WEST AFRICA BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (WA BiCC)

YEAR ONE ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2015–SEPTEMBER 2016

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

OCTOBER 2016
This publication was produced for the United States Agency for International Development by Tetra Tech, through a Task Order under the Restoring the Environment through Prosperity, Livelihoods, and Conserving Ecosystems (REPLACE) Indefinite Quantity Contract (USAID Contract No. AID-OAA-I-13-00058, Order Number AID-624-TO-15-00002).

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>APIP</td>
<td>Association de la Promotion des Industries Privées</td>
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<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
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<td>BIODEV</td>
<td>Building Biocarbon and Rural Development</td>
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<td>CBF</td>
<td>Community Based Forestry</td>
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<td>CIESIN</td>
<td>Center for International Earth Science Information Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CITES</td>
<td>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Collaborating, Learning and Adapting</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Chief of Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP 17</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties (Seventeenth Session)</td>
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<td>COP 12</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties (Twelfth Session)</td>
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<td>CSSL</td>
<td>Conservation Society of Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>CWT</td>
<td>Combating Wildlife Trafficking</td>
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<td>DCOP</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Party</td>
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<td>DoJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
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<td>DoS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Environmental Foundation for Africa</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<td>FCPF</td>
<td>Forest Carbon Partnership Facility</td>
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<td>FDA</td>
<td>Forestry Development Authority</td>
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<td>FOS</td>
<td>Foundations of Success</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>GESI</td>
<td>Gender and Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>German Society for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>IBM</td>
<td>International Business Machines</td>
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<td>IIED</td>
<td>International Institute of Environment and Development</td>
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<td>INDC</td>
<td>Intended Nationally Determined Contributions</td>
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<td>INTERPOL</td>
<td>International Criminal Police Organization</td>
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<td>ISP</td>
<td>Institutional Strengthening Plan</td>
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<td>SPAS</td>
<td>International Public Sector Accounting Reporting Standard</td>
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<td>ITOCA</td>
<td>Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>KAP</td>
<td>Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices</td>
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<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least Developed Country</td>
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<td>MAFFS</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security</td>
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<td>MEEF</td>
<td>Ministère de l’Environnement, des Eaux et Forêts</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Plan</td>
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<td>MIS</td>
<td>Management Information System</td>
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<td>MRU</td>
<td>Mano River Union</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Adaptation Plan</td>
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NAPA National Action Plan for Adaptation
NESDA Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa
NOAA National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
NPAA National Protected Area Authority
OA Options Analysis
OIPR Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Reserves/Ivoirian Offices of Parks and Reserves
PIF Project Identification Form
PPP Public Private Partnership
REDD+ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RFA Request for Applications
RFP Request for Proposals
RSPB Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
TA Threats Assessment
TGS Tai-Grebo-Sapo
TOC Theories of Change
TOR Terms of Reference
TRAFFIC Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID United States Agency for International Development
SERVIR An acronym meaning ‘to serve’ in Spanish
SODEFOR Societe de Developpement Forestier/Society for Forest Development
SCNL Society for the Conservation of Nature/Liberia
SLARI Sierra Leone Agriculture and Research Institute
UNFCC United Nations Framework on Climate Change
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID United States Agency for International Development
USFWS United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VA Vulnerability Assessment
WA BiCC West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
WIA Wetlands International Africa
WWF World Wildlife Fund for Nature
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Annual Report covers the reporting period May 2015 to September 2016. The overall goal of the WA BiCC program is to improve conservation and climate-resilient, low-emission growth across West Africa. Although regional in scope and design, WA BiCC focuses on targeted geographical areas within the region to improve governance and policies that strengthen the conservation of critical ecosystems and the well-being of the people that depend on these ecosystems. By working through the core regional partners Economic Communication of West African States (ECOWAS), Mano River Union (MRU) and the Abidjan Convention, and with targeted national and sub-national institutions, WA BiCC increases the capacity of institutions at all levels to address the three core WA BiCC components:

1. Combat wildlife trafficking through the revision and operationalization of national and regional policies, laws and regulations. The program strengthens national and regional networks and institutions by building their capacity to enforce trafficking laws. National action plans and community-led behavioral change campaigns are being developed to shrink the supply chains of trafficked wildlife.

2. Increase coastal resilience to climate change through integrated planning and the strengthened capacity of local, national and regional frameworks. WA BiCC is building the capacity to generate and use climate information in coastal planning, supporting the National Adaptation Planning process while scaling-up coastal adaptation strategies that are effective.

3. Reduce deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss in key forests through technical and knowledge management support. The Program is improving capacity for economic planning and development of Low Emissions Development Strategies, Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and trans-boundary conservation strategies while simultaneously engaging the private sector and supporting management of natural resources.

Palladium Group (formerly dTS), Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), PCI Media Impact, Wetlands International Africa (WIA) and Pact World, make up the WA BiCC Program’s consortium of international partners.

In Year One, WA BiCC primarily focused on laying the foundation for collaboration with core regional and other partners, gathering baseline assessment data and conducting in-depth analyses to establish a solid foundation for achieving WA BiCC’s anticipated results. At the same time, several tangible outcomes were achieved, which will be built upon during Year Two. For each component, a sample of key activities and outcomes completed include:

Component One: Combating Wildlife Trafficking:

- Trained 36 judges and prosecutors from the West African countries of Ghana, Togo and Nigeria, as well as Gabon and the Republic of Congo in more effective enforcement and prosecution of wildlife crime in collaboration with the US Departments of Justice and State and United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

- With the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and ECOWAS, initiated the training of 12 West African students for master’s degrees on the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the University of Andalucía in Spain.

- Initiated the Combatting Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) Biodiversity Threats Assessment with a desktop review on existing knowledge and gaps in CWT as foundation for the detailed field Assessment that will take place in Year Two.
Supported ECOWAS Member States to prepare positions for the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in consultation with the USFWS and organized related side event at COP.

**Component Two: Increasing Coastal Resilience to Climate Change:**

- Supported the Abidjan Convention Secretariat to develop two protocols. One on the sustainable management of mangroves and the other on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). After convening technical deliberations and consultations, WA BiCC sponsored national consultations on the protocols in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria in accordance with the statutes of the Abidjan Convention. The protocols will be presented to the Convention’s Conference of the Parties (CoP) for ratification when it convenes in March 2017.

- Worked with the Abidjan Convention Secretariat and regional and global experts to organize two experts meeting that led to the development of a regional strategy to tackle invasive coastal species. The catalyst for the Strategy was the ever increasing amounts of the Sargassum sp. that have been washing up on West African shores, threatening aquatic life and biodiversity as well as livelihoods and macro-economic activity. Nine countries from the region have been involved in the development of the strategy, which will also be presented at the forthcoming CoP of the Abidjan Convention.

- Conducted an in-depth Vulnerability Assessment (VA) for the Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape led by WA BiCC implementing partner Center for Integrated Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) and joined by experts from universities, government and non-governmental organizations including the MRU Secretariat. The VA assessed the demands of land use on mangrove and other coastal forest ecosystems as well as the socio-economic characteristics of twenty-four local communities living in or around and dependent to greater or lesser degrees on the mangrove ecosystems.

**Component Three: Reducing Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Biodiversity Loss:**

- Completed preparatory field scoping and design missions in the five WA BiCC learning landscapes, three of which are transboundary in nature. These are: Gola between Liberia and Sierra Leone; Wonegizi/Wologizi/Ziama between Liberia and Guinea; Tai/Grebo/Sapo/Krahn between Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire; the Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape in Sierra Leone and; the Fresco Coastal Landscape in Cote d’Ivoire. The field teams were comprised of WA BiCC, consultants and national governmental and non-governmental representatives. During the scoping design missions, information was gathered on: damage inflicted by rapid expansion of logging, mining, and industrial agriculture by commercial interests in forest and coastal areas; small-scale and subsistence activities including agriculture and aquaculture; production of fuel wood or charcoal; the unsustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and; relevant socio-cultural issues that drive land use change yet offer opportunities for positive change. The WA BiCC team used this information to develop three draft grant Request for Applications (RFA) and proceed to issue the RFA for the Gola Transboundary (Sierra Leone/Liberia) Landscape.

- Held stakeholder consultations to assess the policy needs of selected ECOWAS Member States, mainly those that comprise the MRU Members (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d’Ivoire, and Guinea). The priorities communicated included support for the development of National REDD+ Strategies and National Biodiversity Strategy Actions Plans (NBSAP). The WA BiCC Senior Policy Specialist was recruited to strengthen relationships with key partners at regional and national levels and move forward to address priority policy needs that align with WA BiCC technical mandates.

- Established constructive working relationships with its regional, national and local partners.
This report presents the highlights of WA BiCC activities implemented, results achieved, and the challenges and constraints encountered during the past year.

**Component Funding Allocations**

The three core components of WA BiCC receive funding from various programs of the USAID annual Congressional budget allocation. Component One on CWT is fully funded by the biodiversity allocation, or biodiversity earmark, Component Two on Increasing Coastal Resilience to Climate Change is fully funded by Global Climate Change (GCC) adaptation funds, although there are links to biodiversity in the coastal landscapes, the biodiversity elements of Component Two are covered by the activities of Component Three, Reducing Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Biodiversity Loss, which is funded by GCC climate change mitigation funds (REDD+) and the biodiversity earmark.
1.0 PROGRAM STRATEGY

As part of its response to a presidential directive, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) established the five-year West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA BiCC) Program. The overall goal of WA BiCC is to improve conservation, climate resilience and low emission development across the West Africa sub-region. WA BiCC is the largest investment in the environmental sector in West Africa, close to a $50 million investment. WA BiCC is comprised of three core technical components, which are: combating wildlife trafficking; increasing coastal resilience to climate change and; reducing deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss. These components are supported by complementary cross-cutting components essential to the success of the Program. These include Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI), Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA), sustainability, capacity building, policy and monitoring and evaluation.

The WA BiCC Program is an ambitious effort that co-generates, documents and shares knowledge and learning to influence policy and practice, based on implementation experiences within WA BiCC supported “learning landscapes” and those managed by other practitioners and partners in the region. These effective experiences are designed, implemented and evaluated in partnership with core regional institutions and partners and shared broadly to serve as model interventions to be adopted, replicated and influence policy and practice beyond the focal landscapes. WA BiCC is implemented by Tetra Tech, in association with five international partners: Capacity building support is provided by Pact; Palladium Group serves as the technical partner GESI and advocacy; PCI Media Impact is the technical partner supporting the communications elements of the Program; Wetlands International Africa (WIA) provides support to address climate change vulnerability within coastal landscapes including the Greater Freetown and Fresco Coastal Landscapes; and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) provides technical leadership for assessing vulnerability to climate change.

Component One: Combat Wildlife Trafficking

Component One stems from the growing demand for illegally traded wildlife and animal products, which is devastating the biological diversity of West Africa and beyond. Wildlife trafficking and the concomitant criminal activities that accompany it must be more effectively and systematically understood and addressed. While much attention is directed to this issue in the Eastern and Central African region, there is a growing body of evidence that wildlife crime and trafficking are on the rise as well. Hence, this component is an integral part of the budget allocation for biodiversity activities worldwide.

In order to address the increasing trade in wildlife species from or transiting through West Africa, WA BiCC’s strategy is designed to: (i) assess the threats to biodiversity and current status of wildlife crime issues and enforcement in West Africa; (ii) support stronger policies and legal frameworks for wildlife protection; (iii) provide support for training and sub-regional collaboration initiatives amongst ECOWAS Member States and (iv) strengthen capacity to collect information and communicate on wildlife trafficking issues in West Africa.

Component Two: Increase Coastal Resilience to Climate Change

The effects of climate change, along with climate variability and vulnerability to its impacts, are already being felt across coastal West African countries. While there is increasing understanding of the human-induced causes of climate change, the full picture of the global climate system interactions and the resultant impacts of climate change to humans and ecosystems along the coast of West Africa remain a work in progress. It is anticipated that in the coming years climate induced events, such as coastal flooding and stronger winds, will be more frequent and intense across the sub-region. Coastal communities and ecosystems will be exposed to more extreme weather events, increasing temperatures and rising sea
levels, which will negatively impact infrastructure, water quality, and natural resources such as fisheries and mangroves further increasing ecological, economic and human vulnerability. Against these advancing challenges to West African coastal communities and ecosystems, it is imperative to identify and promote effective ecosystem-based adaptation strategies that can address the threats while ensuring ecosystem sustainability and human well-being.

WA BiCC is working with partners to better understand the potential impacts of climate change and how to effectively minimize risk and build on opportunities to strengthen resiliency and develop adaptive capacity. In addition to increasing understanding of climate change vulnerability through the implementation of participatory vulnerability assessments in focal coastal landscapes, WA BiCC will identify effective interventions, develop them as models in the focal landscapes, and share them to improve practice and policy beyond the landscapes. Planned activities under this component include developing and implementing Vulnerability Assessment (VA) methodologies. The VA results will be used to work with stakeholders and partners to generate and implement activities that will mitigate risk and reduce vulnerability in the two WA BiCC Coastal Learning Landscapes, the Greater Freetown Landscape in Sierra Leone and the Fresco Landscape in the Cote d’Ivoire. WA BiCC will use these “learning landscape” experiences to build the capacity of core regional partners, inform regional and national policies and practices and improve national adaptation planning (NAPs) with a focus on coastal sectors.

**Component Three: Reduce Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Biodiversity Loss**

West Africa has lost 90% of its Upper Guinean Forests. Today only 10% of these forests (73 million ha) remain as fragmented blocks and patches mainly within Mano River Countries: Guinea (6% of remaining forest); Sierra Leone (4%); Liberia (49%); Côte d’Ivoire (21%) as well as in Ghana (18%) and Togo (2%). This loss is caused by unsustainable practices that need to be reduced and reversed in order to save the remaining forests and mangroves and curb the associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation. Steps toward this objective include understanding and addressing the threats that cause deforestation and mangrove loss and the root causes of these threats.

Component Three aims to better understand and address the policies, practices and research gaps to reduce and reverse deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss. WA BiCC aims to generate and disseminate knowledge and scale-up practices, policies and applied research actions within its three transboundary forest learning landscapes and from the experiences of other policy makers and practitioners working on related issues in the region. WA BiCC will issue grants or contracts to competent institutions to undertake activities in the three transboundary forest “learning landscapes” in partnership with ECOWAS, Mano River Union (MRU) to understand and address issues related to biodiversity conservation, forest conservation and REDD+. Initial conversations were also held with the private sector, mainly forest financing funds, on exploring the possibilities to develop or enhance Public Private Partnerships, or PPPs. This component is supported under both the Biodiversity earmark and Sustainable Landscapes (GCC REDD+) earmark.

**Sharpening WA BiCC’s Program Strategy**

At the end of Year One the WA BiCC team, with technical support and guidance from Foundations of Success (FOS), held a workshop to review and improve the Theories of Change (TOC) for each of the three technical components of the Program. The improved TOCs have guided the development of and are reflected in the activities included in the Year Two Work Plan.
2.0 YEAR ON WORKPLAN
ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

2.1 COMPONENT ONE: COMBAT WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Component One activities implemented during the first year of WA BiCC and corresponding results are described below:

**Biodiversity Threats Assessment and Other Foundational Documents**

A synthesis of available knowledge on wildlife trafficking, threatened species and priority countries has been developed as an internal working document that will be further refined as the second phase of the TA begins. A draft policy and issues brief, and a compendium of country profiles, have been drafted. This synthesis of information will inform the strategy for further engagement with the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States on policy development needs, capacity development needs and approaches for strengthening intra and inter-regional collaboration in fighting wildlife crimes.

The purpose of the Threats Assessment (TA) is to develop a regional baseline on threats to biodiversity linked to wildlife trade and trafficking in West Africa, and to assess partner engagement and opportunities for strengthening capacities to address regional wildlife trafficking issues. The information gathered from this TA will be used in identifying priority countries, species and activities for implementation. A scope of work for the field phase of the TA and Request for Proposals (RFP) has been advertised to solicit applicants to complete this work. The field phase is expected to include an ECOWAS-wide questionnaire based survey, and a detailed assessment in six representative countries. These are tentatively: Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Togo and Guinea (final selection may be modified based on any new and relevant information acquired).

**Strengthening Regional Dialogue and Wildlife Enforcement Capacity**

WA BiCC collaborated and coordinated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ECOWAS and the University of Andalucía in Spain to support master’s degree-level training on the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The course included three months of training at the university and a thesis project. Thirteen countries participated in the selection process for the CITES training and twelve submitted nominees. The proposed nominees were vetted and one was selected from each of the following countries: Burkina Faso, Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

The participants were in Spain from the 4th of April to 17th June, 2016 to complete the coursework section of the master’s course. The students received technical support from their advisors and WA BiCC towards the definition of their thesis topics and proposals. A four-day planning workshop was organized for the CITES students and their in-country supervisors in Accra from the 22nd to 25th of August. The objectives of the workshop were to: (1) introduce the various partners to the CITES students and establish working relationships; (2) review the 12 thesis proposals; and (3) agree on an implementation approach to align the thesis proposals with the work plan and contractual details for each student. All thesis proposals were defined, proposed and approved by the University at Andalucía. This training also brought together biodiversity experts from all across the region, forming a network for information sharing, consultations and the peer to peer learning from experiences to help combat wildlife crime.
An RFA was issued to select a grantee to assist and supervise the students during their field and data collection work. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) emerged as the most qualified grantee and a contract has been signed with them to start working with the students on their field work.

While it is too early to draw conclusions about final results from the activities that have been initiated and which, for the most part, are still ongoing; the following strategic results have been achieved:

- A strong working relationship has been established between the CITES officials across twelve of the fifteen ECOWAS member countries (with Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Mali being the outstanding countries) thereby providing a conducive environment for further interactions including acquiring nationally available data on wildlife trafficking issues, and contributions by WA BiCC to define regional level policies on wildlife enforcement.

- The CITES Master’s Degree Program has established a core team of wildlife enforcement professionals who will strengthen regional networks and achieve better wildlife enforcement in West Africa. The West African professionals are also developing relationships with their Cameroonian and Gabonese colleagues, and sharing experiences and knowledge across the two sub-regions.

- The ECOWAS Commission has expressed satisfaction over the opportunities provided to these students with US Government support, and this has laid a foundation for improved working relations between WA BiCC and the ECOWAS Directorate for Environment.

In addition to the CITES Masters training, WA BiCC supported several other initiatives aimed at increasing awareness, visibility and implementation of CITES within West Africa. Working with the CITES Masters Students, information from the CITES website was compiled into a data base of CITES focal points for all 15 West African states. This database was circulated to resource persons within each of the fifteen countries and feedback was integrated to establish current names, addresses and contact details for the various CITES management, scientific and enforcement authorities. This database is intended to improve regular communications between these partners going into year two of WA BiCC.

WA BiCC partnered with the US Consulate General in Nigeria to organise a symposium on World Wildlife Day. This symposium held at the US Consulate in Lagos was a unique occasion to raise awareness...
of students, policy makers and media on wildlife trafficking and trade issues in Nigeria and to explore options for addressing the issue. WA BiCC’s Biodiversity Conservation Specialist made a presentation at the symposium, highlighting the US government’s response to the broad wildlife trafficking problem in West Africa through the USAID West Africa Mission.

WA BiCC participated in a workshop on engaging indigenous peoples and rural communities in combating wildlife trafficking that was held in Limbe-Cameroon in February 2016. This workshop was organised by IUCN, the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), and the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (NESDA - Cameroon). The workshop resulted in the draft of a thirty-five-point document called the “Limbe Deliberations”, which outlines key principles and lessons-learned for strengthening wildlife enforcement through greater inclusion of rural and indigenous communities. It is anticipated that this document, currently under review, will contribute to the development or review of policies across the Central Africa and West African sub-regions.

Training of Judges and Prosecutors

WA BiCC organized and completed the training of judges and prosecutors in collaboration with USAID, Department of Justice (DoJ) and Department of State (DoS) with contributions from Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC) and Conservation Justice as well as from the FBI, INTERPOL, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Thirty-seven judges and prosecutors from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Congo and Gabon were trained over five days. Overall, 60 people participated in the training. These judges and prosecutors will reconvene after six months to evaluate success and challenges in using the skills and knowledge acquired during the first phase of their training.

During the WA BiCC Coordination Committee meeting in Abuja, follow-up discussions were held with the Abidjan Convention, the ECOWAS legal department and individual participants from Nigeria to see how the training can be adapted and offered to a larger number of individuals representing a larger cross section of West African countries. These discussions also addressed how to extend such training to customs agents, police, inspectors and investigators.

The training increased the capacity of the judges and prosecutors in the region to identify and prosecute wildlife crimes. It also afforded these law enforcers the opportunity to meet with other people working in the same domain from different countries thereby creating a network for learning and sharing among peers, which will be further strengthened with additional trainings.
Discussions with the USFWS, CITES management authorities and the network of CITES master’s students particularly in the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone, showed that West African priority species for the CITES COP17 included African Pangolins, African Grey Parrots, Lions, Elephants, Rosewoods, Rays and Sharks. Based on these discussions, WA BiCC contributed to exploring the issues and informing the CITES community in Europe on available knowledge and positions of West African countries, particularly with respect to *pterocarpus erinaceus* (pau rosa) and the African pangolins. Provision of funds for Mr. Brima Bangura of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) of Sierra Leone to attend an International Conference on Trade and Illegal Traffic of pau rosa that held in Guinea Bissau on March 29, 2016. Similarly, the USFWS and WA BiCC offered Mr. Abba Sonko from the Senegalese CITES Administrative Authority support to attend a European Union CITES committee meeting held in Brussels from June 28-29, 2016.

WA BiCC worked with the ECOWAS Environment Directorate and its principle forestry officer to convene a side event on CITES in West Africa at the COP17. The purpose of this meeting was to hear from the West African delegates what they considered to be key regional issues, to learn of priorities related to wildlife trafficking and coordination of CITES implementation in West Africa, how they perceived ECOWAS’s role, and how to take advantage of existing support mechanisms and programs such as WA BiCC to initiate post COP17 activities and planning for COP18. This side event held on the September 29, 2016 and brought participants together from Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone, as well as from the CITES Secretariat, USAID Washington, USFWS, and TRAFFIC. Participants were provided with a presentation on how the US Government through WA BiCC was supporting ECOWAS and its Member States to address Wildlife Trafficking issues in West Africa, and provided their inputs on challenges for implementing CITES in West Africa. Amongst the key messages from this side event was the necessity for higher profile leadership on CITES by regional organizations such as ECOWAS, establishing regular meetings to assess issues, and response options to...
wildlife trafficking challenges. The need for a post COP17 evaluation meeting to plan for implementing COP17 resolutions was emphasized, as well as drafting a roadmap for COP18 preparations.

COP Stephen Kelleher presenting at the WA BiCC side event during COP17

2.2 COMPONENT TWO: INCREASE COASTAL RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In Year One, Component Two primarily focused on laying the foundation for collaboration with core regional partners, national governments, and local communities by gathering current information on what was happening on this issue and how WA BiCC could best contribute. Component Two activities implemented during the first year of WA BiCC and corresponding results are described below.

Intensive Site-based Coastal Adaptation Activities

Two pilot landscapes were selected by USAID/WA for WA BiCC learning interventions:

- The Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape in Sierra Leone, which includes the Great Scarcies River Estuary, the Sierra Leone River Estuary, the Yawri Bay, and the Sherbro River Estuary.
- The Fresco Coastal Landscape in Cote d’Ivoire.

Action-oriented adaptation policies and practices require tested solutions and applied research of options for coastal resources management at the landscape level, and some key prerequisite activities have to be completed before taking concrete actions on the ground. WA BiCC’s Component Two “landscape learning” approach is to first understand how potential changes in climate may effect critical ecosystems and communities within the landscapes and then, based on this understanding define, prioritize and implement activities that mitigate the effects, improve resilience and strengthen adaptive capacity. This will be done by implementing climate change vulnerability assessments (VAs) in the landscapes. WA BiCC will then facilitate a process in which partners and stakeholders use the VA information to conduct an Options Analysis (OA) to define actual and potential adaptation activities. Based on the OA a collaborative action plan will be developed and implemented to pilot and develop effective interventions to serve as models for replication beyond the focal landscapes. The landscape experiences will serve to inform practice and policy via WA BiCC’s knowledge and learning strategy.
Prior to the start of the VA scoping missions were carried out in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.

- **Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape, Sierra Leone Scoping Mission:** In February 2016, the WA BiCC team in collaboration with CIESIN, Wetlands International, MRU, and the National Protected Areas Agency, held numerous meetings and conducted visits to a number of coastal communities in order to prepare for the VA. Mangroves were identified as important for coastal resilience to climate change impacts. Therefore, a strong emphasis of the coastal VA was based on communities and their relationship to the mangroves, as well as on the health and status of mangrove ecosystems. When asked, communities reported a number of climatic and other changes such as higher temperatures, strong winds, coastal erosion, and gully erosion along riverbanks, heavy flooding, and erratic weather patterns such as rains in the dry season.

- **Fresco Landscape, Cote d'Ivoire Scoping Mission:** An initial VA/landscape scoping mission to Cote d'Ivoire was undertaken in February 2016. During this short visit, CIESIN and WA BiCC staff members held meetings and conducted a site visit to Fresco, a mangrove area identified in the USAID E3 Bureau’s report on West African mangroves as high priority for coastal conservation. The Mayor and former Minister of Sports, Alain Lobognon, organized the field visit to Fresco and demonstrated his commitment to developing the landscape in a sustainable manner and protect the environment. It was also discovered that Cote d'Ivoire has the technical capacity to play a significant role in conducting the VA and prior research information does exist. Overall, the scoping mission achieved its main objectives of better understanding the dynamics around the Fresco site and making contact with individuals or groups that may be able to conduct the field research portion of the VA.

In August 2016, a second scoping mission was carried out and a restitution workshop held in September 2016 to present and validate findings to inform next steps moving forward. In total, the Mayor welcomed over 100 community participants and stressed the need to take concrete action to address key challenges and improve livelihoods.

Overall, the scoping missions achieved their main objectives of better understanding the dynamics in the coastal zones, helping to identify sites for the VA, and making contact with individuals or groups that might conduct the field research portion of the VA and/or implement the action plan that emerges from the OA. Following the scoping missions, VA scopes of work were developed. CIESIN led the Freetown Landscape VA and finalization of the Fresco Landscape design is in process. Based on lessons learned from the initial VA and the specificities of the Fresco Coastal Landscape, the VA methodology will be adapted.

In July 2016, the Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape VA was undertaken with two sub-components, one addressing ecosystems and one socio-economic issues. The VA focused on fishing communities where livelihoods are closely tied to mangroves and may be more strongly affected by mangrove disappearance and degradation due to natural as well as anthropogenic pressures. The VA was conducted in both the Scarcies and Sherbro regions (ten villages in each region) of the Greater Freetown Landscape to document different pressures and dynamics, as well as climate resilience issues in those areas.

CIESIN, WA BiCC and other government and academic partners are now analyzing the results. An OA is planned for December 2016 to agree on the actions to take to address the challenges identified by the VA. The OA’s are designed to validate results and evaluate intervention options with partners and stakeholders and will take place in Freetown and in the four landscape sites. A summary of the results is in Appendix 1.
Pictures from Plantain Island, Yawri Bay - approaching the village (upper left); smoking fish in a traditional banda (lower left); waiting for access to the well (right)

Impact of sea-level rise on communities
Regional Policy Frameworks for Coastal Resilience

WA BiCC engaged with the Abidjan Convention to assist them in the development of regional protocols and strategies for coastal resilience. The Abidjan Convention mandate is to promote cooperation in the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the African Atlantic coast. After assessing the mandate and the legislative framework, WA BiCC decided to support the Abidjan Convention Strategy for Invasive Species in West Africa, the Sustainable Mangrove Management Protocol and the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol.
Strategy for Invasive Species in West Africa

In November 2015, WA BiCC supported the Abidjan Convention, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union (MRU) Member States to organize a technical experts’ workshop on addressing challenges caused by the invasion of Sargassum (*Sargassum sp.*), a species of seaweed increasingly found in excessive quantities along the coastlines of West Africa and the Caribbean Basin countries. The event, held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, brought together 55 marine biologists, oceanographers, policy experts from nine countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) and a variety of organizations (national and international) to deliberate on the issue. A draft Regional Strategy to enhance better management of the recurring invasive species (*Sargassum sp.*) in West Africa was developed.

As a follow up to the Freetown event, a Regional Workshop on Invasive Species with a focus on *Sargassum sp.* was held in Monrovia, Liberia from the 9th to 10th of August 2016 to further develop a regional strategy that addresses the challenges of coastal zone degradation due to proliferation of invasive species. Experts from nine West African countries affected by *Sargassum* attended the workshop, together with staff from WA BiCC and Abidjan Convention Secretariat. During the workshop, the participants developed a draft strategy on invasive species with a focus on *Sargassum* that will be submitted to the Conference of the Parties of the Abidjan Convention in March 2017. An implementation plan and a draft Project Identification Form (PIF) were also developed to help initiate the implementation of the strategy.

Sustainable Mangrove Management Protocol and ICZM Protocols

WA BiCC supported the Abidjan Convention in the development of these two protocols to address climate impacts on coastal systems by developing an integrated regional policy and legal framework for strong coastal management. WA BiCC’s support included regional workshops and national consultations to increase regional understanding and commitment as well as ownership of the process, the protocols, and the annexes by all relevant national institutions.

Following the Regional Expert Meetings and the formulation of these protocols, WA BiCC supported the Abidjan Convention to conduct national consultations where information about the protocols was disseminated and support was gained from all Parties to the Convention. The national consultations brought together experts from public and private organizations working in a variety of sectors; biodiversity conservation, environmental management, agriculture, food security, and energy. The national consultations in Liberia and Ghana took place in August, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire in September, and Nigeria, Togo, and Benin after.

Major findings/recommendations from the regional expert meetings and national consultations include:

- The national consultations motivated ownership of the protocols by relevant national institutions.
- Participants consider that the sense of ownership of the protocols will facilitate the adoption by COP12, the ratification, and future implementation of the protocols and their annexes.
- Develop a Regional Action Plan to help set-up the framework for elaborating National Action Plans for the implementation of designed protocols.
- Adopt the large marine ecosystem approach in managing marine/coastal challenges.
- Contracting Parties to the Convention are willing to identify expert focal points at country level of each protocol area and build capacity for an effective coordination of marine and coastal activities using the large marine ecosystem approach.

In addition to the Mangrove and the ICZM Protocols, WA BiCC provided technical and financial support to the Pre-CoP meeting to finalize the legal and policy documents, including the Environmental Standards and Norms, and the Amended Text of the Abidjan Convention. The Bureau of the Convention at its recent meeting in Abidjan considered that COP12 will mark the end of the Abidjan Convention
revitalization process initiated since 2007. Overall, assuming that the four legal and policy documents will be adopted by COP12, the Abidjan Convention will have an updated set of instruments that will supersede the West and Central Africa Action Plan, which was developed under the UNEP Regional Seas program for West and Central Africa in the early 1980s.

**Support to the National Adaptation Planning Process**

WA BiCC has started to work on the development of a baseline assessment for support to National Adaptation Plans (NAP). The MRU Members States and Togo have been identified as focal countries for WA BiCC support, and the technical focus for WA BiCC interventions will be limited to specific coastal sectors where there is a clear link to climate change impacts and responses. In West Africa, only Burkina Faso has completed a National Adaptation Plan, which can provide process lessons for other countries in the region as they ramp up their NAPs. The focal NAP countries are all actively involved in climate change mitigation and adaptation policy development. All of these countries have developed and submitted to the UNFCCC and Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC). Some countries have worked on National Adaptation Programs for Action (NAPAs), the process that preceded the NAP process. Cote D’Ivoire developed a National Strategy to Combat Climate Change, which was adopted in late 2014 for 2015-2020. Liberia is the most advanced country in the WA BiCC focal countries and has initiated and launched the process to formulate a Climate Response Strategy. Stakeholder consultations, synthesizing available information, assessing gaps and needs, are underway. WA BiCC will explore the gaps to identify appropriate support to this process.

**Generation and Utilization of Climate and Geospatial Information**

WA BiCC does not have the capacity to generate climate change and geospatial information. Efforts have been made to get relevant information from specialized organizations. In this regard, WA BiCC has engaged SERVIR/West Africa (a regional USAID-funded program based in Niamey, Niger) to advise them to focus on coastal areas as well as the Sahelian countries, and ensure that products from SERVIR are demand driven. WA BiCC also consulted ECOWAS, MRU, Abidjan Convention, and coastal countries to express their needs with regard to Geospatial information. Possible products that could be useful include:

- Coastal exposure to climate change: sea-level rise & erosion
- Biodiversity mapping (Biodiversity Atlas)
- Information for consideration in early warning systems

**2.3 COMPONENT THREE: REDUCE DEFORESTATION, FOREST DEGRADATION AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS**

A desk review was conducted by the Landscape and Forestry Specialist to understand the policies, strategies, plans, socio-economics, natural resource management activities, carbon stock information and existing institutions operating in the five target landscapes of the Program. This study provided the Program with a deeper understanding of the current state of each landscape. It also enabled better preparation and planning of the various scoping missions. Scoping missions were then undertaken to generate data on the different dynamics in place at the site level (i.e., communities, activities, interventions, issues relating to climate change and biodiversity) to inform the design and contents of WA BiCC interventions for the sustainable management of the landscape. REDD+ roadmaps were developed for both Guinea and Sierra Leone, and WA BiCC was given two seats on the Sierra Leone REDD+ Technical Working Group to provide a voice in the development and coordination of the country’s evolving national REDD+ program. Component Three activities implemented during the first year of WA BiCC and corresponding results are described below:
Gola Transboundary Forest Landscape Scoping Mission

The Gola scoping mission was carried out in April 2016 with the support of key stakeholders in Liberia and Sierra Leone, namely the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)/Forestry Division, Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Society for the Conservation of Nature (SCNL) Liberia, Njala University, Forestry Training Institute-FTI, community representatives from the seven Gola chiefdoms in Sierra Leone, and two Gola counties in Liberia.

After the scoping mission, WA BiCC held restitution meetings with the Sierra Leone and Liberia governments to present its findings, recommendations and next steps for value-added interventions in the Gola Forest Transboundary Landscape. Both governments agreed that co-management, integrated land use, sustainable agriculture, behavior change communication, and other key interventions to reduce deforestation in the landscape are acceptable and tentatively approved. The final RFA for grant applications to implement field activities in the landscape was approved by USAID after review and feedback by USAID/Liberia, and will be published in October 2016.

Wonegizi-Wologisi-Ziama Transboundary Forest Landscape Scoping Mission

WA BiCC, along with officials from the Forestry Development Authority, Ministère de l’Environnement, des Eaux et Forêts (Ministry for Water and Forests) and USAID Liberia carried out two scoping missions, one to the Wonegizi-Wologisi forest landscape in Liberia and another to the Ziama forest landscape of Guinea. The main objective of the scoping mission was to gather relevant information related to the transboundary learning landscapes to guide the development of an RFA to select a grantee to implement interventions for the sustainable management of the landscape. Findings from these scoping missions are summarized in a report, available upon request.

Stakeholders on both sides of the transboundary landscape showed willingness to collaborate with WA BiCC. The WA BiCC team met partners in Liberia and Guinea to discuss the way forward in relation to their interventions in the MRU priority area and how WA BiCC can best contribute to these efforts. Areas in which partners would like WA BiCC’s contribution include:

- Support for game guards/rangers
- Livelihood development for communities around the Wonegizi-Wologisi-Ziama forest
- Development of a management plan
- Restoration of degraded land
- REDD+/carbon project development and implementation
- Development of biodiversity assessment and socio economic studies
- Bilateral collaboration between Guinea and Liberia

Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo Transboundary Forest Landscape Scoping Mission

WA BiCC, along with officials from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA)/Liberia, the Office Ivorian des parcs et reserves (OIPR), and the German Development Agency GIZ, carried out two scoping missions, one to the Sapo-Grebo-Krahn forest landscape in Liberia and another to the Tai Forest landscape in Cote d’Ivoire.

On the Liberia side, there are 207 forest dependent communities representing about 300,000 inhabitants living in three counties (Sinoe, Grand Gedeh and Fish Town). The goals articulated in the landscape include enhancing the conservation of Sapo National Park, establishing legal status and protection of the Grebo-Krahn forest and establishing an ecological corridor between the two areas. These proposed interventions were discussed with the FDA, and the final recommended interventions will help develop the RFA for grant applications to fund activities to promote sustainable management of the transboundary forest.
The scoping mission to the adjacent Sapo-Grebo forest landscape in Liberia revealed a lack of successful sustainable models of community landscape planning/community forest management.

On the Cote d’Ivoire side, the WA BiCC team met with officials from the Cote d’Ivoire REDD+ Secretariat, the OIPR and GIZ to gather information on their activities and better coordinate the scoping mission in Tai. Discussions centered on their interventions in the MRU priority area of Tai and how WA BiCC can best contribute to these efforts. The key stakeholders identified include USAID, MRU, OIPR, Societe pour le Developpement des Forets (SODEFOR), Departement de l’environnement et de la proection de la nature (DEPN), Wildlife Department, Forestry Department, Law Enforcement Unit, GIZ/Embero, WCF, partners of Soubre, San Pedro and clustered communities of Tchetal, Buyo, Guiglo, Zagne, Tai, and Djouroutou.

The scoping missions enabled WA BiCC to establish relationships with national and local partners and gain a better understanding of their needs, including livelihood support to the 81 communities around the Tai National Park, local staff and community capacity building, the establishment of a Tai-Grebo-Krahn corridor, strengthening private sector involvement and fostering collaboration between the national partners. The mission also helped WA BiCC identify threatened species to prioritize for biodiversity conservation through the development of species-specific action plans.

WA BiCC COP with Minister of Environment, Water and Forests Sagno in Guinea

Mangroves

Picathertes

Pygmy hippo
Increase Availability of Information on Best Practices in Mangrove and Upland Forest Management

WA BiCC held a meeting with the USAID funded STEWARD Program in November 2016 to obtain success stories and best practices from regional, national and local dimensions. This information was later verified during the landscape scoping missions. During Year One, WA BiCC also undertook literature reviews, web searches, scoping visits to pilot landscapes as well as meetings with resource persons and discussions with partners in order to identify best practices that could be considered for policy development and/or scaling up.

The following are twenty-seven practices that were identified at regional, national and local (community) levels that will be evaluated for their effectiveness:

Regional level
1. Development of regional policy frameworks for climate change, biodiversity conservation (e.g. West Africa Forest convergence Plan by ECOWAS).
2. Establishment of regional/sub regional strategies for meaningful contribution to international debates such as CITES CoP17, UNFCCC-CoP22.
3. Establishment or strengthening networks (e.g. Eagle, Elephant Protection Initiative) to combat wildlife crime.
4. Bi-annual transboundary collaboration meetings (Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo).
5. Regional perspective on forest landscape restoration (Bonn Challenge).
6. Regional perspective on INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution).

National level
1. Establishment of community forestry department (Liberia).
2. Establishment of national network to combat wildlife crime (Benin, Guinea, Senegal & Togo).
3. Increasing penalties in wildlife forestry laws (Guinea).
5. Establishment of national species groups (Liberia).
6. REDD+ readiness initiative (Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire).
7. Organized and monitored charcoal production (Liberia).
8. Organized and monitored chainsaw milling (Liberia).

Local level
1. Establishment of local community committees e.g. for Ziama Forest co-management (Guinea).
2. Paramount Chief’s law to ban youth mining during weekday (PC of Koya Chiefdom – Sierra Leone).
3. Sacred forests cultural/spiritual link to conservation.
4. Carbon credit for Gola neighboring communities (Sierra Leone).
5. Community adaptation initiatives (lessons from Fresco).
6. Village savings and loan associations (Guinea, Sierra Leone).
7. Turtle monitoring (CITES student, Gambia).
8. Mangrove regeneration Initiative (Gambia).
9. Mixed rice-fish farming (Guinea).
10. Agroforestry landscape restoration (Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire).
11. Beekeeping (MRU Member States) reducing risk of bush fire.

National and Regional Collaboration

Post-COP Paris Discussion April 19-21, 2016, Freetown
• Facilitated by BIODEV in collaboration with Global Environment Facility (GEF), University of Finland, and Sierra Leone Agriculture and Research Institute (SLARI)
• As identified in the discussion, WA BiCC is looking for ways to partner with institutions like BIODEV to organize workshops aiming at supporting future REDD+ processes in the MRU countries who are lagging behind.

Analysis of the REDD+ situation in the MRU Member States (Liberia, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone) and explored support with partners

• The analysis revealed that these countries are particularly vulnerable to environmental disasters including the effects of climate change as their economies are highly dependent on natural resources and agriculture. In terms of GHG emissions, the forests of the MRU Members States serve as a net carbon sink, meaning they absorb more carbon than they emit at the present time. Besides WA BiCC, there is currently no other regional funding for REDD+ activities in the Mano River Union Sub-region. WA BiCC discussed how the Program can help the National REDD+ of Cote d'Ivoire share experiences with other francophone countries, especially Guinea, who is relatively behind on developing a National REDD+ Strategy.
• Meeting with the World Bank regional officer in Abidjan explored potential REDD+ synergies among French speaking countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea).
• WA BiCC supported the Government of Guinea in efforts to access Norwegian climate change and forest funding.

Bilateral Steering Committee Meeting on the Tai-Grebo-Sapo landscape, Abidjan

• Landscape management was recently transferred to the GIZ Country Manager for Cote d'Ivoire and an additional funding of 3 million Euro for the landscape was announced. This new funding will extend their intervention (implemented by Ambero) up to 2020. The KFW funding of 11 million Euro was announced for November 2016 with 6 million for Liberia and 5 million for Cote d'Ivoire.
• The next Steering Committee Meeting has been scheduled for the first week of December 2016 in Liberia. In light of these developments, the draft RFA for WA BiCC support to this landscape will be reviewed in order to ensure that WA BiCC is targeting gaps in the German funding and providing added value to the much larger funding source.

Liberia National Species Working Group

In order to develop a regional strategy for the conservation of threatened species, WA BiCC met with the Liberia National Species Working Group. The proposed action resulting from the meeting is to help the establishment and full operation of national species working groups in the MRU Member States. The groups will help gather information, share experiences, build the capacity of young conservationists, share information, and develop Strategic Actions Plans for the conservation of threatened species.

WA BiCC will assist by building relationships between these groups and international technical institutions such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Regional Workshop on West Africa Forest Monitoring, August 24-29, 2016, Lomé, Togo

The workshop encouraged regional collaboration on monitoring forest resources in West Africa. About 50 institutions from 18 countries representing West Africa, Central Africa and America participated. Presentations highlighted common gaps including: a) no updated data/archive/qualitative control; b) limited collaboration of actors within country; c) limited
funding d) lack of good quality imagery and limited technical capacity. Challenges included limited capacity for forest inventory, overlapping responsibilities of institutions and forest degradation.

**Build Capacity for Low Emissions Development Strategies (LEDS) and REDD+**

Compared with other MRU and ECOWAS Member States, Guinea is behind in the development of a REDD+ Strategy. In response to this need, and to be able to explore all possibilities to sustainably manage its rich forests and biodiversity, the Government of Guinea requested support from the World Bank and USAID, via its STEWARD Program for technical assistance. With the closure of the STEWARD Program, WA BiCC agreed to engage an expert consultant to develop a roadmap for REDD+ in Guinea including, but not limited to, the eventual development of a Project Intention Note (R-PIN) along the lines of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) that will define a roadmap for the development of a REDD++ Strategy in Guinea. Initial support will be to initiate REDD+ consultations with key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of who the Guinea REDD+ stakeholders are and then undertake targeted outreach to potential private sector partners. To advance and define this collaboration, WA BiCC staff undertook two scoping visits to Guinea to jointly identify the outline for WA BiCC support in order to inform and draft the scope of work for the expert consultant.

**Strengthen Private Sector Engagement in Biodiversity Habitat Conservation and Low Emissions Development**

The WA BiCC Technical team met and discussed partnership issues related to forest landscape restoration in WA BiCC’s “learning landscapes” and shared experiences with Form International (FI) on forest restoration and sustainable forest management. The discussion recognized the importance of complimenting the protection efforts of Component Three with restoration activities especially in the degraded areas of the landscapes. WA BiCC will develop case studies of how FI has successfully promoted the sustainable management of existing forests, reforestation of degraded forests, biodiversity conservation, and development of sustainable enterprises. Some of the FI experiences in Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Tanzania and Ghana will be shared with stakeholders beyond the landscapes. A particularly innovative intervention is the regeneration of degraded parts of protected areas with high quality tree species. WA BiCC plans to explore possible learning exchanges with FI in Year Two.
3.0 CROSSING-CUTTING ACTIVITIES: COLLABORATION AND LEARNING

3.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment (ITOCA)

WA BiCC conducted three Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment (ITOCA) workshops with the core regional partners; the Economic Community of West African States’ (ECOWAS) Directorate of Environment and Climate Change Unit on September 28-30, 2015; the Abidjan Convention Secretariat on October 13-15, 2015; and the Mano River Union (MRU) Secretariat on October 19-21, 2015. The objectives of these assessment workshops were two-fold. First, the assessment measures organizational capacity and performance using the ITOCA and Organizational Performance Index (OPI) tools. These tools were used to develop Institutional Strengthening Plans (ISPs) to address gaps and opportunities identified during the assessments. Second, the assessment established organizational and technical capacity development baselines for the core partners. The methodology and findings of the ITOCA workshops are available in the ITOCA and OPI report and the three ISPs has been finalized and endorsed by each of the three key institutional partners. The ISPs are currently at the implementation phase and they will serve as a roadmap to guide WA BiCC’s capacity building support with WA BiCC’s core regional partners.

Rapid Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment (ITOCA) and Facilitator Guide

The Capacity Building Unit worked on the development of the rapid ITOCA by tailoring it to the size of grantees in accordance with the scope of work and support that WA BiCC will provide. The work consisted of simplifying the ITOCA statements and capacity areas while integrating two additional capacity areas notably Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and Consortium Management. The unit also developed the narrative ITOCA Facilitator Guide that will provide necessary guidance to properly administer the ITOCA workshops and capacity assessment processes.

ECOWAS Environmental Action Plan

WA BiCC continues to work with the ECOWAS Environment Directorate to review and update the ECOWAS Environmental Action Plan. During the development of the ISP, the Directorate noted the need to revise and update the current Action Plan to better reflect the evolving strategic orientations of the policy and to integrate new challenges of environment. The review should also ensure that the Environmental Action Plan takes into account emerging environmental challenges as well as the views and interests of Member States and internal and external stakeholders. A consultant has been recruited to lead the revision process and a first inception meeting has been held in Abuja. An Action Plan has been developed and validated by the ECOWAS team and the next step would be for the consultant to develop...
the first EAP general framework to be presented and discussed with different stakeholders during a consultation workshop to be organized in January 2017.

**ECOWAS Directorate of Environment Monitoring and Evaluation System**

Following the revision of the Environmental Action Plan, the ECOWAS Directorate of Environment shared the need to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System to effectively and efficiently measure progress and performance of the Directorate and its partners. The M&E Plan will be tailored to the reporting needs of the Commission and aligned with the objectives and priorities in the Environmental Action Plan. The M&E Plan will also establish a results framework and a monitoring system linked to Member States, partners and donors’ systems in order to promote learning, experience sharing and impacts measurement. A consultant has been recruited to lead the development of the M&E Plan and a first inception meeting has been held in Abuja. An Action Plan has been developed and validated by the ECOWAS team and the next step would be for the consultant to develop the first Draft M&E Plan to be presented and discussed with different stakeholders during a consultation workshop.

**Joint Abidjan Convention-WA BiCC Communication Strategy**

Through the ITOCA consultation process it was identified that communications is one of the Abidjan Convention’s major needs. WA BiCC and the Abidjan Convention agreed that this will be the main focus for capacity building in Year One and Two, beginning with the development of a joint communications strategy. The Joint Abidjan Convention-WA BiCC Communication Strategy has been finalized and validated by both parties. The strategy lists the main activities and products to be developed in the next year, process for collaboration and training, and roles and responsibilities of each party. To support the implementation of the strategy, the process to recruit a temporary Communication Officer for the Abidjan Convention has commenced.

**Abidjan Convention Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**

As highlighted in the ISP, the Abidjan Convention is lacking an integrated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System to support and guide the strategic orientation of the organizations by efficiently measuring progress made by the institution and its partners’ over time. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat requested the support of WA BiCC to develop and implement an M&E plan tailored to the structure and reporting needs of the Secretariat and aligned with its strategic and operational plan. A consultant has been recruited to lead the development of the M&E Plan and a first inception meeting has been held in Abidjan to introduce the consultant to the Convention’s team and gather their expectations and needs. Following the meeting, a work plan has been submitted by the consultant and validated by the Convention team. The next steps involve developing the first Draft M&E Plan to be presented and discussed with different stakeholders during a consultation workshop.

**Support the development of the new MRU Accounting and Financial Reporting System**

WA BiCC supported the Mano River Union Secretariat in developing a new accounting and finance system to strengthen the internal accounting and financial systems of the Secretariat. By migrating these into a new system based on the International Public Sector Accounting Reporting Standard (ISPAS). The objective of this new system will be to strengthen the internal accounting and financial systems of the Mano River Union with the overall goal of ensuring that the Secretariat efficiently, transparently and professionally account for funds provided by development partners.

Terms of References have been jointly developed with the MRU Finance Department to agree on a roadmap towards the development and implement of this new system. WA BiCC started the process by translating the organization’s financing and accounting manual from English to French to support the internal revision, validation and adoption process. A recruitment process has been also initiated to recruit a short term consultant assigned to support the Secretariat in developing a booklet version of the Financial
and Accounting Procedures Manual and to support the organization of a validation workshop aimed at internalizing the new procedures. Another recruitment process has been initiated to recruit a consultant specialized in IPSAS to guide the Secretariat through the migration process and coordinate the operationalization of the new reporting system.

Require the pro bono assistance of IBM for the development of a Regional Clearinghouse Mechanism

The Capacity Building Unit has taken the lead in establishing a partnership between Pact World and Pyxera Global to pursue technical support from IBM in the development of a Regional Clearinghouse Mechanism. Pyxera is managing the IBM social sabbatical program portfolio and suggested WA BiCC to submit a proposal to IBM to seek their pro bono assistance to support the process of establishing a regional information system. The role of the mechanism would be to manage and disseminate data and information related to the sustainable management of natural resources in West Africa and will require to build the capacity of regional partners to use and manage the Clearinghouse Mechanism over the long term. The final proposal has been submitted to IBM in October 2016 and has been officially accepted in November 2016. The support of IBM shall be delivered in 2017 and WA BiCC is currently developing the detailed Scope of Work for IBM in consultation with identified regional partners and stakeholders.

12 CITES student trained on capacity building

The Capacity Building Unit provided a training on capacity building during the West Africa Regional Workshop on Strengthening Capacity for CITES Implementation through master’s Thesis Research. The objective was to introduce the main concepts and tools of capacity building to the students so that they have a better understanding of the capacity building process in their field and professional work.

3.2 COMMUNICATIONS

WA BiCC Communication Strategy

The draft WA BiCC Communication Strategy developed in Year One defines the key target audiences, objectives and tools for Program, partner, and behavior change communications. The Communication Strategy aims to strengthen communication and coordination between the WA BiCC team, institutional partners, grantees, and USAID. In addition, it will facilitate capacity building and knowledge exchange among practitioners, policy makers and other decision-makers. The Strategy will apply appropriate BCC to reach a range of audiences to influence and inform knowledge, attitudes, policies and practices related to wildlife trafficking, coastal resilience to climate change and deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss.

Communications Support for Core Regional Partners

Through the ITOCA consultation process, it was identified that communications is one of the Abidjan Convention’s major capacity gaps and WA BiCC agreed that this will be the main focus for capacity building in Year’s 1 and 2. In Year One, the Communications Unit worked with the Abidjan Convention and WA BiCC’s Capacity Building Unit to develop a Joint Communication Strategy. The Communications Unit will support capacity building for the implementation of the Joint Strategy, and provide guidance to Abidjan Convention in their development of communications products, including the redevelopment of their website and development of educational materials. Now that an advisor has been hired to work with the ECOWAS Directorate of Environment the development of a Communication Strategy will begin in Year Two. The Mano River Union is currently recruiting a Communication Officer supported by the African Development Bank and WA BiCC will be working with the new Officer on the MRU Communication Strategy in Year Two.
Additionally, the Communications Team supported the Abidjan Convention during the World Oceans Day in Accra by providing branding items such as T-Shirts, caps, and key rings. The team also provided media, video and photography coverage. The event resulted in media coverage (as highlighted in the links below) of WA BiCC and greater visibility of the Program in Ghana. A full media report on the event is available on request. Media and branding support was also provided to the Abidjan Convention during the Sargassum Strategy meeting and the National Consultation meeting on Abidjan Convention Protocols. Media coverage included video and audio recordings, interviews, newspaper articles and press releases.

**Program and Partner Communications**

WA BiCC produced a general WA BiCC brochure, a WA BiCC factsheet, a component brief for the three components in collaboration with the component leads, and a grants brochure. All products will be translated into French. The Communications Unit is working on developing the WA BiCC website. The Unit selected a vendor who has provided mockups for the website. A request for approval has been sent to the USAID Governance Board. WA BiCC launched its social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. In September 2016, capitalized on the WA BiCC second annual work plan validation workshop and the CITES COP 17 in Johannesburg as key moments for promotion of the Program via social media. Additionally, the Communications Unit presented “An Overview of Global Climate Change and West Africa’s Role/Challenges” to the Mandela Washington Fellows Alumni. During the West Africa Regional Workshop on Strengthening Capacity for CITES Implementation through master’s thesis research held in Accra, the team began production of a short documentary film on the CITES Training that will capture the views of various stakeholders on how the CITES Training will feed into the overall WA BiCC goal of biodiversity conservation. A 3-part series will be produced; the first part, highlights the WA BiCC Program and introduces the CITES training. It is currently under final review and will be published shortly. The team also developed an [e-poster](#), which gives an overview of WA BiCC and the progress made to date to be used during a poster session at the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

**Behavior Change Communications (BCC)**

Information from the Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape VA will be used to develop behavior change communication activities. In preparation for the definition of a BCC strategy, a list of radio stations that cover the communities within the landscape was compiled. It is likely that the BCC strategy will include activities such as the production of radio dramas and talk shows and this list will serve to broadcast locally.

The Freetown Communications Specialist participated in the Gola forest landscape scoping mission and helped draft the scoping mission report. During the mission, it became clear that BCC will be an important strategy for promoting forest conservation in the landscape. Information was gathered and a draft knowledge, attitudes and behavior document was drafted. The Freetown-based communications staff also participated in the GESI scoping mission to the Gola forest communities of Baoma, Lalehun, Joru and Geima on the Sierra Leone side, as well as the Mano River Congo, Jenemana and Butter Hill communities on the Liberia side.

### 3.3 GESI (GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION)

Two GESI consultants (Mary Tobin and Namalie Jayasinghe) engaged with WA BiCC staff, partners and technical experts to develop the WA BiCC Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy. They completed a rapid GESI analysis in the field. The field mission began in Abuja, Nigeria where they engaged with the ECOWAS Environmental Directorate and the Gender Directorate. ECOWAS was consulted about their experience and expertise in integrating gender and youth in natural resources management in the region. The mission continued to Sierra Leone and Liberia where they held talks with the MRU focal person for gender, participated in a vulnerability assessment study in the coast areas, and engaged with local communities in the Gola Forest (one of the upland forest learning landscapes of WA BiCC). The team then traveled to Dakar, Senegal and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to engage with the ECOWAS Gender
Center and Youth Development and Sports Center to share ideas on better mainstreaming GESI into WA BiCC and ECOWAS’ work on Natural Resource Management (NRM), and potential approaches and activities for WA BiCC. The consultants have compiled the mission report and a draft strategy, which was presented at the WA BiCC Year Two Annual Work Plan Validation Meeting. The WA BiCC Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy is close to the completion stage.

3.4 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Core Regional Partners

WA BiCC held the second meeting of the Partnership Coordination Committee in Abuja on June 26-29, 2016. The meeting provided the opportunity for the partners to provide feedback on their views of implementation to date, strengths and challenges to address and, critically, to provide input to the WA BiCC technical team on priorities for inclusion in the Year Two work plan, building on the outcomes of Year One. The partners benefited from learning more about each other and began to identify areas of joint collaboration in the remaining years of the program. WA BiCC was able to strengthen the partnerships with the partners, and harvest valuable information to inform the Year Two work plan. Additional coordination meetings with each of the Core Regional Partners were held throughout Year One. In close consultation with each of the Core Regional Partners, WA BiCC successfully recruited two Advisors for the Abidjan Convention and the ECOWAS Environment Directorate, respectively. Recruitment for the MRU advisor is in progress.

Regional Partnership Opportunities

In December 2015, the WA BiCC Team presented an overview of the Program to officials at the US Embassy in Accra including USAID West Africa Regional Director, Alex Deprez and representatives from USAID/Ghana. The USAID West Africa Mission discussed the importance of the WA BiCC Team’s effective consultation with other USAID bi-lateral missions and programs in the region in order to avoid duplication, capitalize on previous investments and to work with local, national and regional organizations to make them more effective.

Correspondingly in December 2015, WA BiCC met with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) head office in Freetown, Sierra Leone with the Environmental Chief, Saskia Marijnissen and Small Grants Coordinator Abdul Sannoh. The purpose of the meeting was for WA BiCC and UNDP Sierra Leone to share information on program plans and activities, identify synergies, and possible collaborative investments (i.e., GEF, and small grants).

WA BiCC DCOP met with the Executive Director of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), Dr. Kolleh Bangura and his team in December to share respective plans and potential collaboration for conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in the Gola Forest and Greater Freetown Coastal Landscape.

In February 2016, WA BiCC staff attended the Sierra Leone REDD+ Multi-stakeholder Working Group Meeting in response to a special invitation from the National Protected Area Authority under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security. During the meeting, key member Institutions of the REDD+ Multi-stakeholder Working Group were selected and WA BiCC was given two seats.

The COP and DCOP conducted a one-week mission to Abidjan and met with several officials of the Cote d’Ivoire Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and other agencies and NGOs to introduce the WA BiCC Program. They also identified technical priorities related to the WA BiCC learning landscapes of the Tai Forest and Fresco and existing policies and strategies on climate change, biodiversity and sustainable landscape management.
The COP, DCOP and the Landscape and Forestry Specialist conducted a one-week mission to Guinea in March to introduce the Program to key stakeholders and discuss potential collaboration between institutions and organizations to support the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Ministère de l’Environnement, des Eaux et Forêts – MEEF). Meetings were held with: USAID; US Embassy; Minister Mme Christine Sagno of MEEF; the REDD+ Coordinating Team; the Forestry Department in charge of forest Guards; the “Centre Forestier de N’zérékoré; the UNOPS and EU, “Forêts Classées ”; UNDP, FAO, Guinée Ecologie; IFC, Association de la Promotion des Industries Privees; Predict, GIZ and GALF.

WA BiCC participated in a 2-day IUCN Project Validation Workshop in Monrovia from May 2-3, 2016 to become familiar with IUCN and MRU’s interventions in the landscapes in order to maximize coordination and effectiveness between the two programs. Consequently, potential collaboration in the implementation of conservation activities was defined in four of WA BiCC’s sites namely, Gola, Wonegizi-Wologisi-Ziama, Sapo-Grebo-Tai and Greater Freetown Coastal Landscapes.

The WA BiCC COR and COP met with the USAID/Nigeria Mission Director, members of his team and a representative from the US Embassy to brief them on the outcomes of the Coordination Committee meeting and overall WA BiCC progress of WA BiCC. Activities being implemented in Nigeria were presented including the training of Nigerian CITES students and the 6 Nigerian judges and prosecutors who participated in the joint DoJ, DoS, USAID workshop held the week before in Accra.

WA BiCC also participated in a regional video conference, organized by USAID, among key organizations in Guinea, Burkina Faso and Togo (governments, NGOs, and INTERPOL) that shared experiences and challenges in combatting wildlife trafficking.

**Public Private Partnership (PPP) Opportunities**

The COP and Forestry & Landscape Specialist participated in the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Government of Guinea Roundtable on biodiversity offsets in the mining sector in Conakry, Guinea. The objective of the Roundtable was to promote collaboration between actors of the mining and forestry/biodiversity sectors. WA BiCC established contacts with major actors from both the government and private sector in Guinea.

The COP and Rockfeler Herisse of USAID/Guinea met with Madame Keita at the Association de la Promotion des Industries Privees (APIP) to discuss how WA BiCC might work with APIP on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and increasing knowledge in the private sector on REDD+.

### 3.5 PROGRAM OPERATIONS

In its first year of program implementation, WA BiCC successfully executed a rapid start-up. The rapid program start-up established offices in Accra, Ghana and Freetown, Sierra Leone. During the program start-up phase, WA BiCC completed in-country registration in Sierra Leone and Ghana, recruited for and hired Key Personnel and project staff, and administered training on financial systems, grants, subcontracts and procurement. Employee manuals were drafted for Sierra Leone and Ghana staff and an Operations Manual for all staff to ensure compliance with Tetra Tech corporate operational policies and procedures which are also compliant with USAID standards and regulations. All necessary office equipment and supplies were procured and inventoried, and minor office renovations were completed in both the Accra and Freetown offices in order to maximize the office space and working environment.

WA BiCC successfully recruited for and staffed thirty-one field-based team members including Advisors to the Abidjan Convention and ECOWAS. At the end of Year One, recruitment continues for the following positions: Advisor to the Manu River Union, replacement Senior Communications Specialist, replacement Knowledge and Learning Specialist, Freetown-based Finance and Grants Officer, Communications Coastal Zone Landscape Manager, Community Development and Livelihoods Specialist,
and Mangrove Conservation Specialist. Please see the updated WA BiCC Organigram below for further details on staffing structure.
4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In Year One, WA BiCC worked on developing the Program’s logical frameworks and strengthening institutional partners’ ability to provide data on performance, measure activities and their outcomes. Completed activities include:

1. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) was finalized by WA BiCC and approved by USAID. The MEP presents the process for establishing and implementing the WA BiCC M&E system and process in addition to the agreed upon indicators, targets and methods of measurement.

2. The M&E team hosted two M&E training sessions; one on the WA BiCC M&E System in December, 2015 and one on the use of ePORT in March, 2016.

3. The M&E data collection tools was designed and tested. Deployment into tablets and smartphones is ongoing. Equipment has been purchased in preparation for effective data collection.

4. The Baseline for capacities of the three key partners was conducted. The ITOCA tool has been applied to the three key partners to assess institutional capacity in areas relevant to contributing to WA BiCC’s objectives. In addition to establishing baselines and monitoring capacity improvements, the result of these institutional assessments will be used to define capacity building plans that will be supported by WA BiCC. In Year Two, the ITOCA tool will be simplified and used for other partners which require capacity assessments.

5. A Vulnerability Assessment was conducted for the Greater Freetown Coastal Area. The VA has been designed to provide baseline data on the landscape (for example, socioeconomic data and biophysical data) and also to establish the initial environment in terms of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP Assessment). The VA report to be finalized by CIESIN during the first quarter of FY2017 will provide the initial baselines for this landscape. During the next year baselines will be conducted for the Fresco landscape and for the Three Upland Landscapes.

6. The M&E team also supported work across the Program, including the scoping missions conducted for the Transboundary Landscapes, the CITES student capacities assessment, and the biodiversity threats assessment. The Threat assessment conducted through a Grant will give the baseline situation for Wildlife trafficking in West Africa.

7. The M&E team led the review of the Program’s FY16 results and facilitated the establishment of targets for FY17 based on the revised Theories of Change, results of the previous year, and results expected for the next year. The FY16 results and result targets for FY17 were discussed and finalized with the technical team during a mission to Freetown from August 6th to 8th, 2016 and presented during the Validation Workshop in Accra held on September 14th, 2016.

8. The M&E Assistant attended a 5-day training workshop organized by the Management for Development Fund in Accra as part of Tetra Tech’s capacity building sponsorship support for WA-BiCC staff. The training consisted of new tools for identifying and documenting successful interventions and approaches and tracking program progress towards indicators across all project components.
### WA BiCC Indicators and Targets Progress

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Result #</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline FY16 Target</th>
<th>FY16 Result</th>
<th>FY16 Performance</th>
<th>LOP Target</th>
<th>LOP Result</th>
<th>LOP Performance</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IR1.1. IR 2.1. IR 3.1.</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td><strong>Number of laws, policies, strategies, plans, agreements or regulations addressing climate change and/or biodiversity conservation officially proposed, adopted or implemented as a result of USG assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Law, Legislation and other regulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>National Action Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Other Action Plan, Policy and Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Adaptation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Sustainable Landscapes</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Biodiversity conservation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Cross cutting</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Local</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>National</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Sub-national</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>Extensive ground work was laid to meet and surpass the 2016 target during 2017 while also contributing to the 2017 target. WA BiCC has worked intensively with the Abidjan Convention and the national stakeholders on conducting an inclusive process for the drafting, validation and presentation of a Strategy and related products on Invasive Species and two Protocols to the Convention on: 1) Sustainable Management of Mangroves and annexes 2) Integrated Coastal Zone Management and annexes, 3) Report on Invasive Species with a focus on Sargassum 4) Strategy on Invasive Species with a focus on Sargassum 5) Implementation Plan of the Strategy on Invasive Species. Once the Protocols were drafted and validated by experts, they were submitted to the proper national authorities and national consultations, supported by WA BiCC, were conducted in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Cote d’Ivoire. The National Consultative Meetings brought together experts from diverse backgrounds working in areas concerned with coastal biodiversity conservation and environmental management spanning from government institutions, civil society and private sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>IR1.1. IR 2.1. IR 3.1.</td>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td><strong>Number of countries that undertake the various steps or activities to develop and/or implement a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with USG Assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Drafting their Road Map for the NAP process</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Produce their Risk and Vulnerability Assessment report</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Adopt their National Adaptation Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Define their NAP Implementation Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Produce their Progress Report</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>The first year allowed the program to initiate the process of consultations with regional institutions (such as Manu River Union) and countries members. This process of Consultations didn’t allow to draft a clear roadmap for engaging the NAP process. The next year activities will begin supporting countries from Manu River Union on NAP process.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>IR1.2,</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>Number of institutions with improved capacity to address climate change (and/or biodiversity conservation) issues as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>250,0%</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>IR1.2.</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>Number of stakeholders with increased capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
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<td>IR 2.2.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>IR 1.2.</td>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Number of people receiving training in global climate change and biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1,18%</td>
<td>During FY2016, 39 participants from National and Regional institutions from the MRU Members have been trained on conducting Vulnerability Assessment in Mangrove areas in Freetown from July 11th to 13th 2016. Field Surveys have been conducted in the Mangrove areas surrounding Freetown. Also WABiCC supported Abidjan Convention on formulating additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention, namely, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Sustainable Management of Mangrove. Following Expert Meetings and the formulation of these Protocols, in October 2016, WABiCC concluded National Consultations to bring together experts working in areas concerned with biodiversity conservation. This process brought together national Stakeholders from Sierra Leone and from Liberia to conduct a training on the Sargassum. Under this process 78 people have been trained. Students from national institutions in 12 ECOWAS Member States were sponsored for a master’s degree on the Management and Conservation of Species in a CITES master’s Course at the Universidad Internacional de Andalucia in Baeza, Spain from April, 2016 to June 2016 and all students successfully completed their course work. As a step in the follow-up a second training was conducted for the CITES students and their 12 Supervisors from 22nd to 25th of August in Accra and focused on capacity building activities and research methods and setting up a monitoring protocol for their activities. WA BICC collaborated with, the DOJ, the DOS, USAID and UNODC to train 23 Judges and Prosecutors from West Africa on Wildlife Crime enforcement at a training in Accra from June 20-24.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>IR 1.2.</td>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Number of tools, databases, monitoring systems developed or adapted to analyze, organize, manage or share data on climate change and biodiversity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10,00%</td>
<td>A Facebook page, a Twitter account and a LinkedIn page were adapted as communications tools to share date and information in climate change and biodiversity from WA BICC and other partners. WA BICCWA BICC. The Communications Strategy for the Abidjan Convention and the Accounting Manual for Mano River Union Secretariat were also finalized and validated during the reporting period.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>IR.1.2. IR.2.2. IR.3.2.</td>
<td>OUTP UT</td>
<td>Number of best practices and approaches identified, implemented, and/or adopted as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>The first year saw the implementation of Scoping Missions and a Vulnerability Assessment at the landscapes level to better understand dynamics ongoing and stakeholders intervening. Based on that an RFA have been drafted to define the intervention of WABICC and expectations form potential sub-contractors’ grantees. The reviewing process within the different stakeholders stalled the recruitment of a Grantee to start the implementation of the interventions thus affecting the expected results. The RFA has been published and a grantee is expected to start activities early in the next year. This will help identify and implement best practices</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>IR.1.2. IR.2.2. IR.3.2.</td>
<td>OUTP UT</td>
<td>Number of networks recognized at a regional and national level and addressing climate change (mitigation or adaptation) and/or biodiversity conservation officially installed or strengthened as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>The WABICC program is presently working on building different networks such as the networks of experts on wildlife trafficking that will come from the students sponsored for the Master on CITES strategy. A network of journalists and one of parliamentarians on wildlife is also in the design process. The option was to arrive to a high level of engagement of stakeholders before entering on official recognition of these networks. Due to the options defined to continue on building these networks the expected targets haven’t been met.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>IR1.3. IR 2.3. IR 3.3.</td>
<td>OUTP UT</td>
<td>Number of new USG-supported public-private partnerships (PPPs) formed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>IR1.3. IR 2.3. IR 3.3.</td>
<td>OUTP UT</td>
<td>Amount of investment mobilized (in USD) for climate change and biodiversity conservation as supported by USG assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 000 000</td>
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<td>8 000 000</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>R.2. R.3. Outcome</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>Performance Indicator</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>FY16 Target</td>
<td>FY16 Result</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>R.2. R.3. Outcome</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>Greenhouse gas emissions estimated in metric tons CO2 equivalent, reduced or sequestered and/or avoided as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>IR. 1.2. IR.2.2. IR. 3.2.</td>
<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Number of countries with improved capacity to report on the quantity of greenhouse emissions measured in metric tons CO2 equivalent, reduced or sequestered as a result of USG assistance</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>OUTPUT</td>
<td>Number of radio programs broadcasted on climate change and on biodiversity conservation with the support of the project</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Type</td>
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<td>FY16 Result</td>
<td>FY16 Performance</td>
<td>LOP Target</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>43,00%</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>86</td>
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5.0 CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND RESPONSES

WA BiCC produces results across three ambitious and distinct components that are united by an overall approach to knowledge management and learning referred to as Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA). Essential to this mandate is the need to build capacity of national and regional partners to achieve project outcomes. With WA BiCC staff located in two locations, Freetown and Accra, and with five consortium members, it was challenging to establish offices, operations, and on-board staff while striving to achieve a unified sense of direction, purpose and a singular team. A team retreat early in Year One helped to forge the sense of one WA BiCC team, but as more staff were recruited, operational systems established and the implementation demands accelerated across the board, the need for additional management and communications systems became more apparent given the size of the team, the geographic separation and the demands of program implementation and travel. Defining these systems and the tools to implement them is a top management priority in Year Two and will be addressed at the second annual retreat.

Year One was largely focused on undertaking a Program-wide Situational Assessment of all technical components while undertaking the recruitment of about twenty additional staff and setting up the two offices. This provided the opportunity to truth and update the information from the project proposal and implement specific activities and planning for additional ones. Year Two will be driven by activity implementation on component and cross-cutting work plan activities and intensifying the key knowledge management and learning element of WA BiCC, particularly when the new KML Specialist is hired.

Challenges at the National Level

Identifying and supporting relevant government institutions in focal countries has been a challenge. Laying the foundation for learning, knowledge generation and stronger policy, practice, and research linkages in pilot landscapes and across the institutional mandates embedded in the Theory of Change proved to be an effort requiring patience and persistence.

Many national institutions and civil society organizations in the sub-region suffer from limited financial resources to recruit and/or train quality staff or to purchase needed equipment or supplies. This raises expectations of WA BiCC on the national level for specific national-level training, provision of additional technical and support staff and/or funds to fill these gaps. For this reason, it has been challenging but essential for WA BiCC staff to be able to not only communicate WA BiCC’s design and purpose effectively, but demonstrate the concept of added value to national programs.

The lack of presence in the several countries where WA BiCC is increasingly engaging, notably the MRU countries, makes it a challenge to maintain consistent communications with national-level partners, especially while the RFAs are being developed and awarded. Moving forward WA BiCC will engage short-term consultants to maintain communications and presence in focal countries while the RFA process is completed, and each RFA will include dedicate Level of Effort to maintain communications with national partners through WA BiCC.

Various national governments have requested Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with WA BiCC, but this is confused by the overlapping and often competing mandates of the institutions WA BiCC needs to
work with and whether and MOU is the right kind of agreement to have, given USAID’s overarching development agreements in place for some national governments and regional partners. The various options on how to bet move forward are now more clear on the national and regional levels, and WA BiCC will work with USAID to establish appropriate agreements that meet the needs of various partners.

Challenges with Core Partners

The partnership with the MRU was temporarily suspended early in Year One as a result of internal power dynamics that compromised the solid partnership with WA BiCC. In May, the WA BiCC COR and COP traveled to Freetown for a coordination meeting with the Secretary General and her senior management and technical staff. The meeting was critical in order to re-energize the MRU-WA BiCC partnership. The two key outcomes were the agreement that a MoU or other document was needed to clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each partner and, a follow-up visit by WA BiCC to work with MRU senior management and technical staff to review the ISP and agree to the conditions outlined in the MoU. The follow-up visit by the COP and Capacity Development Specialist was a success resulting in a revision of the ISP and agreed upon conditions now being incorporated into the MoU. However, the finalization of a MoU and the recruitment of the MRU Advisor has again slowed due to the lack of finalizing the MRU-mandated rotation of the Secretary General between the Member States. On balance however the relationship with the MRU is fundamentally strong and activities agreed under the ISP are ongoing.

The ECOWAS Environment Directorate Team is a solid if very small technical team given the regional needs and demands of Member States on environmental, climate change and biodiversity conservation issues. The main challenge faced is the bureaucracy of the overall institution and not the Directorate itself. This includes the need to get the approval from the President of the Commission, through the Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, for individuals to travel for various workshops and meetings. This has resulted in lost opportunities to increase the role and profile of the Directorate at key international fora including the World Conservation Congress, where registration fees and hotel and travel arrangements were paid and several events planned, as well as CITES CoP17. WA BiCC is planning to discuss the situation with the USAID/WA Agricultural Team, which works under the same Commissioner, to gain a better understand of how they have dealt with these challenges. The pending arrival of the ECOWAS Advisor will also be a valuable resource to try and address this constraint.

Many partners are working in the region to address biodiversity and climate change issues. These include the UNDP, GIZ, EU, Fauna and Flora International, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, Royal Society for Protection of Birds, among others. With so many actors, duplication of activities and lack of coordination is a real risk, especially given the limited absorptive financial and technical capacities of many partners. Ensuring effective coordination, collaboration and communication with a diverse array of regional and national partners is a time-consuming challenge, but one that will ease once the short-term ‘bridge’ consultants where needed are brought on board and the pending RFAs awarded. To promote collaboration and complementarity among practitioners and policy makers, WA BiCC will create a knowledge management and learning platform to promote co-generation of knowledge and sharing among a broad range of actors at regional, national and landscape levels.

Staff Turnover and Key Remaining Recruitments

WA BiCC experienced difficulties finding the right candidates for key positions, including the Knowledge and Learning Specialist, the Senior Communications Specialist and the Advisors to the core regional partners. The absence of staff in these critical positions caused some delays in WA BiCC’s efficiency and collaboration with core regional partners, placing additional time demands on the COP and other senior staff to fill the gap, generating a snowball effect of demands on staff. The Advisors for the Abidjan Convention and the ECOWAS Environment Directorate have been hired and WA BiCC has been actively working with MRU on that Advisor and actively looking to fill the remaining posts.
Over the course of Year One it became increasingly apparent how critical the Knowledge Management and Learning element of WA BiCC is to the success of the entire program. As a result, the profile of the Knowledge and Learning Specialist has changed substantially. The position will now be a senior management position that provides conceptual leadership and management oversight to all components and cross-cutting functions and results, and serve as Head of the CLA Unit, which comprises Communications, Capacity Building and M&E. The first task for the incumbent, who will now be a direct Tetra Tech hire and not under a sub-contractor, will be to define a knowledge management and learning strategy that will guide WA BiCC’s overall approach across components and cross-cutting themes.

**Logistical Challenges**

Working across 15 countries poses a challenge in terms of communication especially in a region where distinct European languages are used (French, English and Portuguese) in addition to the multitude of local languages. However, given the regional nature of the Program and the mandates of the core regional partners, simultaneous translation is usually done for regional workshops. Over the year WA BiCC was able to identify and secure a services agreement with a Ghanaian-based firm that is reasonable in cost and extremely responsible and responsive. Written translation has provided additional challenge. A service provider was also identified for French and English translation needs but they have not performed as expected and new arrangements will be explored moving forward.

An increasing challenge over the course of the year has been a degradation in air service across all carriers that service the sub-region. This has had time and cost implications due to missed and cancelled flights, etc.

Additionally, unreliable internet service, often in Freetown, and lack of connectivity in the field is an ongoing challenge. The Accra office was forced to change its internet service provider mid-year. Poor road networks also require more time for staff to get to communities during missions to the landscapes.

**Component Specific Challenges**

Under Component One, a scope of work for a multidisciplinary team of four experts including a legal and policy specialist, an enforcement and prosecution specialist, a capacity building specialist and a wildlife biodiversity specialist for the field phase of the threats assessment was drafted but it was difficult to source consultants. The scope of work was subsequently re-written and issued as a Request for Applications (RFA), but only one application was received from a consortium led by the Born Free Foundation. Since they are a US based organization, this limits the maximum grant amount they can be awarded. Given the lack of regionally based qualified applicants, the RFA has now been modified and advertised as a Request for Proposals (RFP) to attract a qualified organization. Also, information on species and threats is very sparse given the illegal nature of the trade, hence the analysis of available data is often insufficient for effective planning and design of Component One Activities.

Under Component Two, the significant time required to design, implement and document the Freetown coastal landscape vulnerability assessment combined with difficulties in recruiting local staff with expertise in climate change adaptation via Wetlands International has effected the initiation of landscape-level activities in this landscape. These factors have slowed down the intended timeline for presentation of VA results, definition of options for addressing the impacts of climate change within the landscape, and engaging stakeholders to implement some of these interventions. Also, the engagement of stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels in these process requires relationship building and takes time.

Under Component Three, there are several challenges. The mandates national partner institutions in the MRU Member State partners where forestry, conservation and environment sectors often overlap and compete, making it difficult to know which organization to coordinate with on issues related to REDD+ or mangrove conservation. Although the four Mano River Union countries acknowledge the need to work
together on border, security, trade and environmental issues, there remains a lot of work to be done to get them to work together effectively at the transboundary level, especially on conservation. At the moment, joint patrols of park rangers are not effective on the ground in most if not all the transboundary landscapes. Differences in policies and approaches to the REDD+ process or in the legalization of national parks makes it challenging to collaborate to prevent poaching and trafficking and implement landscape conservation approaches.
6.0 APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY RESULTS OF THE VA

The household survey and the PRA showed very high levels of poverty and a generalized lack of education in the coastal zone. Comparison with national data available from the 2004 census and 2013 DHS show that these levels are close to the national averages. What differentiate the coastal populations, however, is higher levels of exposure to climate hazards such as flooding and most notably high winds, and high levels of reliance on climate sensitive natural resources for their livelihoods, such as fish and mangrove wood (for fish conservation). Storminess, characterized by high winds that capsize boats and destroy houses, is projected to increase under future climates, and indeed villagers already report an increase in wind-related damage. Increased temperature and sea levels may affect the mangroves and fish stocks.

Household livelihoods are largely comprised of fishing (52% of households), fish smoking (37% of households), small businesses (27% of households), and subsistence agriculture (22%). Logging mangroves and market agriculture came in at just over 9% each. Most households had two or more strategies, but fully one third of households had only one strategy. More than three-quarters of households fish more than two times a week, with 27% fishing every day. There is a generalized perception (87% of respondents) that there are less fish than five years ago, with the reasons give including too many fishermen, the catch of fingerlings, many foreign fleets, and rising water temperatures, and less spawning grounds (a function of mangrove declines), among others.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that climate change causes negative impacts on livelihoods, citing more frequent abnormal conditions (47%), more intense storm conditions (28%), more intense heat conditions (22%), more intense and frequent flooding (20% and 16% respectively), and coastal erosion (16%). However, given other high priority development concerns, 37% of respondents indicated that climate change is not such a big issue for their community and 26% said that they did not know much about it. Less than 30% indicated that they worried about climate impacts. This was further confirmed by the results of the PRAs, where the strongest stressors listed were lack of money and education, followed by food and housing (Figure 1). Less than 10% of PRA participants mentioned environmental stressors, ranking them low. The overall poverty and the pressure to meet immediate needs prevent the populations from planning over longer term time horizons and adapting to climate change. This is further exacerbated by low levels of access to credit, a common problem in many rural low income settings. Only 10% of the respondents indicated having accessed any loan in the past 12 months and less than 26% indicated having participated in any saving scheme. There is also low participation in associations or groups other than religious groups (nearly 40% report not participating in an association/group other than religious), whereas participation in such associations is recognized as being an important component of adaptive capacity. Informal discussions confirmed very limited presence of NGOs or development organizations in the mangrove areas, which may be a function of the low accessibility of the settlements (most villages could only be accessed by boat).

The incidence index (X axis) represents the normalized frequency that a given issue was mentioned, and the importance index (Y axis) represents a normalized rank in terms of the relative importance of an issue to PRA participants. The size of the bubble indicates how frequently people worry about the stressor. Red arrows highlight flooding and other environmental issues. The latter included fire, heavy winds, erosion, high temperatures, storms/wind, heavy rains, low temperatures, deforestation, climate change, cutting of mangroves, and construction in wetland areas.
Communities widely value mangroves as a source of fuelwood (for fish smoking and cooking), building materials, a fish breeding habitat, and a coastal protection. About 48% of respondents report that there are less mangroves than five years ago, and villagers consider fuelwood cutting, construction, pests and cropland to be the main drivers of mangrove loss. Fifty percent of respondents report that there are no traditional agreements or customary rules to limit access to mangroves, while forty-five percent of respondents are aware that there are laws in place to protect mangroves, while the remainder either denying that laws exist or unsure. Some 64% of respondents said that they would be willing to engage in activities to re-plant or preserve mangroves without compensation. The mangrove ecological survey found that there were four species of mangrove present across the four regions, namely Avicennia germinans, followed by Laguncularia racemose, Rhizophora mangle, and Rizophora racemose. Avicennia dominates the northern and central regions while Rhizophora, a tree with more desirable wood and of larger size, largely dominates the southern region near the Shebro estuary. All regions registered widespread wood harvesting, with the Scarbies estuary also showing evidence of clearing for cultivation. Rhizophora species registered the highest number of dead and standing trees, especially in interior parts of transects. Total biomass is greatest in Yawri central region, however more valuable tree species like Rhizophora have all but disappeared from this region. Much of the biomass is of less desirable and smaller stature Avicennia species.

Figure 1. Summary of the most common stressors listed by the participants to group discussions.
2.1. Component One: Combat Wildlife Trafficking

2.1.1. Activities

Activities implemented to date include conducting the first phase of a Biodiversity Threats Assessment (TA) for West Africa and designing the field research follow-on phase for the TA; providing training to West African experts including biologists and legal practitioners, on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); supporting regional and trans-regional dialogue on combating wildlife trafficking.

Biodiversity Threats Assessment

The purpose of the Threats Assessment (TA) is to develop a regional baseline on threats to biodiversity linked to wildlife trade and trafficking in West Africa, and to assess partner engagement and opportunities for strengthening capacities to address regional wildlife trafficking issues. The information gathered from this TA will be used in identifying priority countries, species and activities for implementation as part of Component One of WA BiCC. A scope of work for the field phase of the TA and Request for Proposals (RFP) has been advertised to solicit applicants to complete this work. The field phase is expected to include an ECOWAS-wide questionnaire-based survey, and a detailed assessment in six representative countries. These are tentatively: Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Guinea (final selection may be modified based on any new and relevant information acquired in the meantime).

Strengthening Regional Dialogue and Wildlife Enforcement Capacity

WA BiCC partnered with the US Consulate General in Nigeria to organise a symposium on World Wildlife Day. This symposium held at the US Consulate in Lagos-Nigeria was a unique occasion to raise awareness of students, and media on wildlife trafficking and trade issues in Nigeria, as well as exploring options for addressing the issue. WA BiCC’s Biodiversity Conservation Specialist made a presentation at the symposium, highlighting the US government’s response to the broad wildlife trafficking problem in West Africa through the USAID West Africa Mission.

Regarding policies, WA BiCC participated in a workshop on engaging indigenous peoples and rural communities in combating wildlife trafficking that was held in Limbe-Cameroon in February 2016.