and agency) may result in both direct and indirect environmental risks, but they are expected

to be site specific, local, reversible, mainly temporary, and capable of management through appropriate risk mitigation measures.

- A. The enhancement of agriculture productivity through farming, processing and marketing is expected to be carried out at a small scale with little or no critical issues of public concern that may result in reputation or grant risk to the Grantor/the World Bank. However, the following issues can be of concern if the necessary safeguards systems isn't put in place:
- B. Involuntary resettlement i.e. relocation of affected populations and associated livelihood restoration;
- C. Community health and safety;
- D. Pollution and release of chemicals and effluent into waterways;
- E. Land and soil degradation and contamination.
- F. Management of waste;
- G. Genetically modified crops;
- H. Loss of biodiversity.
- I. Labour issues

2.4 REPORT FORMAT

The project is expected to be implemented in 750 communities across 6 counties; however, the specific communities have not been identified and will only be known during project implementation, hence the preparation of an ESMF. The purpose of the ESMF is to provide guidelines and procedures for screening and assessing individual sub-projects for adverse environmental and social risks/impacts at the stage of their implementation. Thus, this Environmental and Social Management Framework has been prepared as a guide for the screening of proposed sub-projects for any adverse environmental and social impacts, which would require management and mitigation prior to and during project implementation. The LWEP envisages a wide range of investments in women empowerment activities, hence, the ESMF has been prepared in alignment with both the requirements of Liberian Environmental Management Laws and the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) to cover all sub-projects that will be proposed for implementation. The WB Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) to be triggered are ESS1 (Environmental Assessment and Management), ESS2 (Labor and Working Conditions), ESS3 (Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management), ESS4 (Community Health and Safety), ESS5 (Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement), ESS8 (Cultural Heritage), and ESS10 (Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure).

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve gender equality attitudes and livelihood opportunities for women in project areas while strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government of Liberia to advance gender equality. The LWEP project will be implemented using a phased approach. Community-based components (1, 2 and 3) will be implemented within the same communities in a total of 6 [six] counties, targeting on average 750 communities. Given the project's innovative design, counties will be sequenced to provide lessons learned from early activities before scaling up to additional counties in the

second year of implementation. Potential target counties that have been identified by the government may include Montserrado, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh and/or River Cess. Communities will be selected using targeting criteria that take into account areas of particular need (including comparatively high rates of poverty), the presence of existing community groups (women-only groups or mixed groups with a higher percentage of women) that can be strengthened, (in later stages when the project machinery is established, the focus may shift to creation of new groups where necessary), the presence of basic healthcare and education infrastructure, and feasibility of access to multiple communities by project staff in early stages.

The Project has targeted activities to support Citizen Engagement (CE). Targeted activities including capacity building for CE, participatory decision making, and consultation on gender related norms and behaviors will be facilitated with community members on gender related, and a grievance redress mechanism will be established. These CE mechanisms will be monitored through indicators in the Results Framework with results used to inform as-needed adjustments during project implementation. The project will provide capacity building for women to enhance their civic participation in local development processes (indicator: Women reporting to be actively engaged in community groups). Business plans for female livelihood groups will be developed through a participatory decision-making process. The Grievance Redress Mechanism will ensure that queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems with implementation are resolved, and complaints and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively (indicator: Grievances registered related to delivery of project benefits that are addressed through the Grievance Redress Mechanism set up by the project in targeted counties). Stakeholder consultations will also be carried out at the community level in line with this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

The Project integrates a climate change lens into its activities to address adverse impacts that are barriers for women's empowerment. Climate change has had dire impacts on women in rural areas of Liberia which are the target areas of the Project. Women's livelihoods have been directly impacted since they make up the majority of the agricultural labor force and work at the lower ends of the value chain. Follow-on impacts on women's social, physical and economic well-being are immense as well and have translated into increased household care burdens, and greater exposure to gender-based violence (as domestic stress levels increase).

The targeted beneficiaries are around 750 communities within the six counties and include the following:

- All members of the communities in the targeted areas especially that component 1 is dedicated to have an all community-members approach,
- Women and girls in the target areas who will benefit from specific activities under component 2 and 3,
- Government officials and staff on the national and county level who will benefit from the institutional capacity building activities and will support the sustainability of the Project.

The project will fund activities that would: (a) enable positive social norms and pilot enhancement to basic social services; (b) build economic and social empowerment opportunities; and (c) strengthen public

institutions to advance gender equality. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP). MGCSP will take an overall responsibility of ensuring the effective implementation of the project, with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), serving as a technical partner in the implementation of activities with an agricultural focus and as the focus of capacity-building under Component 3.

3.1 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project comprises five (5) main components as follows.

- **Component 1: Enabling positive social norms and community mobilization:** at the community level, the project will fund activities to address the social norms that drive gender inequality, specifically the norms that drive GBV (with a focus on intimate partner violence). The project will use the *SASA!* methodology, in which trained community facilitators conduct long-term, phased, participatory discussions with community members on thoughts, beliefs and behaviors that relate to gender and power relations. This component will also fund broader community mobilization on women's empowerment and climate resilience and related community-wide benefits to lay the groundwork for Component 3's economic and social support to women.
- **Component 2: Enhancing Basic services in Health and Education:** at the community level, the project will pilot health and education sector activities to address local access to Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health services and GBV services, as well as school-driven community engagement on social norms related to early marriage, pregnancy and girls' education. Both pilots will be preceded by studies which may result in further recommendations for implementation.
- **Component 3: Promoting resilient livelihoods through community-led approaches:** the project will fund women's livelihoods support and grants using a community-driven, group-based approach. Using the livelihood group setting as a platform, the project will also deliver life skills and gender training/dialogue to build agency, address GBV and strengthen the climate resilience of women's livelihoods.
- **Component 4: Strengthening public institutions to advance gender equality:** At the institutional level, the project will support institutional capacity building for the gender machinery in Liberia, providing support to MGCSP and MoA to enable them to better generate sex-disaggregated data and deliver gender-focused programs in line with GoL policies. It will also finance a platform for policy dialogue led by MGCSP, which will create linkages and build coordination with other Ministries. The component will gradually introduce core project activities into ministerial budgets for line ministries to absorb and sustainably manage as a cross-cutting national program.
- **Component 5: project management, monitoring and evaluation.** This component will finance the implementation, management, coordination and oversight of the project. The component will also fund knowledge management, including an impact evaluation to generate lessons learned about the project's model and its potential for scaling on a wider basis.

Table 1: Summary of subprojects/Investment

Components	Subcomponent/Key Activities	Cost (US\$)
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Component 1: Enabling positive social norms and community mobilization	<u>Subcomponent 1.a: Enabling positive social norms</u> Key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Community engagement and awareness across key circles of influence (local/religious leaders) (ii) Training of local activist/facilitators to lead the SASA methodology (iii) Structured discussions with community members about gender relations and impacts 	6.0 million
	Component 1b: Strengthening community mobilization and citizen engagement. Key activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Communication campaigns designed on the county level (ii) Identifying a series of mobilization activities to support women's participation in groups (iii) Mapping of existing groups (including livelihoods groups, saving groups, associations, (iv) Engagement with religious and/or traditional leaders (v) Capacity building of influential/ trusted women in each community who work for the promotion of women's concerns; leadership programs (vi) Strengthening the local grievance redress mechanism (GRM) 	2.0 million
Enhancing basic services in health and education (\$5.4 million)	Subcomponent 2a: <u>increase help-seeking behavior for health services at community level</u> Key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Enhancement of basic GBV response services at local level in target counties (ii) Develop GBV core concept training curricula on integrating basic GBV health and psychosocial care 	2.1 million
	Subcomponent 2b: <u>Supporting behavioral change to keep girls in school</u> Key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Pilot school-driven model to promote behavioral change and social norms (ii) Conducting analysis on the major constraints faced by girls in attending secondary school (iii) Community dialogue and school-driven community engagement campaigns disseminating finding (iv) which will engage students, parents and community leaders, especially traditional and religious leaders, in dialogue around the positive impacts of investing in girls' education and delayed marriage and pregnancy, as well as developing (v) Implementing a pilot plan to address the identified constraints which deter girls from remaining in school. 	3.3 million

Component 3: Promoting resilient livelihoods through community-led approaches (\$19.0)	Subcomponent 3a: Capacity building of resilient livelihoods groups Key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Strengthening existing community groups (saving groups that are led by women including mixed groups with a higher percentage of women) or forming groups and working with them from the ground up, (ii) Support for existing associations that are already operational and need additional capacity building, (iii) Support for existing women entrepreneurs women with record of leading enterprises in target communities. 	4.0 million
	Sub-component 3.b: Supporting grants for women-led livelihoods (million). Key activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Finance grants for women-led community group livelihoods (ii) Develop business plans 	15 million
Component 4: Strengthening public institutions to advance gender equality (\$4 million):	Sub-component 4.a. Build the gender infrastructure in MGCP and MoA: This subcomponent will cover capacity building activities for MGCSP and MoA activities.	3.5million
	Sub-component 4.b: Policy dialogue and coordination (\$0.5 million): This subcomponent will finance a national platform for policy dialogue on gender, empowerment and GBV led by MGCSP.	0.5 million
Component 5: Project management, monitoring and evaluation (\$3.6 million):	Sub-component 5.a: project management, monitoring and evaluation. The key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Coordination and implementation arrangements at the national and sub-national level including financial management, procurement, social and environmental safeguards under the ESF and monitoring and evaluation. (ii) Strengthening of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) that exists within MGCSP), expansion of office facilities if deemed necessary, adequate staffing (including the expansion of the existing PIU 	2.0 million
	Sub-component 5.b: knowledge management This component will finance knowledge management and an impact evaluation for the project.	1.6 million

3.2 PROJECT OVERSIGHT AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT

The institutional arrangement for the E&S works will follow the project's overall implementation arrangements to ensure that stakeholder engagement is fully mainstreamed into the project preparation and

implementation. The institutional arrangement for the SEP will follow the project's overall implementation arrangements to ensure that stakeholder engagement is fully mainstreamed into the project implementation. The institutional arrangements for the SEP implementation will be managed by the PIU at the MGCSP.

The institutional and implementation arrangements will be developed at the national, county and community levels using the following principles: (a) build institutional capacity by supporting existing government systems and mechanisms that have proven to be effective for approaches of similar projects; (b) utilize a consortium of service providers (NGOs) for implementation of Components 1, 2 and 3 in coordination with government actors; (c) ensure presence at the county and community levels to enable capacity building of local MGCSP and other government structures and support for implementation, and (d) support national coordination for the multisector approach of the project by engaging relevant government agencies in project implementation and supervision. Details of the institutional and implementation arrangements are summarized below

On the national level:

- **Project Steering Committee (PSC).** A PSC will be established co-chaired by MFDP and MGCSP and will include focal points from key Ministries including MoA, MoE, MoH. The PSC will be established to provide strategic oversight, review annual work plans and budgets, monitor and evaluate implementation status, and conduct general project supervision meetings on a bi-annual basis, as well as other tasks to be agreed upon between the PSC members per Terms of Reference (TOR) that will be elaborated in the PIM. The PSC will also oversee the establishment of the gender platform for policy dialogue under Component 4.b, the process of which will also be outlined in the TORs.

- **Project Implementation Unit (PIU).** MGCSP is the Implementing Agency for the project, and the project will utilize, expand and strengthen the existing MGCSP PIU that is implementing the Liberia Social Safety Nets Project (P155293). While LWEP will engage its own technical staff for project coordination, as well as financial management and procurement staff. For more efficient project start-up, LWEP will use project staff who are already familiar with World Bank policies and procedures, and will utilize key structures established under the existing project including the Grievance Mechanism. LWEP will bring additional staff and funding to the PIU to ensure there is adequate capacity for both projects. Project-specific technical staff will include at a minimum a Project Coordinator, a women's economic empowerment/livelihoods specialist (who will lead supervision of Component 3), a Gender-Based Violence Specialist who is an international consultant experienced in GBV prevention and response who is an accredited SASA provider (who will lead supervision of Component 1 and will coordinate with the Women's Economic Empowerment Specialist/livelihoods specialist for component 3's social aspects); a Health Specialist and an Education Specialist (who will lead activities in Component 2). The PIU will also include the following existing or new staff: a Procurement Specialist, Financial Management Assistant, Social Safeguards Specialist, Environmental Specialist and Contract Management Specialist. An FM and procurement assessment are currently underway to assess how many additional specialized staff may be needed. Finally, national PIU staff can be decentralized to counties for close follow up of day-to-day activities as it will be elaborated in the PIM.

- **Technical Committee (TC).** Given the multi-sectoral nature of the project, a Technical Committee formed of technical focal points of Ministry representatives from the core agencies (MGCSP, MoA, MoH, MoE at a minimum). The purpose of the TC will not be to oversee or direct the work of the PIU, but to provide a forum for discussing roadblocks and challenges and to keep the relevant line Ministries apprised of the project's activities on a more regular basis than the PSC may meet. The TC will meet every other month during the first year of implementation (frequency may change based on need). To strengthen the linkages between the TC and the PIU, the core agencies may hire technical consultants for improved coordination and technical backstopping.

- **International NGO (INGO) as a lead for a service provider consortium.** The Implementing Agency (MGCSP) will engage a consortium of service providers (NGOs) led by an INGO as a Lead Service Provider to implement Components 1, 2 and 3 in an integrated fashion. The consortium will work under the direction of the PIU. The Lead Service Provider will have a proven track record of managing large projects in Liberia along with the technical and managerial capacity required to both implement activities and coordinate other service providers, and it will be responsible for contracting these providers and ensuring alignment of technical expertise. Within the consortium, at least one service provider will be experienced in GBV prevention and response at community level and will be responsible for implementing activities related to social norms under subcomponent 1.a and 2.b (and potentially Component 2.a). At least one service provider will have experience in rural livelihoods support, women's economic empowerment, and/or community-driven development in Liberia; this service provider will be responsible for implementation of component 3. Other service providers will be included in the consortium as necessary. The makeup of the consortium will be determined based on the expertise available at national and county level, and will focus initially on the first phase of the project (rural Montserrado and Gbarpolu counties). This may change as the project footprint expands. The PIU will be responsible for supervising the engagement and performance of the consortium, and each service provider-member of the consortium will be assessed each year against milestones and objectives to ensure effective implementation.

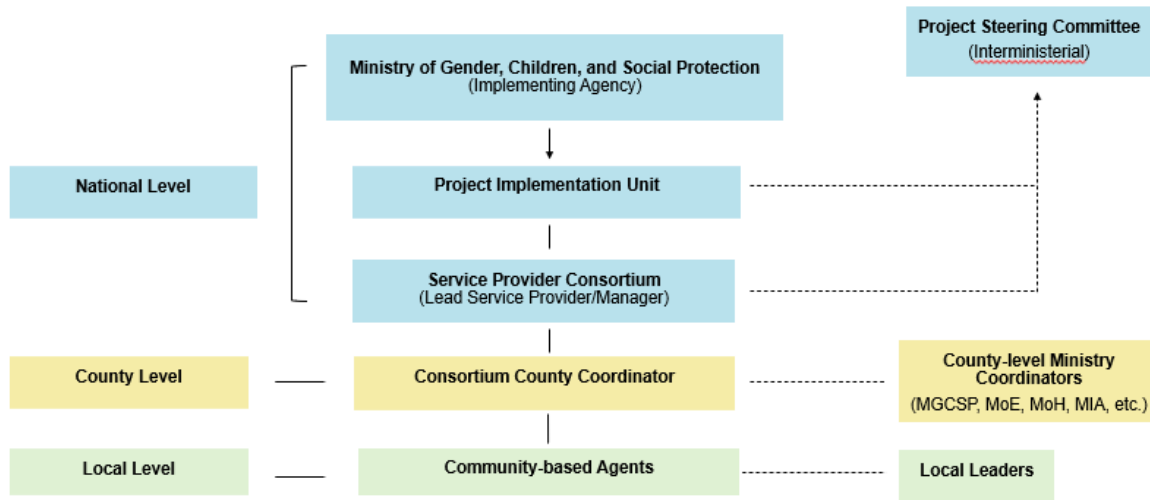
At the county level

- **Consortium County Coordinators.** Each county where the project is implemented will have a Coordinator from the Consortium who will coordinate activities under Components 1, 2 and 3 and specifically the activities of the service providers. These individuals will coordinate directly with the County Coordinators for MGCSP, MoA, MoE, MoH and any other relevant agencies to ensure smooth implementation of the project as well as capacity-building opportunities for local government staff.

On the community level

- **Community Based Agents (CBAs).** As stated under component 1.b and 3.b, CBAs will be recruited on the community level and trained to provide continuous support to livelihoods activities. CBAs will be trusted community members who have the skills and knowledge to be trained by the service providers recruited under component 3 in order to ensure business development support to beneficiaries on a sustainable basis.

PROPOSED LWEF IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENT



4 POLICY, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Key Liberian policies, legislations and institutions governing this project are discussed herein. Given that Liberia is a signatory to various international conventions and laws, it is important that the LWEP is in line with these policies, laws, as well as the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS).

4.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1.1 National Gender Policy (NGP) (2009)

This policy is aimed at promoting gender equitable, socio-economic development and improve national capacities for enhanced gender mainstreaming in the national development processes.

The NGP serves as a framework and guideline in mainstreaming gender and empowering women and vulnerable groups in the national development processes. Other objectives are to enhance women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; create and strengthen gender responsive structures, processes and mechanisms for development in which both women and men participate equally, have access to, and benefit from all the country's resources.

The strategic action plans of the policy are:

- i) Developing interventions that will address the structural inequity and marginalization of women in elective and appointive structures and systems of governance, and influencing Government to adopt policies in all Public Institutions and Government Ministries, Agencies and Corporations to address gender inequities, including Codes of Conduct, sexual harassment, human resource, domestic violence, and non-discrimination policies.
- ii) Formulating and implementing a full- fledged gender capacity building program for the different actors at national and local levels including women leaders;
- iii) Broadening the scope of Affirmative Action to enhance its effectiveness in reducing gender disparities; and
- iv) Developing strategies to empower the girl child to take up leadership positions in schools and tertiary institutions.

4.1.2 Policy on Girl Child Education (PGCE) (2006)

The PGCE seeks to consolidate national and international laws to promote girls' education and to advance priorities that will accelerate progress in improving girls' education.

The key objectives of the policy are:

- i) Ensuring that girls have equal access to school at all levels and in all educational programs and services.
- ii) Achieving equitable geographic distribution of educational opportunities for girls.

- iii) Eliminating the gap between the girl child and the boy child in completing primary, secondary and tertiary school by ensuring that girls are provided scholarships and other supports.

4.1.3 Land Right Policy 2013

This Policy provides recommendations for land rights in Liberia, centered on four basic types of rights: Public Land, Government Land, Customary Land and Private Land. The Policy is a vision statement of where Liberians want to go with their land sector.

The basic land rights principles fostered by the Policy are:

- The Government is responsible for administering and managing land within the territory of Liberia in the public interest;
- The Government recognizes and protects the land rights of communities, groups, families, and individuals who own, use, and manage their land in accordance with customary practices and norms as equal to Private Land rights;
- The Government recognizes and protects Private Land rights;
- The Government recognizes and protects the rights of the Government to own land.

4.1.4 National Health Policy and Plan 2011-2021

This policy establishes that the health sector of Liberia can become more effective by:

- i) Improving the timely access to high-impact, evidence-based interventions and strengthening referral between all levels of the system; and
- ii) Increasing the utilization of services by improving the population's care-seeking behavior, the quality of care and the availability of essential drugs and equipment.

The policy also deduces that the health sector can become more efficient by:

- i) Allocating resources among counties according to equitable criteria and optimally distributing resources to health facilities according to population size, utilization and workload;
- ii) Improving the coordination of all efforts to support health and social welfare services, eliminating duplication and minimizing gaps; and
- iii) Creating a culture at all levels of the system that values and strives to do more for the population within existing levels of resources.

4.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Liberian Constitution and other laws provide for promoting gender equitable, socio-economic development and improve national capacities for enhanced gender mainstreaming in the national development processes.

4.3 CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Article 6 of the Constitution seeks to provide equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all citizens to the extent of available resources, for the purpose of promoting the social, economic and political well-being of citizens.

Article 8 directs policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health and welfare facilities in employment.

Article 18 demands that all Liberian citizens shall have equal opportunity for work and employment regardless of sex, creed, religion, ethnic background, place of origin or political affiliation, and all shall be entitled to equal pay for equal work.

Inheritance Act (1998) (Equal Rights of the Customary Marriage Law);

This law defines “customary marriage” as the marriage between a man and a woman performed according to the tribal tradition of their locality and provides that a wife’s rights and duties within a customary marriage are the same as a wife’s rights and duties in a statutory marriage.

Section 2.6 provides that a customary wife has exclusive right to the properties she receives before or during the marriage. It goes further to state that if the husband attempts to control his wife’s property, he will have committed theft of property and he will be subject to a fine for such theft.

4.3.1 The Environmental Protection Agency Act

The Act empowers the EPA, amongst other things, to encourage the use of appropriate environmentally sound technologies and renewable sources of energy and natural resources; monitor and assess projects and activities including activities being carried out by relevant ministries and bodies to ensure that the environment is not degraded by such activities and that environmental management objectives are adhered to and to review project documents for donor-sponsored environment-related projects.

4.3.2 Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML) of Liberia

This Law provides for the administration and wise use of the natural resources of Liberia in pursuance of social and economic development without undermining the ecosystem's renewal and re-supply process. Amongst other things, it also encourages and ensures maximum participation by the people of Liberia in the management and decision-making processes of the environment and natural resources; and require prior environmental assessments of proposed projects which may significantly affect the environment or use of natural resources.

4.3.3 Liberia Land authority Act of 2009

This Act defines and delineates the different categories of land ownership and rights recognized in Liberia. It also prescribes the means by which each of the categories of land may be acquired, used, transferred and otherwise managed. The Act further ensures that all communities, families, individuals and legal entities enjoy secure land rights free of fear that their land will be taken from them, except in accordance with due process of law; and confirms, declares and ensures equal access and equal protection with respect to land ownership, use and management, including ensuring that Customary Land and Private Land are given equal legal protection and that land ownership is provided for all Liberians, regardless of identity, custom, ethnicity, tribe, language, gender or otherwise.

4.3.4 The Public Health Law: Title 33 of the Liberian Code of Law revise of 1976

This Act provides comprehensive legislation on matters relating to public health, including control of diseases, environmental sanitation, and regulation of Drug Medical Waste Management Approval Guideline for Liberia (2019). The government of Liberia promulgated the medical waste revised guidelines 2019 for processing and management of medical waste in Liberia. It was prepared through active participation with the MoH and the WHO mainly has the objective to manage healthcare wastes at healthcare facilities and increase access to basic services and improve sanitation and protect the environment.

4.3.5 The Decent Work Act of Liberia

The purposes of this Act are to: a) promote the attainment of decent work in Liberia, by establishing a regulatory environment which facilitates: continuing and further creation of quality employment; ii) the ability of all to exercise their rights at work; iii) a measure of social protection; and iv) participation in institutions and processes of social dialogue.

The Act also ensures respect for, and the protection and fulfillment of fundamental rights at work in Liberia, including fundamental rights that are protected by the Constitution of Liberia. The Act applies to all work performed by both women and men, in both the formal and the informal economy, with the exception of civil servants, security personnel and maritime staff.

4.3.6 3.2.7 The Gender and Development Act (2001)

The Gender and Development Act of 2001 establishes and defines the institutional mandate of the Ministry of Gender and Development, subsequently amended to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protections. The Act defines the national machinery for promoting gender equality, women's advancement and children's welfare in Liberia. It advises on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children and coordinates Government's gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that both women and men's perspectives are central to policy formulation, legislation, resource allocation, planning and outcomes of policies and programs, focusing on gender equality, the empowerment of women and development of children.

4.4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.4.1 National Level

The following governmental institutions have been identified, as they have legal mandates relative to women empowerment, gender-based violence, education, participation in agricultural activities, the environment, etc. The institutions are:

4.4.1.1 *Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection*

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) is the national machinery for promoting gender equality, women's advancement and children's welfare in Liberia. The ministry is mandated to advise the Government on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children; coordinate gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that both women and men gain from development programs; integrate women as equal partners with men in the development of the country; monitor and report back the impact and progress on gender equality programs. MGCSP will be the principal implementer of the project.

4.4.1.2 *Ministry of Agriculture*

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is the agency of government responsible for acquiring and disseminating useful information on agricultural subjects to farmers. The ministry collects information and statistics with regard to the condition, prospect, harvesting and marketing of the principal crops and forest products in Liberia. It oversees the conservation and judicious use of the soil, the forests, and the fish and wildlife resources of the nation and work for the development of agriculture and rural areas of the nation, and improvement of the economic well-being and general welfare of the farmers.

MoA administers all laws relative to agricultural subjects or rural improvement, including regulatory laws designed to protect the farmer or agricultural means of production or farm commodities. MoA will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project, relative to agricultural activities.

4.4.1.3 *Ministry of Health*

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has the statutory responsibility to manage the health sector of the country. The ministry is responsible for the management of all public health facilities and is charged with the prevention of the introduction and spread of communicable, infectious, and preventable diseases within the country. The ministry is also responsible for promotion and conduct of research in the prevention and treatment of human diseases and the collection and compilation of pertinent statistical data. MoH also coordinates with any other agencies of the Government authorized to administer institutions or activities concerned with social welfare. MoH will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project, relative to health matters affecting beneficiaries.

4.4.1.4 *Ministry of Education*

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the agency of government responsible to supervise all public and private schools and institutions of higher learning. The ministry is responsible for the planning of a modern, sound, nation-wide educational system. It also works for the eradication of illiteracy among peoples of all ages and all origins.

MoE will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and will handle all educational matters affecting the beneficiaries.

4.4.1.5 Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is the agency responsible for the administration of local government in the political subdivisions of the country. The ministry manages all tribal affairs and implements government services rendered through the local government. The ministry administers supervision of the tribal societies and oversees the collection and publication of the laws and customs of the Liberian tribes. The ministry further initiates and organizes programs for rural community development with emphasis facilities designed to transform rural communities into viable towns. MIA also coordinates plans and programs for self-help projects.

As the project will be undertaken in rural Liberia and beneficiaries being members of the tribal groups and societies, MIA will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and will coordinate all rural administrative issues.

4.4.1.6 Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) shall handle all legal matters and render services requiring legal skill to all agencies of Government. The ministry also oversees the security sectors across the country, ensuring cordiality for the peaceful existence of all within the country. MoJ will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and will handle all legal matters, as well ensuring security across all regions the project is implemented.

4.4.1.7 Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is the agency of government authorized to formulate, institutionalize and administer economic, development, fiscal and tax policies for the promotion of sound and efficient management of the financial resources of the government.

The ministry undertakes economic studies required for planning and policy purposes and prepares long-range and intermediate-range economic development plans. The ministry also gives technical guidance to all government agencies in the preparation of development programs and projects. MFDP will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and will give guidance on the economic and development studies affecting the project beneficiaries..

4.4.1.8 Liberia Land Authority

The Liberia Land Authority (LLA) is the agency of government mandated to develop policies in support of land governance, including land administration and management. The agency controls and manages access to and use of public land.

LLA will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and shall be engaged to verify the tenure of land to be used or allocate public land for project use.

4.4.1.9 Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia is the agency of government responsible for monitoring, coordinating, and supervising the sustainable management of Liberia's environment. It is mandated to ensure the conduct of environmental assessment for all projects undertaken in the country that are likely to have adverse effects on the environment and people.

The EPA will be a participating partner of MGCSP for the project and will have oversight to ensure adherence to environmental and social guidelines and mitigation measures identified.

4.4.1.10 Traditional Management Practices

Local level resource management is implemented through traditional systems and practices. At the lowest level of local administration, power and decision-making is in the hands of traditional tribal authorities. The highest rank is that of Paramount Chief who is responsible for the actions of a number of Clan Chiefs. The Paramount Chief is elected by the chiefs and elders but serves at the discretion of the President, who may veto the election.

The Council of Elders (elderly, respected community members) must be consulted on important matters. The Paramount Chief has responsibility for enforcement of tribal customs, aspects of law and order, collection of taxes by lower rank chiefs, and promotion of agriculture, industries, trade and welfare. It is difficult to judge the power of the chiefs, who remain strongly influenced by the secret societies (*Poro/Sande*) in relation to observance of tribal customs. Chiefs are not government employees but retain a portion of taxes for their services and for local projects. Traditionally, their power is largely determined by their control (not ownership) of land. The interactions between the State and its institutions with the traditional tribal institutions and practices are regulated by the Hinterland Laws 1949. These institutions will be key on matters of possible land disputes during project implementation i.e. opening up new cultivations will likely trigger conflict in the participating communities.

4.4.2 Regulatory Framework

4.5 THE NATIONAL RICE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF LIBERIA (REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA 2012A STRATEGIES)

The Liberia National Rice Development Strategies (LNRDS) was formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2012 to steer Liberia toward achieving self-sufficiency by doubling the local rice production by the year 2018. The strategies aimed at increasing the rice productivity in both upland and lowland ecosystems and by expanding the land area under rice cultivation in the lowlands.

The LNRDS aspired to improve productivity in smallholder rice farms through a value chain approach in which the needs and issues of various subsectors would have been addressed through an integrated approach. The six main strategic components of LNRDS include (i) Land and water management, (ii) Increasing availability and accessibility of smallholder farmers to farm inputs, (iii) Enhancing post harvest quality improvement, (iv) Increasing access to market, (v) Institutional capacity building, and (vi) Mechanization.

The increased domestic rice production under the proposed strategies will substantially improve the food security, environmental sustainability and livelihoods of both rural and urban communities. Furthermore, it shall reduce the rice trade balance and poverty, and thereby allow investing of financial resources in other economic developmental priorities.

4.5.1.1 Gender Equality Profile – Liberia (2021)

The Gender Equality Profile (GEP) represents an important guide to assess the existing situation regarding women's empowerment and gender equality in Liberia. The document tends to integrate and mainstream gender issues to promote gender-responsive policies and programming in Liberia. The GEP uses an evidence-based policymaking approach in order to provide recommendations and key entry points to improve the state of gender equality in Liberia.

The GEP may be used as a backing document for an exhaustive evaluation of past and current strategies that have been deployed by the government, including policies and laws that have sought to mitigate gender inequalities rooted in the country's history. The GEP is also used for the purpose of strengthening advocacy efforts to improve accountability in terms of public budget usage; address the lack of reliable data to evaluate gender-focused programs and policies; and increase the interest of policymakers and public managers to gender mainstream their plans of action.

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The areas of concentration of the GEP are as follows:

- i) Representation of Women in Decision-Making: Macrolevel;
- ii) Women and Health;
- iii) Women and Education;
- iv) Gender and Cultural Norms;
- v) Women's Participation in Decision-Making: Micro-level;
- vi) Women and Financial Services;
- vii) Women and The Formal Economy;
- viii) Women and The Informal Economy;
- ix) Women, Post-Conflict and Peacebuilding;
- x) Women and Agriculture;
- xi) Women and Infrastructure;
- xii) Women and Energy;
- xiii) Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment;
- xiv) Women and Technical and Vocational Education Training;

- xv) Women, The Environment and Climate Change;
- xvi) Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking;
- xvii) Women, Migration and Displacement; and
- xviii) Women, COVID-19 and Other Epidemics' Impact, Response and Recovery Implications.

4.6 MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The strategy observes mainstream gender issues in the programs and activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. It assesses how gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results and the relative status of men and women, taking into account not only the different roles of men and women, but also the relationships and balance between women and men and the institutional structures that support them.

The strategy reviews the characteristics of Liberian women under the following principles:

- i) Intense labor
- ii) Low education and training
- iii) Land ownership
- iv) Lack of technical skills
- v) Lack of market information by small farmers
- vi) Lack of entrepreneurial skills
- vii) Limited access to productive services including financial support and credit
- viii) Lack of storage and processing facilities
- ix) Participation in agriculture leadership and decision-making; and
- x) Cultural and traditional practices

4.7 APPLICABLE WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS

The environmental and social risk classification for the Project is moderate, implying that the expected environmental and social impacts are largely insignificant and site-specific. Few, if any, of the impacts are irreversible, and mitigation measures can be designed relatively readily. The assessment of a moderate project:

- examines the project's potential negative and positive impacts,
- recommends measures to prevent, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for adverse impacts, and
- recommends measures to improve environmental performance

The World Bank has 10 Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) to reduce or eliminate the adverse effects of development projects and improve decision making. The ESS are integral to the Environmental and Social Management Framework and are meant to prevent and mitigate undue harm to people or project beneficiaries during implementation. The ESS provides guidelines for Bank and borrower in the identification, preparation, and implementation of project activities.

The ESS support Borrowers in achieving good international best practices relating to environmental and social sustainability, assist Borrowers in fulfilling their national and international environmental and social obligations, enhance nondiscrimination, transparency, participation, accountability and governance, and enhance the sustainable development outcomes of projects. The World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards applicable to the Liberian Women Empowerment Project (LWEP) are presented below:

Environmental and Social Standard 1 (ESS1): Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts;

Environmental and Social Standard 2 (ESS2): Labor and Working Conditions;

Environmental and Social Standard 3 (ESS3): Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management;

Environmental and Social Standard 4 (ESS4): Community Health and Safety;

Environmental and Social Standard 5 (ESS5): Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement;

Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10): Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

ESS1 sets out the Borrower's responsibilities for assessing, managing and monitoring environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each stage of a project supported by the Bank, in order to achieve environmental and social outcomes consistent with the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

Borrowers are required to conduct environmental and social assessment of projects proposed for Bank financing to help ensure that projects are environmentally and socially sound and sustainable. The environmental and social assessment shall be proportionate to the risks and impacts of the project which will inform the design of the project, and be used to identify mitigation measures and actions and to improve decision making. Borrowers are also required to manage environmental and social risks and impacts of the project throughout the project life cycle in a systematic manner, proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and the potential risks and impacts.

The core requirement of this standard is to screen early for potential impacts and select appropriate instrument to assess, minimize and mitigate the potentially adverse impacts. Relevant safeguard instrument for the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which is prepared to establish a mechanism to determine and assess future potential environmental and social impacts during implementation of the project activities and investments, which are not specified before project appraisal.

The standard calls for the proposed project as a whole and for activities to be identified at a later stage during project implementation to be environmentally screened to determine the extent and type of the EA process.

For a Moderate Risk project as the LWEP, the client will indicate in the ESCP the project-related ESF instrument that will be prepared and disclosed after Board approval. For each key instruments, the client will provide, where possible, the following details: the objectives and proposed content of the document;

the rationale for the timing of preparation; the estimated costs associated with the preparation of the document and its implementation; the source of funding; and the arrangements for preparation. These details and timing for delivery of the document will be set out in the ESCP, as appropriate.

This process requires that LWEP and its implementing partners screen their activities to identify their potential adverse environmental and social risks and impacts and thereby determine the corresponding mitigation measures to incorporate into their planned activities.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions

The World Bank recognizes the importance of employment creation and income generation in the pursuit of poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. It is the belief of the Bank that Borrowers can promote sound worker management relationships and enhance the development benefits of a project by treating workers in the project fairly and providing safe and healthy working conditions.

The objectives of ESS2 are:

- To promote safety and health at work.
- To promote fair treatment, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunity of project workers.
- To protect project workers, including vulnerable workers such as women, persons with disabilities, children (of working age, in accordance with this ESS) and migrant workers, contracted workers, community workers and primary supply workers, as appropriate.
- To prevent the use of all forms of forced labor and child labor.
- To support the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining of project workers in a manner consistent with national law.
- To provide project workers with accessible means to raise workplace concerns.

The standard requires putting in place a Labor Management Plan (LMP) and structure for adoption in all project work related activities. The LWEP is submitting this expanded ESMF, inclusive of the Labor Management Procedure (LMP), for review and clearance. The project will also adopt the Decent Work Act, which is being enforced by the Government of Liberia for workers.

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

The World Bank recognizes that economic activity often generate pollution to air, water, and land, and consume finite resources that may threaten people, ecosystem services and the environment at the local, regional, and global levels. The current and projected atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) threatens the welfare of current and future generations. At the same time, more efficient and effective resource use, pollution prevention and GHG emission avoidance, and mitigation technologies and practices have become more accessible and achievable.

The objectives of this standard are to promote the sustainable use of resources, including energy, water and raw materials, to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment by avoiding or minimizing pollution from project activities, to avoid or minimize project-related emissions of short and long-lived climate pollutants, to avoid or minimize generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste and,

to minimize and manage the risks and impacts associated with chemicals, such as using fertilizers for farming.

Compliance with this ESS requires that the LWEP and implementing partners will set up requirements to address resource efficiency and pollution, prevention and management throughout the project life cycle.

ESS4 - Community Health & Safety

The World Bank recognizes that project activities, equipment, and infrastructure can increase community exposure to risks and impacts. In addition, communities that are already subjected to impacts from climate change may also experience an acceleration or intensification of impacts due to project activities.

The objectives of this standard are:

- To anticipate and avoid adverse impacts on the health and safety of project-affected communities during the project life cycle from both routine and nonroutine circumstances.
- To promote quality and safety, and considerations relating to climate change, in the design and construction of infrastructure, including dams.
- To avoid or minimize community exposure to project-related traffic and road safety risks, diseases and hazardous materials.
- To have in place effective measures to address emergency events.
- To ensure that the safeguarding of personnel and property is carried out in a manner that avoids or minimizes risks to the project-affected communities.

The LWEP and its implementing partners will ensure the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on project-affected communities are avoided or minimized, with particular attention to people who, because of their particular circumstances, may be vulnerable.

ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restriction on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The World Bank recognizes that project-related land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities and persons. Project-related land acquisition or restrictions on land use may cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of residential land or loss of shelter), economic displacement (loss of land, assets or access to assets, leading to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood), or both. The term “involuntary resettlement” refers to these impacts and consider “involuntary” when the affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse land acquisition or restrictions on land use that result in displacement. Resettlement is considered involuntary when affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse land acquisition or restrictions on land use that result in displacement.

The objectives of this standard are:

- To avoid involuntary resettlement or, when unavoidable, minimize involuntary resettlement by exploring project design alternatives.
- To avoid forced eviction.
- To mitigate unavoidable adverse social and economic impacts from land acquisition or restrictions on land use by: (a) providing timely compensation for loss of assets at replacement cost⁶ and (b)

assisting displaced persons in their efforts to improve, or at least restore, their livelihoods and living standards, in real terms, to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher.

- To improve living conditions of poor or vulnerable persons who are physically displaced, through provision of adequate housing, access to services and facilities, and security of tenure.
- To conceive and execute resettlement activities as sustainable development programs, providing sufficient investment resources to enable displaced persons to benefit directly from the project, as the nature of the project may warrant.
- To ensure that resettlement activities are planned and implemented with appropriate disclosure of information, meaningful consultation, and the informed participation of those affected.

The policy also requires that for chosen sites involving land acquisition, it is required that a Resettlement Action Plan be prepared to ensure the provision of compensation and or other assistance required for relocation, prior to displacement, and preparation and provision of resettlement sites with adequate facilities, where required. In particular, the taking of land and related assets should take place only after compensation has been paid, and where applicable, resettlement sites, new homes, related infrastructure and moving allowances are provided to displaced persons.

The LWEP and its implementing partners will ensure that the project will not involuntarily displace people from lands to be used by the project, particularly vulnerable people.

ESS10 - Stakeholders Engagement & Information Disclosure

Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle. Where properly designed and implemented, it supports the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that are important for successful management of a project's environmental and social risks. Stakeholder engagement is most effective when initiated at an early stage of the project development process and is an integral part of early project decisions and the assessment, management and monitoring of the project's environmental and social risks and impacts.

The objectives of ESS 10 are:

- To establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement that will help Borrowers identify stakeholders and build and maintain a constructive relationship with them project-affected parties.
- To assess the level of stakeholder interest and support for the project and to enable stakeholders' views to be considered in project design and environmental and social performance.
- To promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life cycle on issues that could potentially affect them.
- To ensure that appropriate project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to stakeholders in timely, understandable, accessible, and appropriate manner and format.
- To provide project-affected parties with accessible and inclusive means to raise issues and grievances and allow Borrowers to respond to and manage such grievances.

The World Bank recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice. Effective stakeholder

engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation.

The LWEP will submit a stakeholders engagement plan (SEP) to the Bank for review and clearance prior to project appraisal.

4.8 APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONVENTIONS SIGNED/RATIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA.

Table 2: International Environmental Conventions Signed/Ratified by the Government of Liberia

Convention	Status	Year	Objective
African Convention on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	Ratified	NA	To encourage individual and joint action for the conservation
Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	Ratified	1981	To prevent trade of endangered or threatened species
Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	Signed	2002	To recognize and protect cultural and natural heritage for future generations
Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol	Signed	2002	To achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climatic system To strengthen the commitment of developed country parties with a view to reduce their overall emissions
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP)	Signed	2002	To strengthen National Capacity and to enhance knowledge and understanding Amongst decision makers, managers, industry and the public at large on POPs To develop a National implementation Plan (NIP) to manage the elimination of POPs.
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Signed	2003	To encourage and support countries to develop and implement national policy and legislative frameworks, education and awareness raising programs, as well as inventory, research and training projects on Ramsar.
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer	Signed	1996	States agreed to cooperate in scientific research on the ozone problem, to exchange information, and to adopt “appropriate measures” to prevent activities that harm the ozone layer. The obligations are general and contain no specific limits on chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.
Montréal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Signed	1996	A protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, it is designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances believed to be responsible for ozone depletion.

International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC), London, 1990	Signed	1995	To strengthen the legal framework for the control of environmental pollution by oil, in general, and marine pollution by oil in particular.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Ratified	2004	ICESCR commits to work toward the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights to individuals, including labor rights and rights to health, education, and an adequate standard of living. ICESCR is part of the International Bill of Human Rights, along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

4.9 ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESSES IN LIBERIA

An ESIA Process Flow Chart has been included as Annex 1. The main steps in the process are:

- Prepare Application for Environmental Impact License
- Prepare Notice of Intent (NoI)
- Submit Project Brief (allow 14 working days for EPA to review and give feedback)
- Conduct Scoping Process:
 1. Publish NoI in Media
 2. Prepare Terms of Reference (TOR)
 3. Conduct Meetings with EPA Environmental Committee and District Environmental Committees, as needed.
 4. Conduct Public Meetings with Potentially Affected Communities
 5. Submit Scoping Report to EPA
- Prepare Environmental Review
- Obtain EPA Approval of TOR and Environmental Review
- Prepare Environmental Impact Study and Report (included in ESIA)
- Prepare Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (included in ESIA)
- Develop Comprehensive Environmental Mitigation Plan and Implementation Strategy (included in ESIA)
- Agency Review of ESIA (within 3 months)
- Public Consultation on ESIA (within first 30 days of 3 months)
- Public Hearings (EPA to decide whether to hold these)
- Liberia's Line Ministries Comment on ESIA
- Review by EPA Environmental Assessment Committee
- Approval or Rejection by EPA (within three (3) months of receiving ESIA report)

4.10 PUBLIC CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE ESIA PROCESS

The EPA requires that the project proponent conducts public consultation meetings and stakeholder engagement during the ESIA preparation. This is meant to provide stakeholders an overview of the project (its objectives, activities and associated risks and impacts) and to ensure that stakeholders' concerns regarding the project are considered and incorporated into the ESIA Report. Additionally, the EPA requires the project proponent to organize meetings with the project beneficiaries to review the findings of the report.

4.11 PROCEDURE FOR ACQUIRING LAND IN LIBERIA

- I. In Liberia there are four kinds of land tenure namely; Government Land, Public Land, Customary Land and Private land. All these four categories of land can be acquired through leasehold and purchase, with the exception that only Liberian citizens can permanently purchase land.
- II. A person who wishes to purchase a property in Liberia should:
- III. Identify the property and the legitimate owner either personally or through an agent/Lawyer.
- IV. Obtain a copy of the title from the seller and conduct a title search to ascertain the legitimacy of the property by visiting the offices of Centre for National Documents and Record Agency (CNDRA).
- V. After the search, the seller proceeds to the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) to check for any outstanding taxes against the property.
- VI. If all taxes are cleared, the Real Estate Tax division issues an official clearance showing that all payable property taxes are cleared.
- VII. The buyer and the owner agree on the purchase price and an agreement of sale is executed by the parties.
- VIII. A surveyor can be hired from the offices of Liberia Land Authority to survey the parcel of land.
- IX. The survey is done by the surveyor with the buyer in presence of a witness and any other person who may wish to be around.
- X. When the process of surveying the property is completed, a deed is prepared transferring the property from the seller to the buyer.
- XI. After signing the deed, it is taken to the Probate Court for probation.
- XII. 10. The deed is subsequently taken to the CNDRA for registration.
- XIII. 11. Thereafter, the seller goes to the LRA to change the owner's name on the property.

4.12 THE VOLUNTARY LAND DONATION PROCESS

The procedure for obtaining rights to any piece of land located in Liberia through donation is clearly articulated in the Land Rights Act of 2018.

Article 36: Governance and Management provides the procedures for acquiring customary land through the community acting collectively. Sub-sections 1 and 2 of the procedures are presented below:

1. The authority for the development and management of Customary Land shall be vested in the members of the Community acting collectively.
2. The Community Members acting collectively are the highest decision-making body of the Community. They shall have the power by a vote of two-thirds of the Community membership:
 - a) To approve the sale, lease, or transfer of Customary Land to Persons other than Community Members.
 - b) To approve the sale, lease, or donation of Customary Land to the Government.
 - c) To approve requests of leases of Customary Land more than fifty (50) acres.
 - d) To approve the sale of Customary Land, subject to the fifty (50) year prohibition on the sale of Customary Land as provided in Articles 49 and 51 of this Act.

- e) Investigate complaints involving CLDMC members and, in connection therewith, remove members of the CLDMC, provided that the successor of any removed member shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of Article 36(4) of this Act.
- f) Decide any matters relating to the Community's Customary Land consistent with the provisions of the bylaws of CLDMC.

Additionally, Article 49 of the Land Rights Act of 2018 provides the process for obtaining customary land as follow:

Para 4. A Customary Land may be leased on such terms and conditions as the Community may determine by and through its CLDMC (.....) for areas smaller than fifty (50) acres, and by consensus of the Community Membership for areas larger than fifty (50) acres. The certain total period of any lease of Customary Land shall not exceed fifty (50) years.

Para 5. A lease agreement in respect of any Customary Land shall include payment of rent and equitable benefits to the community, an agreed payment schedule, and a mechanism to ensure full and timely payment of rent and the performance of all obligations assumed by the lessee.

Para 6. A lease of a Customary Land may not be made to any Person until:

- I. The Community has organized and established a CLDMC; and,
- II. The lease or transfer is duly authorized in keeping with the provisions of Articles 35 and 36 of this Act.

World Bank Procedures for Screening and Documenting Voluntary Land Donations (VLD)

The following are recommended procedures for voluntary land donations for the Liberia Women Empowerment Project.

Due Diligence:

- Voluntary land donations for a sub-project should be openly discussed in public consultations to establish that:
 - The donor is the legitimate owner of such lands.
 - The donor is fully informed of the purpose of the donation.
 - The donor is aware of the implication of donating the land and does so without coercion and retribution.
 - The donor is aware of his/her/their option to choose freely whether or not to enter into a VLD agreement.
- For communal lands donated by the chiefs, the specific individuals using or occupying the land should also be identified and consulted to verify whether they consent to the land donation and that their livelihoods would not be adversely affected.
- For family lands, family members (including spouses) must be aware of the donation in order to minimize the risks of cross-generational conflicts.
- For government lands, MPW through sub-project screening should establish that the land is free of claims (from squatters, encroachers, tenants, or other land users); otherwise, it would trigger the World Bank's Involuntary Resettlement Policy and follow-up, site-specific Resettlement Action Plans might be required.

Assessing and minimizing adverse social impacts:

- Voluntary land donations for public-use civil works should represent only a small fraction of the total land holding of the donor.
- For public-use civil works, the section of land to be donated should not be the donor's main source of income and should not significantly affect the donor's livelihood.
- Donation of land should not occur if it requires any household relocation or the loss of structures or fixed assets on the affected land area.
- The donor or user may request monetary or non-monetary benefits, incentives, or community assistance as a condition for donation.
- When appropriate, the land donation agreement should specify that if and when MPW (or other Government entity) definitively decides not to use the donated land as previously intended, the land would revert back to the previous owner.

Recommended Documentation:

- Minutes of Consultations with a list of participating stakeholders and their institutional affiliation or area of interest, along with the key information shared and the agreed-upon actions.
- Voluntary Land Donations Screening Checklist
- A formal statement or documentation of agreement (such as a Memorandum of Understanding or Deed of Donation) for each instance of land donation establishing informed consent and signed by each owner or user involved and MPW or other relevant Government agency.

Voluntary Land Donation (VLD)

The World Bank has prepared the Voluntary Land Donation Protocol (VLDP) for due diligence purposes. Frequently, World Bank-assisted projects necessitate the temporary or permanent use of land for infrastructure or facility siting. When land is needed, it is preferable to acquire it on a voluntary basis). If this is not possible, World Bank ESS-5, Involuntary Resettlement, defines the conditions and processes that must be followed when land is acquired involuntarily, and the policy's social and economic implications are identified.

Many of the problems involved with involuntary resettlement could have an impact on the voluntary land donation process. It's crucial to make sure the process is transparent, based on knowledge and permission, and properly documented. This Protocol, which should be followed in all cases of voluntary land donation, strives to address these concerns and aid project teams in reducing the risks.

PMU must demonstrate that:

- The possible donor or donors have been properly informed and briefed about the initiative and their options; potential donors have affirmed their desire to proceed with the contribution in writing.
- Donation of community or collective land is only possible with the approval of those who use or occupy the land.

- All conversations and legal documentation procedures (including land mutation) related to the donation must be well recorded and kept, and PMU shall keep a transparent record of all consultations and legal agreements achieved.

ESF GAP Analysis

<u>ESF</u>	<u>Applicable local legislation</u>	<u>Addressing gaps</u>
<p>Assessment & Management of Environmental & Social Risks and Impacts</p> <p>ESS1 requires that borrowers identify and manage environmental and social risks associated with a project, including through conducting an environmental and social assessment during the project preparation stage. Establishes a mitigation hierarchy which instructs borrowers first to anticipate and avoid risks and impacts; then to minimize or reduce risks and impacts to acceptable levels; then once risks and impacts have been minimized or reduced, mitigate; and finally, where significant residual impacts remain, compensate for or offset them. Instructs borrowers to ensure that project negative impacts do not fall disproportionately on those who might be disadvantaged or vulnerable, and to ensure that all groups have access to project benefits.</p>	<p>Environment Protection Agency Liberia Law 2002 An Act to establish a monitoring, coordinating and supervisory authority for the sustainable management of the environment in partnership with regulated Ministries and organizations and in a close and responsive relationship with the people of Liberia; and to provide high quality information and advice on the state of the environment and for matters connected therewith. It provides for a wide-ranging responsibility for environmental management by the EPA. One of the most prominent issues is the need for development of administrative procedures for the preparation of EIA to ensure effective environmental governance. The required administrative procedures and how they are arranged to reflect the intent of the law is the subject of the following guidelines.</p> <p>Environmental Impact Assessment Procedural Guidelines, 2006 It provides guidance on the EIA process and has been evident since the establishment of the EPA. It sets out the processes and procedures from applying for EIA to the EPA to the issuance of environmental permit.</p>	<p>The EPA Act caters for identifying and managing Environmental and Social risks broadly and adequately. Where there are gaps relating to standards and guidelines, those relating to ESS 1 will be adopted. EPA's EIA Process allows for adopting higher standards</p> <p>Part 5, Section 37 of the EPA Act: or conduct a project or activity for which an environmental impact assessment is required unless an environmental impact assessment has been concluded and an environmental regulation made there under</p>
<p>Labor & Working Conditions</p> <p>ESS2 requires that borrowers ensure safe labor and working conditions in Bank-financed projects. Prohibits the use of forced or child labor in Bank-financed projects. Borrowers must provide a grievance mechanism for project workers, including sub-contracted workers.</p>	<p>Labor Laws of Liberia Decent Work Act of Liberia, 2015 Provide a synopsis of applicable labor laws, occupational health and safety, conditions of service, contract etc.</p>	<p>Although some labor laws are old and outdated, existing labor laws have been applied to the project that are in line with requirements for ESS2. These will be acceptable to the Government of Liberia as the country also subscribes in principle to many of the labor laws of the ILO and the UN</p>

<p>The requirements are guided in part by a number of international conventions negotiated through the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN). The specific objectives are: To promote the fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity of workers. To establish, maintain, and improve the worker- management relationship. To promote compliance with national employment and labour laws. To protect workers, including vulnerable categories of workers such as children, migrant workers, workers engaged by third parties, and to promote safe and healthy working conditions, and the health of workers. To avoid the use of forced labour.</p>		<p>and many of the international Human Rights Laws. Contractors will also be required to adopt many of the practical aspects of ESS2 implementation through stipulated requirements specified in the ESMPs and Contractor Labor Management Procedure.</p>
<p>Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management ESS3 recognizes that economic activity and urbanization often generate pollution to air, water, and land, and consume finite resources that may threaten people, ecosystem services, and the environment at the local, regional, and global levels. The current and projected atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) threatens the welfare of current and future generations. At the same time, more efficient and effective resource use, pollution prevention, and GHG emission</p>	<p>Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia, 2002 EIA Procedural Guidelines, 2006 Sets out the processes and procedures involve in the conduct of Environment and Social Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Although there are gaps with ESS 3 and national regulations such as the EPML, management measures are also been sourced from ESS3. These measures will be acceptable to the Government of Liberia. Consultant and or Contractors will be required to adopt industry specific guideline to promote and support sustainable use of natural resources and complement them with appropriately developed modern technologies.</p>
<p>Community Health and Safety ESS4 addresses the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on project-affected communities</p>	<p>New Public Health Law of Liberia, Title 33,(2019)</p>	<p>It is therefore the obligation of the Liberian government to create and promote safety policies aimed at protecting workers from workplace injuries, death, and other associated illnesses. Environmental health and</p>

and the corresponding responsibility of Borrowers to avoid or minimize such risks and impacts, with particular attention to people who, because of their particular circumstances, may be vulnerable. It recognizes that project activities, equipment, and infrastructure can increase community exposure to risks and impact and must be eliminated, prevented, mitigated or reduced		safety management is an important component of a safe work environment because it protects human health and safety in the workplace. In cases where the New Public Health Law does not address an issue, the relevant provisions of ESS4 will be adopted which is allowable under the Liberian Governance system
Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement ESS5 recognizes that project-related land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities and persons. Project-related land acquisition ¹ or restrictions on land use ² may cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of residential land, or loss of shelter), economic displacement (loss of land, assets, or access to assets leading to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood), ³ or both. The term “involuntary resettlement” refers to these impacts. Resettlement is considered involuntary when affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse land acquisition or restrictions on land use that result in displacement.	Land Rights Act, 2018 The Act provides the Land Commission’s policy recommendations for land rights in Liberia, centered on four basic types of rights: Public Land, Government Land, Customary Land, and Private Land. In addition, a Protected Area is land which may fall under the Government Land, Customary Land, or Private Land categories but which must be conserved for the benefit of all Liberians. Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia, 2002, spells out the consultative processes and procedures involved in consulted project-affected communities for the purpose of land acquisition Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia, 2002 EIA Procedural Guidelines, 2006 Sets out the processes and procedures involve in the conduct of Environment and Social Impact Assessment	Other than the EPML and the 2018 Land Rights Act, Liberia does not have a prescriptive guideline that addresses the conduct of resettlement during the implementation of project activities. In such instances, ESS5 will be adopted.
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources ESS6 recognizes that protecting and conserving biodiversity and sustainably managing living natural	National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan of Liberia, 2017 The Strategy considers key issues identified by stakeholders critical for biodiversity conservation and provides strategic direction to enhance biodiversity management.	The project is not anticipated to affect or involve activities with negative impacts on biodiversity or natural resources. However, there is always a potential risk that some livelihood

resources are fundamental to sustainable development. Biodiversity is defined as the variability among living organisms from all sources, including inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. Biodiversity often underpins ecosystem services valued by humans. Impacts on biodiversity can therefore often adversely affect the delivery of ecosystem services.		<p>agriculture activities and associated value chains may lead to some impacts on natural habitats.</p> <p>However ESS6 will be adopted to ensure the sustainable management of Living Natural Resources as the National Biodiversity Action Plan only addresses conservation of biological diversity and not sustainable use of resources.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p> <p>ESS8 recognizes that cultural heritage provides continuity in tangible and intangible forms between the past, present, and future. People identify with cultural heritage as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions. Cultural heritage, in its many manifestations, is important as a source of valuable scientific and historical information, as an economic and social asset for development, and as an integral part of people's cultural identity and practice.</p> <p>ESS8 sets out measures designed to protect cultural heritage throughout the project life cycle. It also spells out sets out general provisions on risks and impacts to cultural heritage from project activities.</p> <p>ESS7 sets out additional requirements for cultural heritage in the context of Indigenous Peoples. ESS6</p>	No Applicable National Regulations	<p>It is not likely that any project activity would adversely affect cultural heritage as defined under the policy. Any such activities will be excluded from project eligibility. However, the relevance of this ESS will be further discussed and assessed as the Borrower carries out and documents consultations with stakeholders in accordance with ESS10. These consultations will seek to identify any cultural heritage that may be relevant to the activities and location, and Borrower actions will be guided by ESS8. Further, the ESMF will also include a chance find procedure to guide actions in the event of any unanticipated discovery of cultural heritage.</p> <p>However, the absent existing national regulations on Cultural Heritage, ESS8</p>

recognizes the social and cultural values of biodiversity. Provisions on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure are set out in ESS10.		will be adopted for implementation throughout the project.
Stakeholders' Engagement and Information Disclosure ESS10 recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice. Effective stakeholder engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation. Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle. Where properly designed and implemented, it supports the development of strong, constructive, and responsive relationships that are important for successful management of a project's environmental and social risks. Stakeholder engagement is most effective when initiated at an early stage of the project development process, and is an integral part of early project decisions and the assessment, management, and monitoring of the project's environmental and social risks and impacts.	Environmental Protection and Management Law, 2002 - The EPML provides the legal basis on which stakeholders shall be consulted during and throughout the project life cycle. EIA Procedural Guidelines, 2006 , sets out the procedures involved in conducting stakeholder's consultation during the conduct of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment	The EPML do not required the preparation of a Stakeholders' Engagement Plan (SEP). The project has adopted and prepared a SEP as part of the compliance process to ESS10.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BASELINE CONDITIONS

5.1 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Liberia is situated in the tropics and lies at latitude 6.4281°N and longitude 9.4296°W. The total land area is approximately 111,369km², and is located within the humid Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem on West Africa's Atlantic Coast. The country is divided into 15 administrative sub divisions, referred to as counties.

5.1.1 Topography

Liberia's landscape consists of three distinct topographical areas:

- i) A flat coastal plain which extends up to 80 km inland and is characterized by the presence of creeks, lagoons, and mangrove swamps;
- ii) An area of segmented, forested hills with altitudes ranging from 180 to 370 m, covers most of the country; and,
- iii) A mountainous area in the northern highlands, with elevations reaching 1,384 m.

5.1.2 Climate

Liberia has two climate regimes – the equatorial climate regime which is largely restricted to the southernmost part of the country, where rainfall occurs throughout the year; and the tropical regime dominated by the interaction of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) and the West African Monsoon. The climate is very warm and humid throughout the year with little variation in temperature. The country's daytime temperature ranges from 27°C to 32°C, while the nighttime temperature ranges from 21°C to 24°C. The highest daytime temperature occurs between January and March, and the lowest between July and September¹.

5.1.3 Wind

The season in Liberia is influenced by the movement of the following air masses:

- The Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), which shifts northwards across the country during the northern hemisphere summer
- Vapor-filled or moist air masses over the Atlantic Ocean, which are drawn in from the South; and,
- Dry Continental air masses that are drawn off the interior of North Africa during the southern hemisphere winter.

The pressure shifts between air masses, driven by the seasonal movements of the sun, force the Dry Continental air masses and the moist south equatorial maritime air mass to replace each other nearly every six months.

Wind Speed: the monthly mean wind speed indicates a maximum of 10.3 km/h in August, and a minimum of 7.1 km/h in January with an overall average of 9.3 km/h. Along the coast, the average annual wind speed is 30 km/h².

5.1.4 Precipitation

There are two distinct seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season runs from May to October, and the dry season is from November to April.

The average annual rainfall along the coastal belt exceeds 4,000 mm but declines to 1,300 mm at the forest-savanna boundary in the north. Relative humidity is fairly high for most part of the year, reaching 80% or higher along the coastal belt with lower humidity in the interior parts of the country, particularly during the harmattan season which blows dust-laden wind from the Sahara Desert between January and March³.

Situated within the Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem, Liberia is estimated to account for over half of West Africa remaining tropical forest. About 45% (4.39 million hectares) of the total land area is estimated to be covered by forest. Thus, the country is very green and has a huge potential for agricultural productivity.

5.1.5 Soils

The main types of soils found in Liberia are Latosols (laterite), Regosols, Loamy clay and Alluvial. Latosols (laterites) constitute about 75% of the country's soils. Latosols are highly weathered soil with low fertility and low capacity to retain nutrients. They are less suitable for food crop cultivation but provide valuable material for road construction works.

Regosols (sandy soil) occupy about 5% of the landmass of the country, Regosols are situated mainly along the coast. They are very porous soils with low nutrient content and low fertility. They are suitable for oil palm and coconut production. Alluvial soils are the most fertile and most suitable for crop cultivation, but they constitute only 3% of the country's soils. They are mainly found along streams and rivers. The other type of soil is a combination of clay and sand, which is referred to as Loamy soil.

These soil types are found in all parts of the country, including the project target counties (Gbarpolu, Rural Montserrado, Rivercess, Grand Gedeh, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount). The vegetation cover and weather conditions are also very similar across the country, with minor seasonal variations in some parts.

5.2 BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Liberia is historically a forested country, accounting for a significant proportion of the Upper Guinea forest biome across West Africa. The present vegetation of the country mainly comprises secondary closed canopy forest and is a consequence of the effect of anthropogenic factors. Much of the original forest is thought to have been cleared some three centuries ago due to high population density and rampant cut-and-burn agriculture (Cooper and Record, 1931; Gatter, 1984)^{1,2}. The forests recovered because of the emergence of disease and the effect of inter-tribal war and the slave trade which is believed to have reduced the population, allowing the forest to regenerate resulting in the current state of the country's vegetation. Much of the vegetation around the vicinity of Monrovia and the areas covered in this survey have undergone transformation primarily because of urbanization, traditional agriculture and the establishment of

¹ Cooper, G.P. and Record, S.J. (1931). The evergreen forests of Liberia. Yale University School of Forestry Bull. 31

² Gatter, W. (1984). For future Natural Forests and Plantation Management in Liberia. Observation – Considerations – Results. German Forestry Mission Papers. 55 pp. Forestry Development Authority, Monrovia.

plantations of oil palm and rubber. Thus, the environmental impact of development is clearly evident and has affected the distribution and abundance of biodiversity across the County.

The distribution of fauna in Liberia is consistent with the vegetation distribution in the country. However, because Liberia remains one of the countries with the largest forest cover in West Africa, its mammalian fauna is expected to be more skewed towards forest species. About 150 species of mammals have been recorded in the country, including nine endangered, 12 vulnerable and nine near threatened, according to IUCN Red List (2015). The distribution of mammals, especially primates and large mammal species is strongly correlated with the distribution of close forest ecosystems in the country. Areas that have relatively pristine forest cover support higher numbers of mammal species and accounts for greater proportions of threatened and rare species. The areas to be affected or covered by some of the proposed project activities (land-based livelihood activities) will fall within degraded/modified regions of the country and so the mammalian diversity (especially primates and large mammals) is expected to remain largely intact.

Based on studies carried out over the last twenty years (Gatter, 1997; Robertson, 2001; Demey, 2007), Liberia is a stronghold for many endemic, rare and threatened birds in the Upper Guinea Forest and the Guinea-Congo Forest biome^{3,4,5}. The Upper Guinea forest is considered among many others as one of the Endemic Bird Area, with the highest priority ranking for conservation based on the combination of its biodiversity importance and threat status (Strattersfield, et al, 1998)⁶. Liberia empirically supports 695 species of birds, including Liberian Greenbul *Phyllastrephus leucolepis*, which is endemic only to the country (Gatter (1997), Robertson (2001) and Demey (2007). The country holds 21 species of global conservation concern according to IUCN (2015) and (Birdlife International, 2015); 18 of these species are entirely forest dependent, including two endangered, seven vulnerable, six near threatened and three data deficient species. Most of the species are resident with proof of breeding locally. The resident species include 184 species restricted to the Guinea-Congo biome and 15 (100%) of the species endemic to the Upper Guinea forest block. No Sudan-Guinea Biome Dependent species has been recorded in the country.

There are key biodiversity areas (KBAs) and protected sites which have been established across the country by the Government through the support of donor partners. Those biodiversity and protected areas, which are discussed below, are unlikely to be negatively impacted by land-based livelihood activities that would be carried out under Component 2 of the proposed Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP).

³ Gatter, W. (1997). *Birds of Liberia*. Pica Press. Robertsbridge

⁴ Robertson, P. (2001). Liberia. In: L.C.D. Fishpool and M.I. Evans (eds). *Important Bird Areas in Africa and Associated Islands: Priority Sites for Conservation*. Pisces Publications; and Birdlife International, Newbury and Cambridge, UK. Pp 473-480.

⁵ Demey, R. (2007). Rapid survey of the birds of North Lorma, Gola and Grebo National Forests. In: Hoke, P., R. Demey and A. Peal (eds.). (2007). *A rapid biological assessment of North Lorma, Gola and Grebo National Forests, Liberia*. RAP Bulletin of Biological Assessment 44. Conservation International, Arlington, VA, USA.

⁶ Stattersfield, A.L., Crosby, M.J. Long, J.A. & Wege, D.C. (1998). *Endemic Bird Areas of the World: Priorities for Biodiversity Conservation*. BirdLife International Publication No. 7. 1998.

5.3 PROTECTED AREAS

5.3.1 Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance

Liberia is endowed with wetlands that provide both subsistence and economic benefits to its many inhabitants. However, like wetlands all over the world, Liberia's wetlands have increasingly become overburdened by human induced activities.

The National Environmental Policy of Liberia explains that the importance of wetlands is not fully understood, and that wetlands are threatened with degradation due to factors such as: pressure from firewood gatherers and charcoal producers, uncontrolled solid and liquid wastes, unregulated settlements near wetlands, agriculture production and industrial expansion and other constructions. Some strategic actions recommended by the National Environmental Policy (2003) include:

- Establishment of full protection status for wetlands of biodiversity significance
- Development of wetlands policy and management plans
- Inventory of wetlands

Part VI, sections 74 and 75 of the Environment Protection and Management Law of Liberia deal with management and protection of wetlands. Violation of this Law carries with it a cash payment penalty (in United States Dollars) or an imprisonment not exceeding a period of two years.

Eight (8) wetlands have been identified in Liberia (Table 4-1), of which five are designated as Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance (see the table below). Of the 8 wetlands listed in the below table, 3 – Lake Piso, Mesurado and Cestos-Senkwein wetlands (highlighted in green) – are situated in 3 of the 6 project target counties.

Table 3: Wetlands of Liberia

Wetland	Type	Size (acres)	Location	Conservation status
Lake Piso	Coastal Lacustrine	76,091	Cape Mount County	Proposed nature reserve
Marshall	Coastal Lacustrine	38,500	Margibi County	Proposed nature reserve
Mesurado	Coastal	22,000	Montserrado County	RAMSAR Wetland
Bafu Bay	Coastal	11,900	Sinoe County	None
Lake Shepherd	Coastal	18,000	Maryland County	None
Cestos-Senkwein	Inland Riverine	15,000	Sinoe & Rivercess	Proposed nature reserve
Gbedin	Inland Riverine	11,200	Nimba County	RAMSAR Wetland
Kpatawee	Inland Riverine	8,800	Bong County	RAMSAR Wetland

(Source: Adapted from Source: EPA/GEF/UNDP. 2004. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

5.3.2 Mesurado Wetlands

Located in the capital city Monrovia, Montserrado County, the Mesurado Wetlands (6,760 ha) are important for the protection of three mangrove species (*Rhizophora harrisonii*, *R. mangle* and *Avicennia africana*). It provides a favorable habitat and feeding ground for several species of birds including the African spoonbill (*Platalea alba*), common pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*) and Eurasian curlew (*Numenius*

arquata). It also hosts the vulnerable African dwarf crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*), the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) and the African sharp-nosed crocodile (*Crocodylus cataphractus*) and plays an important role in shoreline stabilization and sediment trapping. The site is currently threatened by: deforestation for fuel wood and charcoal collection, solid waste disposal, unregulated fishing (including the use dynamite), industrial pollution including paint factories. No management plan currently exists, but there are plans to put this wetland site under a protected area management.⁷

5.3.3 Lake Piso Wetlands

The largest inlet on the Liberian coast, situated in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County, Lake Piso is characterized by a vast expanse of wetlands and lowland forest vegetation. The area is surrounded by forested hillsides (including one of the rarest tropical rainforests in the region) and fed by a number of creeks and rivers that drain a series of swamps above the lagoon, the lower ones of which are tidal and support mangroves. Additional mangrove swamps occur behind the dune ridge on the west side of the lake mouth and at creek mouths. A series of small lakes with swampy margins occur on the sandy forested spit that separates the lake from the sea. Some 38 communities, totaling about 7,000 people, depend on Piso for transportation, commercial and non-commercial fishing, and sand for construction. Farm-to-market infrastructure was well-developed prior to the civil war. The site is important both as a nursery and spawning ground for fish and sea turtles and as feeding and roosting places for large numbers of shore and seabirds. Mammals such as antelopes, duikers, monkeys, and bushbucks, along with crocodiles, are found in the area.⁸

5.3.4 Nationally Protected Areas

Nationally protected areas of Liberia are shown on Figure 3-1.

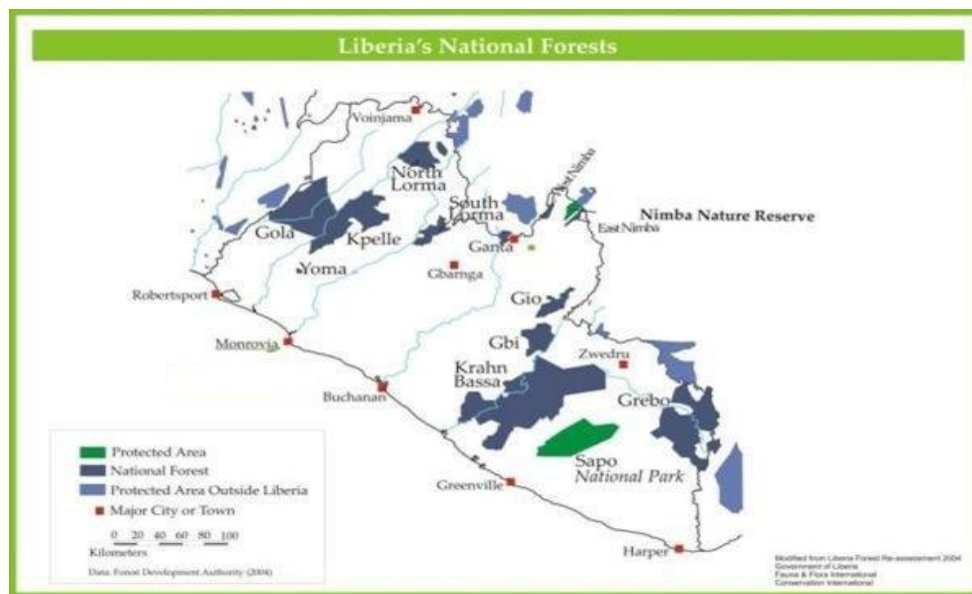


Figure 1: Nationally protected areas of Liberia a

⁷ Ramsar sites Information service, 2016. Mesurado Wetland. Available at: <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/1631>

⁸ Ramsar Sites Information Service. 2016. Lake Piso. Available at: <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/1306>

(Source: Modified from Conservation International, Liberia Forest Re-assessment, 2004)

5.3.5 Key Biodiversity Areas

In addition to national protection, Liberia remains an international priority area for conservation. For example, in December 1999 the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded the West African Conservation priority-setting exercise for the Upper Guinea Ecosystem. The project identified Liberia as a top priority country in West Africa for conservation purposes since 41% of its area is designated as being of exceptionally high biological importance. In September 2002, the West African chimpanzee conservation identified the southeastern Liberia forest block as one of the highest or top priority rainforest sites for chimpanzees.

In 2007, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identified Key Biodiversity Areas in Liberia (Figure 4-2)⁹. These areas are not legally protected, but are designated based on quantitative criteria based on manageable land units defined by local experts using global standards. These criteria include: presence of globally threatened species; significant populations of restricted range species; a representative sample of biome-restricted species; and, important congregations of species. This methodology was pioneered by Birdlife International, which also identified nine important bird areas in Liberia, one of which, Cestos-Senkwehn, in Rivercess and Grand Gedeh Counties (two of the proposed project areas). Activities of the proposed project are less likely to adversely affect these biodiversity and protected areas. Proposed subprojects will be subjected to environmental and social screening to identify and address any potential adverse impacts that may be associated with their implementation.

5.4 SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

5.4.1 Demographic Profile

The 2008 National Population and Housing Census showed Liberia's total population to be 3,476,608, comprising 1,739,945 males and 1,736,663 females, with an annual growth rate of 2.1 percent and a sex ratio of 100.2. Women head about one in every three households (34%). The average household size is 4.6 persons. Thirty-six percent of Liberian households are caring for foster and/or orphaned children (LDHS 2019-2020). 31% of women have no formal education, compared with 13% of men. Montserrado County

⁹ Langhammer, P.F., Bakarr, M.I., Bennun, L.A., Brooks, T.M., Clay, R.P., Darwall, W., De Silva, N., Edgar, G.J., Eken, G., Fishpool, L.D.C., 3 Fonseca, G.A.B. da, Foster, M.N., Knox, D.H., Matiku, P., Radford, E.A., Rodrigues, A.S.L., Salaman, P., Sechrest, W., and Tordoff, A.W. (2007). *Identification and Gap Analysis of Key Biodiversity Areas: Targets for Comprehensive Protected Area Systems*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

¹National Population and Housing Census, 2008

has the largest percentage of women and men (26% and 40%, respectively) with a completed senior high or higher level of education. River Cess and Gbarpolu have the lowest percentage of women (2% each) who have completed senior high or higher, while River Cess has the lowest percentage of men who have reached this level of education (9%).

The LDHS 2019-2020 also revealed that 23.1% of Liberians have access to electricity power supply, comprising 37% persons in urban areas and 4.3% persons in rural areas, while Forty-seven percent of households in Liberia use improved toilet facilities (66% in urban areas and 21% in rural areas). The rest of the population disposed of their human waste either by means of shared toilet, covered and open pit latrines, the bush or on the beach (for beach vicinity dwellers). Eighty-four percent of women and 83% of men are Christian. Fourteen percent of Liberian women and men are Muslim, and 1% practice no religion.

5.4.2 Population of the Project Areas

The total population of the project target counties is 1,610,327, which is disaggregated by county as follows:

- Montserrado County: 1,118,241 (549,733 males and 568,508 females);
- Gbarpolu County: 83,388 (43,906 males and 39,482 females);
- Grand Gedeh County: 125,258 (64,994 males and 60,264 females);
- Rivercess County: 71,509 (37,224 males and 34,285 females);
- Bomi County: 84,119 (42,940 males and 41,179 females); and,
- Grand Cape Mount County: 127,812 (65,679 males and 62,133 females)

5.4.3 Grand Cape Mount

Grand Cape Mount is a County found in the Western Region, specifically the south-western corner of Liberia along the coastal belt. Located on coordinates 7° 15' N, 11° 00' W, it is bounded in the Northeast by Gbarpolu County, in the East by Bomi and Lake Piso, in the South by the Atlantic Ocean and in the West by Sierra Leone, with a total land area of 5,827 square kilometers. The County is sparsely populated with concentrations in commercial, mining and fishing areas.

The climate of the County is humid and tropical with two distinct seasons: the wet or rainy season and the dry or summer season. The wet season begins in April and ends in October with an average rainfall of 400 cm and temperatures ranging from 28 degrees and 34 degrees Celsius, while humidity goes as high as 90 to 100 percent. The dry season is from November to March. Cape Mount, being a coastal County, has high annual average rainfall because the coastline runs approximately from South-east to Northwest and at right angles to the prevailing south-western rain-bearing winds.

Grand Cape Mount has a large natural lake called Lake Piso, which forms a confluence with the Atlantic Ocean with beautiful shores attractive to tourists. The County is also endowed with mountains such as the Bea Mountains, that spans over Porkpa and Gola Konneh Districts, which contains a large deposit of iron ore. Cape Mount County is served with a good network of rivers such as Maffa, Mani, Konja, and Lofa, which separates Bomi from Cape Mount, and the Congo Mano River, separating Sierra Leone and Liberia. These rivers contain rich deposits of gold and diamonds and provide food and livelihoods for many communities. The County's coastal belt is rich with coastal mangrove, farmland, coastal savannah and

secondary forest. Tewor, Porkpa and Gola Konneh Districts are mostly covered with semi-deciduous rainforest. A portion of the Gola Forest runs through the County, with a variety of wildlife species such as elephants, monkeys, chimpanzees, pottos, genets, pigmy hippopotamus, zebra duiker, leopards, egrets and owls, among others.¹⁰

5.4.3.1 Bomi County

Situated in the Northwestern part of Liberia and bordered by Gbarpolu County in the North, Grand Cape Mount County in the West, Montserrado County in the East and the Atlantic Ocean in the South, Bomi is predominantly a Gola speaking County. There are four Administrative Districts (Klay, Dewien, Suehn Mecca and Senjeh), comprising five Chiefdoms and 18 Clans. Bomi County has an area of 755 square miles and the Capital City is Tubmanburg.

The existence of natural resources such as the Atlantic Ocean, the Po, Wlein, Mahei, Lofa, and St. Paul Rivers, among others large water bodies, provides a source of livelihood and could be used for the development of small hydro dams for electricity generation. There are many valuable commercial timber species found in the County. However, currently there exists no large-scale logging activity.¹¹

5.4.3.2 Montserrado County

Montserrado County is home to the nation's Capital City, Monrovia. It is the most populated county with approximately 1.1million population and is also the most developed. It has developed townships, communities and cities. Like most parts of the Country, Montserrado has a very fertile soil and the large water bodies all provide alternative livelihood options for its inhabitants

St. Paul River and Greater Monrovia are the two administrative districts of Montserrado the project line route passes through. Of the two, St. Paul is more remote with only one pave road leading to Klay in Bomi County. Its inhabitants are predominantly involved in agriculture and fishing. Greater Monrovia is comprised of the townships and cities surrounding the nation's capital, excluding the municipalities of Monrovia.

5.4.3.3 River Cess County

River Cess was the twelfth county established in Liberia and it derives its name from the Cestos (meaning "crawfish basket") River. Cestos City, formerly known as River Cess City, is the headquarters of the County. The main livelihood activities today include palm oil production, hunting, food crops production and fishing. Acute and chronic malnutrition rates are alarmingly high and this in part could be explained by the geographical isolation of River Cess. Most households' access to improved drinking water and health facilities is extremely limited. The County is situated 320 kilometers southeast of Monrovia, lying at 5 degrees 36'23N and 9 degrees 39' 31W, with an average altitude of 84 meters. River Cess has an area of

¹⁰ Grand Cape Mount County Development Agenda, 2008 - 2012

¹¹ Bomi County Development Agenda, 2008 - 2012

5,263.4 square kilometers and a coastline of 62 kilometers. The area is bound by the counties of Grand Bassa in the west, Nimba and Grand Gedeh in the North, Sinoe in the Southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean in the South. Prominent geographical features demarcating the County are River Timbo in the West, River Blonne in the East, and the Whomeh and Gienee Rivers in the North. Cestos City is situated on the coast, alongside the Cestos River. The nearest major town to Cestos is Buchanan in Grand Bassa County, some 140 kilometers away.

The region experiences heavy rainfall, ranging from 160cms to 170cms annually, with the heaviest rains in August to September. Temperatures generally range from 25 to 32 degrees Celsius. The coastal areas experience high humidity during the months of November to January. Wetlands and swampy areas are common in the County on account of the heavy rainfall. River Cess County is generally considered lowland and partly thick green forest. The major mountain ranges in River Cess are found in Morweh District. The Cestos River runs through the lowlands into the Atlantic Ocean. The soil types vary with location. In the Timbo district area, the soil is sandy. In Yarnee District, one sees mangrove swamps and water-logged soils. In the Central River District, the soil has a reddish color. In Morweh, the soil is both reddish and of the Mangrove type. The vegetation of River Cess is both savannah and green forest, mostly the latter.

The Bassa-speaking people are in the majority, making up 96 % of the County's population, with 75% Christian population. Most of the rest are practitioners of animist faiths, with a tiny Muslim minority. Poro, Sande, Bodeo, Neegee and Kpayah traditional belief societies are important institutions in many areas. Of the Christian churches, Episcopal churches are most common. Services in churches that are not kwi tend to be more ebullient; dancing and occasional street processions in colorful costumes are features of their practice. River Cess County has eight administrative districts: Dodain, Joe River, Fehn, Zarflahn, Nyunwein, Central River Cess, Bear-Wor, and Sangbalor. These are further divided into statutory districts.

5.4.3.4 *Grand Gedeh*

Grand Gedeh is the second largest county in Liberia and the ninth most populous, thus it is one of the most sparsely populated. It is located in the southeast of Liberia. Its long northern border is the frontier with Côte d'Ivoire. To the south is River Gee County and Sinoe County. To the west is Nimba County. Most of the Grand Gedeh population lives between county seat Zwedru and Nimba County in the northwest. The interior and east of the county is mainly rainforest with isolated foresting and farming settlements. Zwedru is the only significant sized town, ranking seventh in Liberia and the largest in the southeast. Grand Gedeh has a relatively straightforward demography, being dominated by the Krahn ethnic group with minorities of Sapo in the south, Grebo in the east and a more mixed population in Zwedru and the west, including Mandingo and Gio. Most Grebo-dominated areas broke away to form River Gee County in 2000. According to the 2008 census, Grand Gedeh has the highest sustained demographic growth of any county household size (7.6 persons).

Forestry is traditionally the mainstay of the local economy but has been considerably disrupted by the international sanctions imposed on Liberian timber from 2003 to 2006. The most important cash crop was palm oil, but currently there is little beyond subsistence farming and a little cocoa production. Prospecting is under way for iron ore in the Putu mountains and there is considerable artisanal mining for gold. There are no facilities for higher education in the county and no significant manufacturing or processing

industries. Except within Zwedru city, there are no tarred roads in Grand Gedeh, no rail links, no navigable rivers and only a tiny airstrip in Zwedru to serve the UNMIL base. Zwedru is at least ten hours' drive from Monrovia, with the journey normally undertaken over two days. In the long wet season, the highway between Ganta and Harper through Grand Gedeh can become impassable. Zwedru and some towns along the highway have mobile telephone coverage but many forest communities do not. Community radio normally covers at least the west of the county.¹²

The climate of Grand Gedeh County, like many parts of Liberia, is determined by the Country's geographic position near the equator and Atlantic Ocean. Temperatures are warm throughout the year with extreme high humidity. The climate is characterized by little seasonal change of temperature and humidity, but by changes between day and night. There are basically two seasons, rainy season and dry season. The average annual rainfall of the county ranges from 76 inches in the upper or northern part of 107 inches in the lower or southern part. Average temperature is 77.5 degrees Fahrenheit. The County is categorized under the highlands of Liberia, which is generally characterized by plateau and mountain ranges up to 1000 ft. Important Mountain ranges are the Puto and Tiempo. The hilly terrain is an impediment to road construction; gradients are steep and irregular, and the river valleys are V-shaped and narrow in the upper reaches. The soils are not unlike the rest of the country and vegetation is typical of the tropical rain forest, characterized by evergreen and semi-deciduous forest.

5.4.3.5 Gbarpolu

Created in 2003 from territory previously known as Lower Lofa County, Gbarpolu is the newest of Liberia's fifteen political sub-divisions. The County seat of Bopolu City is famous as the home and final resting place of King Sao Boso of the Kingdom of Suehn-Bopolu, who resolved the conflict between the settlers of the Mississippi Colonization Society and the natives, paving the way for their co-existence in the coastal areas.

Most social services and infrastructure in Liberia have always been concentrated in Monrovia and a few coastal areas. The densely forested County occupies an area of approximately 1,263 square miles, and is located in the western region of Liberia. The County has borders with Lofa to the North, Bong to the East, Bomi to the South, and Grand Cape Mount County and Sierra Leone to the West.

The average temperature is 28 degrees Celsius and the prevailing wind is from the Southwest. The County has two main mountain ranges, Kpo and Fanyea, and three main river systems, the Lofa and St. Paul that form the boundary with Lofa, Bong and Bomi counties, and the Mahe River. It has many large creeks and streams that are tributaries of these main rivers, and two large waterfalls: Goma and Zalakai. There are various mineral resources in Gbarpolu County; gold and diamonds are the most commonly exploited. Gold deposits are found in Henry's Town, Weasua, and Belekpalamu, while diamond deposits are found in Tarkpoima, Sirleaf Town, Smith Camp, and other sites. Iron ore has been discovered, and unconfirmed reports point to the existence of potentially valuable lead, manganese, silver, fluorite, graphite and copper deposits

Gbarpolu contains significant portions of the Upper Guinea Forest. Most of this forest is deciduous and

¹² Grand Gedeh County, Liberia Security and Justice from a County Perspective (<https://www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IFP-Security-County-Perspective-Gedeh-Liberia-EN-2010.pdf>)

mountain in nature, covering all three main forest classes: class 3.1– forest with small agriculture; class 3.2–open dense forest; and class 3.3–closed dense forest.

5.4.4 Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Situation in Liberia

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is widespread and remains entrenched across the spectrum of Liberian society. SGBV includes rape, physical assault/domestic violence, sexual assault, and denial of resources. More often than not, SGBV is perpetrated by males.

Between August and September 2019, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) recorded the total of 510 SGBV cases reported by various actors, including health facilities, the Liberia National Police, Government Ministries and Agencies, and NGOs. The 510 SGBV cases were collected from 13 of the 15 counties. Of the reported cases, rape accounted for 64%, physical assault/domestic violence constituted 19.4%, sexual assault made up 8%, and denial of resources accounted for 5.3% (Third Quarter Statistical Report/MGSCP, 2019).

Ten (10) of the 510 SGBV cases reported were perpetrated against males, constituting 2%, while the rest – 98% were perpetrated against females, meaning that women and girls remained vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Table 4.2 below provides further details on the age range and sex of the 510 SGBV survivors reported by MGCSP during the Third Quarter of 2019.

Table 4: GBV Incident by Age and Sex

Age Range	Sex			% Of Total
	Female	Male	Total	
0-5yrs	28	1	29	5.7%
6-12yrs	95	6	101	19.8%
13-17yrs	194	2	196	38.4%
18-25yrs	88	1	89	17.5%
>25yrs	94	-	94	18.4%
Age unknown	1	-	1	0.2%
Total	500	10	510	100%

Source: 3rd Quarter Statistical Report, MGCSP, 2019

From the table above, children under 18 years old constituted 63.9% of all GBV survivor cases reported. Child rape was the highest reported GBV incident, accounting for 52.3% of all GBV cases reported during that quarter. Survivors/victims aged 18-25 years old accounted for 17% of reported cases involving physical assault or domestic violence, rape, gang rape and sexual assault.

5.4.5 County Level Statistics

Of the 510 SGBV cases reported, 73% (372 cases) occurred in Montserrado County and 7.3% (37 cases) occurred in Grand Gedeh County – two (2) of the 6 counties targeted for the implementation of the Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP). The fact that the majority of the 510 reported SGBV cases occurred in Montserrado appear to justify the selection of the county as one of LWEP implementation areas. Apart from Montserrado and Grand Gedeh, the Report provided no information on the SGBV situation in the other 4 project target counties of Rivercess, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi and Gbarpolu.

Since the end of Liberia's civil war which exacerbated sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls as a weapon of war, various forms of SGBV such as domestic violence and rape against women have been on the rise (Liebling-Kalifani et al, 2011). Even though the Government, several years ago, identified SGBV as a key strategic issue that the government needs to tackle, there remains a glaring gap between its ambitions written on paper and the real situation on the ground.

5.6 SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH INFORMATION OF ALL PROJECT COUNTIES

From Table 5.5 below, on average 85% of households (HH) in the project counties has access to improved source of drinking water, which is 20% higher than the national average but 11% lower than those of Gbarpolu and Montserrado – both of which are project counties.

On average 38% of HHs in the project counties has access to improved sanitation, which is lower than the national average of 47%.

39% of women aged 15-49 years in the project counties have no formal education – on average 8% higher than the national average. This means that 8% more women in this age range within the project counties have no formal education. More men (18% against the national average of 13%) in the same age range within the project counties have no formal education, with Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties showing the highest number of men without formal education within the project counties.

Regarding the number of children per woman, analysis of the available data shows that on average a woman in the project counties has 4.7 children, compared to 4.2 children per woman as a national average. This indicates a higher birth rate in the project counties than the country as a whole.

5.5 Summary Of Demographic And Health Information Of All Project Counties

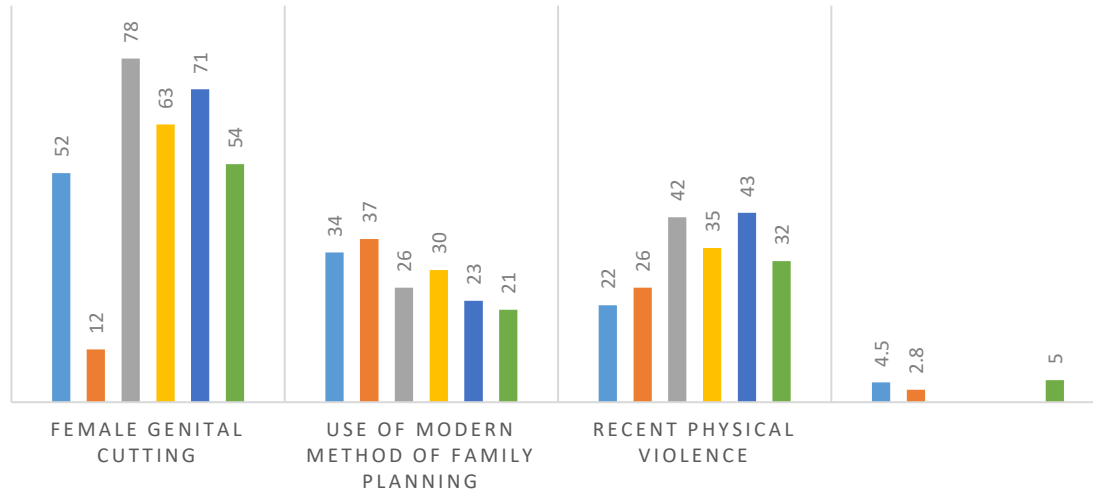
Characteristics of Households and Respondents	Liberia	Bomi	Grand Cape Mount	Gbarpolu	Grand Gedeh	River Gee	Montserrado
Households with access to an improved source of drinking water (%)	65	92	82	65	96	91	96
Households with improved sanitation (%)	47	24	33	19	46	32	72
Women age 15-49 with no formal education (%)	31	43	54	51	33	34	18
Men age 15-49 with no formal education (%)	13	21	34	21	14	13	6
Fertility and Family Planning							

Total fertility rate (number of children per woman)	4.2	4.2	5.9	6.1	4.9	4.0	3.0
Use of any method of family planning (% of married women age 15-49)	25	31	24	26	38	41	23
Use of any modern method of family planning (% of married women age 15-49)	24	30	23	26	37	41	21
Unmet need for family planning ¹ (% of married women age 15-49)	33	30	37	31	21	20	35
Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% of married women age 15-49)	41	50	38	46	63	67	36
Maternal and Child Health							
Births delivered in a health facility (%)	80	79	82	50	88	91	74
Births assisted by a skilled provider ² (%)	84	84	86	51	89	93	83
Women age 15-49 with a postnatal check during the first 2 days after birth (%)	80	87	84	66	84	85	75
Births with a postnatal check during the first 2 days after birth (%)	76	80	83	63	82	84	71
Children age 12-23 months with all basic vaccinations ³ (%)	51	(57)	62	50	47	48	54
Children age 12-23 months with all age-appropriate vaccinations ⁴ (%)	39	(53)	46	33	38	41	46
Neonatal mortality ⁵ (deaths per 1,000 live births)	37	18	45	46	32	57	42
Infant mortality ⁵ (deaths per 1,000 live births)	63	53	116	78	64	72	66
Under-5 mortality ⁵ (deaths per 1,000 live births)	93	84	115	119	99	93	95
Nutrition			55				
Children under 5 who are stunted (%)	30	32	33	34	32	31	21
Children under 5 who are wasted (%)	3	6	5	5	5	3	4
Children under 5 who are overweight (%)	4	2	4	6	1	11	3

Children under 5 who are underweight (%)	11	14	18	15	12	7	10
Malaria				52			26
Household population with access to an insecticide-treated net (ITN) (%)	40	44	49	52	53	52	26
Household population who slept under an ITN the night before the survey (%)	39	44	51	49	54	49	25
Pregnant women age 15-49 who received 3 or more doses of SP/Fansidar as intermittent preventive treatment during pregnancy (%)	40	60	42	32	36	39	32
Domestic Violence and Female Genital Cutting							
Women age 15-49 who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 (%)	60	58	72	66	45	58	66
Women age 15-49 who experienced physical violence in the last 12 months (%)	33	35	43	42	26	35	32
Women age 15-49 who have ever experienced sexual violence (%)	9	13	11	6	9	6	6
Women age 15-49 who experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months (%)	5	6	6	2	3	1	2
Ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their most recent husband/partner (%)	55	41	66	59	43	59	57
Ever-married women age 15-49 who have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by any husband/partner in the last 12 months (%)	46	31	52	50	35	56	48
Prevalence of female genital cutting among women age 15-49 who have heard of female genital cutting (%)	38	63	71	78	12	2	25

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH INFORMATION

■ Rivercess
 ■ Grand Gedeh
 ■ Gbarpolu
 ■ Bomi
 ■ Grand Cape Mount
 ■ Montserrado



5.6.1 Ethnicity and Religion

Liberia's population consists of 16 major language or ethnic groups, including the Kpelle (largest), Bassa (second largest), Mano, Gio, Lorma, Gbandi, Kissi, Gola, Belle, Vai, Grebo, Kru, Krahn, Mandingo, Sapo, and Dei. The three main religious groups are Christianity, which is estimated to constitute 86% of the total population; Islam, which accounts for about 12% of the population; and animism and others constitute the remaining 2% of the population. These religious beliefs are practiced in all parts of the country including the target project counties, although the number of people belonging to each religious group may vary from county to county and even within counties.

All language/ethnic groups are represented in the target project areas, although their concentration or number in particular county, district or town may vary significantly. The predominant language groups in Gbarpolu County are Kpelle and Gola; in Grand Cape Mount County Vai and Gola are the largest language groups; in Grand Gedeh County Krahn and Sarpo are the predominant groups; Gola is the largest ethnic group in Bomi County; and Bassa is the predominant language group in Rivercess County.

Montserrado, the country's capital city, is home to over one million people, with the vast majority coming from all the other counties. It is one of the smallest in land size but the single most populated county in the country, containing large numbers of all ethnic groups. This is because Montserrado, as host of the country's capital city, Monrovia, is the main center for commerce, education, health and government services. Apart from Montserrado, most other counties lack the minimum basic education and healthcare services and livelihood opportunities to attract a large number of people both from within and outside the country.

5.6.2 Economic Environment

5.6.2.1 *Women and the Formal Economy*

The Liberian economy comprises the formal and informal sectors, with the majority of the working-age population (93.4%) working in the informal sector. Women participation in the formal sector is very limited and the vast majority of women (91.6%) in the formal sector are self-employed. But only 8.4% of women in the formal sector are salaried workers, compared to 67% of self-employed men and 33% salaried men workers. The informal sector concentrates the majority of working women, with about 96.2% of females working informally. This situation puts women in a position of high employment vulnerability in which they may lose their jobs without any type of financial or health care protection (Liberia Gender Equality Profile, 2021) Women economic vulnerability in the informal sector was vividly felt during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

5.6.2.2 *Women and Agriculture*

Agriculture and its related activities constitute the bedrock of the Liberian economy. Agriculture is the source of employment, earnings, food, and livelihood security for the majority of the population.

Agriculture contributes over 60% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Women play a significant role in national agricultural production. In 2019, 38% of women were employed in agriculture. Yet despite their substantial contribution to agriculture, only 22.6% of women working in agriculture receive cash payments; 74.9% of women earn cash payments for non-agricultural work (Liberia Gender Equality Profile, 2021).

In rural areas (including the target project counties), agriculture and in particular subsistence farming is the primary economic and livelihood activity carried out by most residents and households. Food production mainly focuses on staple crops such as rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, eddoes, fruits and vegetables. Tree crops cultivation focuses in most parts on rubber, cocoa, oil palm, plantains/bananas. Livestock is usually goats and poultry. However, farmers' lack of investment capital and other vital agricultural inputs combined with poor road conditions across the country has over the years constrained farmers' ability to increase agricultural production, thus confining most of them to subsistence farming, characterized by slash and burn, shifting cultivation and low productivity.

LWEP will be implemented in rural areas where agriculture is the primary source of employment and livelihood security. Component 3 of the project therefore seeks to enhance women's livelihoods and income through support to small-scale agriculture, agribusiness and related activities. Land is a critical factor of production, and women's access to and ownership of land in rural areas is a challenge that the project would need to support women to address. Of the 16% of women and men who own land, 76% of women and 78% of men do not have a title or deed of ownership for it (Liberia Gender Equality Profile, 2021).

5.6.3 Basic Social Services

5.6.3.1 Health Facilities

There are health facilities in all 6 project target counties where residents seek medical services when needed. Gbarpolu County has one referral hospital – Chief Jallahlone Hospital, and 12 clinics. There are about 80 registered health facilities across Montserrado County, including 7 major hospitals, 10 health centers and 63 clinics. There are 2 health centers, 1 hospital (Martha Tubman Memorial Hospital) and 15 clinics in Grand Gedeh County. Rivercess County has 1 health center and 16 clinics. Bomi County has 1 hospital (in Tubmanburg) and 21 clinics across the county. And there are 2 health centers (Dambala and Sinje), 1 hospital (St. John Hospital) and 29 clinics in Grand Cape County.

The quality of service varies widely between and within counties, especially in government run facilities. The often-reported lack of basic diagnostic equipment, the shortage of trained health professionals, low wages for health workers, the regular outage of essential drugs are some of the main factors that negatively affect the quality of services rendered and effective functioning of these health facilities. The fact is that health facilities exist in the project areas, but most are poorly managed and therefore unable to satisfactorily address the medical needs of the people who run to them for help.

5.6.3.2 Education Facilities

Schools – from primary to senior secondary levels – exist in all the target project counties. Every county capital and some districts within each county have at least one high school with multiple primary schools. So, those educational facilities provide residents the opportunity to educate themselves and their children.

Some of the key high schools in the project areas include CH Dewy in Tubmanburg, Bomi County; St. John Episcopal in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County; Zwedru Multilateral in Grand Gedeh County; the government high schools in Bopolu, Gbarpolu County and in Cestos, Rivercess County. As for Montserrado County, there are hundreds of primary and secondary schools (both publicly and privately owned).

6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter identifies the potential environmental and social impacts that may arise from the project, and measures to mitigate those impacts or risks. The overall environmental and social risk classification for the Project **is moderate**. The project will trigger both negative and positive impacts. For the positive impacts, the project will finance interventions that support women's economic opportunities, which will include investments to enhance agricultural productivity, value chains and access to markets (along with strengthening life skills, social capital and voice and agency). Further, Component 4 envisions strengthening the capacity of government actors to implement gender policies and deliver programs to enhance women's social and economic well-being.

However, the project activities may result in both direct and indirect environmental risks that are expected to be site specific, local, reversible, mainly temporary and capable of management through appropriate E&S risk mitigation measures.

6.1 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL RISK/IMPACTS

The negative environmental risks and impacts triggered by the project are as follows:

6.1.1 Land Clearing and Planting Risk

Land clearing and planting of crops due to agricultural activities under the project may result in damage to existing crop species and increased soil erosion. However, it is anticipated that agriculture activities will not occur on land that has pristine/good quality natural forest, but rather on existing farmed areas.

6.1.2 Risk of Soil Erosion

There is a likely impact of soil erosion and consequent run-off to local waterway due to vegetation clearing and surface runoff during the rains.

6.1.3 Waste Management

Agricultural activities on the project will generate waste materials that require proper collection, storage, handling and disposal. Waste that may be generated will include waste from manure, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Since the project will generate waste of different types, the contractor will prepare a Waste Management Plan for review and approval by the PIU.

6.1.4 Water Quality

Surface water pollution may result from uncontrolled discharges into rivers or seawater, accidental spills of oil, runoff, erosion, and sediment transport. The latter impact is particularly significant when agricultural activities occur within or in close proximity to surface water. Contaminated water flowing into surface water bodies could impact aquatic organisms and affect the quality of life of downstream users when river waters are involved.

6.1.5 Pest and Chemical Management

Agricultural activities may contribute to an increase in the use of pesticides, fertilizers or other agrochemicals, with potential adverse impacts related to contamination and pollution of water resources and soil, and health impacts for residents of surrounding communities. The use of agrochemicals would also require procurement, transport, storage and application equipment.

6.1.6 Flora and Fauna

The contamination and pollution streams of by the use of pesticide and fertilizer may affect aquatic species such as the fish and other aquatic invertebrates. Also, agricultural activities may also result in the loss of vegetation, disturbance of fauna habitats, weakening and degradation of soils, disturbance of the natural landscape and morphology. However, it is anticipated that agriculture activities will not occur on land that has pristine/good quality natural forest, but rather on existing farmed areas which will reduce the risk on flora and fauna.

6.1.7 Biodiversity risks

There is the risk that some livelihood agricultural activities and associated value chains could impact natural habitats and biodiversity, or lead to land degradation through activities such as land clearing or pesticide use. However, it is anticipated that the project will not involve activities with significant negative impacts on biodiversity and natural resources.

6.1.8 Health and Safety

Both occupational health and safety as well as community health and safety issues may arise during the agricultural activities (which include health and safety risks from land clearing and farming activities and the use of fertilizers and pesticides). People may be injured by the use of tools or machinery during land clearing and farming activities.

The contamination of water resources from the use of pesticides may have negative health impact on residents of surrounding communities. Women in rural communities use streams and other water resources for several activities and may be affected if pesticides are not properly managed especially, during the raining seasons.

The impact of women exposure to COVID-19 during agricultural activities could potentially be significant but the likelihood of such occurrence would be seldom if the correct procedures and mitigation measures are applied and followed. During manual clearing and planting of crops, women could be exposed to the risk of COVID-19.

6.1.9 Land Use

It is expected that agricultural activities will be done on existing farmed areas which will reduce the impact on land use. However, apart from the land clearing and planting activities, the project will not interfere with the existing land use/land users.

6.2 POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACTS

6.2.1 Socio-Economic Impacts

The negative social risk classification for the project is moderate. The project is expected to have a positive social impact at the individual and community level in that it will promote gender equality, economic opportunities, and address the social norms that contribute to GBV and stand as a barrier to women's empowerment. However, there are negative social risks that the project activities may have on the beneficiaries. Therefore, the project will design appropriate mitigation measures to address potential social risks.

6.2.2 Norms and Belief

Component 1 activities that are designed to challenge long-standing norms and beliefs about gender and power relations could be negatively perceived and result in backlash. This risk will be mitigated by using established, proven methodologies which take a phased approach to changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to be more gender-equitable, working progressively through topics in a manner that is designed to help participants examine the ways in which restrictive gender roles can limit the lives of both men and women, harming everyone.

6.2.3 Exclusion

The risk of exclusion of deserving women with respect to the economic strengthening intervention under component 2 is anticipated. The project provides support to enhance women's access to credit, strengthens agricultural extension services to women, provides grants or capital to enhance access to key agricultural inputs, business registration and other assistance which may not be distributed equitably. This needs to be mitigated upfront to prevent risk of exclusion.

6.2.4 Elite Capture

The project anticipates a risk of vulnerability to elite capture in regards to the economic strengthening intervention under component 2. There is a risk that support provided to women on the project could benefit those with connections and influences. Thus, the risk of elite capture under component 2 needs to be mitigated.

6.2.5 Increased domestic and economic violence

The project activities aimed at enhancing women's voice and agency can create unexpected risks for women, as traditional roles for men and women are challenged and shaped. Such changes could result, in the short term, in attempts to strengthen men's traditional roles, which may be associated with increased GBV risks. While the evidence suggests that these risks are low to moderate (and that combining women's economic support with gender-transformative approaches can positively impact both norms and some forms of GBV), the project will conduct thorough preparatory analytical work on all aspects of gender and GBV so that the design takes into account these risks.

The activities under Components 1 and 2 will also involve women's economic and social empowerment and in-depth engagement on social and gender norms that can have implications for relationships between

men and women if they alter existing gender and power relations. This may have the potential to impact household dynamics, and will require sensitization for participating households in the targeted communities to be prepared for accepting or working with potential changes to come (these considerations are part of evidence-based methodologies for changing norms, attitudes and beliefs to be more gender equitable).

The project will involve community-level engagement and discussion on gender norms and GBV, which may lead more women and girls to understand themselves to be survivors and to seek information on services

6.2.6 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Risk

The project will likely involve project actors and project beneficiaries at the community level, which raises the risks of SEA/SH. Further, the project is likely to be implemented in rural areas where access to quality GBV services or support of efficient service providers for survivors is limited. The project will also establish clear risk mitigation measures for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH), including SEA/SH risks that may arise from interactions between project workers and beneficiaries.

6.2.7 Physical Cultural Resources

Improperly cited projects can damage physical cultural resources and diminish its value. Moreover, unregulated and careless land clearing activities may destroy potential buried archeological remains. Damage to physical cultural resources constitutes a threat to social cohesion and eliminates the potential for its use in tourism. If properly planned and sited, developments related to the distribution components will have no impact on the country's physical cultural resources. However, to mitigate impacts on any cultural heritage that may be discovered during land clearing and planting, a Chance Finds Procedure will be applied (see annex 14: Chance Find Procedure).

6.3 SUMMARY OF MEASURES TO MITIGATE IMPACTS

6.3.1 Mitigation Measures

The potential environmental and social impacts that may be associated with the implementation of the project can be minimized by careful site planning and staging of farming activities, adopting proper management practices during agricultural activities and relying on effective environmental monitoring and training to support women. This chapter proposes several potential impact-mitigation or control measures that should earn the proposed projects more acceptability, by reducing or eliminating to the extent possible many of the impacts that have been discussed in Section 4. Mitigation measures are intended to reduce the effect of potentially significant impacts on the environment. Thus, they are highly dependent on the significance of the predicted impact or the nature of the impact (permanent vs. temporary). Accordingly, the mitigation measures presented below are generic to a certain extent and need to be refined and adapted to each of the component's projects, once the detailed project components are available.

It should be noted that the mitigation measures referred to in the table below are generic measures, meaning they will only require action once specific projects are identified and assessed. Similarly, the cost of the mitigation activities would be assessed as part of the grant agreement to be implemented under the specific components. The grant request would be reviewed to ensure that the recommendations set forth herein are reflected and their implementation adequately included in the overall price of the works. At present, it is not possible to assess specific mitigation measures or their cost as the potential future sub-projects to be implemented are unknown. As the future works become clear, the measures and their cost shall be reflected

either in an updated ESMF or in specific Environmental Assessments and/or Environmental Management Plans, as well as the relevant grant documents.

Table 5: Summary of Mitigation Measures for Environmental and Social Impacts

Impact/Risk	Mitigation Measures	Responsible
Solid waste generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and follow a brief site-specific solid waste control procedure (storage, provision of bins, site clean-up, bin clean-out schedule, etc.) before commencement of project activities. • Manage and dispose waste in line with Good International Industry Practices (GIIP). • Segregate chemical wastes and properly store and dispose it as hazardous waste. • Store chemical wastes in a separate area that has an impermeable floor, adequate ventilation and a roof to prevent rainfall from seeping. • Clearly label all chemical waste in English and it in corrosion resistant containers. • Secure a prior agreement with the EPA for the disposal of hazardous waste generated on-site. • Engage an EPA certified solid waste collector in the county where the project is being implemented to identify collection sites and schedule the removal to minimize odor, pest infestation and litter buildup. • Prohibit the burning of waste on site. • Store solid waste temporarily on site in a designated place prior to off-site transportation and disposal through a licensed waste collector. • Dispose waste at designated place identified and approved by local authority. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries
Hazardous Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is provided by the manufacturer to understand the procedure for handling and storage of pesticide • Develop a hazardous waste management plan for the collection, and disposal of all hazardous waste generated under the project; to be included in the ESIA/ESMP. 	Project Contractors/ PCMU/PIU/EPA
Surface water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce land clearing to existing farmlands to surface water pollution from runoff. 	Project Contractors/ PCMU/PIU

Impact/Risk	Mitigation Measures	Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid farm activities in close proximity to surface water. Reduce pesticide use on farmlands and use agronomic practices such as manuring, irrigation, weeding, harvesting and storage and other biological practices. 	
Soil erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing farmlands to avoid intensive land clearing. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries
Flora and Fauna;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict land clearing to existing farmed areas and avoid the use of natural forest for agricultural activities. Adopt construction sequencing and work procedures to minimize streambed disturbance. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries
Land clearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select existing farmlands to avoid important natural areas such as natural forest and sensitive habitats. Utilize appropriate clearing techniques (hand clearing vs. mechanized clearing). Restore disturbed sites with vegetation cover that is native to the area. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries
Worker Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sensitization/training on the fundamentals of occupational health and safety procedures. Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (impermeable latex gloves, working overalls, and safety boots, safety glasses) for those exposed to pesticides and agrochemicals handling. Ensure that the protective material is being used wherever it is required. Ensure that the workers are qualified, well trained and instructed in handling pesticides Develop an emergency response plan. Provide on-site first aid. Ensure that hazardous substances are being kept in suitable, safe, adequately marked and locked storing places. Ensure that containers of hazardous substances are clearly marked, and that material safety data sheets are available. Ensure that all workers dealing with hazardous substances are adequately informed about the risks, trained in handling those 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries

Impact/Risk	Mitigation Measures	Responsible
	<p>materials, and trained in first aid measures to be taken in the case of an accident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct accident investigation to determine immediate/root causes in order to prevent future accidents. Report all accidents/incidents within 24hrs of occurrence. • Designate an area where contaminated materials and hazardous waste can be stored for proper disposal according to environmental guidelines. • Adopt good housekeeping practices for ensuring hygiene on site. • Eliminate pools of stagnant water, which could serve as breeding places for mosquitoes. • Train personnel to apply pesticides and ensure that personnel have received the necessary certifications or equivalent training where such certifications are not required. • Ensure hygiene practices are followed to avoid exposure of beneficiaries' family members to pesticides residues. 	
Community Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contamination of community water sources • Barricade work zones to restrict public/community access • Use safety signs at danger/risky work sites to alert the public/community • Anticipate and avoid adverse impacts on the health and safety of project-affected communities during the project life cycle from both routine and nonroutine circumstances. • Promote quality and safety, and considerations relating to climate change, in the design and construction of infrastructure, including dams. • Avoid or minimize community exposure to project-related traffic and road safety risks, diseases and hazardous materials. • Have in place effective measures to address emergency events. • Ensure that the safeguarding of personnel and property is carried out in a manner that avoids or minimizes risks to the project-affected communities. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries
Spread of COVID-19	<p>The project shall implement the COVID-19 prevention plan in keeping with the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and MOH guidelines. The measures will be implemented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ways to minimize/control contact during project implementation activities. 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries

Impact/Risk	Mitigation Measures	Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict site to only those involved in direct work activities. • Provide appropriate PPE where necessary. • Wash stations should be provided regularly throughout site, with a supply of clean water, liquid soap and paper towels (for hand drying). • Communication materials on COVID-19 prevention and control should be put in workplaces. 	
STDs, gender and Socio-economic, social norm, SEA/SH. GRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide awareness campaigns for grantees and immediate local communities on the risks, danger, impact and appropriate avoidance behaviors regarding Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), and HIV and AIDs. • Provide regular supply of condoms to male and female workers. • Provide adequate onsite supply of water for drinking and other use for local workers. • Provide separate toilet facilities on site for male and female workers. • Use established, proven methodologies which take a phased approach to changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to be more gender-equitable. • Design topics in a manner to help participants examine the ways in which restrictive gender roles can limit the lives of both men and women, harming everyone. • Set up qualification criteria to identify vulnerable groups of women and to avoid the project benefiting those with connections and influences. • Keep record of beneficiaries for inspection (e.g., names, category, ages, gender, hours worked and wages paid). • Develop a Gender Action Plan (GAP) in accordance with the National Gender Policy of Liberia, to ensure that gender issues and other SEA/SH are adequately addressed throughout the project life cycle . • Set up functional Grievance Redress Mechanisms for workers and affected communities and document and report grievances received. • Conduct regular consultation and sensitization meetings with affected communities regarding project activities and GRMs. 	Project Contractor/ PCMU/PIU
Physical cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct appropriate project siting at the planning stage to avoid physical cultural resources and touristic sites. • Adopt, 'Archaeological Chance Find Procedures' particularly where excavation works will take place (see Appendix 14). 	PIU-MoA, PIU-MGCSP/ Project beneficiaries

6.4 MONITORING

Impact and compliance monitoring should be practiced during the project implementation phase. Monitoring should be conducted to verify the predicted impacts, examine the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures, respond to unanticipated environmental impacts, and improve environmental controls. Monitoring should be conducted by trained individuals following monitoring and recordkeeping procedures and using properly calibrated and maintained equipment. Monitoring data should be analyzed and reviewed at regular intervals and compared with the operating standards so that any necessary corrective actions can be taken. Note that the scale/nature of the project dictates the level of the proposed monitoring plan, whereby small projects favor monitoring that is limited to visual observations and photographic documentation while large scale projects require quantitative assessment of several environmental parameters in addition to visual monitoring. Table 4-2 and Table 4-3 present typical parameters that should be monitored along with monitoring means, frequency, and phase. The PIU/MOA/MGCSP in collaboration with the EPA, or an independent consultant hired by the PIU, will be responsible for the implementation of the monitoring. It should be stressed that the developed monitoring plan should be updated to reflect the specificities of each project (scale, location, etc.) and should also incorporate an estimate of the total monitoring costs involved.

Table 6: Summary of monitoring activities during general construction and/or rehabilitation activities

Impacts	Environmental Parameters	Location	Method of Monitoring	Frequency of Monitoring
<i>Potential Environmental Impacts</i>	<i>What parameter is to be monitored?</i>	<i>Where is the parameter to be monitored?</i>	<i>How will the parameter be monitored?</i>	<i>When is the parameter to be monitored?</i>
Construction waste/debris	Waste disposal	Disposal site	Visual inspection	Weekly
Hazardous waste from pesticides	Empty storage cans	Farm lands and disposal site	Visual inspection	Quarterly or upon complaints
Water pollution	Water Quality	At nearby surface water body	Water quality (Turbidity, suspended solids, total coliforms, fecal coliform, dissolved oxygen)	Quarterly and upon complaints
Soil Degradation	Soil disturbances,	At farming locations	Visual inspection	Quarterly during construction works
Health and safety	Occupational health and safety	Project site	Visual inspection, documentation and photographs	Daily
Potential Social Impacts	Social Parameters	Location	Method of Monitoring	Frequency of Monitoring

Socio-economic	Job created by the project	Project site and surrounding areas	jobs created for vulnerable women groups Qualification Criteria for beneficiaries	Monthly
Physical cultural resources	Cultural sites	All vulnerable sites adjacent to project location	Disturbance of known sites Document chance findings	Monthly and upon compliants

7 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND FRAMEWORK

As the implementing agency, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) will provide support for coordination and periodic supervision of LWEP implementation activities, including environmental and social aspects. A project implementation unit (PIU) which is to be set up within the MGCSP will be responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of the LWEP activities, including procurement, financial management, M & E, and operational support. The PIU will report to the Project Steering Committee, an inter-ministerial body comprising of the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning (MFDP) and MGCSP.

7.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF ESMP, MONITORING AND REPORTING

Under the supervision of the Project Coordinator, the Environmental Safeguards Specialist and the Social Safeguards Specialist to be hired within the PIU will be responsible for planning, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this expanded ESMF, which incorporates the RPF, LMP, waste management and integrated pest management. The primary responsibility of the environmental and social safeguards specialists is to ensure the effective management of potential environmental and social risks and impacts in all LWEP supported activities, from design through planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the PIU with regards to the implementation of this ESMF are as follows:

- Screen all proposed subprojects using the screening checklist/procedure included in this ESMF in order to identify potential E&S risks and to determine the appropriate safeguards instrument(s) that need to be prepared for each subproject, based on the significance of the anticipated impacts;
- Draft or review ToRs for preparation of environmental and social instruments (ESIA, ESMP, RAP, Environmental Audits, etc.) by independent consultants;
- Where required, include environmental and social safeguard requirements in bidding documents prior to advertisement; safeguards clauses including preparation and implementation of construction phase ESMP should also be included in contractors' contracts, especially for civil works contracts;
- Follow up on implementation of all mitigation measures laid out management plans;
- Build capacity of project beneficiaries and stakeholders in environmental and social management;
- Conduct environmental and social monitoring of project activities at regular intervals;
- Prepare and submit periodic progress reports

7.1.1 Responsibility of Project Grantees (Beneficiaries) and/or Contractors

Project beneficiaries (grantees) and/or contractors will be responsible for the implementation of all management and mitigation measures laid out in specified E&S instruments (examples: ESMP, RAP) to address environmental, social, health and safety risks and impacts associated with their subprojects. This

responsibility will require the grantees/contractors to have in place dedicated environmental, social, health and safety specialist(s) to manage, monitor, document and report all ESHS issues on their projects in accordance with the approved ESMP or RAP

7.2 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The PIU will organize and oversee capacity building training for relevant Ministry staff, collaborating partners and other stakeholders with the aim of enhancing their capacity to effectively contribute to the implementation, management and sustainability of LWEP activities. Training will also be provided to project beneficiaries (grantees) and/or contractors to enable them plan, implement and monitor their subprojects in close alignment with the PDO. The training will, inter alia, sensitize them on: a) the Bank's safeguards policies, and b) the management of environmental, social, health and safety risks associated with the execution of civil works activities, and works involving the procurement, storage, application and disposal of agrochemicals and pesticides. The training program will help build and/or strengthen the requisite capacities within the grantees/contractors' organizations, as well as the implementing entities.

The PIU will either use its relevant staff or engage external consultants to provide the capacity building training. Such training will be provided periodically as may be deemed necessary throughout the project implementation period.

7.3 ESMF IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET

No.	Item/Activity	Cost in USD
1	Awareness and sensitization campaigns for farmers and communities including E&S manuals to guide farmers.	130,000
2	Capacity building for County Agricultural and Environmental Officers and Safeguards focal persons	111,000 <i>(From the training program above)</i>
3	Environmental and Social Audits	120,000
4	Equipment and Facilitation of Environmental and Social Unit (vehicles, desks, computers)	200,000
5	Mitigation of environmental and social impacts in the projects (including subsequent Environmental and Social Assessments for sub-projects)	350,000
6	Grievance Redress	50,000
7	Environmental monitoring and follow up	50,000
Total Budget Estimate for ESMF Implementation		1,011,000.00

Table 7: Estimate Cost to Implement the ESMF

7.4 INFORMATION DISCLOSURE, CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

7.4.1 Public Consultation Requirements of the ESIA Process

Consultations with affected people and communities and interested parties are the starting point for all projects, especially those projects with the potential environmental and social risks and impacts. .

The LWEP aims to provide a two-way communication channel between its stakeholders and the project's proponents. In keeping with the same, the process of public consultation and participation in the project will be on going throughout the project life cycle. Stakeholder consultations should be extensively reported in the SEP containing Project Context, Socioeconomic Baseline, Consultation and Communication Strategy etc. applying ESS 10. The SEP guidelines will be followed through the project cycles.

The Project will ensure the following stakeholders engagement procedures:

- LWEP will engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts.
- LWEP will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders and will provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation.

- The process of stakeholder engagement will involve the following, (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning how the engagement with stakeholders will take place; (iii) disclosure of information; (iv) consultation with stakeholders; (v) addressing and responding to grievances; and (vi) reporting to stakeholders.
- LWEP will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was considered, or the reasons why it was not.

7.5 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION MEETINGS HELD WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders are people, groups, or institutions, who are likely to be impacted either negatively or positively by the LWEP interventions or those who can influence the outcome of the Project directly or indirectly.

A stakeholders mapping was conducted prior to conducting consultation meetings. The stakeholders consulted institutions or organizations that will directly engage with the project beneficiaries during the implementation of the project. These secondary stakeholders are NGOs, community-based organizations, governance agencies, development partners, community leaders, and civil society in the project area. During preparation of the ESMF, consultations with the different stakeholders were held from March 7 to 9. The discussion and the concerns and responses are extensively documented in SEP. A summary of consultation meetings is given below:

- The engagement provided an overview of the project components and sought to gather feedback on the project and potential role or level of involvement of the stakeholder. Key recommendations included the following points.
- Regular monitoring of the project to ensure proper implementation;
- The police and other state actors addressing GBV issues should be well equipped
- Education for women and young girls on GBV prevention, response and SRHS.
- Support the setting up of One Stop shops to provide rural women with training, information and integrated services vital for food and nutrition security, sanitation and hygiene and reduction of women's unpaid care work
- Advance gender-sensitive rural infrastructure development for environmentally sustainable, labor saving and to enhance productivity for male and female of different ages, whether disable or not.

7.6 PROPOSED DISCLOSURE PLAN

During consultation with the different stakeholders, LWEP registered all the concerns raised. Majority of the concerns are on assistance to be given to project beneficiaries and timely disbursement. LWEP has incorporated those concerns in the project implementation plan.

As a standard practice, the Project safeguard documents including ESMF, SEP, LMP released for disclosure are accompanied by making available the registers of comments and suggestions from the public that are subsequently documented by the PIU in a formal manner. The PIU will continue applying the similar approach to disclosure for any additional safeguard appraisal materials that will be prepared as part of the project development. The PIU will continue applying the similar approach to disclosure for any additional E&S appraisal materials that will be prepared as part of the project development. The ESMF in English will be made available for public review in accordance with the World Bank requirements. The ESMF in English will be made available for public review for the period of 60 days in accordance with the World Bank and standard international requirements. The ESMF will be released in the public domain simultaneously with the other safeguard documents and will be available for stakeholder review during the same period of time, i.e. 60 days. Distribution of the disclosure materials will be through making them available at venues and locations frequented by the community and places to which public have unhindered access. Free printed copies of the safeguard documents in English will be made accessible for the general public at the following locations:

- i. LWEP Offices at the MGCSP
- ii. The Superintendent Offices in the affected counties
- iii. The local Project offices in the affected counties;
- iv. Other designated public locations to ensure wide dissemination of the materials.
- v. Newspapers, posters, radio, television;
- vi. Information centers and exhibitions or other visual displays;
- vii. Brochures, leaflets, posters, nontechnical summary documents and reports;
- viii. Official correspondence, meetings

Electronic copies of the safeguard documents will be placed on the project website. This will allow stakeholders with access to Internet to view information about the planned development and to initiate their involvement in the public consultation process.

The website will be equipped with an on-line feedback feature that will enable readers to leave their comments in relation to the disclosed materials. The mechanisms which will be used for facilitating input from stakeholders will include press releases and announcements in the media, notifications of the aforementioned disclosed materials to local, regional and national NGOs as well as other interested parties.

7.7 GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

In compliance with applicable national laws and essentially the World Bank's ESS10, a project specific grievance redress mechanism shall be set up to handle complaints and issues. This process would be specially designed to record, collate, review and redress stakeholders' concerns, complaints and grievances. This process will be carried out using dedicated communication materials (specifically, a GRM brochure or pamphlet) which will be developed to help stakeholders become familiar with the grievance redress

channels and procedures. The suggestion box, to be used to gather feedback from stakeholders shall also be used to collect complaints. A grievance register has to be developed and maintained to capture and track grievances from submission to resolution and communication with complainants.

7.7.1 MANAGING GRIEVANCES: PROCEDURES AND STEPS

The principles and procedures for managing grievances in this project are integral part of the community consultation and stakeholder engagement plan. The project will endeavor to investigate and address complaints as they are lodged. The following procedures represent the project's stepwise approach to registering, investigating, and addressing grievances and complaints in this project.

The six steps demonstrate a typical grievances resolution process.

Step 1: Uptake. Project stakeholders will be able to provide feedback and report complaints through several channels such as filling up grievance forms, reporting grievances to implementing entities, submitting grievances via email address or phone number made available by the service providers and technical counterparts and via the boxes stipulated for the grievance uptake. Complaints can be channeled through the following mediums:

- a. In person at the offices indicated above
- b. **Phone Calls & Text Messages** through the contact details provided in the updated SEP prepared during project implementation.
- c. **Suggestion box:** located at the office of the PIU, MGCSP, technical partners, coordinating entities, CBOs.

Step 2: Acknowledging, Sorting and processing. Each counterpart or service provider receiving the complaint will conduct a prompt sorting and processing of all grievances. The processing will involve the internal escalation process to specific desks to review, resolve and respond to grievances raised. All complaints, no matter the medium lodged, will be recorded in a grievance form with the assistance of the assigned officers. The assigned officers shall acknowledge receipt of the grievance, within 10 working days of receipt, if the grievance is considered a low risk or non-project related complaint (information request, updates, clarifications etc) could be resolved and closed out on the spot. Where grievances require investigations, the assigned officers will inform the complainant of the response timeline. Depending on the level at which the grievance is being resolved, the assigned officer will inform and set up the grievance committee meeting to commence investigations. Those who cannot read or write (illiterates) should be encouraged to also seek the assistance of his/her family member or a trusted friend to ensure transparency.

Step 3: Verification, investigation and action. This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine the facts surrounding the issue and verifying the complaint's validity, and then developing a proposed resolution. It is expected that many or most grievances would be resolved at this stage. All activities undertaken during this and the other steps will be fully documented, and any resolution logged in the register.

Step 4: Resolution and sign-off at the level of the receiving entity, other than the MGCSP: Once a complaint has been investigated and the committee has reached a conclusion, the results and proposed course of action to resolve the grievance will be communicated to the complainant through a written letter

and in person in the language understood by the complainant. If the complainant is satisfied with the proposed decision, he/she will be required to sign a statement confirming that the complainant is satisfied and this will be the condition to close out a case/ grievance. Again, for unlettered persons, any of the family members, community leaders or elders can serve as a witness and assist the person to affix his/her finger print to the document if required. The assigned offer at the office of the technical counterpart or service provider will also record the information, pertaining to the decisions for resolution taken in the grievance log, and submit the same to the PIU at MGCSP for reporting.

Step 5: Grievance redress at the level of the PIU at the MGCSP: If the complaint has not been resolved by mutual agreement, a re-assessment may be undertaken if new information becomes available in support of the claim/complaint. Grievances can be forwarded to the MGCSP redress if:

- a. the complainant is still not satisfied with the resolution
- b. the complainant does not receive a response within 10 working days

The PIU will also act on grievances received directly from the general public and those referred. The safeguards officer will formally acknowledge the grievance and log it for tracking. The PIU will act on the complaint/grievance within ten (10) working days (two weeks) from the day of its filing. Once the grievance is resolved, the PIU will implement Step 4.

Step 6: Lodging of grievance at a National Court of Jurisdiction: If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the decisions of the project, he/she can, as a last resort, appeal to a court of competent jurisdiction for redress. The Laws of Liberia allows any aggrieved person the right of access to the Court of law.

7.7.2 Database, Storage and Tracking of Information

The LWEP GRM database will be a secure cloud-based portal that only the MGCSP and LWEP can access for review and screening of complaints received. Using an online dashboard, and secure login, approved users will be able to: (a) view complaints, (b) enter new complaints into the system, (c) classify complaints, (d) update what action has been or is being taken, and (e) update the status of the complaint, for example whether it is “open”, “closed”, etc. Different users will have different security access to this site.

The LWEP MIS team will develop this database to manage complaints and grievance redress for the project. This platform will be used by the LWEP GRM officer and other approved institutional users to track and exercise oversight on the collection, investigation, and resolution process of each grievance. The grievance module shall include personal identification details of complainants, reported grievance(s), and grievances resolved.

At the community level, a simplified Log Sheet will be used to register and keep track of complaints and issues that have been lodged through the GRM

7.7.3 Grievance Reporting and Monitoring

The LWEP Project Coordinator is responsible for monitoring and reporting on project-related grievances and complaints. A quarterly grievance report will be compiled and shared with the World Bank and other stakeholders. At the minimum, the report will include the following indicators:

1. Number of open cases at the beginning of the Quarter
2. Number of new cases during the period
3. Number of resolved cases at the end of the Quarter
4. Open cases at the end of the Quarter
5. Grievances by community/county and category of complaints
6. Average response time from the lodging of complaint to the agreement on solutions with complainant
7. Average response time from the lodging of complaint to the implementation of the agreed solution
8. % of true and false claims
9. Number of grievances resolved by order of mechanisms

8 INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

It is expected that some of the beneficiaries of the LWEP will engage in agricultural activities. They may use pesticide to increase their yields. This however triggers ESS 3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management. There is a need for the preparation of a pest management plan in place to develop capacity and provide support to enable project beneficiaries that will engage in agricultural activities to improve productivity and the quality of their produce. It will further reduce post-harvest losses through the institution of efficient post-harvest handling mechanisms and the facilitation of access to high value markets to ensure appreciable income levels for the farmers. The intervention is expected to result in increased productivity coupled with reduced post-harvest losses, improved product range and quality, more efficient processing and improved marketing, thereby generating additional incomes for producers.

The objective of the Pest Management Plan is to promote the use of a combination of environmentally and socially friendly practices (hygienic, cultural, biological or natural control mechanisms and the judicious use of chemicals) and reduce reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides and ensure that health, social and environmental hazards associated with pesticides are minimized under the Project and within acceptable limit requirements.

The specific objectives of the Plan are to:

- i. Promote the use of Integrated Pest Management options (hygienic, cultural, biological or natural control mechanisms and the use of agro chemicals as a last resort) in pest control;
- ii. Effectively manage and strengthen capacity amongst participating farmers in safe handling and use of pesticides;
- iii. Provide for implementation of an IPM action plan in the event that serious pest management issues are encountered, and/or the introduction of technologies is seen to lead to a significant decrease in the application of pesticides;
- iv. Effectively monitor pesticide use and pest issues amongst project beneficiaries who will engage in agricultural activities;
- v. Assess the capacity of the project to promote and support safe, effective, socially and environmentally sound pest management and to provide for appropriate institutional capacity support recommendations;
- vi. Ensure compliance with ESS-3.

8.1 PROJECT COMPONENTS LIKELY TO TRIGGER PEST MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS INTEGRATED

The project component likely to trigger pest management is Component 3, particularly sub component 3b. This component will finance resilience livelihood support and provide grants for women-led community groups. It is anticipated that grants provided for women will be used for agricultural related activities, which will trigger the procurement and use of pesticides.

8.2 KEY POTENTIAL RISKS AND CONTROL MEASURES (TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE, HANDLING, APPLICATION AND DISPOSAL)

The use of pesticides during agricultural activities under sub component 3b has potential negative impact or risk on the environment if not properly managed. Every pesticide applicator should understand the hazards of transporting pesticides and the procedures for minimizing those risks. Pesticides are moved by manufacturers to distributors, from retailers to end users, and from storage sites to job sites. Transportation-related accidents can happen at any point along the way. The first line of defense is recognizing how to prevent these transportation mishaps. When accidents occur, the timing of your response could determine the size of the spill.

The key potential risks in the use of pesticides include following:

- pollution of water resources and aquatic life from pesticide usage;
- Public health concerns from water-borne diseases such as malaria and bilharzia that can trigger the use of pesticides in controlling their vectors;
- Poisoning from improper use of pesticides by farmers and farm assistants;
- Poisoning from improper disposal of pesticide containers;
- Production losses from threats from other crop pests and diseases;
- Abuses associated with pesticide supply and sales; and
- General health and safety of farmers and environmental hazards.

Other potential health hazards associated with the transportation, storage, application and disposal of pesticides are given in the table below.

Table 7.1: The potential hazards associated with pesticides use

Hazards to health	Hazards to Environment	Hazards to crops
<p>Acute poisoning: Symptoms of acute poisoning include severe headaches, nausea, depression vomiting, diarrhea, eye irritation, severe fatigue and skin rashes.</p> <p>Chronic ill-health problems can affect all persons exposed to pesticides, either because of their occupation or because they live near areas of use. Such problems can include neurological disorders, cancers, infertility and birth defects and other reproductive disorders.</p>	<p>Contamination of drinking</p> <p>Water and ground water. Surface water contamination kills fish.^[L]Soil contamination.</p> <p>Wildlife and domestic animals can be killed by spray drift or drinking contaminated water. Exposure may also cause infertility and behavioral disruption. Persistence in the environment and accumulation in the food chain leads to diverse environmental impacts. Loss of biodiversity in natural and agricultural environments</p>	<p>Pesticide resistance:^[L]species of insects and mites, plant diseases; and weeds are resistant to pesticides (FAO). Resistance can create treadmill syndrome, as farmers use increasing inputs to little effect, while elimination of beneficial insects causes secondary pest outbreaks.</p> <p>High cost of pesticides can lead to falling incomes for farmers: newer products are often safer, but are more expensive.^[L]Farming communities lose knowledge of good horticultural practices and become dependent on expensive external inputs.</p>

8.3 CONTROLLING PESTICIDES USED IN CROP PROTECTION:

Every pesticide used in Liberia is subjected to registration and approval by the EPA and the relevant government agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture. However due to porous border control and the fact that EPA do not have the requisite staff stationed at entry or customs points to regulate the products, some pesticides may enter the country without verification.

In order to ensure the efficient use of the pesticides for the fight against crop pests/diseases, the maximum residues limits (MRL) have been defined by European markets/EU standards, if not it is the codex alimentarius that is considered. Liberia is required to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS). Never carry liquid pesticides in the passenger area because spilled chemicals may cause harmful fumes that can be inhaled. A pesticide spilled in the cab is difficult to remove and may lead to long-term inhalation exposure.

The following are some the pesticides control measures to be considered:

- Keep pesticide containers in the original designated location.
- Only carry a minimum amount of pesticide products on a vehicle at any one time.
- Secure and protect pesticide containers against punctures and impacts from items packed closely together.
- Always carry product labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) when transporting pesticides on highways. The SDS contains critical information for the driver and emergency responders after a pesticide spill. It lists steps to safely deal with the spill, including the personal protective equipment (PPE) to use, whether the spill carries an inhalation or explosion risk, decontamination procedures, and emergency telephone numbers. Have the labels and SDSs well organized and alphabetically arranged by product name to allow quick access in the event of a spill.

- Always carry a spill kit with the items you will need to handle a spill during transport. (The contents of a spill kit are discussed later.) Inspect containers to ensure they have legible and attached labels, tight closures, and pesticide-free outside surfaces. Secure application equipment (such as hand sprayers, backpack sprayers, and spreaders) during transport

8.4 PEST MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

It is anticipated that some of the beneficiaries of the project will engage in agricultural activities as a mean of empowering themselves and improving their livelihood. However, those to engage in agricultural activities

Are not expected to require significant pest management nor is the project contemplating activities that may lead to significant or specific pest and pesticide management issues. Hence, general pest problems and their management are covered under this plan.

Common pests expected in the project areas are rodents and migratory and outbreak pests such as locusts, caterpillar, nematode, aphid and mealy bug. IPM strategies are recommended and used by some farmers as much as it is possible because there is no one control practice that can provide acceptable control of the target pest.

Rodents

Rodents, particularly the field rats (*rattus rattus*), the small house mice (*rattus norvegicus*) and multi-mammate shamba rat, (*Mastomys natalensis*) are key pests of food crops. The most affected crops are pawpaw and cabbage. The damage caused by rodents starts at early booting and continues through the mature stage, as well as the storage stage.

Farmers are strongly advised to do the following to reduce potential damage to crops and the environment:

- Weeding for clean bunds and fields regular surveillance. The earlier the presence of rodents is observed, the cheaper and simpler any subsequent action will be and losses will remain negligible.
- Storage Sanitation. It is much easier to notice the presence of rodents if the storage is clean and tidy.
- Proofing i.e. making storage area rat-proof in order to discourage rodents from entering.
- Trapping. Place the traps in strategic positions.
- Use recommended rodenticide. However, bait poisons should be used only if rats are present in storages or buildings, use single-dose anticoagulant poisons, preferably as ready-made baits.
- Encourage team approach for effectiveness. The larger the area managed or controlled with poison, the more effective the impact.
- Predation. Keep cats in stores and homesteads.

Locusts

Locusts live and breed in numerous grassland plains. During periods with favourable weather, locusts multiply rapidly and form large swarms that can cause huge damage to plants in a very short period of time.

Grasshopper has become increasingly damaging in some parts of the country. There being no research done on the management of the pest, farmers are forced to use any recommended insecticide whenever outbreaks occur.

Invasive Pest Species

Invasive alien species have a huge adverse effect on the production of major food crops such as vegetables and pawpaw. Climate change and agricultural intensification (introduction of increased fertilizer use, introduction of new crops and varieties, changes in land use and landscape etc.) could trigger the occurrence of new pest problems. This requires frequent pest risk surveillance.

9 WASTE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Increasing world population combined with increasing human activities and consumption patterns has led to massive waste generation, and created serious waste management problems across the world. Today, the world is confronted and threatened by wastes everywhere and is struggling to find concrete solutions to the waste management problems. But what is meant by “waste”?

Waste is defined as any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard (Amended Waste Framework Directive (EU) 2018/581).

9.1 CATEGORY OF WASTE GENERATED

Generated wastes can be classified by type and by nature. By type or source of generation, waste can be divided into four categories: industrial waste, chemical waste, domestic waste, and agricultural waste. By its nature or inherent property, waste can be classified as ‘hazardous or nonhazardous, biodegradable or nonbiodegradable.’ Industrial waste is a term used to describe material considered to be no longer of use after a manufacturing process has been completed. There is a wide variety of sectors of industrial manufacturing that produce waste. For example, fossil-fuel power stations/plants are among the major sources of industrial waste. Wastewater discharge from these plants usually contains significant levels of metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium and chromium, as well as arsenic, nitrogen compounds, etc.

Commercial Waste can be defined as any waste other than domestic waste. It is usually generated as a result of the operation of a business or commercial entity (e.g.: emptied food containers and wrappers generated at entertainment centers, hotels, enterprises, companies).

Domestic Waste is waste that is generated as a result of the ordinary day-to-day use of domestic premises. In other words, domestic waste is the waste generated in homes/dwellings.

Agricultural Waste is waste produced as a result of various agricultural operations. It includes manure and other wastes from farms, poultry houses and slaughterhouses; harvest waste, fertilizer run-off from fields; pesticides that enter into water, air or soil; and salt and silt drained from fields (Glossary of Environmental Statistics, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 67, United Nations, New York, 1997).

By **its nature or inherent property**, waste can also be classified as either hazardous or nonhazardous, biodegradable or non-biodegradable. Under environmental legislation, waste is considered ‘hazardous’ when it contains substances or has properties that might make it harmful to human health or the environment.

If a waste is **biodegradable**, it means it can disintegrate or melt away in the environment over a short period of time. But if a waste is **non-biodegradable**, then it means that it can take a very long time period to disintegrate or melt away in the environment if it ever does. Examples of non-biodegradable waste includes plastic materials. Crop residues and debris are biodegradable.

In the context of the Liberia Women Empowerment Project, the category of generated waste that will be of concern for management is agricultural waste, which is potentially associated with Component 2 livelihoods initiatives, particularly agriculture and/or agribusiness processing activities that are likely to be proposed and undertaken as sub-projects by some women groups in the project areas.

9.2 KEY POTENTIAL RISKS (COLLECTION, STORAGE, TRANSPORT AND DISPOSAL)

The improper management of the waste management cycle – from collection through storage and transportation to disposal – carries with it enormous potential risks. At the collection stage, the improper handling of waste poses the risk of work-related disorders and injuries, such as respiratory problems, infectious diseases, gastrointestinal issues, muscle pain, irritation of eyes and skins, pulmonary problems, etc. to the waste collectors. When waste collectors are infected due to their mishandling of waste (not separating hazardous from nonhazardous waste, not using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)), they stand a high risk of not only getting infected themselves but also the probability of affecting those with whom they come into contact.

Apart from the health and safety hazards associated with poor waste collection practices, improper storage, transportation and disposal of waste carries even higher and the far-reaching risks of causing surface and ground water contamination, soil and air contamination, and the spread of infectious diseases

9.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL)

Both the 1986 Constitution and the Environmental Management Laws of Liberia (2003) are the main national policy framework that make provisions for managing the environment and natural resources of the country. Effective management of the environment entails managing any and all wastes that affect the quality of the physical, biological and social environments. The challenge, however, is that policies and laws on environmental management exist, but their application is rarely monitored and enforced.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection would need to ensure that the environmental and social aspects of the Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP) are carried out in compliance with established national and international waste management practices.

9.4 WASTE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

Approaches to effective waste management would include consideration of the five stages of the waste hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycle, recovery and disposal. Prevention is the least harmful to the environment and disposal is the last resort with the most adverse impact on the environment.

The prevention approach to waste management does not necessarily mean ‘produce or use nothing.’ Rather, it encompasses using less material, and includes using less hazardous materials that could be harmful to humans and the environment. This approach could involve, among other things, encouraging users to keep products for longer time period where possible.

Re-use: this approach encourages the cleaning, repairing and refurbishing of items/materials in order to prolong their use.

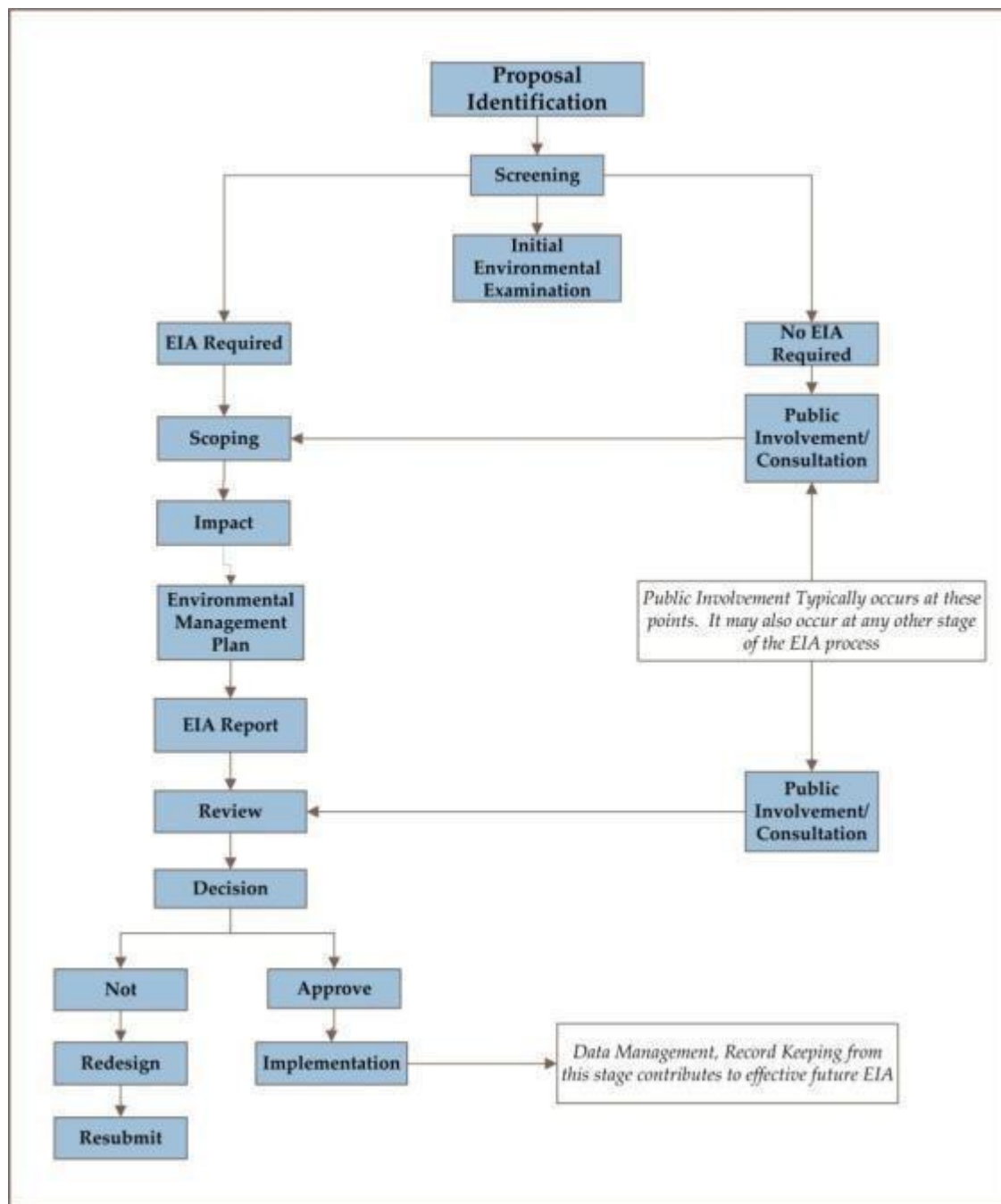
Recycling as a waste management approach is perhaps the most popular of the waste management stages. It involves the conversion of waste into their original use or new substances and product. Recycling has become a growing industry that provides hundreds of jobs around the globe in addition to enhancing waste management.

Recovery or reclaiming occurs when waste is used to backfill or replace another material. This practice is common in land reclamation and construction activities.

Disposal: as mentioned earlier, this is the last means of resort in the waste management cycle. Disposal involves discarding anything that cannot be recovered, and includes incineration and landfill.

The Liberia Women Empowerment Project is rated as Moderate on the environmental assessment category, meaning any potential adverse environmental and social risks/impacts of the project will be site-specific, and easily amendable through the application of sound mitigation measures, including the use of appropriate PPE when handling agrochemicals and pesticides, and the safe transportation, storage, application and disposal of used agrochemical and pesticide containers. Thus, the project approach to waste management will include prevention or minimization of waste generation, and the safe handling and disposal of the agricultural waste that would be generated from implementation of livelihood activities. Relevant safeguards instruments will be prepared as required to manage all waste that would be generated from the project activities.

10 ANNEX 1: ESIA FLOW CHART



11 ANNEX 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (ESMP) CHECKLIST FOR SUB-PROJECTS

Inspection Items	YES/NO	Remarks (Specify location, good practices, problem observe, possible causes of non-conformity and proposed corrective/preventative actions, etc.)
A. Environmental Management		
1.0 Regulatory Compliances		
1.1 Appropriate permissions/ approvals/ clearances obtained before commencement of project activities	[] Yes/ [] No	Attach copies during the assessment period
1.2 EPA permit obtained for civil works?	[] Yes/ [] No	Attach copy
1.3 Construction Environmental Management Plan developed prior to construction works.	[] Yes/ [] No	
2.0 Water Quality		
2.3 Appropriate measures taken to prevent contamination of surface water.	[] Yes/ [] No	
2.4 Pesticides stored in bunded areas	[] Yes/ [] No	
3.0 Waste Management		
3.1 Waste Management Procedure is developed for management of both hazardous and non-hazardous waste?	[] Yes/ [] No	Attach copy of waste management plan
3.2 Installation of garbage bins for bio-degradable, recyclable and unrecyclable?	[] Yes/ [] No	
3.3 Disposal of hazardous waste at designated disposal sites?	[] Yes/ [] No	
3.4 All waste from worksite are removed from working areas	[] Yes/ [] No	
All waste from worksite are stacked in designated storage areas	[] Yes/ [] No	
4.0 Noise		
4.1 Construction site properly barricaded?	[] Yes/ [] No;	
4.2 Only well-maintained mechanical equipment is operated on-site?	[] Yes/ [] No;	
4.3 Shut down or throttle down to a minimum equipment that may be intermittent in use?	[] Yes/ [] No;	
4.4 Scheduled noisy activities during the morning hours informing the locals when noisy activities are planned?	[] Yes/ [] No;	

4.5 Provide ear plugs or mufflers for workers to reduce vibration on construction equipment?	[] Yes/ [] No;	
5.0 Occupational Health and safety		
5.1 Risk assessment is conducted and analyzed for the given task?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.3 Occupational Health and Safety Standards are in Place?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.5 Installation of warning/safety Signs in critical work areas to restrict or prevent access?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.6 Installation of Diversion Signs to warn pedestrians/ motorists?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.7 Installation of Danger Signs to warn pedestrians/ motorists?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.8 Safety Officer is available onsite and knowledgeable of associated risks/hazards?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.9 Standard Operating Procedure for the given task available onsite?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.10 Daily Tool Box Talk is conducted and recorded?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.11 Construction Crew is equipped with appropriate Safety Gear or Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs)?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.12 Safety precaution are adhered while working at heights?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.13 Trained First Aider available to administer first aids?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.14 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in place?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.15 Any accident/incident/Near miss occurred during work on site?	[] Yes/ [] No	
Accident/Near miss recorded and reported?	[] Yes/ [] No	Attach records/photographs
5.17 Workers are aware of Health and Hygiene practices?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.18 Workers are provided with safe drinking water?	[] Yes/ [] No	
5.19 Workers are provided with appropriate resting area/shed during lunch/rest time?	[] Yes/ [] No	
6.0 Flora and Fauna		
6.1 Critical biodiversity areas avoided during clearing/construction works	[] Yes/ [] No	
7.0 Social Management		
7.1 Public sensitization conducted?	[] Yes/ [] No	attach public sensitization plan
7.2 Information of working hours and type of work shared with group members and contracted workers	[] Yes/ [] No	
7.3 Local Un-skilled workers have been engaged?	[] Yes/ [] No	

7.4 Their payment is made on?	[] Daily; [] Weekly; [] Monthly basis	
7.5 Reported cases of Child Labor?	[] Yes/ [] No	
7.6 Reported cases of sexual exploitation?	[] Yes/ [] No	
7.7 Construction workers are aware about Communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, STD, Venereal diseases?	[] Yes/ [] No	
7.8 Places/ Spaces/ Objects of Historic, Cultural, and Religious Sites found in/around the working areas?	[] Yes/ [] No; If Yes, To whom and How it was reported	
379 Is Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) in place?	[] Yes/ [] No	Document grievances (Workforce, Project Affected Persons) and conflict resolution activities;
7.10 Number of Grievances Redressed?		Specify:
7.11 Any case of dissatisfied recipient?	[] Yes/ [] No;	Reasons for dissatisfaction:
7.12 Number of Grievance Redressals Pending?		Specify:
7.13 Reasons for pending cases		State Reason (s): 1. _____ _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ _____ _____
Attach copies of the GRM Register for the reporting duration		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Signed by Environment Specialist:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Signed by Project Manager:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> </div> </div>		

12 ANNEX 3: INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT INSTRUMENTS

1. This annex describes the elements of a resettlement plan or an abbreviated resettlement plan that should be followed to address any Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement that may occur during the implementation of the project. These mitigation plans must be developed and implemented before any resettlement impact would occur and before any civil work would commence.

Resettlement Plan

2. The scope and level of detail of the resettlement plan vary with the magnitude and complexity of resettlement. The plan is based on up-to-date and reliable information about (a) the proposed resettlement and its impacts on the displaced persons and other adversely affected groups, and (b) the legal issues involved in resettlement. The resettlement plan covers the elements below, as relevant. When any element is not relevant to project circumstances, it should be noted in the resettlement plan.

3. Description of the project. General description of the project and identification of the project area.

4. Potential impacts. Identification of

- (a) the project component or activities that give rise to resettlement;
- (b) the zone of impact of such component or activities;
- (c) the alternatives considered to avoid or minimize resettlement; and
- (d) the mechanisms established to minimize resettlement, to the extent possible, during project implementation.

5. Objectives. The main objectives of the resettlement program.

6. Socioeconomic studies. The findings of socioeconomic studies to be conducted in the early stages of project preparation and with the involvement of potentially displaced people, including

- (a) the results of a census survey covering
 - (i) current occupants of the affected area to establish a basis for the design of the resettlement program and to exclude subsequent inflows of people from eligibility for compensation and resettlement assistance;
 - (ii) standard characteristics of displaced households, including a description of production systems, labor, and household organization; and baseline information on livelihoods (including, as relevant, production levels and income derived from both formal and informal economic activities) and standards of living (including health status) of the displaced population;
 - (iii) the magnitude of the expected loss—total or partial—of assets, and the extent of displacement, physical or economic;
 - (iv) information on vulnerable groups or persons as provided for in OP 4.12, Para. 8, for whom special provisions may have to be made; and
 - (v) provisions to update information on the displaced people's livelihoods and standards of living at regular intervals so that the latest information is available at the time of their displacement.
- (b) Other studies describing the following

- (i) land tenure and transfer systems, including an inventory of common property natural resources from which people derive their livelihoods and sustenance, non-title-based usufruct systems (including fishing, grazing, or use of forest areas) governed by local recognized land allocation mechanisms, and any issues raised by different tenure systems in the project area;
- (ii) the patterns of social interaction in the affected communities, including social networks and social support systems, and how they will be affected by the project;
- (iii) public infrastructure and social services that will be affected; and
- (iv) social and cultural characteristics of displaced communities, including a description of formal and informal institutions (e.g., community organizations, ritual groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)) that may be relevant to the consultation strategy and to designing and implementing the resettlement activities.

7. Legal framework. The findings of an analysis of the legal framework, covering

- (a) the scope of the power of eminent domain and the nature of compensation associated with it, in terms of both the valuation methodology and the timing of payment;
- (c) the applicable legal and administrative procedures, including a description of the remedies available to displaced persons in the judicial process and the normal timeframe for such procedures, and any available alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that may be relevant to resettlement under the project;
- (d) relevant law (including customary and traditional law) governing land tenure, valuation of assets and losses, compensation, and natural resource usage rights; customary personal law related to displacement; and environmental laws and social welfare legislation;
- (e) laws and regulations relating to the agencies responsible for implementing resettlement activities;
- (f) gaps, if any, between local laws covering eminent domain and resettlement and the Bank's resettlement policy, and the mechanisms to bridge such gaps; and
- (g) any legal steps necessary to ensure the effective implementation of resettlement activities under the project, including, as appropriate, a process for recognizing claims to legal rights to land—including claims that derive from customary law and traditional usage (see OP 4.12, para.15 b).

8. Institutional Framework. The findings of an analysis of the institutional framework covering

- (a) the identification of agencies responsible for resettlement activities and NGOs that may have a role in project implementation;
- (b) an assessment of the institutional capacity of such agencies and NGOs; and
- (c) any steps that are proposed to enhance the institutional capacity of agencies and NGOs responsible for resettlement implementation.

9. Eligibility. Definition of displaced persons and criteria for determining their eligibility for compensation and other resettlement assistance, including relevant cut-off dates.

10. Valuation of and compensation for losses. The methodology to be used in valuing losses to determine their replacement cost; and a description of the proposed types and levels of compensation under local law and such supplementary measures as are necessary to achieve replacement cost for lost assets.¹

11. Resettlement measures. A description of the packages of compensation and other resettlement measures that will assist each category of eligible displaced persons to achieve the objectives of the policy (see OP 4.12, Para. 6). In addition to being technically and economically feasible, the resettlement packages should be compatible with the cultural preferences of the displaced persons, and prepared in consultation with them.

12. Site selection, site preparation, and relocation. Alternative relocation sites considered and explanation of those selected, covering

- (a) institutional and technical arrangements for identifying and preparing relocation sites, whether rural or urban, for which a combination of productive potential, locational advantages, and other factors is at least comparable to the advantages of the old sites, with an estimate of the time needed to acquire and transfer land and ancillary resources;
- (b) any measures necessary to prevent land speculation or influx of ineligible persons at the selected sites;
- (b) procedures for physical relocation under the project, including timetables for site preparation and transfer; and
- (c) legal arrangements for regularizing tenure and transferring titles to resettlers.

13. Housing, infrastructure, and social services. Plans to provide (or to finance resettlers' provision of) housing, infrastructure (e.g., water supply, feeder roads), and social services (e.g., schools, health services);² plans to ensure comparable services to host populations; any necessary site development, engineering, and architectural designs for these facilities.

14. Environmental protection and management. A description of the boundaries of the relocation area; and an assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed resettlement³ and measures to mitigate and manage these impacts (coordinated as appropriate with the environmental assessment of the main investment requiring the resettlement).

15. Community participation. Involvement of resettlers and host communities,⁴ including

- (a) a description of the strategy for consultation with and participation of resettlers and hosts in the design and implementation of the resettlement activities;
- (b) a summary of the views expressed and how these views were taken into account in preparing the resettlement plan;
- (c) a review of the resettlement alternatives presented and the choices made by displaced persons regarding options available to them, including choices related to forms of compensation and resettlement assistance, to relocating as individuals families or as parts of preexisting communities or kinship groups, to sustaining existing patterns of group organization, and to retaining access to cultural property (e.g. places of worship, pilgrimage centers, cemeteries);⁵ and
- (d) institutionalized arrangements by which displaced people can communicate their concerns to project authorities throughout planning and implementation, and measures to ensure that such vulnerable groups as indigenous people, ethnic minorities, the landless, and women are adequately represented.

16. Integration with host populations. Measures to mitigate the impact of resettlement on any host communities, including

- (a) consultations with host communities and local governments;
- (b) arrangements for prompt tendering of any payment due the hosts for land or other assets provided to resettlers;
- (c) arrangements for addressing any conflict that may arise between resettlers and host communities; and
- (d) any measures necessary to augment services (e.g., education, water, health, and production services) in host communities to make them at least comparable to services available to resettlers.

17. Grievance procedures. Affordable and accessible procedures for third-party settlement of disputes arising from resettlement; such grievance mechanisms should take into account the availability of judicial recourse and community and traditional dispute settlement mechanisms.

18. Organizational responsibilities. The organizational framework for implementing resettlement, including identification of agencies responsible for delivery of resettlement measures and provision of services; arrangements to ensure appropriate coordination between agencies and jurisdictions involved in implementation; and any measures (including technical assistance) needed to strengthen the implementing agencies' capacity to design and carry out resettlement activities; provisions for the transfer to local authorities or resettlers themselves of responsibility for managing facilities and services provided under the project and for transferring other such responsibilities from the resettlement implementing agencies, when appropriate.

19. Implementation schedule. An implementation schedule covering all resettlement activities from preparation through implementation, including target dates for the achievement of expected benefits to resettlers and hosts and terminating the various forms of assistance. The schedule should indicate how the resettlement activities are linked to the implementation of the overall project.

20. Costs and budget. Tables showing itemized cost estimates for all resettlement activities, including allowances for inflation, population growth, and other contingencies; timetables for expenditures; sources of funds; and arrangements for timely flow of funds, and funding for resettlement, if any, in areas outside the jurisdiction of the implementing agencies.

21. Monitoring and evaluation. Arrangements for monitoring of resettlement activities by the implementing agency, supplemented by independent monitors as considered appropriate by the Bank, to ensure complete and objective information; performance monitoring indicators to measure inputs, outputs, and outcomes for resettlement activities; involvement of the displaced persons in the monitoring process; evaluation of the impact of resettlement for a reasonable period after all resettlement and related development activities have been completed; using the results of resettlement monitoring to guide subsequent implementation.

Abbreviated Resettlement Plan

22. An abbreviated plan covers the following minimum elements: 6 and maximum of 200

- (a) a census survey of displaced persons and valuation of assets;
- (b) description of compensation and other resettlement assistance to be provided;

- (c) consultations with displaced people about acceptable alternatives;
- (d) (d) institutional responsibility for implementation and procedures for grievance redress;
- (e) arrangements for monitoring and implementation; and
- (f) a timetable and budget.

1. With regard to land and structures, "replacement cost" is defined as follows: For agricultural land, it is the pre-project or pre-displacement, whichever is higher, market value of land of equal productive potential or use located in the vicinity of the affected land, plus the cost of preparing the land to levels similar to those of the affected land, plus the cost of any registration and transfer taxes. For land in urban areas, it is the pre-displacement market value of land of equal size and use, with similar or improved public infrastructure facilities and services and located in the vicinity of the affected land, plus the cost of any registration and transfer taxes. For houses and other structures, it is the market cost of the materials to build a replacement structure with an area and quality similar to or better than those of the affected structure, or to repair a partially affected structure, plus the cost of transporting building materials to the construction site, plus the cost of any labor and contractors' fees, plus the cost of any registration and transfer taxes. In determining the replacement cost, depreciation of the asset and the value of salvage materials are not taken into account, nor is the value of benefits to be derived from the project deducted from the valuation of an affected asset. Where domestic law does not meet the standard of compensation at full replacement cost, compensation under domestic law is supplemented by additional measures so as to meet the replacement cost standard..

2. Provision of health care services, particularly for pregnant women, infants, and the elderly, may be important during and after relocation to prevent increases in morbidity and mortality due to malnutrition, the psychological stress of being uprooted, and the increased risk of disease.

3. Negative impacts that should be anticipated and mitigated include, for rural resettlement, deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, sanitation, and pollution; for urban resettlement, projects should address such density-related issues as transportation capacity and access to potable water, sanitation systems, and health facilities.

4. Experience has shown that local NGOs often provide valuable assistance and ensure viable community participation.

5. In case some of the displaced persons lose more than 10% of their productive assets or require physical relocation, the plan also covers a socioeconomic survey and income restoration measures.

13 ANNEX 4: TERMS OF REFERENCE (GENERIC ESIA)

The TOR evolves from the scoping process of ESIA. The critical issues identified during the Scoping exercise, to be carried out in ESIA study, should be included in the TOR. The project proponent should prepare a TOR that both delineates the scope of the ESIA and provides

complete guidance for undertaking the ESIA study. After approval from the authorizing agencies the TOR becomes an official document. In the ESIA report review process the TOR serves as a standard document against which the subject matter covered by the ESIA report will be evaluated.

The consultant will perform the following tasks:

- Carry out a description of the biophysical characteristics of the environment in which the planned activity will take place, and highlight the major constraints that need to be taken into account during construction as well as during operation of the facility;
- Carry out a description of the socio-economic environment of the planned investment, and highlight the major constraints that need to be taken into account during construction as well as during operation of the facility;
- Assess the potential environmental and social impacts due to construction, operation, or rehabilitation activities, and recommend mitigation measures as appropriate, including cost estimates;
- Assess the potential environmental and social impacts due to the provision of water supply and sanitation facilities that might be needed for the planned facility and make appropriate recommendations;
- Assess the need for liquid and solid waste collection, disposal and management in the facility, and make recommendations accordingly;
- Discuss and assess alternative project designs and make recommendations;
- Carry out a review of the respective national environmental policies, legislation, regulatory and administrative frameworks in conjunction with the World Bank's safeguard policies, indicate which of these policies is triggered by the planned activity, identify any gaps that might exist, and make recommendations as to how potential gaps should be bridged in the context of the planned activity;
- Review the Conventions and Protocols to which the country is a signatory;
- Assess the country's environmental assessment and management capacity, as well as the capacity to implement the proposed mitigation measures, and make appropriate recommendations, including potential capacity building and training needs, and their costs;
- Prepare an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the planned activity. The ESMP should outline:
 - Potential environmental and social impacts resulting from the activity;
 - Proposed mitigation measures;
 - Institutional responsibilities for implementation of the mitigation measures;
 - Monitoring indicators;
 - Cost estimates for these activities; and
 - Time horizons for implementing the ESMP
- Public consultations. ESIA results and proposed mitigating measures will then be shared with the potentially affected population, NGOs, local authorities and the private sector working in the area

where the activity will take place. Minutes of this consultation will form an integral part of the report.

14 ANNEX 5: CHANCE FIND PROCEDURE

Chance finds are defined as physical cultural resources encountered unexpectedly during project implementation. Chance find Procedures includes provisions for managing aforementioned encountered chance finds. These include the following:

- In the case of chance find of any sites or artifacts of historical, cultural, archeological or religious significance all construction activity in the vicinity of the find/feature/site will cease immediately.
- The discovery will be clearly delineated and secured, and all found remains will be left in situ.
- An assigned archaeological consultant will assess, record and photograph the find/feature/ site.
- In consultation with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, the assigned Archaeologist will complete a report on the findings and determine the appropriate course of action to take.
- An on-site finds storage area will be provided, allowing storage of any artifacts or other archaeological material recovered during the process.
- A conservator will be made available to the project, if required, and will decide on the disposition of any found samples or relics.
- Once authorization has been given by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, the proponent will be informed when works can resume.

15 ANNEX 6: SCREENING CHECKLIST GUIDE

Potential Environmental and Social Risks/Impacts	Answer		Instrument or Mgt Plan required
	Yes	No	
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources			
Will the proposed activity cause adverse impacts to pristine environments (example: forests, natural and critical habitats) and/or ecosystem and ecosystem services?			
Are any of the proposed project activities located within or near critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including protected areas?			
Will the proposed activity pose risks to endangered species?			
Does the proposed activity involve significant extraction, diversion or containment of surface or ground water			
Will the proposed activity generate potential adverse transboundary environmental concerns?			
Natural Resource Management			
Will the proposed activity contribute to conserving, protecting and enhancing natural resources?			

Will implementation of the proposed activity include a rehabilitation of an existing or construction of a new irrigation scheme?			
If an irrigation scheme is part of the works, will it cover more than 10 hectares?			
Will the irrigation scheme include a dam that is more than 5 meters in height?			
Does the activity include measures that will build resilience to climate change?			
Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management			
Will the proposed activity result in the release of pollutants to the environment?			
Will the proposed activity result in the generation of waste – both hazardous and non-hazardous?			
Will the proposed activity involve the use of hazardous chemicals or materials?			
Will the activity require significant consumption of local raw materials (laterite, sand, wood), and/or water?			
Pest and Pesticides Management			
Does the activity involve the procurement, storage and application of pesticides?			
Does the activity require the disposal of pesticides or pesticide contaminated materials?			
Community Health and Safety			
Will elements of the activity (clearing/site preparation, construction) pose potential safety risks to workers and community residents?			
Will the activity pose potential risks to community health and safety due to the transport, storage, use and disposal of hazardous or dangerous materials (fuel, oil, chemicals, etc.)?			
Would failure of structural elements during the implementation pose risks to workers and community residents?			
Will implementation of the proposed activity result in increased health risks (spread of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, TB, Malaria, etc.) through labor influx?			
Will the presence of contracted workers pose potential risks to the security, health and safety of community residents?			
Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement			
Will any aspect of the proposed activity involve the physical and/or economic displacement of people?			
Will the activity affect land tenure arrangements and/or community-based property rights, including customary rights to land or other communal resources?			

Cultural Heritage			
Will some aspects of the project activity cause potential adverse impacts on sites of cultural, historical, religious and artistic significance?			
Labor and Working Conditions			
Will the activity promote a safe and healthy work environment?			
Will the activity promote the fair treatment and nondiscrimination of workers (direct, contracted or community workers)?			
Will the activity promote the use of child and forced labor?			
Will there be a means for workers to raise workplace concerns?			
Gender Equality			
Have the needs, priorities and constraints of both males and females been taken into consideration in the design of the proposed activity?			
Will the activity foster the equal participation of women and men in decision making processes?			
Will the activity promote women's and men's equal access to			
Will the activity seek to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and violence against women?			
Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure			
Is there a risk that project affected parties may be excluded from meaningful consultations and participation in project decision making?			
Is there the likelihood for the project to overlook the views of project affected parties?			

16 ANNEX 7: LABOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

The primary objective of ESS2 on 'Labor and Working Conditions' is to promote sound worker- management relationships and enhance the development benefits of a project by ensuring the rights of workers, while also providing them with safe and healthy working conditions. Hence, the purpose of this Labor Management Procedure (LMP) is to facilitate the planning and implementation of the project by identifying the main labor requirements and the associated risks and determining the resources necessary to address the project-related labor issues. This LMP sets out general guidance relating to different forms of labor but also issues and concerns that relate to women empowerment.

Overview of Labor use on the project

The Liberia Women Empowerment Project (LWEP) will include different categories of workers. As per ESS2, project workers can be classified into the following four groups: direct workers, contracted workers, primary supply workers, and community laborers. For this project, direct workers, contracted workers and primary supply workers are the most applicable, as significant community labor is not envisioned in the early stage of the project.

The following are the key categories of workers that would be engaged under the project and therefore require special attention.

Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

The PIU will be constituted by direct project workers of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) and participating agencies who will either be government civil servants engaged in the project or those that will be recruited for the purposes of the project. Specifically, the PIU will comprise: Project Coordinator, Procurement Specialist, Environmental Specialist, Social Specialist, and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist. While the Project Coordinator and Procurement Specialist will be civil servants from the MGCSP, the other remaining posts can be hired.

The Project

Coordinator (PC) will oversee the project team on the overall day-to-day management and coordination and implementation of the subcomponents of the project. The PC will also closely liaise with the Task Team from the World Bank and other stakeholders. The PC will ensure that the works are in line with the objectives of the project and is carried out according to the terms of reference.

The Procurement Specialist (PS) will lead the procurement activities of the project and coordinate with the PC, technical teams and stakeholders assigned to implement the subcomponents. Specifically, the PS will work with the Environmental and Social specialists to ensure that all the procurement documents adequately reflect environmental and social issues, where relevant.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (MES) will lead the monitoring and evaluation activities of the project and coordinate with the technical teams and stakeholders assigned to implement the subcomponents. The MES will collect, process and manage data, including those relating to social and environmental issues associated with the project, as appropriate, from various sources.

The Social Specialist (SS) will lead the social activities of the project and coordinate with the technical teams and stakeholders assigned to implement the subcomponents. Together with the Environmental Specialist, the Social Specialist will primarily be responsible for ensuring that project activities avoid or minimize negative social impacts; and where they cannot be avoided, that impacts are identified and the necessary mitigation measures are developed and implemented following the relevant laws as well as the World Bank policies.

The Environmental Specialist (ES) will lead the environmental activities of the project and coordinate with the technical teams and stakeholders assigned to implement the subcomponents. Together with the SS, the ES will primarily be responsible for ensuring that project activities avoid and minimize negative environmental impacts; and where they cannot be avoided, that impacts are identified and the necessary mitigation measures are developed and implemented following the relevant laws as well as the World Bank policies.

The Environmental and Social Specialists will provide overall policy and technical directions for environmental and social management under the Project, as defined in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and these Labor Management Procedures (LMP). These staff will be hired for a 1-year term and the contract will be renewed based on performance, need and funding up to 5 years.

This LMP will apply to all project workers including fulltime or part-time. The project scope does not provide or anticipate the employment of migrant workers. International consultants may be recruited to offer specific services and their conditions of engagement will be as contained in their contracts and TORs.

The Project may hire other technical staff for limited duration based on specific project needs. All project staff, including the civil servants assigned to serve in the PIU, are considered as direct workers of the project under ESS2 and the respective standards will apply. However, the civil servants assigned to serve to the PIU of the Project, whether full-time or part-time, will be bound by their existing agencies' sector employment agreement or arrangement, and provisions under this LMP will not apply to such parties. Nevertheless, their health and safety need to be considered, and the measures adopted by the project for addressing occupational health and safety issues will apply to them.

The Project may also involve other specialists, agencies or consultancies to support project implementation. The provisions given under this LMP will not strictly apply to such specialists, agencies or consultancies. However, the health and safety needs of such specialist consultants needs to be considered, and the measures adopted by the project for addressing occupational health and safety issues will apply to them.

Contracted Workers

It is not clear how many contractors are expected to be engaged in the project. This will be defined after the tasks assigned under the project subcomponents are finalized. The number of contract workers depends on the tasks assigned in the different project areas. Employing of contracted workers shall be made according to applicable Liberian laws.

Primary Supply Workers

Primary supply workers are workers employed or engaged by primary suppliers for the project, providing goods and materials to the project, over whom the primary suppliers exercise control for the work, working conditions, and treatment of the persons. Based on the requirement in every component, primary supply workers will be recruited by the suppliers as required. It will be ensured that no children are recruited and supplied as worker. Furthermore, it will be monitored like above that these workers are not subject to 'forced labor' in any manner. The PIU will be responsible to ensure that these standards are followed strictly.

It is not clear how many primary supply workers are expected to be engaged in the project. This will be defined after the tasks assigned under the project subcomponents are finalized, relative to primary supplies.

Assessment of key potential labor Risks

Potential labor risks are those related to labor and working conditions, such as work-related discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and OHS. The PIU will assess and address these risks by developing recruitment guidelines, procedures and appropriate OHS measures and applying relevant provisions of the Decent Work Act 2015, public service regulations, HR manual, and the ESS2 and ESS4. The potential labor risks are discussed below.

Child and Forced Labor

The risk of child labor will be mitigated through certification of laborers' age. This will be done by using the legally recognized documents such as the National Identification Card and Birth Certificate. Further, awareness raising sessions will be conducted regularly to the communities to sensitize on prohibition and negative impacts of child and forced labor. All employment will be voluntary. And to mitigate the risk of employees or consultants being forced to work overtime, the workers will be provided with accessible means to raise workplace concerns. This will be done through the project grievance mechanism (GM).

Occupational Health and Safety

Workers may be subjected to poor working conditions, including lack of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where needed and appropriate toilet facilities separate for males and females. The OHS measures will be designed and implemented to address: (i) training of project workers and maintenance of training records; (ii) documentation and reporting of occupational accidents, diseases and incidents; (iii) MGCSP will be compelled to safeguard the interests of women, including gender parity at the workspace, provide appropriate sanitation facilities at the workplace and appropriate PPE for women and persons with disability, as needed.

Discrimination in Relation to Recruitment and Employment

The risk of discriminating on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, or any other personal characteristic unrelated to inherent job requirements exists at all levels of project implementation. Decisions relating to the employment or treatment of project workers will not be made on the basis of personal characteristics unrelated to inherent job requirements. The employment of project workers will be based on the principle of equal opportunity and fair treatment, and there will be no discrimination with respect to any aspects of the employment relationship, such as recruitment and hiring, compensation, working conditions and terms of employment, access to training, job assignment, promotion, termination of employment or retirement, or disciplinary practices.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

There is a risk of GBV including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) among workers at the national, county and community levels. All workers will be required to sign a Code of Conduct. A separate GM structure for workers will be set up to address GBV/SEA issues during the project implementation. Measures will be put in place to manage GBV/SEA issues in a timely manner using a separate structure for reporting GBV/SEA cases.

16.1.1 Insecurity

There is potential risk of insecurity for project workers when they travel out of their work stations to different counties for capacity building and M&E. Workplace processes will be put in place for project workers to report work situations that they believe are not safe or healthy, and to remove themselves from a work situation which they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to their life or health. Project workers who remove themselves from such situations will not be required to return to work until necessary remedial action to correct the situation has been taken. Project workers will not be retaliated against or otherwise subject to reprisal or negative action for such reporting or removal.

Spread of Diseases in Communities, including HIV:

There is potential risk of the spread of HIV and other communicable diseases among project workers and beneficiaries. All project staff and beneficiaries will be sensitized on preventing communicable diseases. Communication on risks of infection from HIV will be conducted throughout the project. Posters/flyers on HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases will be developed and distributed at the county and project level.

Brief Overview of labor terms and conditions

The standards for Labor and Working Conditions are defined in the Decent Work Act of 2015. The Act addresses the fundamental rights of all workers, as well as the minimum conditions of employment.

The Decent Work Act of 2015 clearly describes all things related to labor and workforce including wage and salary, termination, redressing, work environment, female worker, recruitment, child labor and so on. According to the Decent Work Act, some salient features of the labor law are described as follows:

Fundamental Rights: Chapter 2 defines fundamental rights of workers. No person should be subjected to forced or compulsory labor. There is freedom from the worst form of child labor. All workers are to enjoy equal rights and protection. All workers are to receive equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value. No person shall discriminate against a worker. All workers shall not be directly or indirectly sexually harassed. There shall be protection of workers living with HIV. And workers shall have freedom of association.

Work hours

Chapter 17 defines Work Hours. Ordinary hours of work shall be 8 hours in any one day or 48 hours in any one week. Any worker working beyond the ordinary hours shall be paid at a rate not less than fifty percent above the normal rate for that work.

Wages

Chapter 16 defines the minimum wage for which a worker should be paid. Every employer is responsible for the payment of wages to laborers employed by him. In case where the wages of a worker employed by a contractor are not paid by the contractor, the wages must be paid by the employer of the establishment. There should be deduction of a worker's wage, except for lawful purposes. And an employer shall keep workers wage records.

Regular Leaves and Benefits

Chapter 18 notes that every worker is entitled to an uninterrupted period of annual leave. Every employer must inform their employees of the period of their annual leave and must be paid for said leave period. An employee is also entitled to a ten-day paid sick leave annually, as well as 5-days paid leave to care for others.

Maternity leave

Female workers will get paid for maternity leave. An expectant mother would be entitled to a minimum of 14-week maternity leave. If a medical practitioner certifies that due to complications arising from the pregnancy or delivery it would be in the best interests of the health of the employed women and/or her child to extend the period of maternity

leave, the employer shall grant to the woman a maximum period of 1 month's unpaid extended maternity leave in addition to her maternity leave.

Policies and Procedures for Management of Labor Issues

This section sets out the mitigation measures that will be adopted by the project to address the risks mentioned in previous section, including those relating to responding to the specific risks to workers.

Term of Employment:

16.1.2 Direct Workers

All project staff will be provided with an employment contract.

All direct project staff employed for the purpose of the project will be above 18 years. Even though ESS2 provides provision to employ minors at 14 years and above, it is not envisioned that a minor will be required to be employed as a direct project worker. ·

Maximum working hours for staff will not exceed the maximum limit set in the Decent Work Act of 2015 of 48 hours a week.

Equal training opportunity will be available to all staff working in the project without discrimination, based on gender or otherwise. It is responsibility of the Project Coordinator to ensure that such discrimination does not exist.

All staff will be entitled to breaks from work of 30 (thirty) minutes after every 05 (five) hours during working hours. They will also be provided with the entitled leaves, in addition to paid maternity and paternity. This policy has been established and enforced in all government civil service offices and all government companies.

All project staff will be provided with health insurance packages, equivalent to that given by other government institutions working in similar capacities.

A daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will be provided to all project staff covering lodging, meals, gratuities and transport costs when traveling in field. The rate of DSA will be determined based on the rates at locations where project is implemented and will be revised based on changes to rates.

All staff will be made aware of GRM available for the staff as specified under this LMP.

To ensure enforcement of these aspects highlighted in the LMP, these provisions will be included in the employment contracts of all direct workers. If workers are allowed (or required) to work longer hours than normal, this should be documented alongside measures taken to protect such workers (e.g., mandatory rest breaks).

Terms and Conditions:

16.1.3 Contracted Workers ·

List of workers to be utilized in relation to the project, with proof of employment will be required to be submitted to PIU by all contractors.

Protect activities undertaken by contractors will only commence once when the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are acquired by the contractors for all workers.

Any newly employed party by the contractors will be required to complete induction to the project prior to commencing any physical work.

As per the provisions of the employment, all parties employed by any contracted party will be above 18 years of age.

All contractors will be required to provide document evidence (national identification, passport or birth certificate) confirming age of employees to the PIU prior to involving them on activities of the project.

Maximum working hours for staff will not exceed the maximum limit set in the Decent Work Act, i.e. 48 hours a week. To confirm this, monthly attendance and duty sheets need to be submitted to the PIU.

An internal transparent and accountable system will be established within the contractors' firms to tackle issues of sexual harassment, physical and psychological harassment and workplace bullying. Details of this system will be shared with PIU prior to signing any contracts or agreements.

The leave policy of the contractors will be shared and confirmed that it is in line with national laws and regulations.

All foreign parties employed by all contractors will have valid work permit. The work permit details will be shared with PIU.

All vehicles used by any contractor/investor for the purpose of the project will have valid registration, insurance and road worthiness.

All contracted staff will be made aware of grievance redress mechanism available for the staff specified under this LMP.

To ensure the enforcement of the provisions mentioned here for the contract workers by the contractor, the conditions highlighted here will be included in the contracts signed with all the contractors. If workers are allowed (or required) to work longer hours than normal, this should be documented alongside measures taken to protect such workers (e.g. mandatory rest breaks).

Worker Grievance Redress Mechanism

Typical work place grievances include demand for employment opportunities, labor wage rates, delays of payment, disagreement over working condition; and health and safety concerns in the work environment. Although GBV occurs in workplaces, it is not always reported for fear of victimization. Therefore, a separate grievance structure will be established for project workers, as required in ESS2.

LWEP will inform the workers and contractors of the grievance mechanism at the time of recruitment and the measures put in place to protect them against any reprisal for its use. Measures will be put in place to make the grievance mechanism easily accessible to all such project workers or contractors, including providing the name and telephone contacts of the GRM focal point at the workplace. Communication could also be done on email (the email address will also be shared) and in-person reports.

Handling of grievances will be objective, prompt and responsive to the needs and concerns of the aggrieved workers. The mechanism will also allow for anonymous complaints to be raised and addressed through providing options for people reporting a grievance to not mention their names, positions or place or work station. Individuals who submit their complaints or grievances may request that their names be kept confidential and this must be respected.

Every employee, including contractors, shall have access to the *Grievance Procedure* which should be known and explained to the employees and contractors.

The Code recommends that such procedure should at least:

- i. Specify to whom the employee or contractor should lodge the grievance.
- ii. Refer to time frames in the Labor Management Plan to allow the grievance to be dealt with expeditiously.
- iii. Allow the person to refer the grievance to a more senior level within the organization, if it is not resolved at the lowest level;
- iv. If a grievance is not resolved, the employee has the right to lodge a dispute with the LWEP Project Coordinator.

All the contractors who will be engaged for the project will be required to produce their grievance procedure as a requirement for tender, which at a minimum comply with these requirements. In addition, good international practice recommends that the procedures be transparent, is confidential, adheres to non-retribution practices and includes right

to representation. After they are engaged, they will be required to produce proof that each employee has been inducted and signed that they have been inducted on the procedure.

Where the grievance cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe, the aggrieved worker will be informed in writing, so that the worker can consider proceeding to the labor standards divisions of the Ministry of Labor or the judiciary.

Grievances raised by workers will be recorded with the actions taken by each unit and/or the contractor. The summary of grievance cases will be reported to the PIU as part of contractor's and other relevant parties' periodic report. Where the aggrieved workers wish to escalate their issue or raise their concerns anonymously and/or to a person other than their immediate supervisor, the workers may raise their issue with the PIU.

Contractor Management

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and this LMP will form an integral part of the bidding documents to be issued to contractors and partners, and shall also be part of the awarded contracts to these contractors. In addition, proper training and orientation shall be made by the Environmental and Social Specialists to ensure full understanding and compliance.

Performance of contractors shall be managed and monitored by the Project Coordinator. Regular supervision checkups shall be conducted to ensure compliance with all the ESS requirements.

LWEP requires that contractors monitor, keep records and report on terms and conditions related to labor management. The contractor must provide workers with evidence of all payments made, regardless of the worker being engaged on a fixed term contract, full-time or part-time. The application of this requirement will be proportionate to the activities and to the size of the contract, in a manner acceptable to LWEP and the World Bank:

- i. **Labor conditions:** records of workers engaged under the Project, including contracts, registry of induction of workers including hours worked, remuneration and deductions (including overtime);
- ii. **Safety:** recordable incidents, lost time incidents, medical treatment cases, first aid cases, high potential near misses, and remedial and preventive activities required (for example, revised job safety analysis, new or different equipment, skills training, and so forth).
- iii. **Workers:** number of workers, indication of origin (local, nonlocal nationals), gender, age with evidence that no child labor is involved, and skill level (unskilled, skilled, supervisory, professional, management).
- iv. **Training/ induction:** dates, number of trainees, and topics.
- v. **Details of any security risks:** details of risks the contractor may be exposed to while performing its work—the threats may come from third parties external to the project.
- vi. **Worker grievances:** details including occurrence date, grievance, and date submitted; actions taken and dates; resolution (if any) and date; and follow-up yet to be taken—grievances listed should include those received since the preceding report and those that were unresolved at the time of that report.

The following procedures are currently in place for LWEP contractor management, but have been adjusted to adhere to LMP provisions:

1. Ensure that Contractors have valid contracts with clearly define service level agreement in accordance with the national law and all environmental and social clauses, as applicable: Reviewed by LWEP.
2. Contractor induction to the World Bank ESS and LMP: Project Implementation Unit, attended by World Bank team.
3. Monthly submission of records: Contractor submission to Project Implementation Unit.
4. Monthly site visits (at a minimum) and reports: Project Implementation Unit and other Agencies.
5. Evaluation of contractor requirements. This includes training, OH&S files, certifications and others. The evaluation results will include recommendations for contract extension or termination.
6. Training needs identification, recorded in Contractor Training Schedule.
7. Annual Contractor Management Plans submitted.

17 ANNEX 9: WHO PESTICIDES CLASSIFICATION¹³

Pesticides product	Active ingredient	Chemical class	Toxicological class	Main use
BASUDIN	Diazinon	Organophosphate	11	Insecticide
HERBOXONE	2,4-D	Chlorophenoxy-acid	11	Herbicide
TOPIK	Clodinafop-Propargyl	Aryloxyphenoxy propionics	111	Herbicide
AATREX	Atrazine	Triazines	U	Herbicide
MACHETE	Butaclor	Chloroacetanilides	U	Herbicide
CERTAINTY	Sulfosulfuron	Sulfonylureas	U	Herbicide
ERADICANE	EPTC	Carbamides	11	Herbicide
LASSO	Alachlor	Chloroacetanilides	111	Herbicide
DECIS	Deltamethrin	Pyrethroids	11	Insecticide
ALTO	Cyproconazole	Triazoles	111	Fungicide
SENCOR	Metribuzin	Triazines	11	Herbicide
CONFIDOR	Imidacloprid	Neonicotinoids	11	Insecticide
GRANDSTAR	Tribenuron-methyl	Sulfonylureas	U	Herbicide

18 ANNEX 9.1 : WHO PESTICIDES CLASSIFICATION¹⁴

10.1 All pesticide containers should be clearly labelled in accordance with applicable guidelines, at least in line with the FAO guidelines on good labelling practice (3).	10.1 All pesticide containers should be clearly labelled in accordance with applicable international guidelines, such as the FAO guidelines on good labelling practice.
Code of Conduct - 2001 revised version	Code of Conduct - 1989 amended version
10.2 Industry should use labels that:	10.2 Industry should use labels that:

10.2.1 comply with registration requirements and include recommendations consistent with those of the recognized research and advisory agencies in the country of sale;	10.2.1 include recommendations consistent with those of the recognized research and advisory agencies in the country of sale;
10.2.2 include appropriate symbols and pictograms whenever possible, in addition to written instructions, warnings and precautions in the appropriate language or languages (3);	10.2.2 include appropriate symbols and pictograms whenever possible, in addition to written instructions, warnings and precautions;
10.2.3 comply with national or international labelling requirements for dangerous goods in international trade and, if appropriate, clearly	10.2.3 in international trade, clearly show appropriate WHO hazard classification of the contents (11) or, if this is inappropriate or

show the appropriate WHO hazard classification of the contents (3,35,36);	inconsistent with national regulations, use the relevant classification;
10.2.4 include, in the appropriate language or languages, a warning against the reuse of containers and instructions for the safe disposal or decontamination of used containers;	10.2.4 include, in the appropriate language or languages, a warning against the reuse of containers, and instructions for the safe disposal or decontamination of empty containers;
10.2.5 identify each lot or batch of the product in numbers or letters that can be understood without the need for additional code references;	10.2.5 identify each lot or batch of the product in numbers or letters that can be read, transcribed and communicated by anyone without the need for codes or other means of deciphering;
10.2.6 clearly show the release date (month and year) of the lot or batch and contain relevant information on the storage stability of the product (21).	10.2.6 are marked with the date (month and year) of formulation of the lot or batch and with relevant information on the storage stability of the product.
10.3 Pesticide industry, in cooperation with government, should ensure that:	10.3 Industry should ensure that:

10.3.1 packaging, storage and disposal of pesticides conform in principle to the relevant FAO, UNEP, WHO guidelines or regulations (27,28, 37, 39, 40) or to other international guidelines where applicable;	10.3.1 packaging, storage and disposal of pesticides conform in principle to the FAO guidelines for packaging and storage, the FAO guidelines for the disposal of waste pesticides and containers, and WHO specifications for pesticides used in public health;
10.3.2 packaging or repackaging is carried out only on licensed premises where the responsible authority is satisfied that staff are adequately protected against toxic hazards, that the resulting product will be properly packaged and labelled, and that the content will conform to the relevant quality standards.	10.3.2 in cooperation with governments, packaging or repackaging is carried out only on licensed premises where the responsible authority is convinced that staff are adequately protected against toxic hazards, that the resulting product will be properly packaged and labelled, and that the content will conform to the relevant quality standards.
10.4 Governments should take the necessary regulatory measures to prohibit the repackaging or decanting of any pesticide into food or beverage containers and rigidly enforce punitive measures that effectively deter such practices.	10.4 Governments should take the necessary regulatory measures to prohibit the repacking, decanting or dispensing of any pesticide into food or beverage containers in trade channels and rigidly enforce punitive measures that effectively deter such practices.
10.5 Governments, with the help of pesticide industry and with multilateral cooperation, should inventory obsolete or unusable stocks of pesticides and used containers, establish and implement an action plan for their disposal, or remediation in the case of contaminated sites (41), and record these activities	- new paragraph in revised Code -
10.6 Pesticide industry should be encouraged,	- new paragraph in revised Code -

19 ANNEX 10: E&S NEGATIVE EXCLUSION LIST (NON-FUNDABLE)

1. Cash crop production (Rubber, coffee, cocoa, Oil Palm, etc)
2. Production and sale of tobacco products
3. Use of pesticides on the World Health Organization's Hazardous Pesticides (list which are not recommended).
4. Aquaculture using non-native species in natural water bodies.
5. Activities that negatively affect natural protected areas recognized by state or municipal governments (or buffer zones thereof)
6. Use of land which has unclear titles
7. Activities against GBV/SEA/SH/SRHR(violence against women and girls, etc)
8. Activities relating to forestry production which includes charcoal production, logging activities, etc.
9. Activities that will be deemed damaging to the environment (such as clearance of key water catchment areas and use of chemicals)
10. Sub-project requiring no heavy equipment earth moving equipment
11. Environmentally damaging technologies

20 . ANNEX 11: STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ENGAGEMENTS

20.1 ANNEX 3 - STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT ATTENDANCE LIST

Stakeholder Engagement

7th – 9th March 2022

The stakeholder engagement kicked off with interactions with technical actors at the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture. Other participants were CSO representative and Rural Women Structure leadership (RWS) at the national level (a representation of the RWS in the counties). The participants listed reasons they believed the project will make a difference in the lives of women and girls in the targeted counties. Challenges impeding women's equality and economic empowerment were listed and recommendations were suggested for girls' education. GBV has become a growing phenomenon in the project counties with women and girls being the survivors. Participants equally provided some suggestions on how to address GBV prevention and response.

Outcome of the engagement by component and the agreed next step:

Relevance

- The project will help women in the targeted regions, who have been marginalized due to religious beliefs and social norms, to achieve equality and economic empowerment.
- Awareness should be reinforced in the communities so women and men will understand the consequences of social and religious norms and how they impede women's economic growth.
- It is necessary for a multi-sectional approach to be taken to ensure women in agriculture, trade and other economic activities be given the chance to succeed;
- Women and girls require sustainability in their livelihoods to ensure economic empowerment.

Norm Change

- Change of norms can be slowly accepted in rural areas as most social and religious norms has become a way of life passed on to residents by their ancestors;
- Some of the norms in the division of labor in agriculture will have to be addressed by extension workers and gender activists; this will help farmers, especially women and girls reduce drudgery in agriculture work;
- Improving access to livelihoods and reducing harmful social norms are good initiatives, however, project implementers should be cautious when referring to social norms as these counties, especially Gbarpolu, are highly traditional societies. Therefore, the information about changing social norms should not include the word 'harmful' to not annoy the traditional leaders and the people who have had these norms handed down to them by their ancestors;

GBV

- GBV is more prevalent in parts of Rural Montserrado and Gbarpolu mainly because there is limited information to help girls prevent and raise alarm when faced with indecent advances;
- More focus should be placed on girls between the ages of 18 and 25 and economic empowerment, even though girls younger than are being raped and exposed to high rates of GBV.

Referral Pathway in the Counties

- The referral pathway in most counties is not complete as the MGSCP and other line ministries such as Ministry of Justice lack logistics and adequate staff; most of the counties do not have police presence to enforce the law.
- A major recommendation is to increase the presence of MGCSP in the counties to cover more districts
- Conduct refresher training for GBV actors in the use of referral pathway.

Institutional Contribution:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, at the county level, trains men and women in agriculture-related activities. With this project they will reenforce work with women groups in the targeted counties.
- Providing capacity and resource support to women in agriculture will not only enhance their livelihoods but also ensure food and nutrition security in the regions that have been food insecure over a long period of time;
- MIA is leading on working with Traditional leaders to prevent and respond to SGBV/HTP as well as monitoring temporary closure of bush schools. MIA will build synergies with the MGCSP and other local stakeholders to reduce harmful social norms

Recommendations for Girls Education

- The reintroduction of Home Economics and 4-H activities starting from the elementary level will help prepare them for a sustainable future;
- Other livelihood support, especially for teenage drop outs, could be the re-introduction of literacy and numeracy programs in the targeted communities. This will help women and girls (especially drop outs) improve their knowledge, build new skills and improve existing ones.
- Train beneficiaries on basic business development and livelihood skills such as vegetable
- Provide guidance counselling in schools and around the community to sensitize girls and ensure they possess self-confidence;
- Reinforce family planning knowledge to prevent teenage pregnancy;
- Sensitize girls and their family members on the consequences of early marriages to the health of their daughters, education and economic advancement.
-

Challenges women encounter

- Inability to access information and comprehend awareness messages;
- Lack of basic resources to improve their livelihood activities;
- Social and religious norm barriers that hinder their full participation in decision-making;
- Gender bias on the unequal distribution of opportunities between men and women;
- Family responsibilities and low self esteem

Social Risks

- Men in the counties where advocacy for change of social norms will take place may see the intervention as undermining their authority over their wives and might resolve to increase in quarrels and beating of the women;
- Some community leaders may not be receptive to change in social norms that favor patriarchy in society; this may aggravate the existing persistent non-support cases in the counties;
- The idea of promoting girls' education and empowering them literally and economically may pose threats to males in the society;
- Community leaders may not take ownership of the project and the results will be less impactful to the beneficiaries;

Recommendations

- Regular monitoring of the project to ensure proper implementation;
- The police and other state actors addressing GBV issues should be well equipped
- Education for women and young girls on GBV prevention, response and SRHS.
- Support the setting up of One Stop shops to provide rural women with training, information and integrated services vital for food and nutrition security, sanitation and hygiene and reduction of women's unpaid care work
- Advance gender-sensitive rural infrastructure development for environmentally sustainable, labor saving and to enhance productivity for male and female of different ages, whether disable or not.

20.2 ANNEX 4 - STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT ATTENDANCE LIST

Attendance				
#	Name	Position	Institution	Contact Info
1	Mr. Edward Perry	Director of Extension	MOA	0886455838
2	Ms. Keturah Woods	Acting Director, Gender & Soc Dev.	MOA	0770032136
3	Mrs. Cleopatra Gibson-Jallay	Dep. Director, Gender & Soc. Dev	MOA	0886550933
4	Chief Konikay Nimley	Environmental Specialist	RETRAP/MOA	0886562134`
5	Mr. Edmord Greaves	Regional Agriculture Coordinator for Gbarpolu/Bomi and Cape Mount Counties	MOA	0886410489
6	Mrs. Lovette Seidi Sie	SGBV Unit	MGCSP	0886538833
7	Ma Kebbeh Mulbah	President	Rural Women Structure	088628434

8	s. Musu K. Massaquoi	Gbarpolu County Gender Coordinator	MGCSP	0886459802
9	Ms. Hawa Kanneh	Adolescence Girl Division	MGCSP	
10	Ms. Yah Vallah Parwon	Interim Country Director	Medica Liberia	0778151421