



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



Strategic Plan: 2022 - 2026

Road Map for the Next Five Years

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PLANNING is an exercise in forward thinking: and without Planning failure is assured. Failure is NOT an option. This Strategic Plan articulates our corporate aspiration for the next five years **(2022-2026)** and establishes a program to achieve them. It is a roadmap an embodiment of deliberate choices to effectively attend to the environmental issues in our country. It is also a commitment to contribute to addressing key issues, such as climate change, of the international community

The Plan is for the benefit of our current generation, but more so for the well-being of future generations. Accordingly, I call on our employees to assiduously work with us to implement it. I call on all task managers in particular to make copies of the relevant sections of this PLAN and ensure each and every employee under their direction is familiar with and committed to the orderly pursuit of the plan. Towards this end, I challenge all of us to be innovative in our thinking and proactive in our actions. Our real challenge is to engender appreciation from the people we serve and our international partners who support us.

I thank all our professionals that contributed to the development of the plan. My special thanks go to **Professor Willie Belleh**, the Liberian consultant that facilitated its preparation. I also thank all departments, especially the **Policy and Planning Department** for the coordination and technical support to his role.

Finally, my compliment goes to the **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** that sponsored this worthwhile activity. I remain grateful to the international environmental community for its continued assistance to Liberia in enhancing environmental governance and management.



Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Acronyms & Abbreviations

ACE	Africa Coast to Europe submarine communication cable
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CCCD	Cross-Country Capacity Development
CI	Conservation International
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	The Environmental Protection Agency
EPMC	Environment Protection Law
ERRSL	Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Laboratory
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FPIC	Free Prior Informed Consent
GCF	Global Environment Facility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Programme
GOL	Government of Liberia
GSM	Global system for Mobile Communications
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organizations
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
Libtelco	The Liberia Telecommunications Corporation
LLA	Liberia Land authority
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Monrovia City Corporation
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MFDP	Minister of Finance and Development Planning
MIA	Mercury Initial Assessment
MIS	Management Information System
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MTN	MTN Group, formerly M-Cell
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
R&D	Research and Development
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SEA	Strengthening Environmental Assessment
SoER	State of the Environment Report
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Executive Summary

1.1. Background

THE ENVIROMENT is intrinsically linked to human survival and development. It impacts human welfare. Reversely, human activities also affect the environment. Climate Change, due to human activities, and its ramifications around the world in 2021 has pronounced the significance of environmental issues and the urgent need for global actions towards protection of the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the institution in Liberia charged with the responsibility of protecting the environment.

The Agency has developed this Strategic Plan for the next five years (2022 – 2026) to direct environmental governance and management in Liberia. This **Executive Summary** sets out the Focal Areas and Strategic Directions the Agency has purposefully chosen to take in those areas during this period, as well as the key actions and activities that will accomplish them.

1.2. Focal Areas and Strategic Directions

1.2.1. Corporate Governance and Management

Strategic Objective 1: To strengthen the Board of Directors and Policy Council

Key Actions: Clarify the status of the Agency; Clarify roles of governing bodies; Reconstitute and re-orientate both bodies; Review and amend enabling legislation; Prepare a gender policy; Mainstream the environment in national and local government planning; and Build capacities of stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 2: To develop and implement effective personnel classification & appraisal systems

Key Actions: Undertake an inventory of personnel; Study CSA and other classification models; Develop a sector-specific classification regime; Develop a personnel appraisal system; and Provide internal orientation of employees on both schemes.

Strategic Objective 3: To develop and implement an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism

Key Actions: Study national examples of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms; Undertake benchmarking studies on ADRs; Develop a sector-specific ADR mechanism; and Strengthen the grievance desk at the Agency.

Strategic Objective 4: To strengthen environmental reporting

Key Actions: Develop a Management Information System (MIS); Strengthen internal reporting; and Address environmental reporting challenges.

Strategic Objective 5: To strengthen research, policy, and planning capacities to inform governance and management decision-making

Key Actions: Establish a research unit; Establish a monitoring and evaluation unit; Strengthen policy analysis capabilities; Strengthen institutional planning capabilities; and Establish partnerships with colleges and universities.

1.2.2. Institutional Capacity Building

Strategic Objective 1: To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters

Key Actions: Soil test the land acquired to inform architectural design; Develop architectural design; Obtain regulatory approvals; Undertake ESIA; Mobilize requisite funding; Hire civil engineering consultant; and Hire Construction Company.

Strategic Objective 2: To enhance the human capital, increase and retain professional and technical staff.

Key Actions: Undertake a manpower needs' assessment; Develop human capital development Program; Mobilize resources and implement human capital development program; and Develop a transparent and fair incentive regime.

Strategic Objective 3: To centralize institutional project management activities

Key Action: Establish a centralized project management unit and consolidate all project activities into this unit; Develop an organizational structure and recruit competent staff.

Strategic Objectives 4: To centralize institutional financial management activities

Key Actions: Establish a centralized financial management unit and consolidate all financial management and accounting functions and activities into this unit; Develop an organizational structure and recruit competent staff.

Strategic Objective 5: To strengthen implementation capacity for internationally funded projects.

Key Actions: Develop a technical assistance program; Establish twining relationships with advanced EPAs; Establish a study tour program; Forge Partnership with research institutions; and Enhance technological capability.

1.2.3. Information, Education, Communication Services

Strategic Objective 1: To increase the understanding of government authorities of the environment and hence the importance, mandate, and roles of the EPA

Key Actions: Engage the Cabinet, the Legislature, Judiciary, and Local Governments.

Strategic Objective 2: To enhance understanding by the population of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the EPA

Key Actions: Establish a Communications Unit; Revise and implement the communications strategy; Enhance environmental education in schools; Engage media institutions; Promote environmental activities in various sectors; and Promote environmental IEC services to specific publics.

Strategic Objective 3: To increase public awareness of and access to environmental information

Key Actions: Employ all IEC vehicles; Direct public to website and resource Libraries; Transmit IEC messages through Liberian simple English; Transmit IEC messages through Liberian languages; Established Local Government Environment Committees; and Establish Environmental Committees in local communities.

Strategic Objective 4: To positively change public environmental behavior

Key Actions: Regularly inform, educate, and communicate to the public; Train special media personnel; Undertake door-to-door campaigns in communities; and Undertake routine Environmental Talks in schools.

1.2.4. Compliance & Enforcement

Strategic Objective 1: To develop environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines

Key Actions: Develop standards for remaining sectors/areas; Develop regulations and guidelines for sectors/areas; Update additional ESIA's; and disseminate standards and regulatory instruments.

Strategic Objective 2: To strengthen field operations of monitoring of compliance

Key Actions: Hire additional staff; Enhance logistical support; Enhance administrative support services; Provide on-going human capacity building; and Complete Agency structures across the country.

Strategic Objective 3: To strengthen the ESIA process

Key Actions: Develop ESIA guidelines for emerging sector-related undertakings; Revisit and update ESIA fees' regime; Decentralize ESIA process across the country; Promote awareness of the ESIA Process; and Introduce the ESIA Process as a course at colleges and universities.

Strategic Objective 4: To ensure ISO accreditation of the monitoring & compliance laboratory

Key Actions: Provide better working space; Procure additional analytical equipment; and Provide periodic staff upgradation training.

1.2.5. International Cooperation

Strategic Objective 1: To strengthen Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements

Key Actions: Domesticate MEAs; Build Human and Institutional Capacities; Regularize compliance with reporting obligations; Regularize participation in international fora; and Accede to or ratify other MEAs such as the Minamata Convention.

Strategic Objective 2: To effectively and efficiently manage international environmental projects designated to Liberia

Key Activities: Adhere to implementing Agency guidelines; Undertake proficient program/project implementation; Ensure reliable information sharing; Undertake impact assessments of programs/projects; Strengthen actions on key international environmental issues (Climate change and Biodiversity changes) as follows:

Climate change: Ensure full implementation of the National Climate Change strategy framework; Liaise with sectorial partners for the implementation/enforcement of climate change policies

Biodiversity Changes: Ensure the continued monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity status and trends; Address issues associated with governance, legal and financial modalities in biodiversity programs for equitable sharing of resources; Ensure development initiatives with potential adverse effects on biodiversity are subjected to strategic environmental assessments; Set balance between economic development and environmental consideration to ensure sustainability of natural resources; Build strong mechanism for awareness creation and education; recognize, promote, and uphold traditional and indigenous knowledge, practices, and innovations for the sound management of natural resources; Ensure that biodiversity decision-making and management are people-centered approach; Ensure that biodiversity management and conservation consider economic, cultural, and aesthetic values; Place special emphasis on ecosystems and habitats management. Work with LLA to prepare a Land Use Policy and Strategy; Work with FDA to strengthen Community-based Forestry Policy and Strategy; Work with Ministry of Mines and Energy and develop a National Energy Policy and Strategy; and Expand knowledge and understanding of ecosystem values in government and the population; and Undertake a Mercury Initial Assessment and develop a Nation Action Plan.

Strengthen actions on key domestic environmental issues (Chemicals and Hazardous materials; Waste; Sustainable resource utilization; Wetlands) as follows:

Chemicals and hazardous materials: Develop a national policy for the management of chemicals and hazardous materials; Develop a system for hazardous waste handling and disposal; and Partner with relevant conventions such as the Stockholm and Basel Conventions to strengthen the management of chemicals and hazardous materials.

Wastes: Develop a national waste management policy, to include institutional arrangements and governance systems; Design a system for comprehensive waste management including waste segregation, recycling, compositing, and sound waste disposal procedures; Develop a system for hazardous waste handling and disposal Identify and develop waste disposal sites for disposable waste; Incorporate international regulations and guidelines on waste management into national policy frameworks; and Develop a waste data system to store national data on different waste streams in the country.

Sustainable resource utilization: Ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national policies and development programs; Adhere to international norms and best practices on the implementation of the SDGs; and Design and implement projects for achieving the SDGs

Wetlands: Develop national regulations for the management and sustainable use of wetlands; Revise the existing Wetlands Policy Document to ensure enhance management and sustainable use of wetlands Institute the gazzettment of the remaining four (4) Ramsar wetland Sites: Marshall, Kpatawee, Gbedin and the Mesurado; Update the status of all five Ramsar Sites in Liberia. Ramsar sites are updated once every five years; Develop logistical and human capacities of the Ramsar Team and Conservation Unit to lead the enforcement of Wetlands regulations, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders; Develop a mechanism to involve more women and traditional people in the development of awareness framework for the sustainable use of wetlands; Develop a mechanism to sensitize the population including policy makers, on the importance, benefits, values of wetlands; and Develop projects proposals and solicit funding for the sustainable use of wetlands; and Validate the Water Quality Regulations to include water quality standards for wetlands.

1.2.6. Resource Mobilization

Strategic Objective 1: To create and strengthen capacity for domestic resource generation

Key Actions: Lobby for additional budgetary support; Establish National Climate Change Trust Fund; Establish Green Tax; Activate Conservation Trust Fund; Diversify and strengthen collection of fees; and Enforce regulations on performance bonds.

Strategic Objective 2: To build capacity to mobilize external environmental resources

Key Actions: Develop project proposals for external funding; Provide proper project management; Ensure effective accountability of Funds; and Evaluate impacts of programs/projects.

1.3. Cost of Implementation

Total cost to implement the plan over the five-year period is approximately **US \$8,535,000**. Of this amount, the Government of Liberia will underwrite 30% or **US \$2,560,500**. This leaves a funding gap of 70% or **US \$5,974,500**. In this regard, the goodwill of donors, particularly Liberia's development partners, is solicited to fill this gap.

1.4. Implementation Arrangements

A **Strategic Plan Implementation Committee** will be established to coordinate implementation. The Committee will track implementation targets and timelines, monitor implementation progress. The Committee shall also resolve implementation challenges, and hold all actors accountable for agreed actions, deliverables, and timelines. The Committee shall be chaired by the Executive Director and shall meet at least twice a year.

A **Stakeholders' Forum** will be established for briefing and consulting with stakeholders on implementation of the Plan. The Forum will meet at least once a year.

A **Donors' Forum** will be established as a roundtable at which donors will be briefed and consulted on plan implementation. The Forum will meet at least once a year.

INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

THE ENVIRONMENT is linked to human development. It is essential to various aspects of human well-being such as food and nutrition, housing and human settlements, and energy. If we do not protect the environment, we put our lives at risks. The environment must, therefore, be protected at all costs.

Just as the environment is linked to human development, humans also impact the environments. This is done in many ways such as over population, pollution, burning of fossil fuels, poor disposals of wastes, land degradation and non-conservation of biodiversity. These, in turn, negative occasion such things as climate change, soil erosion, poor quality of water, and poor health. Ultimately, these impact the quality of life and the life expectancy of peoples.

2.2 Environmental Issues and International Agreements

Environmental issues are many but different countries and regions of the world experience different types and intensities of environmental issues. In Liberia, the key areas of environmental concerns are climate change, chemicals and hazardous materials; waste management; sustainable resource utilization, and wetlands.

The environment has become a major international concern. The impact of human activity on climate change has awakened the world on the urgency climate change presents. Liberia's changing climate is an attestation to the seriousness of this issue and exemplary of the significance of environmental issues worldwide. Towards this end, there are several international agreements and protocols on environmental issues. Liberia is either a signatory to or has acceded to most of these treaties. That the world is working in concert on climate change and other environmental issues is a welcome development.

2.3 Purpose of the Plan

This Strategic Plan identifies and addresses the key issues in environmental governance and management in Liberia for the next five years (**2022 – 2026**). It builds on the gains made from implementation of last Strategic Plan (2012-2017) is informed by remedial issues from that Plan that remain to be attended. The Plan is largely a product of forward thinking. It prioritizes the focal areas of concern for the Agency, strategic objectives under each area to be pursued, and key actions and activities that will be undertaken to achieve each objective.

The plan is essentially a “road-map” that provides strategic directions for the Agency. It is thus a basis for annual work planning, stakeholders’, and donors’ engagements, as well as resource mobilization. But of paramount importance, it is the basis for predictability, expectations and results-based monitoring and evaluations.

2.4 Development of the Plan

Development of the Plan employed a participatory approach involving the management and professional staff of the Agency. The process was initially informed by a review of the enabling legislation, policies, and regulations of the Agency. It was further informed by a 3-day Strategic Planning Workshop facilitated by the consultant. The workshop provided a forum for the exchange of perspectives and experiences among management and professional staff, as well as for building consensus on core issues and next steps in environmental governance and management in Liberia.

Specifically, a four-step model was utilized in preparing the plan. This model included the following steps:

Step 1: Situation analysis (*Where is the Agency currently?*): This step entailed an analysis of the current development context of Liberia and the existing state of the Agency. It entailed assessments of the political, economic, social, and technological contexts, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Agency, and identification of opportunities and threats within its operating environment, as well as mapping of its stakeholders and their expectations.

Step 2: Future destination determination (*Where does the Agency want to be in the next five years?*) This step entailed a visioning process that commenced with clarifying the mandate of the Agency. Combined with the results of the situation analysis, this phase streamlined the Agency's mission and vision statements, evolved a motto, and elaborated its core values. But of prime importance, it also identified the focal areas to be targeted and determined the Strategic Objectives in each of the areas that the Agency intends to pursue in environmental governance and management over the next five years.

Step 3: Strategy development (*How does the Agency intend to get to where it wants to be in the next five years?*) This step identified the strategies (Key actions/activities) the Agency purposefully intends to take in the achievement of each strategic objective under each focal area.

Step 4: Implementation Plan (*How will implementation of the plan be managed?*) This step involved responsibility analysis in terms of who will do what, over what timeframes and at what costs. It further entailed developing an implementation framework that consists of plan implementation management, communications strategy development, forums for donors' and stakeholders' engagements, and monitoring and evaluation.

2.5 Alignment with the PAPD

The government launched, in July 2018, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), a 5-year national development program. The PAPD is a strategic development framework that seeks to achieve inclusion of the people and a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth through a rights-based approach. It is aimed at poverty reduction and is built on Liberia's Vision 2030, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The PAPD underpins peace building, reconciliation, inclusive development, and poverty reduction.

This Strategic Plan is aligned to the PAPD, which recognizes the importance of the environment. The Plan falls under Pillar 2: The Economy and Jobs. This pillar covers the economy, agriculture, and the environment. Under the section on the environment, the PAPD seeks to achieve effective forest utilization, sustainable management of natural resources, and sound disaster risks management, all of which are within the domain of environmental governance and management.

2.6 Structure of the Plan

This Strategic Plan is organized and presented in seven (7) chapters. **Chapter 1** is the *Executive Summary* of the Plan. It provides a synopsis of the Plan: the focal areas and the strategic directions chosen for the next five (5) years.

Chapter 2 is the *Introduction* to the Plan. It presents the background, purpose, and shows how the plan was developed.

Chapter 3 presents the *situation analysis* of the Plan: the national context in which the Plan is expected to be implemented; the Agency's strengths and weaknesses; opportunities and threats in its operating environments; and the Agency's stakeholders and their expectations.

Chapter 4 sets out and clarifies the Agency's: mandate, mission, and vision statements; establishes a motto; and elaborates the core values of the Agency.

Chapter 5 lays out the *strategic directions* (objectives and key actions) that the Agency has purposefully taken to pursue towards achieving meaningful environmental governance and management.

Chapter 6 presents the *financial requirements* for implementing the Plan. It further shows the Agency and government's anticipated contributions to the overall cost of the plan and the financial gap which is expected to be filled by donor partners of the international community.

Chapter 7 outlines an *implementation framework* for carrying out the plan, including plan implementation management, development of a communications strategy, stakeholders' and donors' engagement mechanisms, and a monitoring and evaluation framework. An implementation Matrix is attached in the Appendix.

Situation Analysis

3.1 National Context

3.1.1. Political

LIBERIA remains a nation-state characterized by a challenge for national renewal. The population is estimated at 5.1 million and is growing at an average annual rate of 2.5% (UNFPA, 2020). A little over half (51%) of the population resides in rural communities. Despite abundant natural resources, bad governance has undermined economic growth and human development over many decades. The country is classified by the international community as low income and underdeveloped. It is ranked 175 out of 189 countries in human development (UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2020).

The tripartite and interlinking issues of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty remain major development problems. Illiteracy limits productive capacities, unemployment denies income generation and makes it difficult to meet household needs, and poverty, a state of human deprivation, is the product of the two. Illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty are often breeding grounds for conflicts.

3.1.2. Economic

Liberia is a *compound-complex* development situation. Development challenges are huge and permeate all sectors. Then in each sector, the issues to be attended are deep-seated. The country is highly dependent on international assistance. Over half (53.6%) of development resources are net official development assistance (UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2015).

Economic recovery and growth are major challenges. The economy has slowed: the private sector, the engine of growth, is shrinking gradually. Productivity in the real sectors is low, fiscal space limited, and inflation rising. Prices for Liberia's main foreign exchange earners, iron ore and rubber often fluctuate on the international market, making the country vulnerable to happenings in distant economies. Unemployment is widespread: it stands at 60% for the age group 15 years and above (UNDP *Human Development Report*, 2017). Poverty is pervasive: approximately 81.6% of households live on less than US\$2.00 per day (UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2015). The debt burden is gradually rising and likely to reach an unsustainable level of US\$1 billion placing Liberia at high risk of debt distress (IMF: *Art IV Consultations*, July 2018).

3.1.3. Social

Social capital (trust, unity, solidarity) within the population is in short supply. There remain too many vexing social and ethnic issues to be attended. Liberia's once trusting communities have eroded in confidence. Education has become a challenge: expenditure on education is only 2.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), down from 6% in the 1980s (UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2017). While access has increased, quality is generally poor as evidenced by massive failures in sub-regional examinations. Illiteracy currently stands at 52.4% (UNDP, *About Liberia*, 2016). Modern health services are available to only 48% of Liberians, although expenditures on health constitute 15.2% of GDP

(UNDP, *Human Development Report, 2017*). Nation-wide, only 1 in 4 Liberian has access to safe drinking water. Open defecation is still practiced by 49% of the population (WASAN *Strategic Plan, 2011-2017*).

3.1.4. Technological

The production of technology-based goods and services in the Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector is growing. More than sixty percent (60%) of Liberia's population has a mobile phone and more than five percent (5%) has access to broadband internet. There are two (2) GSM operators: Lone Star MTN and Orange. Both have access to high-speed internet provided by the ACE fiber optic cable. The Liberia Telecommunications Corporation (Libtelco) is designated as the National Operator, providing wireless and wireline solutions but with dominance in the maintenance of ducting systems throughout Monrovia.

There are now six (6) television stations, over twenty-five (25) commercial, non-commercial and community radio stations across the country. Some of the radio stations broadcast over the internet. The landing of the ACE fiber optic cable in 2011 and the launch of the Cable Consortium in 2013 provided a key marker in Liberia's true transition into the global village of information and telecommunications technology (ICT).

3.2 Environmental Protection Agency

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) is the institution in Liberia that manages environmental governance and management. It was established by an Act of Legislature in 2003. Its enabling legislation mandates it to: "monitor, coordinate and supervise sustainable management of the environment in partnership with other ministries and agencies". The Agency is headed by an Executive Director.

As informed by its enabling legislation, the Agency's core functions are summarized as follows:

- Implement Environmental Laws
- Regulate Environmental Protection
- Undertake Inter-Sectoral Coordination
- Provide Information, Education, Communications Services
- Maintain Relationships with the International Environmental Community

3.3 Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

Like humans, every institution has strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths are assets, and our weaknesses are liabilities. Towards moving forward, the Agency intends to harness its strengths, while vigorously addressing its weaknesses. The matrix below presents the strengths and weaknesses of the Agency. These were obtained through an exercise in institutional self-assessment at the strategic planning workshop.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Laws, Policies, Regulations	• Lack of adequate budgetary support from Government
• Technical capacity: limited qualified professionals	• Low critical mass of qualified professionals
• ESIA Process	• Inadequate opportunities to build employee capacity
• Timely Response to Environmental Incidents	• Limited logistical support
	• Inactive board and policy council
• Good Central Office Location	• Lack of integrated financial management system
• Visibility: Presence in ten (10) counties	• Recruitment constrained by limited fiscal space
• Ability to generate revenue through ESIA process	• Non-existent appraisal system
• Mini Compliance Monitoring Laboratory	• Inappropriate personnel grading
• Environmental Resource Center (Library)	• Misplacement of staff
• Accession to the ratification of international multilateral environmental agreements	• Limited laboratory supplies
	• Lack of decentralization compliance laboratories
	• Inadequate public awareness
	• Inadequate funds for monitoring & research
	• Fees' regime: "Limited in scope"
	• Non dissemination of research & development papers
	• Lack of an environmental court
	• Lack of ISO certified laboratories (Central & Counties)
	• Incomplete county environmental structures
	• Poorly endowed resources center
	• Inadequate monitoring & inspections
	• Lack of digitized monitoring system
	• Lack of head office & county offices

3.4 Environmental Opportunities and Threats

Institutions are impacted by their environments. These environments hold both opportunities and threats. Moving forward, the Agency intends to leverage its opportunities, while concurrently attending to threats in its operating environments. The matrix below identifies the opportunities and threats in the Agency's operating environments obtained from a comprehensive environmental scanning at the strategic planning workshop.

Type of Environment	Opportunities	Threats
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous goodwill and support of donors and international community for Liberia. New Executive Director has access to political and legislative decision-makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-political recognition of the importance of environmental issues and the role of EPA could hamper sustainable socio-economic development. Any fallout of the New Executive Director from the influential relationship with political and legislative decision makers could negatively impact EPA.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentials for economic recovery from investments in sectors such as agriculture and mining that could enhance public finances and the national budget and beef-up budgetary support to the EPA. Available natural resources (largest forest cover; biodiversity; highest per capita water resource availability in West Africa) that make Liberia attractive to international destination of conservation and biodiversity efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current poor economic performance resulting into low public finances could continue to cause low government budget support to EPA. High rate of poverty compromises households from complying with environmental regulations. Poor economic performance could induce low compliance of private sector institutions with environmental regulations. Poor economic performance could also lead to low compliance on payment of license fees.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A generally obedient and friendly population A citizenry that usually follows the examples of its political leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in the number of urban slums due to fast rural to urban migration and high population growth rate. Poor quality of housing in urban slums with potentials for water and sanitation environmental issues. Low household consciousness of and poor attitudes to environmental issues. Conflicts in resource utilization such as between rural households, logging companies, and entities concern with conservation of land and biodiversity. Continuous practice of shifting agricultural cultivation affects forest resources, particularly land degradation.
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available information and communication technologies that enhances work productivity such as GIS capability. Internet connectivity through fiber optics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New technologies impose strong demands for high digital competencies and skills in an environment of high illiteracy. Current low resources to invest in high technological capabilities and capacities.

3.5 Stakeholders and their Expectations

Stakeholders are institutions and peoples' groups with interests in the existence and activities of the Agency. Given the nature of the Agency's work, every person, household, community, institution, and organization, is logically a stakeholder. Each has a particular expectation of the Agency. The matrix below shows our key stakeholders and their expectations.

Stakeholders	Expectations
International: GEF, GCF, UNDP, UNEP, IUCN, CI, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjugation to international environmental agreements, instruments, and protocols • Participation in international environmental forums (Sharing of experiences) • Effective communications from Focal Points and/or Secretariats
Donors and Financing Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance and management in environmental practices • Effective utilization of donors' funds • Timely reporting on operations supported by donors' funds • Full and timely accountability of donors' funds
Government Ministries, Agencies, Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective environmental governance and management (implementation of environmental laws and regulations) • Creation of awareness among national decision makers on importance, role, status, and authority of EPA
Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Education and Communication on environmental issues and concerns • Information Education and Communication on environmental laws, guidelines, regulations
Private sector (Concessions & Businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and effective management of environmental and social impact assessment processes • Fairness and justice in the application of environmental laws and regulations • Objective resolutions of environmental related disputes through administrative, conflict resolution mechanism • Objective adjudication of environments disputes through environmental courts when established
INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness on environmental laws, regulations, and priorities • Partnership in working with local communities and leaders on environmental issues and concerns, including capacity building
Academic & Research Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership in capacity building activities • Collaboration in environmental research projects • Partnership in peer reviews and publication of scientific papers • Partnership in mobilizing external resources for research and capacity building activities
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating awareness on environmental issues and concerns • Creating awareness on environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines • Capacity building of community/local environmental focal points
Investment Proponents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for business in the environmental sector • Ethics (fairness and justice) in business engagements
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of accurate information and data on issues and concerns of the environment • Partnership in environmental Information, Education and Communication (IEC) services
Women & Youth Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active women and youth involvement in environmental issues • Gender mainstreaming in environmental activities • Efforts at building gender equality in the EPA
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective environmental governance and management resulting into a clean, safe and healthy environment • Transparency and integrity (fairness & justice) in the application of environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines • Creating public awareness on environmental issues and concerns • Creating public awareness on environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines

3.6 Review of First Strategic Plan

The Agency's first Strategic Plan was entitled **"Developing a Low Carbon Economy and Green Environment"**. It covered a five-year period: 2012 – 2017 and contained eight (8) goals, twenty-five (25) Strategic Objectives, and nineteen (19) Strategic Targets. The matrix below shows the results of stock taking of the achievements of the first strategic plan. It presents achievements matched against the targets under each goal.

3.6.1 Matrix: First Strategic Plan Targets and Achievements

Goal	Targets	Achievements
Building effective and efficient institutional and human capacities	By 2013, 60% of the EPA Professional work force would have received adequate training	There has been significant improvement in EPA Professional work force who have received trainings in various environmental disciplines. More than 40% of EPA's workforce has acquired graduate degrees in various environmental disciplines. Currently, 6 students are doing graduate studies abroad, while 7 others are in graduate schools in Liberia.
	To have an effective efficient and retainable work force by the end of 2013	All partly financial aid students entered an MoU with the EPA to work for the Agency for a given period upon their graduation.
	To have a complete framework for governance at all levels by 2015 (i.e. structure, decentralization, automation, etc.).	The Agency has established offices in ten of the fifteen counties. Gbarpolu, Rivercess, Grand Kru, Cape Mount and River Gee are still outstanding. Meanwhile Environmental Inspectors in Bomi have oversight responsibilities in Gbarpolu and Cape Mount; those in Grand Bassa have oversight in River Cess; those in Sinoe have oversight in Grand Kru, and those in Maryland over River Gee. However, the Agency is yet to establish county and district environmental committees.
Completing Decentralization process of EPA operations	By 2013, Regional and County Offices constructed, equipped, and staffed	Under the Liberia Forest Sector Project, two (2) modern office complexes have been constructed, equipped, and fully staffed in Bomi & Grand Bassa counties. Efforts are also underway for offices in the other thirteen (13) counties. Meanwhile, EPA has acquired other properties in Lofa and Buchanan to likely be used for staff dwelling.
Developing and enforcing Environmental Laws, Regulations and Guidelines	By end of 2011, Environmental Laws, Acts and Policy reviewed, harmonized, and updated	There has been a push recently to update and harmonize EPA's Act, policies, and laws with those of other agencies such as the Liberia Land Authority, National Public Health Institute of Liberia, and Wash Commission, whose works are intrinsically linked those of the EPA. The UNDP has provided funding for this exercise.

Goal	Targets	Achievements
	<p>By end of 2012, additional 15 legislations, guidelines, regulations, and policies developed and promulgated</p> <p>By 2015, a total of 35 legislation, guidelines, regulations, and policies shall be developed and promulgated</p> <p>By end 2013, at least three (3) Environmental Lawyers trained</p> <p>By end 2013, Administrative Environmental Court established</p>	<p>EPA has identified around 41 policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to be developed. Six (6) has been developed and validated; eight (8) drafted; and twenty-seven (27) do not exist.</p> <p>The EPA is training one environmental lawyer and one policy person. Meanwhile, there is another staff who has gained admission for environmental law, but due to finances, this is on hold.</p> <p>No environmental court established</p>
Developing Effective Environmental Communication, Education and Public Awareness	<p>By end of 2011, Environmental Awareness and Education strategy developed</p> <p>By 2013, Country-wide environmental awareness and education carried out</p>	<p>Through the Liberia Forest Sector Project, the EPA has developed a communication strategy and is online.</p> <p>Through the Department of Intersectoral Coordination, there has been awareness carried out mainly in Montserrado. There have been efforts in going out of Montserrado, but financial challenges have constrained the efforts.</p> <p>Meanwhile, every year, there is a celebration of World Environment Day which is rotated in counties yearly. The World Environment Day is a vehicle used by the UN to raise environmental awareness worldwide.</p>
Ensuring Effective Environmental Planning and Reporting	<p>By end 2011, State of the Environment Report (SER) prepared</p> <p>By end 2012, National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) developed</p>	<p>The EPA has developed a State of the Environment Report (SoER) and it covers 2007 to 2018.</p> <p>A National Environmental Action Plan has also been developed along with the SoER. The implementation plan is up to 2023.</p>
Ensuring Effective Environmental Monitoring, Audit and Evaluation	<p>By end 2012, effective and efficient environmental monitoring and inspection systems in place</p>	<p>The EPA has established Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Unit (Compliance Laboratory) as means of supporting effective monitoring.</p>
Developing Strategies Internal and External Co-operation for funds Mobilization	<p>Next Fiscal Year (2011/2012), lobby for budget increase from government of at least US\$ 0.5 Million.</p> <p>By end 2011-2012, organize Donor Conference and develop comprehensive project proposals to access more donor support</p> <p>Increase yearly internal funds generation intake by 50% beginning 2011/2012.</p>	<p>Budget from GOL 2010/11 was US \$805,910 and 2011/12 was US \$1,093,309, less than a half million-dollar increment</p> <p>In 2011 an Environmental Conference was planned, organized, and conducted.</p> <p>Income generated from ESIA in 2011/2012 was US\$703,545.72</p>
Implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)	<p>Work towards achieving low carbon economy by 2015</p> <p>By 2013, mainstream and develop National program for effective implementation of MEAs</p>	<p>This was not achieved</p> <p>This was not achieved</p>

3.6.2 Lessons Learned

- National policy makers must understand the linkage between the environment and development without which the environment will not be prioritized in national development planning, including national budgetary allocations.
- Better understanding of the environment and environmental issues within the population, public and private institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities can improve behavioral changes of individuals, communities, and institutions relative to the environment.
- International accentuation of environmental issues such as climate change presents the Agency with an opportunity for constructively engaging and tapping into various donor funding programs.
- The Agency cannot continue to depend solely on the financial support of the Government. It must diversify its resource base to attain financial sustainability.
- Environmental issues occur in the various sectors such as mining, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, forestry, manufacturing, and energy. Effective environmental governance mandates a wholesome, inter-sectoral coordination.

3.6.3 Remedial Issues

From the foregoing, there are several remedial issues, now in varying degrees, which remain relevant today. These are either captured or addressed, directly or indirectly, in this current Strategic Plan. They include the following:

- Capacity building of staff, including the training of additional environmental lawyers
- Development of environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines
- Strengthening of environmental information, education, and communication services
- Timely preparation and release of the State of the Environment and other Reports
- Strengthening environmental monitoring and compliance
- Strengthening implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)
- Mobilizing more resources for environmental governance and management
- The establishment of county and district environmental committees
- The establishment of an Environmental Court
- Work towards achieving low carbon economy
- Mainstream and develop National program for effective implementation of MEAs

MISSION, VISION, MOTTO, CORE VALUES

THIS CHAPTER presents the mandate, mission and vision statements, motto, and a defined set of core values of the EPA. Together, they collectively drive and guide the work of the Agency works, interactions, and relationships with all stakeholders, including our valued donors.

4.1 Mandate Statement

The environment is a cross-cutting determinant of human development. The EPA is the institution responsible for the protection of the environment. Its directive is to sustainably manage environmental issues and resources. The Agency collaborates with all stakeholders, public and private sector institutions, civil and non-governmental organizations, development partners, and the international community, in the sustainable management of the environment.

4.2 Mission Statement

To sustainably manage the environment to contribute to poverty reduction and the development of our people, as well as the protection of our natural resources, in collaboration with all stakeholders.

4.3 Vision Statement

Sustained socio-economic development through the contribution of effective and efficient environmental governance and management

4.4 Motto

Our Environment, Our Future, Our Obligation

4.5 Core Values

VALUES	DESCRIPTION
Stewardship	We commit to being trustworthy custodians of the environment for our future and the future of our children, as well as the betterment of our country, our continent, and our one world.
Professionalism	We commit to undertaking proficient and skilled actions that are proactive, responsive, and people-friendly in environmental governance and management.
Integrity	We commit to fairness and justice in environmental governance and management for our prosperity and development.
Transparency	We commit to openness, clarity, and consistency of laws, policies, regulations and actions in environmental governance and management.
Accountability	We commit to being answerable to all stakeholders for the decisions we make, the actions we take, and the results we achieve, as well as the resources we mobilize and utilize, in environmental governance and management

Partnership	We commit to consultations, teamwork, and collaboration with all sector actors, local communities, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as development partners and the international community, in environmental governance and management. Particularly, we commit to collaborate with universities and colleges involved in research and development (R&D) in the field of environmental research, peer reviews, and publications.
Respect	In the discharge of our duties and responsibilities, we commit, above all else, to respect the livelihoods, humanity, and dignity of our people.

Strategic Direction 2021 - 2025

This Chapter presents the strategic directions that the Agency has purposely chosen to take over the next five years (2022 – 2026). These directions are informed by its mandate, vision, and the issues faced by the Agency. Together, these strategic directions seek to: strengthen governance and management; enhance institutional capacity; and improve environmental information, education, and communications services; toughen compliance and monitoring; boost partnership with the international environmental community; and increase resource mobilization. All of these are geared towards enriching environmental governance and management in Liberia.

5.1 Governance & Management

Objective 1: To strengthen the Board of Directors and Policy Council

Context: There are two (2) governing bodies in the institutional arrangements of the Agency. These are the Board of Directors and the Policy Council. The mandate of the Board is to provide oversight of management, while the role of the Policy Council is to provide policy guidance to the institution. These roles are conflicted and need rationalization. In any event, both bodies are largely inactive.

Further, the status of the institution needs to be clarified and exacted. Was the EPA meant to be an agency like other government agencies such as the General Service Agency (GSA) or a specialized, autonomous institution like the University of Liberia?

Key Actions

Clarify the status of the Agency: Review the enabling legislation of the Agency and, through the process of benchmarking, use international best practices to rationalize and exact the status and mandate of the Agency.

Clarify roles of governing bodies: Review and clarify the roles of the Board and Council. Rationalize and remove conflicts and provide clearer definition of roles, responsibilities, and nomenclatures of both bodies. Rationalize the numerical strength and membership of each body.

Re-constitute the Board and Policy Council: Informed by clarity of the status of the Agency and realignments of the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Council and work with the relevant policy makers and reconstitute both bodies.

Orientate Board & Council Members: Plan, organize and conduct an orientation training workshop for the reconstituted Board and Council. The workshop will focus on their functions: roles and responsibilities. At the forum, both bodies will be updated on the exact institutional status and mandate of the Agency.

Review and amend enabling legislation: Towards clarifying and exacting the status and mandate of the Agency, as well as the roles of the governing bodies, review and repeal the relevant aspects of the law that established the Agency, as well as other areas that may need amendments.

Prepare a Gender Policy: As directed by the National Gender Policy of Liberia of 2009 (revised 2017), prepare a Gender Policy towards promoting gender equality at the institution.

Mainstream the environment in national and local government planning: The environment is a cross-cutting issue. Given its linkage to human development, work with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the fifteen (15) Local Governments to mainstream the environment in national and local government development planning, programs, projects, and budgets.

Build capacities of stakeholders: Design, organize and implement capacity building activities, with emphasis on tools and techniques, for public and private institutions, as well as local governments to enable them to mainstream the environment into their policies, plans, programs, projects, and budgets.

Objective 2: To develop and implement effective personnel classification & appraisal systems

Context: Personnel of the agency are not appropriately classified. This is partly on account of the inadvertent inconclusiveness of the exact status of the Agency. The Agency seems to be a mix breed of a regulatory entity and a scientific institution. Salaries at the agency are, generally, on par with those in the civil service. However, this may need revisitation given the semi-scientific and technical nature of the Agency. This will be an incentive to the retention of competent personnel. Additionally, there is no personnel appraisal system in place to annually appraise and reward the work of diligent employees.

Key Actions

Undertake an inventory of personnel: Towards developing an appropriate personnel classification system, take an inventory of personnel. The inventory will collect and analyze information and data on every personnel in terms of position, job description, qualification (education, training, & experience), gender, age, and tenure with the Agency.

Study CSA and other classification models: Review the classification system of the CSA and EPA institutions in other countries to educate the management on the structures and issues that will need to be attended in a likely new classification system to be developed.

Develop a sector-specific classification regime: Informed by the outcomes of the above undertakings, develop a sector-specific classification system. The system to be developed will assign all employees into grades and levels, with attendant salary and benefit structures. However, if the Agency is found to rightfully fall within the realm of the CSA, then the CSA classification regime will be used to harmonize personnel classification levels, salaries, and benefits.

Develop personnel appraisal system: Alongside the personnel classification system to be established, a Personnel Appraisal System will be developed. This will be for the purpose of annually appraising the performance of all personnel, rewarding those that are productive, and identifying training needs of others.

Provide internal orientation on classification and appraisal schemes: Following approval of the two (2) schemes, provide internal orientation training to all employees on the goals, objectives, scope, and processes entailed in each of the schemes, followed by their impartial implementations.

Objective 3: To develop and implement an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism

Context: As are in most areas of life, there are conflicts in environmental management. They vary in nature and sizes. A responsibility of the EPA is to ensure that these conflicts are resolved amicably, transparently, fairly, and timely. In some countries, there are environmental courts. For Liberia, this is a long-term objective. However, in the short-to-medium term, the Agency will develop an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism to complement its administrative adjudication processes.

Key Actions

Study national examples of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms: Out of our experience in protracted conflicts, some sectors are currently piloting alternative dispute resolution methods. In these sectors, there are dispute resolution bodies and set of procedures and guidelines to follow. In land governance and management, for example, there is an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. These examples will be studied for the purpose of learning basic principles, structures, and processes.

Undertake benchmarking studies: Some countries in the world have become successful at implementing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. These countries, especially those in Africa, will be identified and their experiences studied for the purpose of learning the principles, structures, and processes, as well as lessons learned.

Develop a sector-specific ADR mechanism: Informed by the findings of the above studies, a sector specific alternate dispute resolution mechanism will be developed and implemented. It will be a step short of a formal court process.

Strengthen the grievance desk: The Grievance Desk at the Agency will be strengthened to provide advice and assistance to those registering grievances. Assistance will include information on administrative adjudication procedures and alternative dispute resolution processes, including what to do, where to go, and how to start.

Objective 4: To strengthen environmental reporting

Context: Information and data are required to inform governance and management decision-making. There are two (2) reporting demands that need to be met regularly and effectively. The *first* is the need for adequate internal reporting covering activities at the Agency, from the Head Office to the regions and counties. A summation of periodic internal reports will be useful to policy and management decision-makers. Currently, there is a lack of a Management Information System to inform reporting.

Second, the international environmental community requires certain periodic reports. For example, all nations are to prepare a comprehensive report on their environments. Entitled the “The State of the Environment Report”, it is considered a major activity for environmental agencies across the world. The report is required every five (5) years. Additionally, there are other required reports, including one on climate change which is required every two (2) years. Regrettably, there have been lapses in meeting these various reporting obligations.

Key Actions

Develop a Management Information System (MIS): An Agency-specific MIS will be developed and institutionalized to include: the information and data required for governance and management decision-making; identification of the sources of such information and data; the procedures for collecting the information and data; the requirements for processing and storage; and the requirements for accessing them.

Strengthen internal reporting: Informed and supported by a robust and responsive MIS, an internal reporting regime will be developed and implemented. It is envisaged that streamlined quarterly reports from various sources will be consolidated by the Planning Department for management use. Consolidated and summarized versions will be used to inform regular board or council meetings.

Address international environmental reporting challenges: The State of the Environment Report (SoER) and other earmarked international reports required will, henceforth, be prioritized. Small “work teams” to produce each report will be put together, schedules developed, and monitoring and follow-through mechanisms agreed amongst all concerned. Where necessary, independent consultants will be hired to assist develop the reports.

Incorporate reporting elements from other sector institutions: Some of the Agency’s international reports required coverage of activities in various sectors and institutions like the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), and city corporations such as the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC). Accordingly, a rationalized reporting regime in which EPA reporting function considers information and data in relevant sectors and institutions will be developed and implemented. Implicitly, this will demand improved inter-sectoral coordination.

Objective 5: To strengthen research, policy, and planning capacities to inform governance and management decision-making

Context: Research is an important activity in institutions. Research provides evidenced-based information and data that inform policy making and management decision-making. Research also helps to monitor and evaluate operations. Regrettably, the research function at the Agency is limited to scientific research activities. There is need to rationalize and expand research functions.

Concomitantly, planning is an important function in institutions. It is the premier function of management. It provides direction and guidance to institutional activities. In addition to the absence of a non-scientific research function, there is also the absence for a Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) unit to support effective governance, and management. The planning function of the Agency needs to be rationalized and strengthened.

Key Actions

Establish a research unit: A research unit will be established within the Department of Policy and Planning, to be renamed the Department of Research, Policy and Planning. It will be staffed with two (2) sets of skills: one with skills capable of scientific investigations of environmental issues; and the second with skills for research involving non-scientific issues.

Establish a monitoring and evaluation unit: A Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) unit will be established within the department of Policy and Planning as part of its research function. The unit will monitor and evaluate all projects and programs, including those undertaken with donor assistance.

Strengthen policy analysis capabilities: Policy making is about studying situations and developing prescriptive frameworks to guide administrative actions towards problem-solving, setting goals, driving organizational performances, and holding actors accountable. In public service, it requires skills in analysis of issues relevant to the public interest in any domain. Training will be provided to staff of the department to enhance their skills in environmental policy analysis.

Strengthen institutional planning capabilities: Planning demands skills in forward thinking and acting in goals setting, programming, and budgeting. The capacity of the department will be broadened and deepened through training and other initiatives. For example, the development of Annual Agency Work Plans will be led by the department and developed consistent with the Strategic Plan as well as prevailing and/or anticipated national and international environmental situations.

Establish partnerships with learning and research institutions: To enhance the Agency's research capabilities and performance, partnerships with colleges, universities, and research institutions will be established. Through this means, the Agency will institutionalize networking and collaborative relationships with such institutions.

5.2 Institutional Capacity Building

Objective 1: To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters

Context: The head office of the EPA is ideally located in terms of easy access to organizations and institutions in Monrovia, the Capitol City. However, the building is not ideal for a head office. The building was not designed for an office. The offices are, therefore, few and cannot accommodate all the required offices, including a fully equipped and functioning central laboratory. As such, an annex for additional office space is being rented. Further, the offices and conference rooms are small. The parking lot is inadequate for staff and customers. To address these issues, approximately four (4) acres of land have been acquired along the Roberts International Airport Highway to construct a modern head office complex. The land has been surveyed and deeded.

Key Actions

Soil testing: Soil testing will be undertaken to inform architectural design, particularly with respect to the vertical reach of the main building.

Develop architectural design: A preliminary custom-design structure is under preparation. The design will be informed by all activities that should ideally be hosted at an EPA headquarters. The facility will include a main building plus annexes. The infrastructure will thus include executive and staff offices, waiting rooms, small and large conference rooms, a training center, a resource center, a central laboratory with storage, warehouses, kitchen-nets and canteens, a mini-residence for both local and international guests, and adequate space for vehicular parking. The design will be costed to include the cost of furnishing, equipping, and civil engineering supervision.

Obtain regulatory approvals: Following the architectural design of the building, the relevant regulatory approvals for the design and the location of the building relative to appropriateness and zoning will be obtained from the Ministry of Public Works.

Undertake ESIA: In compliance with the Agency's own regulations, an environmental social impact assessment of the project will be undertaken. To ensure integrity, this exercise will be undertaken by an independent assessor recognized by the agency.

Mobilize requisite funding: Upon receipt of all regulatory approvals, the needed funds will be mobilized to undertake the construction, furnishing, and equipping of the building and ancillary facilities. Primary sources earmarked are the Government of Liberia, the Agency's own resources, and grants from Environmental Multilateral Partners. An alternative approach that seeks to obtain a loan from a consortium of banks, guaranteed by the Central Bank of Liberia, will also be considered.

Hire civil engineering consultant: A registered private sector, civil engineer will be hired to serve as supervisory consultant for the construction. His responsibility will be to ensure that the infrastructure is constructed to the architectural specifications approved by both the EPA and Ministry of Public Works.

Hire Construction Company: A registered construction company will be hired to undertake the construction. The company will work closely with the Architect and the Supervising Civil Engineer representing the Agency, and if required, the Ministry of Public Works, representing the Government of Liberia.

Objective 2: To enhance the human capital, increase and retain professional and technical staff

Context: The agency has some competent professionals. However, qualified professionals and technicians are few. As such, there is an absence of a critical mass of professional and technical staff in terms of numbers and competence mix in all areas of environmental concerns, governance, and management. Additionally, given the low incentive regime, the agency has been unable to retain all its competent professionals and technicians. Staff attrition is on the increase. These situations must be addressed.

Key Actions

Undertake a manpower needs assessment: A full manpower needs assessment will be undertaken to determine gaps and needs in the required professional and technical manpower configuration of the agency, including headquarters, regional, and county offices. This exercise will be undertaken by an independent professional to ensure integrity of the outcomes.

Prepare a human capital development program: Informed by the outcomes of the manpower needs assessment, a costed, human capital development program will be prepared. The program will be disaggregated into short, medium, and long-term, gender-sensitive capital development program.

Mobilize resources and implement the human capital development program: Informed by the human capacity development program, resources to implement the program will be mobilized. Short, medium, and long-term commitments in the form of direct budgetary allocations, scholarships, and other training opportunities such as personnel attachments will be mobilized. The human capital development program will be meticulously implemented, while continuously searching for resources.

Develop a transparent and fair incentive regime: A transparent and fair incentive regime shall be developed and implemented aimed at retaining competent staff. This regime will be informed by the new personnel classification system and include salaries and fringe benefits. Benefits may cover such

elements as housing and transportation allowances, scratch cards for communication, paid leave, and insurance.

Objective 3: To centralize institutional project management activities

Context: The agency undertakes many projects. But the projects are not planned and/or implemented under a central department. Rather, they are undertaken in silos by various groups of professionals and technicians. This practice has promoted splintered groups within the Agency. Accordingly, project information and experience sharing across the agency is limited. This does not allow for synergy in programming and institutional learning within the agency.

Key Actions

Establish a centralized project management unit: A centralized Project Management Unit will be established, and all project management activities (implementation, reporting, monitoring, evaluation) placed in it. The unit will be responsible for the preparation of project proposals. Each project concept will have a small team of professionals and technicians from relevant departments work on it. The team shall keep management and other staff informed through regular senior staff meetings or agreed reporting mechanisms.

Develop organizational structure and recruit competent staff: The unit will be properly structured, job descriptions and specifications prepared for core positions, and staffed with professionals competent in project management. Recruitment will be transparent and fair. Internal recruitment of personnel who possess the requisite competencies (education, skills, and experience) will be given priority.

Objectives 4: To centralize institutional financial management activities

Context: There is a dual financial management regime at the Agency. Like project management, financial management activities are splintered between the regular financial management activities of the agency and sponsored project financial accounting to external, third party, project managers such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Financial accountings undertaken by project implementers are not always adequately captured on the books of the Agency. The dual financial management and accounting regimes need to be handled by a centralized, Financial Management Unit.

Key Actions

Establish a centralized financial management unit: A centralized financial management unit will be established to be responsible for financial planning, programming, and accounting. All financial management and accounting activities will be placed under the unit. Operational guidelines will be developed and institutionalized to ensure activities of the unit meet industry or international financial management and accounting standards.

Develop organizational structure and recruit competent staff: The unit will be properly structured, job descriptions and specifications prepared for core positions. The unit will be structured such that a sub-unit will deal with financial planning and programming (budget) matters, while another sub-unit will deal with financial accounting matters, including internal and sponsored project accounting. The unit will be staffed with professionals competent in financial management and accounting. Recruitment will be transparent and fair. Internal recruitment of personnel who possess the requisite competencies (education, skills, and experience) will be given priority.

Objective 5: To strengthen implementation capacity for internationally funded projects

Context: Currently, on account of low institutional capacity, most internationally funded projects are managed by international organizations such as the UNDP. Management fees for each project takes away from resources that could have otherwise added operational and management values to the projects and the Agency. EPA-Liberia needs to develop to the level that convinces international funding partners that it has the professional, technical, and financial management capacities to satisfactorily manage sponsored projects.

Key Actions

Develop and solicit a technical assistance program: A technical assistance program will be prepared to assist the Agency develop capacities to a level satisfactory to international partners. Specific areas to be targeted will include project management, financial management, and environment-specific areas such as climate change, chemicals, and solid waste management. Towards this end, dedicated efforts will be made to identify and mobilize technical assistance resources. Members of multilateral environmental agreements will all be targeted and canvassed to assist the Agency with capacity-building.

Establish twining relationships with advanced EPAs: A complementary program to be developed and implemented will be twining relationships with one or two advanced EPAs. The idea is for these advanced EPAs to second, for a few years, some of their best professionals and technicians to train and mentor staff of EPA-Liberia in specified environmental management areas. This will also involve professional exchange programs between EPA-Liberia and those advanced EPAs.

Establish a study tour program: Additionally, a study tour program will be established and implemented to select countries with successful environmental programs. This will enable EPA professionals and technicians to broaden and deepen their knowledge and experiences through capturing international best practices in specific areas of environmental governance and management.

Forge Partnership with research institutions: The Agency will seek and forge partnerships with research institutions involved in environmental research. Through this effort, collaboration on specific research projects in Liberia will be jointly undertaken, scientific papers produced, and released in recognized peer-review publications. This will assist strengthen institutional learning within Agency.

Enhance technological capability: Much productivity can be achieved through the adaptation of modern technological breakthroughs. For example, low-cost drones are now being used to attend to situations in distant, rural places. The Agency will investigate in which areas and what types of technologies can assist it best in its work. Thereafter, technological capabilities, both in terms of hardware and software, at the head office and in field offices across regions and counties, will be fast-tracked.

5.3 Information, Education, Communication (IEC) Services

Objective 1: To increase the understanding of government authorities of the environment and hence the importance, mandate, and roles of the EPA

Context: The EPA is not one of the traditional institutions of government. It was recently established. Accordingly, there is poor understanding in government of the environment and its linkage to human development. This situation must be remedied. With international accentuation of the importance of

issues such as climate change, policy makers and legislators must be assisted to understand environmental issues, their relationships to development, and hence the importance and mandate of the EPA.

Key Actions

Engage the Cabinet: The cabinet will be engaged constructively. An executive workshop dedicated solely to the environment will be sought, planned, and organized for the cabinet. The workshop will assist the Cabinet understand the environment and its linkage to development. Within this context, it will assist the Cabinet appreciate the importance of the agency: its mandate, functions, and activities.

Engage the Legislature: There are two standing committees of the legislature, one in the House and other in the Senate, that oversee EPA issues. Like that for the cabinet, special legislative workshops will be planned, organized, and facilitated for each of the two standing committees to assist legislators understand the environment and its linkage to development, and hence the significance, mandate, and functions of the Agency.

Engage Judiciary: Similarly, the Agency will engage the judiciary through a series of workshops on the environment, its linkage to development, and hence the significance, mandate, and activities of the Agency.

Engage local governments: Working with and through Ministry of Internal Affairs, local government authorities will be constructively engaged. Through a series of workshops, they will be assisted to understand the environment and its linkage to development, and hence significance, mandate, and functions of the Agency.

Objective 2: To enhance understanding of the population of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the EPA

Context: There is generally, inadequate understanding of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the Agency. This lack of understanding of environmental issues and, hence, the roles and responsibilities of the EPA permeates the entire society. Particularly, there is a limited understanding of the linkage between the environment and socio-economic development. There is an urgent need for a more robust and on-going information, education, and communication program to address this situation. A media officer alone, as currently present at the Agency, is inadequate to attend these situations in a sustained manner.

Key Actions

Establish a Communications Unit: A Communications Unit responsible to manage a continuous information, education, and communications program of the Agency will be established. The Unit will collaborate with other departments and handle public and media relations. Preliminary suggestion is to locate this Unit within the Office of the Executive Director.

Revise and implement the communications strategy: The communications strategy will be revised and implemented. This strategy will seek to raise public awareness of the relationship between the environment and development and promote general understanding of environmental issues. The strategy will seek to encourage individuals, institutions, and communities to cooperate with the Agency in protecting the environment. Accordingly, it will promote understanding of the mandate, roles, and activities of the Agency. The strategy will also cover media relations.

Enhance environmental education in schools: The Agency will work with the Ministry of Education to strengthen teaching of the environment in schools. As was done years ago with Agriculture, it will experiment with Environment Clubs in high schools to encourage students to better cultivate understanding, appreciation, and respect for their environments. Competitions between high schools on the environment will be introduced.

Engage media institutions: Media institutions will be engaged through long-term commitments and empowered with requisite skills training to communicate environmental issues to the population on a sustained basis.

Promote environmental activities in various sectors: Various sector institutions such as those in Health, Water and Sanitation, Manufacturing, Forestry, and Mining will be continuously engaged to promote environmental activities. An element of this effort will include specifically designed IEC programs targeted at each sector. Organized exhibitions on environment friendly practices to promote sustainable development in each sector will be undertaken.

Promote environmental IEC services to specific publics: Every population has many publics such as teachers and students, marketers and petty traders, and commercial drivers. Various publics will be identified and sensitized using means most suitable to each group. Using multi-media outreach activities, including the production of audio and visual publicity materials, specific IEC services will be designed and implemented to reach each public in a sustained manner towards educating them to positively change their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) on the environment.

Objective 3: To increase public awareness of and access to environmental information

Context: There is low knowledge of and access to environmental information. To increase public awareness of and access to environmental issues, reliable and timely environmental information to the public is mandatory. This means that such information needs to be organized, stored, and made easily accessible to the public through various means on a sustained basis. Such information must also be periodically updated.

Key Actions

Employ all IEC vehicles: All IEC service media will be mapped and made available to the public. This means the whole gamut of IEC instrumentalities such as radio stations, television stations, newspapers, billboards, social media, and community radio stations in rural communities will be cultivated and utilized in the provision of IEC services.

Direct public to website and resource Libraries: The public will be directed to its website and its resource libraries at the head office and in the counties where environmental awareness and education materials will be organized and placed.

Transmit IEC messages through Liberian simple English: To facilitate better understanding of environmental issues and the role of the EPA, IEC messages will be transmitted to the population in simple Liberian English, using jingles, flyers, and promos.

Transmit IEC messages through Liberian languages: To enhance better understanding of messages in the counties, IEC messages will be transmitted to the people utilizing Liberian languages dominant in specific counties, using jingles, flyers, and promos.

Established Local Government Environment Committees: Working with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Committees on the Environment will be established and empowered in the fifteen (15) Local Governments (counties) to assist in environmental protection education and awareness in their areas.

Establish Environmental Committees in local communities: In collaboration with Local Governments, Environmental Committees will be established and empowered in local communities to assist promote environmental protection education and awareness in local communities. A particular focus will be placed on the involvement of women and youths.

Objective 4: To positively change public environmental behavior

Context: Generally, there are many public behaviors that negatively impact the environment. These behaviors are found everywhere: at public and private institutions as well as at household levels in communities. These behaviors lead to environmental deterioration and if not addressed, would occasion environmental crises either now or in the future. A few examples may suffice here. The drinking of water from plastic sachets and, thereafter, dropping the empty plastic bags on the ground rather than in garbage bins have become generally problematic across the country. Additionally, the dumping of garbage also containing plastic waste into rivers and swamps (wetlands) negatively affects marine life and wetlands. Much needs to be done to change public knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) towards changing the negative behaviors of the population towards the environment.

Key Actions

Regularly inform, educate, and communicate to the public: As conceived and planned in the section dealing with Information, Education, and Communication (IEC), the whole gamut of tools at the disposal of the Agency will be utilized as follows: *first*, sustained IEC services to broaden and deepen the knowledge of the population of the environment and its linkage to human development; *second*, consistently demonstrate how issues such as waste and waste disposals impact the environment, and the lives of the population; *third*, continuously pursue and correct public behaviors that are detrimental to the environment that are influenced by the absence of right knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions; and *Fourth*, mobilize and constructively engage all groups, institutions, and communities to assist in these efforts. As such, public and private sector institutions, media institutions, CSOs/NGOs/CBOs, local communities, and households will all be targeted and mobilized to assist in these efforts.

Train special media personnel: A select number of media personnel will be identified across the media landscape and provided specialized and on-going training on the environment. The Agency will cultivate interest among these media professionals in environmental issues, governance, and management towards motivating them make environmental reporting a specialization. Periodically, specialized training will be planned, organized, and conducted on specific environmental issues for these media personnel.

Undertake door-to-door campaigns in communities: Undertake, commencing with a pilot exercise, door-to-door educational campaigns on the environment during the dry season, in communities across the country, using students on vacation (vacation student workers).

Undertake routine Environmental Talks in schools: Plan, organize and implement a program that involves routine talks in secondary schools on the environment. When students are properly informed and motivated about the environment, they will take the information home and influence their parents.

5.4 Compliance & Enforcement

Objective 1: To develop environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines

Context: Compliance and enforcement interventions are informed by standards. These standards are embedded in regulations and guidelines. Only six (6) regulations have been developed, validated, and published. For the period 2007-2009, several regulations were developed but are yet to be validated. These regulations are as follows: Mining EIA Guidelines, Waste Management Regulations, Forest EIA Guidelines, Air Quality Regulations, and Water Quality Regulations. In 2017, two (2) draft policies were developed: dispersant policy and Insitu-Burning Policy. However, these are also still pending validation. Implicitly, standards and regulations are yet to be developed and validated for these and other areas.

Key Actions

Develop standards for remaining sectors/areas: In keeping with Part IV of the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia (EPML), develop additional standards in the following Areas: Waste Management; Water Quality; Air Quality; Soil Quality; Emission Control; and Ionization and Radiation.

Develop regulations and guidelines for areas: Guided by the updated ESIA per area, develop regulations and guidelines for other areas to include Mining, Agriculture, Oil Palm, Wetlands, Forestry, Industries, Infrastructure, Land Use and Urban Planning, Ecosystem, Energy, Oil Spill, Dispersant Policy, Insitu-Burning, and Environmental Disaster.

Update additional ESIA: Additional ESIA will be updated. Those to be updated include the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), Sand Mining, Road Construction Projects, Fumigation, and Burials.

Disseminate standards and regulatory instruments: Once developed and validated, widely disseminate the new or updated standards, regulations, and guidelines using appropriate Information, Education, and Communication means.

Objective 2: To strengthen field operations for monitoring of compliance

Context: Field operations are an important dimension of environmental management. It is through monitoring of field operations that standards, regulations, and guidelines are enforced. Effective field monitoring, in turn, requires trained personnel and logistics. Regrettably, these are currently wanting. Field operations staff is thirty-four (34). There is a need for an additional fifty-four (54) projected. This will augment the staff to eighty-eight (88). Logistically, there are only two (2) available vehicles along with thirty-one (31) bikes. To aggravate a bad situation, maintenance is a challenge.

Key Actions

Hire additional staff: Hire and train additional personnel and post them to field operations in the counties. The projected fifty-four (54) personnel needed will be spread over the next five (5) years and hired annually and incrementally. Recruitment will be transparent, fair, and gender sensitive. Initially, the Agency shall gradually commence employing and deploying across the counties those inspectorate candidates already assessed, selected, and trained.

Enhance logistical support: Logistical support will be strengthened. Primary logistics to be procured and distributed to counties are vehicles, motor bikes, laptops, onsite-mini laboratory monitoring kits, GPS, and internet gadgets.

Enhance administrative support services: Administrative support services to field monitoring operations will be strengthened and in a sustained. Examples of measures to be strengthened shall include reliable supply of gasoline and preventive maintenance for vehicles and motor bikes, provision of office supplies, air-conditioning, generators, furniture, PPEs, rain gears, scratch cards, and painting services.

Provide on-going human capacity building: Under the Agency's Human Capital Development Program to be launched, on-going capacity building of field monitoring personnel will be provided to ensure staff competence. Short, medium, and long-term training programs shall be planned, organized, and implemented, both domestically and internationally.

Complete Agency structures across the country: The decentralization structures across the country will be completed. This will include establishing three (3) or four (4) regional hubs from which operations of activities in counties shall be covered. It will also include establishing field monitoring presence in the remaining five (5) counties: Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Kru, Rivercess, and River Gee.

Objective 3: To strengthen the ESIA process

Context: The ESIA process requires much to be deserved. The current process does not capture all sectors. The ESIA guidelines were completed in 2017, but now need to be updated to conform to current trends across regions and counties. There are additional guidelines that cover Mining and Forestry, but these too need to be updated. Regrettably, there are no guidelines for other sectors. Then the ESIA fees regime needs to be revisited and rationalized in keeping with international best practices.

Key Actions

Revisit and update ESIA fees' regime: The ESIA's fee regime will be comprehensively reviewed, rationalized, and updated. The objective will be to ensure that the regime captures major sector activities and follows international best practices.

Decentralize ESIA process across the country: The ESIA process shall be decentralized across counties by the establishment of County Environmental Committees and District Environmental Committees, and by ensuring that ESIA licensure training for Environmental Consultants incorporates the participation of representatives of Local Governments. Additionally, public hearings on environmental impacts assessment shall, henceforth, be held in the counties as prescribe in the law.

Promote awareness of the ESIA Process: As an integral part of its IEC services, the Agency shall promote awareness of the ESIA processes. This effort shall be supplemented by inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and shall be informed by lessons learned from the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) Project.

Introduce the ESIA Process as a course at colleges and universities: Towards training professionals in the ESIA process, the Agency will collaborate with colleges and universities to introduce the ESIA process as a course in one of their academic programs.

Objective 4: To ensure ISO accreditation of the monitoring & compliance laboratory

Context: The Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Laboratory (ERRSL) is the scientific research arm of the Agency. However, there are designated commercial laboratories that are commissioned to undertake environmental analytical work on behalf of the Agency. To meet ISO accreditation, the laboratory needs significant improvement in terms of workspace, and particularly, more analytical equipment, as well as the upgrading of personnel skills.

Key Actions

Provide better working space: Adequate and suitable laboratory space for the preparation and analysis of samples for quality assurance will be provided. Adequate space for a modern laboratory is one of the elements in the new headquarters project.

Procure additional analytical equipment: Additional analytical, calibrated, laboratory equipment to enhance the capability of the central laboratory will be procured and installed. Concomitantly, relevant tools and software will also be acquired, along with a reliable supply of reagents and supplies.

Provide periodic staff upgradation training: The competencies of laboratory personnel will be strengthened by providing them with specialized and generic upgradation training on a continuous basis as part of the Agency's Human Capital Development program.

5.5 International Cooperation

Objective 1: To strengthen Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements

Context: Liberia is a party to several international environmental Agreements. However, Liberia has neither acceded to nor ratified all such agreements. Liberia is currently party to fourteen (14) agreements. The agreements entail obligations that must be duly fulfilled. This begins with mainstreaming the instruments into the body of national laws, policies, and programs. The obligations also require building requisite human and institutional capacities to operationalize the agreements. These requirements have thus far constrained Liberia's ascension to or ratification of all the MEAs. Coupled with financial constraints, the above limitations have compromised Liberia's ability to meet its obligations under and fully benefit from these Agreements.

Key Actions

Domesticate MEAs: The regulations and guidelines of Environmental Agreements to which Liberia is a party will be mainstreamed into our environmental laws, policies, regulations, and guidelines. Further,

specialized studies will be undertaken to better diagnose environmental issues in the country, providing a better and clearer context, scope, and consequential effects for the domestication of agreements into national environmental programs.

Build Human and Institutional Capacities: Vigorously pursued Human and Institutional Capacity Building as envisaged in Human Capital Development Program as informed by the Institutional Capacity Building Needs Assessment Report and the Manpower Needs Assessment to be undertaken.

Regularize compliance with reporting obligations: Reporting obligations to the international environmental community will, henceforth, be prepared and submitted in a timely manner to demonstrate Liberia's commitments to the community.

Regularize participation in international fora: Attendance of meetings and other fora of the international environmental community will, henceforth, be regularized and sustained. Regular attendance of meetings is a good for sharing of experiences and institutional learning, as well as for networking among leaders and professionals in the community.

Accede to or ratify other MEAs: Having strengthened human and institutional capacities and demonstrated commitment to various agreements of the international environmental community, Liberia will proceed to gradually accede to or ratify other agreements such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Memberships of MEAs provide opportunities for sponsorship of programs and projects in member countries, as well as for collaborative ventures between Liberia and other countries.

Objective 2: To effectively and efficiently manage international environmental projects designated to Liberia

Context: All assessments of the Agency have identified three categories of needs the country must address to fully implement MEAs. These include *foundation level capacity* (laws, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines); *Institutional level capacity* (logistics, national, regional, county and district level offices, systems, and procedures) and *Individual level capacity* (human resource competencies). Some efforts have been made to address these challenges. At the foundational level, legal, policies, and regulatory instruments by environmental oriented line-ministries and agencies such as FDA, Mines and Energy, Agriculture, Public Work, and Transport have been developed. Additionally, although not yet adequate, some levels of institutional and human capacities have also been built in these institutions. Notwithstanding, there still exist huge gaps and resource constraints to sustain the achievements made in these entities.

Key Actions

Adhere to implementing Agency guidelines: Sponsored projects by donors have specific guidelines required by sponsors and implementing agencies. All guidelines of sponsored projects will be meticulously followed.

Undertake proficient program/project implementation: All sponsored projects will be undertaken with maximum diligence and integrity, particularly as relates to technical and financial managements, transparency, fairness, and accountability of both results and resources. Effectiveness and efficiency will be accentuated.

Ensure reliable information sharing: Information on sponsored projects will regularly be shared with sponsors and other members of the environmental community, both domestic and international. Accordingly, reliable information collection, organization, and dissemination will be pursued as part of inter-sectoral and international cooperation endeavors. Information sharing enhances institutional learning.

Undertake impact assessments of programs/projects: Impact assessments of sponsored projects will be undertaken through independent professionals. This will be an integral part of proficient project management characterized by effectiveness (achieving desired results) and efficiency (achieving desired results at minimum costs).

Strengthen actions on key international environmental issues: The key international environmental issues of today are climate change (coastal erosion and flooding attributed to sea level rise and changes in rainfall patterns; and heat waves and widespread bush fires); and changes in biodiversity (unsustainable exploitation of fauna and flora species). In these areas, the following key actions will be undertaken:

No.	Key Issues	Key Actions
1	Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure full implementation of the National Climate Change strategy framework • Liaise with sectoral partners for the implementation/enforcement of climate change policies
2	Biodiversity Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the continued monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity status and trends • Address issues associated with governance, legal and financial modalities in biodiversity programs for equitable sharing of resources • Ensure development initiatives with potential adverse effects on biodiversity are subjected to strategic environmental assessments • Set balance between economic development and environmental consideration to ensure sustainability of natural resources • Build strong mechanism for awareness creation and education • Recognize, promote, and uphold traditional and indigenous knowledge, practices, and innovations for the sound management of natural resources • Ensure that biodiversity decision-making and management are people-centered • Ensure that biodiversity management and conservation consider economic, cultural, and aesthetic values • Place special emphasis on ecosystems and habitats management • Work with LLA to prepare a Land Use Policy and Strategy • Work with FDA to strengthen Community-based Forestry Policy and Strategy • Work with Ministry of Mines and Energy and develop a National Energy Policy and Strategy • Expand knowledge and understanding of ecosystem values in government and the population • Conduct Mercury Initial Assessment (MIA) and Develop National Action Plan (NAP)

Strengthen actions on key domestic environmental issues: The key domestic environmental issues are chemicals and hazardous materials; waste management particularly plastics and electronic wastes;

sustainable resource utilization, and wetlands. In these areas, the following key actions will be undertaken:

No.	Key Issues	Proposed Actions
1	Chemicals and hazardous materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national policy for the management of chemicals and hazardous materials • Organize a chemical management steering committee comprising of relevant ministries and agencies • Ensure full compliance with the national policy for the management of chemicals and hazardous materials • Develop a system for hazardous waste handling and disposal • Partner with relevant conventions such as the Stockholm and Basel Conventions to strengthen the management of chemicals and hazardous materials.
2	Wastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national waste management policy, to include institutional arrangements for governance and management • Design a system for comprehensive waste management including waste segregation, recycling, composting, and sound waste disposal procedures • Incorporate international regulations and guidelines on waste management into national policy frameworks • Develop a waste data system to store national data on different waste streams in the country
3	Sustainable resource utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national policies and development programs • Adhere to international norms and best practices on the implementation of the SDGs • Design and implement projects for achieving the SDGs
4	Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop national regulations for the management and sustainable use of wetlands • Revise the existing Wetlands Policy Document to ensure enhance management and sustainable use of wetlands • Institute the gazettment of the remaining four (4) Ramsar wetland Sites: Marshall, Kpatawee, Gbedin and the Mesurado. Only the Lake Piso Wetland has been gazetted • Update the status of all five Ramsar Sites in Liberia. Ramsar sites are updated once every five years. • Develop human capacities of and enhance logistical support to the Ramsar Team and Conservation Unit to lead the enforcement of Wetlands regulations, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders • Ensure that projects in other wetlands habitats and ecosystems be subjected to comprehensive EIA process. • Develop a mechanism to involve more women and traditional people in the development of awareness framework for the sustainable use of wetlands • Develop a mechanism to sensitize the population including policy makers, on the importance, benefits, and values of wetlands • Develop projects proposals and solicit funding for the sustainable use of wetlands. • Validate the Water Quality Regulations to include water quality standards for wetlands

5.6 Resource Mobilization

Objective 1: To create and strengthen capacity for domestic resource generation

Context: Domestic financial resources available to the Agency are limited. The primary source is the Government of Liberia through the National Budget. However, given the challenges in the economy, fiscal resources are limited. Then, there are competing demands from other sectors on the limited fiscal assets. While all sectors and public institutions are supported by funding from the government, the health, education, and infrastructural sectors are the priorities of the government. Accordingly, they together, account for the lion's share of the national budget. The average annual budgetary allocation to the Agency over the last three (3) years has been **US \$ 1,382,282 million** which is inadequate to meet the needs of the Agency. Most of this amount goes to salaries. While the Agency collects fees from Environmental Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), the annual amount is negligible compared to the annual, operational cost of the Agency. Also, while the Agency collects fines and other charges, these go to the central government. In the context of the above, the Agency must enhance domestic and external resource mobilization.

Key Actions

Lobby for additional budgetary support: The Agency will lobby with political decision-makers and the legislators to increase annual budgetary support to the Agency. The Management will continue to reasonably make the case of the Agency: the international concerns of the environment such as the current devastating effects of climate change and hence significance, roles, and responsibilities of the Agency.

Establish National Climate Change Trust Fund: Climate change is the world's premier environmental issue. To attend and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on Liberia, the Agency in collaboration with the Government, will establish a Climate Change Trust Fund. The Government will be the grantor, the Agency the beneficiary, and an independent third party such as a bank, the trustee. The Government as grantor, in collaboration with the Agency, will set the terms and rules for the management of the Fund.

Establish Green Tax: In keeping with international best practice, the Agency will work with the Government to establish a Green Tax to support environmental protection activities. Every individual, institution, and corporation will be taxed since every person, organization or corporation contributes, directly or indirectly, to environmental problems, and benefits from remedial actions. The tax will be levied on purchases such as plastic products and collected by the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA). However, this tax revenue shall not be deposited in the Government's Consolidated Account. Instead, it will be deposited into a Special Environmental Green Tax Account at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL). The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), in collaboration with the Agency, will prescribe the protocols for accessing and accounting for monies from the Account.

Activate Conservation Trust Fund: As mandated by its enabling legislation, a Conservation Trust Fund for the Agency was established. However, this Fund has since become defunct over the years. This is because it required matching funds from the Government of Liberia which was never forthcoming. This time around, the MFDP and the Agency will establish clear and sustainable guidelines to ensure funds deposited into the account are matched from identifiable fiscal sources.

Diversify and strengthen collection of fees: The Agency will diversify its domestic resource base and strengthen the collection of required fees such as the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) fee. The EIA fee regime, which is likely the lowest in Africa, will be reviewed and rationalized to following an industry process of fee regime reconstruction.

Enforce law and regulation on performance bonds: The regulation relating to performance bonds will be reviewed. The resultant law and/or regulation will be vigorously enforced. Corporations that fall short of standards shall be held accountable. Where applicable, performance bonds of non-performing entities shall be forfeited. The Legal Office of the Agency will ensure that forfeiture of bonds follows due process of law. Thereafter, forfeited bonds shall be transparently auctioned and the proceeds placed into the Agency's account.

Objective 2: To build capacity to mobilize external environmental resources

Context: Given the world's accent on climate change and other environmental issues, opportunities abound for attracting and accessing external environmental resources. While these resources include financial resources, they are by no means limited to money. They include non-financial resources such as laboratory equipment and supplies and technical assistance resources. Liberia through the Agency must position herself and strengthen her capacity to take advantage of opportunities in the international environmental community.

Key Actions

Develop project proposals for external funding: External environmental resources will be attracted through proposals for specific programs and projects that are dear to the heart of the international environmental community. Such programs and projects will be development with clear goals, objectives, and activities that attract the buy-ins of the community.

Provide proper project management: The Agency will cultivate the trust of the international environmental community by providing the requisite technical competence in managing programs and projects funded by external sources.

Provide effective accountability of Funds: Collateral with technical project management, the Agency shall provide the highest degree of accountability of financial resources from both domestic and external sources. Where the resources include materials and technical assistance, the Agency shall honor all obligations and agreed terms and conditions of contractual obligations.

Evaluate impacts of programs/projects: Towards effective project management, externally funded programs and projects will be closely monitored, making interventions when and where required to keep project activities on track and evaluated at the end to ascertain they have achieved the required outcomes (impacts) they were expected to produce.

Plan Costing and Financing

6.1 Plan Cost Estimates

The financial requirements for implementing this Strategic Plan are derived from the totality of cost required to implement the actions associated with the various strategic objectives in each of the focal areas.

As shown in the table below, it will cost an estimated **(US\$8,535,000)** to implement the Plan over the five-year period.

No.	Strategic Objective	Est. Costs (US\$)
1	To strengthen the Board of Directors and Policy Council	50,000
2	To develop effective personnel classification & appraisal systems	100,000
3	To develop an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism	35,000
4	To strengthen environmental reporting	75,000
5	To strengthen research, policy, and planning capacities to inform governance and management decision-making	100,000
6	To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters	5,000,000
7	To enhance the human capital, increase and retain professional and technical staff.	500,000
8	To centralize institutional project management activities	75,000
9	To centralize institutional financial management activities	50,000
10	To strengthen implementation capacity for internationally funded projects	50,000
11	To increase the understanding of government authorities of the environment and hence the importance, mandate, and roles of the EPA	100,000
12	To enhance understanding of the population of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the EPA	275,000
13	To increase public awareness of and access to environmental information	200,000
14	To positively change public environmental behavior	300,000
15	To develop environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines	150,000
16	To strengthen field operations of monitoring of compliance	300,000
17	To strengthen the ESIA process	100,000
18	To ensure ISO accreditation of the monitoring & compliance laboratory ¹	0
19	To strengthen Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements	150,000
20	To effectively and efficiently manage international environmental projects designated to Liberia	750,000
21	To create and strengthen capacity for domestic resource generation	100,000
22	To build capacity to mobilize external environmental resources	75,000
Total		8,535,000

¹ Cost is imbedded in bullet six (EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters)

6.2 Financing of the Plan

The implementation of this Plan will require maximum resource support, particularly from the government and donor community. Donors' assistance is critical. This is because although the government is expected to be highly supportive of plan implementation, its fiscal resources will not be sufficient to provide all the required funds. This is partly because of other competing demands like roads, education, health, and power. The enormous needs across the whole of government make it virtually impossible for any sector and/or institution to get what is fully required to implement its programs. Notwithstanding its financial constraints, the Agency will work with the government to underwrite at least **30% (or US\$ 2,560,500)** of the total cost of the budget as a demonstration of government's commitment to environmental governance and management.

In this regard, the Agency solicits the continued understanding and goodwill of the international community to defray the balance **70% (or US\$5,974,500)** of the budget. If Liberia is to rise to the demands of sustained environmental governance and management, sufficient funding is mandatory. In this regard, the assistance and long-term commitment of the international community is warranted.

Implementation Framework

7.1 Risks and Risk Mitigations

Implementation of all plans will encounter risks at some point in time. How these risks are attended will impact the outcomes of implementation. Below, the key risks have been identified and how they are to be mitigated explained.

No.	RISK	MITIGATION ACTIONS
1	EPA efforts at addressing environmental issues could be resisted by public and private sector institutions and organizations.	In the discharge of its roles and responsibilities, the EPA will constructively engage public and private sector in ways that cultivate their respect and trust. They will be made to understand that the work being done by the Agency is in their interest as well as future generations. The intent will be to evolve their buy-in and cooperation.
2	Environmental governance and management may not be among the priorities of the government	The leadership of the Agency will continuously engage the government on the importance of environmental issues. Institutions to target will be the Presidency; Cabinet; Ministries, Agencies and Commissions; and State-Owned Enterprises. The Agency shall explain the urgency and benefits of sound environmental governance and management, demonstrating the current changing climate and the world's accentuation of climate change as glaring examples.
3	Limited fiscal space will constrain adequate government support to the environmental governance and management	The EPA leadership will convince the government to demonstrate to donors its commitment to environmental governance and management by obligating at least 30% of the budget of this Plan over the five-year period. Persons to engage are the President, Vice President, the Speaker, the Senate pro Tempore, Minister of Finance and Development Planning and the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, among others.
4	Environmental governance and management may not find the right mix of champions and drivers of change in government and civil society and non-governmental organizations.	The Agency will purposely identify and work with a select group of individuals in government (ministries, agencies, commissions, and state-owned enterprises) and civil society and non-governmental organizations to champion and drive environmental governance and management issues. These will be people who understand and are passionate about and committed to environmental issues. They will have a set of clear messages from the Agency that are consistently and sustainably delivered across the country and at various levels of society.

7.2 Plan Implementation Management

This Plan demands meticulous implementation. No Plan is complete until someone with requisite authority has the responsibility to implement it. A Strategic Plan Implementation Committee will be established to coordinate implementation. The Committee will be headed by the Executive Director. The Committee will provide leadership in plan implementation, track implementation targets and timelines, monitor and evaluate implementation progress, and resolve implementation challenges. Specifically, the Committee

will hold actors accountable for agreed actions, deliverables, and timelines. The Research, Policy and Planning Department will provide secretarial services to the Committee.

A meeting of the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee will be held at least twice every year to take inventory of where each component of the plan is with respect to progress made (or the lack of it) and to take required actions where warranted.

7.3 Stakeholders' Engagement

This plan relies on continuous engagement of stakeholders. A Stakeholders' Forum will be established by the Agency for briefing and consulting with stakeholders on activities of the Agency and implementation of the Plan. The Forum will provide an opportunity for stakeholders and the Agency to exchange information and experiences, as well as monitor implementation progress. The forum will be convened by the Agency at least once every year.

While this plan is for the EPA, some elements contained in it indirectly involve the cooperation of other institutions such as the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Public Works (MPW), and the Liberia Land authority (LLA). The Agency will engage these institutions in the context of inter-agency coordination towards strengthening collaborating in environmental governance and management.

7.4 Donors' Engagement

This plan depends on the substantive support of donors. Accordingly, continuous donors' engagement will be an essential dimension of implementation. A Donors' Forum will be established by the Agency. It will be a periodic roundtable at which donors will be briefed and consulted on plan implementation. The Forum will be convened by the EPA at least once every year.

7.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Plan will lend itself to continuous monitoring and evaluation. Lessons learned from on-going monitoring and evaluations will be accentuated. Progress reports will be derived from periodic reviews. The Research, Policy and Planning Department will provide monitoring and evaluation services.

APPENDIX: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: Strategic Objectives, Timelines, Key Actors

Focal Area 1: Governance & Management

Strategic Objective 1: To strengthen Board of Directors and Policy Council

No.	Key Actions	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Clarify the status of the Agency						Executive Dept.
2	Clarify roles of governing bodies						Executive Dept.
3	Re-constitute the Board and Policy Council						Executive Dept.
4	Orientate Board & Council Members						Executive Dept.
5	Review and amend enabling legislation						Executive Dept.
6	Prepare a Gender Policy						Gender Coordinator
7	Mainstream the environment in national and local government planning						Planning and Policy Dept.
8	Build capacities of stakeholders						Executive Dept.

Objective 2: To develop and implement effective personnel classification & appraisal systems

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Undertake an inventory of personnel						C&E Dept.
2	Study CSA and other classification models						Admin Dept.
3	Develop a sector-specific classification regime						C&E Dept.
4	Develop personnel appraisal system						Planning and Policy Dept.
5	Provide internal orientation on classification and appraisal schemes						Admin Dept.

Objective 3: To develop and implement an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Study national examples of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms						Planning and Policy Dept.
2	Undertake benchmarking studies						C&E Dept.
3	Develop a sector-specific ADR mechanism						Planning and Policy Dept.
4	Strengthen the grievance desk						Inter-sectoral Dept.

Objective 4: To strengthen environmental reporting

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Develop a Management Information System (MIS)						Admins Dept.
2	Strengthen internal reporting						Planning and Policy Dept. and Executive Dept.
3	Address international environmental reporting challenges						Executive Dept.
4	Incorporate reporting elements from other sector institutions						Planning and Policy Dept.

Strategic Objective 5: To strengthen research, policy, and planning capacities to inform governance and management decision-making

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Establish a research unit						Executive Dept.
2	Establish a monitoring and evaluation unit						Executive Dept.
3	Strengthen policy analysis capabilities						Executive Dept.
4	Strengthen institutional planning capabilities						Planning and Policy Dept.
5	Establish partnerships with learning and research institutions						Executive Dept.

Focal Area 2: Institutional Capacity Building

Strategic Objective 1: To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Soil test the land acquired to inform architectural design						C&E Dept.
2	Develop architectural design						C&E Dept.
3	Obtain regulatory approvals						C&E Dept.
4	Undertake ESIA						C&E Dept.
5	Mobilize requisite funding						MEAs Dept.
6	Hire civil engineering consultant						Executive Dept.
7	Hire Construction Company						Executive Dept.

Objective 1: To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Undertake a manpower needs assessment						Planning and Policy Dept.
2	Develop human capital development Program						Admins Dept.
3	Mobilize resources and implement human capital development program						Executive Dept.
4	Develop a transparent and fair incentive regime						Planning and Policy Dept.

Objective 3: To centralize institutional project management activities							
No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Establish a centralized project management unit and consolidate all project activities into this unit						Executive Dept.
2	Develop an organizational structure and recruit competent staff						Executive Dept.

Objectives 4: To centralize institutional financial management activities

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Establish a centralized financial management unit and consolidate all financial management and accounting functions and activities into this unit						Executive Dept.
2	Develop an organizational structure and recruit competent staff						Admins Dept.

Strategic Objective 5: To strengthen implementation capacity for internationally funded projects.

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Develop a technical assistance program						C&E Dept.
2	Establish twining relationships with advanced EPAs						C&E Dept.
3	Establish a study tour program						Executive Dept.
4	Forge Partnership with research institutions						Executive Dept.
5	Enhance technological capability						Executive Dept.

Focal Area 3: Information, Education, Communication Services

Strategic Objective 1: To increase the understanding of government authorities of the environment and hence the importance, mandate, and roles of the EPA

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Engage the Cabinet						Executive Dept.
2	Engage the Legislature						Executive Dept.
3	Engage the Judiciary						Executive Dept.
4	Engage Local Governments						Inter-sectoral Dept.
1	Establish a Communications Unit						Executive Dept.
2	Revise and implement the communications strategy						Inter-sectoral Dept.
3	Enhance environmental education in schools						Inter-sectoral Dept.
4	Engage media institutions						Inter-sectoral Dept.
5	Promote environmental activities in various sectors						Inter-sectoral Dept.
6	Promote environmental IEC services to specific publics.						Inter-sectoral Dept.

Objective 2: To enhance understanding of the population of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the EPA

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Employ all IEC vehicles						Inter-sectoral Dept.
2	Direct public to website and resource Libraries						Inter-sectoral Dept.
3	Transmit IEC messages through Liberian simple English						Inter-sectoral Dept.
4	Transmit IEC messages through Liberian languages						Inter-sectoral Dept.
5	Established Local Government Environment Committees						Inter-sectoral Dept.
6	Establish Environmental Committees in local communities						Inter-sectoral Dept.

Objective 3: To increase public awareness of and access to environmental information

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Regularly inform, educate, and communicate to the public						Inter-sectoral Dept.
2	Train special media personnel						Inter-sectoral Dept.
3	Undertake door-to-door campaigns in communities						Inter-sectoral Dept.
4	Undertake routine Environmental Talks in schools						Inter-sectoral Dept.

Objective 4: To positively change public environmental behavior							
No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Regularly inform, educate, and communicate to the public:						Inter-sectoral Dept.
2	Train special media personnel						Inter-sectoral Dept.
3	Undertake door-to-door campaigns in communities						Inter-sectoral Dept.
4	Undertake routine Environmental Talks in schools						Inter-sectoral Dept.

Focal Area 4: Compliance & Enforcement

Strategic Objective 1: To develop environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Develop standards for remaining sectors/areas						C&E Dept.
2	Develop regulations and guidelines for sectors/areas						C&E Dept.
3	Update additional ESIA's						C&E Dept.
4	Disseminate standards and regulatory instruments						C&E Dept.

Objective 2: To strengthen field operations for monitoring of compliance

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Hire additional staff						Admins Dept.
2	Enhance logistical support						Admins Dept.
3	Enhance administrative support services						Admins Dept.
4	Provide on-going human capacity building						Admins Dept.
5	Complete Agency structures across the country						Admins Dept.

Objective 3: To strengthen the ESIA process

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Revisit and update ESIA fees' regime						C&E Dept.
2	Decentralize ESIA process across the country						C&E Dept.
3	Create and promote awareness of the ESIA Process						C&E Dept.
4	Introduce the ESIA Process as a course at colleges and universities						Executive Dept.

Objective 4: To ensure ISO accreditation of the monitoring & compliance laboratory

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Provide better working space						Admins Dept.
2	Procure additional analytical equipment						Executive Dept.
3	Provide periodic staff upgradation training						Admins Dept.

Focal Area 5: International Cooperation

Strategic Objective 1: To strengthen Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Domesticate MEAs						MEAs and Executive Dept.
2	Build Human and Institutional Capacities						MEAs Dept.
3	Regularize compliance with reporting obligations						MEAs Dept.
4	Regularize participation in international forums						MEAs Dept.
5	Accede to or ratify other MEAs						MEAs Dept.

Objective 2: To effectively and efficiently manage international environmental projects designated to Liberia

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Adhere to implementing Agency guidelines						MEAs Dept.
2	Undertake proficient program/project implementation						MEAs Dept.
3	Ensure reliable information sharing						MEAs Dept.
4	Undertake impact assessments of programs/projects						MEAs Dept.
5	Strengthen actions on key international environmental issues (Climate change and Biodiversity changes)						MEAs Dept.
6	Strengthen actions on key domestic environmental issues (Chemicals and Hazardous materials; Waste; Sustainable resource utilization; Wetlands)						MEAs Dept.

Focal Area 6: Resource Mobilization

Strategic Objective 1: To create and strengthen capacity for domestic resource generation

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Lobby for additional budgetary support						Executive Dept.
2	Establish National Climate Change Trust Fund						Executive Dept.
3	Establish Green Tax						Executive Dept.
4	Activate Conservation Trust Fund						Executive Dept.
5	Diversify and strengthen collection of fees						Executive Dept.
6	Enforce law and regulations on performance bonds						Executive Dept.

Objective 2: To build capacity to mobilize external environmental resources

No.	Key Actions/Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Actors
1	Develop project proposals for external funding						Executive Dept.
2	Provide proper project management						Executive Dept.
3	Provide effective accountability of Funds						Executive Dept.
4	Evaluate Impacts of programs/projects						Executive Dept.

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