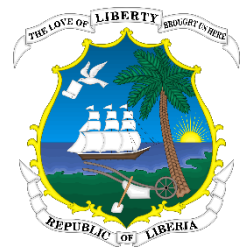




**The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Sierra Leone and
Forestry Development Authority, Liberia
TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION ACTION PLAN**

Updated June 2019



Original Introduction:

The Governments of the Republics of Sierra Leone and Liberia recognized the importance of the Gola Forest that extends across the borders of both Countries, due to its vast biodiversity richness and the ecosystem services contribution to the region and the world at large. In addition, both Governments also recognized the threats to the forest if not properly protected. As a result, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) committing both Countries to establish the “Greater Gola Peace Park” and outlines series of actions to be taken to actualize their goal.

While Sierra Leone has established the Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP), Liberia is moving towards achieving the same mark. The Gazettement Package of the Liberia Gola Forest national Park (GFNP) was submitted to the office of Her Excellency, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on May 27, 2014 for onward submission to the national Legislature for passage into law. It is anticipated that the GFNP gazettelement Act will be enacted into law by the end of October 2014.

The MoU on the cooperation in management, research, protection and conservation of the Greater Gola Peace Park calls for three cardinal actions to be taken both Countries to ensure the successful establishment and management of the Peace park: (a) Planning towards the establishment of the Greater Gola Peace Park (b) Enhanced cooperation between the two Countries to advance the management, monitoring and further development of the Peace Park, and (c) Effective coordination between both Countries in the implementation of concrete joint actions that engender and foster cooperation and protection of the Peace Park.

The MoU also considers both short and long term actions, which lead to achieving the long term goal. To realize this goal, it is therefore necessary to commence concrete actions with timeline and assigned responsibilities.

Predicated upon this transboundary collaborative agreement, a two day meeting was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, between Forestry Division (FD) of Sierra Leone and the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia on June 16 – 17, 2014. The meeting resulted into the development of an agreed Transboundary Collaboration Action Plan that lays out concrete activities to be implemented in accordance to the objectives of the MoU. The Action Plan activities emphasize collaborative law enforcement mechanisms, free cross border movement of staff assigned to the parks, research, monitoring, community engagement, marketing, etc.

Below is the action plan developed and endorsed by senior Management of both the FD of Sierra Leone and the FDA of Liberia on behalf of the two Countries.

Updated Introduction: Following the preparation of this action plan in 2014, Sierra Leone and Liberia faced the challenge of an unprecedented Ebola outbreak and hence other work came to a temporary standstill. In addition, the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in Liberia was not officially passed into law until September 2016 by which time the project funding the transboundary collaboration activities had come to an end. The coming of the Gola WA BiCC Project, funded by USAID, is an opportunity to re-start these transboundary activities.

To this end, a transboundary meeting was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 11-12 December 2018. It was attended by representatives of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) and Forestry Division (FD) of Sierra Leone and of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia in addition to civil society organisations working in the Gola Forest - Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Gola Rainforest Conservation LG (GRC LG), Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The participants reviewed the Collaboration Action Plan prepared in 2014 and updated it. As was the case previously, the Action Plan activities emphasize collaborative law enforcement mechanisms, free cross border movement of staff assigned to the parks, research, monitoring, community engagement, and marketing.

Below is the 2018 Action Plan developed and endorsed by senior Management of both the NPAA and FD of Sierra Leone and the FDA of Liberia on behalf of the two Countries.

TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION ACTION PLAN

Updated June 2019

Number	Milestone	How	When	Institution	Who
1	Produce a brief summary of existing institutional and legal framework for transboundary coordination and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WA BiCC to connect NPAA and FDA with MRU policy person - request legal assistance from MRU legal team - collect legal and policy documents from both countries - check FFI document that has already done this for Liberia - produce brief summary 	June 2019 June 2019 June 2019 June 2019	WA BiCC NPAA FDA MRU MRU	Nouhou/Wale Alhaji Blamah + NPAA and FDA policy persons
2	Develop a Transboundary Collaboration Agreement (TCA) in accordance with policy and legislation in both countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compile joint activities to be incorporated into TOR of legal consultant - hire legal consultant for the development of the TCA 	July 2019 July 2019	NPAA, FDA Gola WA BiCC with FDA and NPAA	Alhaji, Blamah Anne
3	Produce zero draft of TORs for law enforcement sub-committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use TGS TORs as model - adapt for Gola situation - circulate for input 	July 2019 July 2019	Gola WA BiCC	Anne
4	Adapt TORs at August Technical meeting	- review, revise and approve	August	All	
5	Sign amended transboundary MOU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow up approvals from Ministries of Foreign Affairs - invite Minister of Agriculture and Forestry to Liberia for signature, along with MRU representative - 	June-July 2019 August 2019	NPAA, FDA FDA	Alhaji, Blamah Tally

6	Joint ranger training and cross border patrols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include in TCA - develop TORs - share TCA with immigration authorities - undertake training – possibly by ISAT and by Freeland - include forest guards if possible 	August 2019 2020	NPAA, FDA NPAA, FDA NPAA is lead GRC LG	Law enforcement subcommittee
7	Joint community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - radio discussions - community meetings - design and distribution of awareness materials - exchange visits - Nature Clubs exchange visits - live drama - road shows 	ongoing	NPAA, FD, GRCLG, CSSL, FDA, SCNL	
8	Quarterly rotational technical meetings.	- updates and briefings	Quarterly Aug 2019	NPAA, FDA Gola WA BiCC	FDA Anne
9	Annual rotational coordination committee meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - updates and briefings - presentations from implementers 	June 2020	NPAA, FDA	
10	Share existing biological/ biodiversity studies and identify gaps, including corridor areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gather all studies, send to GRC LG - identify gaps 	Jan – Feb 2020	NPAA, FD, GRCLG, CSSL, FDA, SCNL, RSPB GRC LG	Under PAPFor project
11	Conduct further biological studies to fill gaps and identify crossing places for biodiversity corridor	- research activities	Jan-June 2020	NPAA, FD, GRCLG, CSSL, FDA, SCNL	Under PAPFor project
12	Draft management plan for the Greater Gola Peace Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - finalise/review management plans of GRNP and GFNP - consult NP plans to develop Peace Park plan 	Jan-June 2020	NPAA, FDA NPAA, FDA	Under PAPFor project
13	Physical demarcation of the Greater Gola Peace Park	- re-awaken engagement with communities on Peace Park	Sept 2019	NPAA, FDA Gola WA BiCC	Alhaji, Blamah, Smith, Francis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ground trothing re hotspots - physical demarcation 			Anne
11	Participation in joint security meetings at the border	- request for NPAA and FDA to participate in joint security meetings	July 2019	NPAA, FDA	?
12	CSO monitoring of implementation of Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication with government officials - field visits 	ongoing	CSSL, SCNL	Sheku,Michael