

**DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANS-FRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA LINKING
FOREST RESERVES AND PROTECTED AREAS IN GHANA AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE
(GCP/RAF/447/GFF)
REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING/FINAL PROJECT WORKSHOP
12TH – 13TH APRIL, 2018
ALISA HOTEL (TBC), ACCRA – GHANA.**

12th April, 2018

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr. Chairman, Ministers of State, GEF Focal Points, Heads of Institutions, Project Partners, Distinguished Guests, Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen; It is my esteemed pleasure to extend to you a warm welcome to this Knowledge Sharing Workshop of the GEF/FAO funded Transboundary Project between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

The landscape in and around Bia (Western Ghana) and Diambarakro (Eastern Côte d'Ivoire) is a complex mosaic of forests, forest fragments and agricultural land (especially cocoa farms), with each of these areas managed for different purposes and subject to different tenure and ownership arrangements (i.e. state, communal and private ownership of land and trees). Like much of the rest of these two countries, there are also a number of conflicts, uncertainties and weaknesses in the area with respect to the overall governance, ownership and management of land and forest resources. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and forest management within the landscape is threatened by agricultural expansion; perverse incentives to remove tree cover; hunting pressure; human-wildlife conflict; and weak capacity of local institutions to address the aforementioned issues.

Against this background, the *Development of a Trans-frontier Conservation Area linking Forest Reserves and Protected Areas in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire* was conceived and implemented in 2015 to 2018 with a global environmental objective 'to establish a viable and sustainable trans-frontier conservation area (TFCA) that links forest reserves and protected areas in and around Bia in Ghana and Diambarakro in Côte d'Ivoire.' The project has facilitated the improvement of biodiversity conservation in the protected areas and production landscape within the TFCA and has helped to reduce the barriers to sustainable forest and land management. The project was financed by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) through the Food and Agriculture Organisation and implemented by the Forestry Commission in Ghana and SODEFOR in Cote d'Ivoire with Conservation Alliance International (CA) coordinating the field implementation of the project activities.

The End-of Project Knowledge Sharing Workshop which opens today and ends tomorrow forms part of project activities. The purpose of this workshop is to share the results, experiences and lessons learnt in the course of project implementation with immediate and wider stakeholders while also mapping out strategies for scaling up best practices and lessons learned from the project.

As the Coordinating Agency for the Trans-boundary Project, we expect two main outcomes from this meeting: First, the signing of an MoU between Ghana and Côte for effective and collaborative implementation of the management plan for the TFCA; and Secondly, key project outcomes, experiences and lessons learnt will be presented to, discussed and reflected on by stakeholders, partners and other interested institutions/persons. I hope that this workshop ends with a plethora of recommendations that will influence existing and planned efforts towards the execution of this project for a successful outcome for all parties. I wish you a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you.

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