

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund**  
No Objection Approval Pursuant to Section 3.8 of the Operational Manual

5 October 2023

**Long-term Vision for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot**

**Recommended Action Item:**

The Donor Council is asked **to endorse on a no-objection basis** the long-term vision for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot.

The deadline for no-objection endorsement is **19 October 2023**.

**Background**

At its 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 28 January 2014, the CEPF Donor Council approved the strategic framework for Phase III of CEPF. The new strategy proposed taking CEPF to a scale where it can have a transformational impact on reversing biodiversity loss in the hotspots. To this end, four key outcomes were agreed for the new phase, including:

*Long-term strategic visions developed and implemented for at least 12 hotspots, facilitating the development of credible, effective, and well-resourced civil societies, and delivering improved biodiversity conservation, enhanced provision from healthy ecosystems of services important to human wellbeing, and greater alignment of conservation goals with public policy and private sector business practices.*

Unlike an ecosystem profile, which outlines investment priorities for CEPF grant-making over five years, a long-term vision is meant to be a guide for both CEPF and other actors (e.g., host-country government, private sector, donors, and NGOs from the economic development community) on how to positively influence conservation in a region over a longer time period. A long-term vision is built around five conditions for graduation from CEPF support, which address issues of: conservation priorities; civil society; financial resources; the enabling environment; and the ability to respond to new issues.

During the second phase of investment in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot (2016 to 2022), CEPF supported civil society to: empower local communities to engage in sustainable management of priority Key Biodiversity Areas and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale; mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector practice in the nine conservation corridors, at local, sub-national and national levels; safeguard priority globally threatened species by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps; and build the capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People's, women's and youth groups, to conserve and

manage globally important biodiversity. A total of 79 grants were awarded to 63 different organizations, for a total investment of US\$10 million. Collectively, these grants achieved several important impacts, including: 23 globally threatened species with stable or increasing populations; four new protected areas created, covering 283,166 hectares; 495,793 hectares of production landscapes managed for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use; and 174 local communities benefiting from sustainable livelihood activities, job creation and/or benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The long-term vision for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot was developed by a consultant engaged by the Regional Implementation Team, BirdLife International, with inputs from CEPF grantees and other local experts. The consultation and drafting process began in December 2021 and was completed in June 2022. The draft long-term vision was then reviewed by the CEPF Secretariat, and a revised draft, incorporating this feedback, was prepared in December 2022.

The draft long-term vision was then reviewed by the CEPF Working Group at its 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting, on 19 January 2023. Following the meeting, the document was revised to address comments from Working Group members. The final long-term vision and a matrix summarizing the responses to the Working Group's comments are enclosed as Attachments 1 and 2.