



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STRATEGIC PLAN



ROAD MAP FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS 2025-2029

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Foreword

In my capacity as the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, I am privileged to introduce our Strategic Plan for the period of **2025-2029**. This five-year plan underscores our steadfast dedication to strengthening environmental governance and promoting sustainable practices across our country. We project a total implementation budget of approximately **\$32,078,000** of which we seek **\$16,890,000** from our trusted partners, while committing to mobilize **\$15,188,000** from internal resources.



Rooted in our core values - stewardship, professionalism, integrity, transparency, accountability, partnership, and respect, this Strategic Plan outlines an ambitious agenda aimed at addressing the complex challenges facing our environment while fostering inclusive and sustainable development. We understand that safeguarding our rich biodiversity and natural resources is essential for the well-being of current and future generations.

This plan serves not only as a roadmap but also as a commitment to our communities and stakeholders. We will work collaboratively to empower local governance structures, enhance institutional capacity, and encourage public engagement in environmental stewardship. By decentralizing our operations and establishing environmental committees in each of Liberia's 15 counties, we aim to ensure that environmental governance becomes a shared responsibility at all societal levels.

The ambitious objectives outlined in this plan target improvements in compliance and enforcement, the fostering of international collaborations, and resource mobilization - elements crucial to achieving our environmental objectives. We prioritize transparency and accountability in all our actions, engaging meaningfully with stakeholders to enable inclusive decision-making processes.

We recognize the challenges that lie ahead, but with the support of the government, our partners, and the communities we serve, I am confident in our ability to achieve the goals set out in this Strategic Plan. Together, we will strive for a sustainable future where Liberia's natural resources are conserved in alignment with the aspirations of our people.

I encourage you to explore the details of our Strategic Plan, and I look forward to our collective efforts driving our vision forward.

Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo, Ph.D.

Executive Director/CEO

Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

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.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

AAID Agenda for Inclusive Development

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ARREST	Agriculture, Road, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CSA	Civil Service Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EKMS	Environmental Knowledge Management System
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERRSL	Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Laboratory
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessments
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IEC	information, education, and communication
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Monrovia City Corporation
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreements
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MIS	Management Information System
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Plan
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIS	Safeguard Information System

SoER State of the Environment Report
UNDP United Nations Development Program
WWF World Wildlife Fun

Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan outlines an ambitious vision for enhancing environmental governance and management in Liberia from 2025 to 2029. This comprehensive plan seeks to address core mandates while tackling contemporary environmental challenges, ultimately aiming to improve the agency's operational effectiveness. The strategic directions are concentrated on strengthening governance structures, building institutional capacity, nurturing public engagement, enforcing compliance, and enhancing international collaborations.

A pivotal aspect of the plan is the improvement of *Governance & Management*. By decentralizing operations and establishing EPA offices in all 15 counties, the agency aims to enhance local capacities in environmental governance. This decentralization will be complemented by the formation of Environmental Committees, facilitating community engagement and ensuring that local needs and voices are prioritized in environmental decision-making.

Capacity Building is another vital focus area. The EPA plans to invest in human resources, technological advancements, and infrastructure improvements, including the construction of a new headquarters. This initiative aims to equip all EPA offices effectively, ensuring they are well-prepared to achieve their environmental responsibilities and respond to the challenges presented by various sectors.

To increase *Public Engagement and Education*, the EPA will enhance its information dissemination strategies and educational outreach initiatives, particularly in collaboration with schools and local governments. By empowering citizens with knowledge about sustainable practices, the agency aims to cultivate a culture of environmental awareness and responsibility across the nation.

The plan underscores the importance of *Compliance and Monitoring* by implementing stricter mechanisms and updating environmental standards. Enhanced field operations will ensure regulatory adherence in sectors such as mining, agriculture, and waste management, strengthening the EPA's ability to enforce environmental regulations effectively.

International Collaboration plays a crucial role in achieving the EPA's objectives. Strengthening partnerships with the global environmental community will facilitate alignment with international standards, enhance knowledge exchange, and secure funding for vital environmental initiatives. In recognition of financial constraints, the agency will also actively pursue "Resource Mobilization" through diverse funding strategies, which include budget advocacy and establishing a National Climate Change Trust Fund.

The plan emphasizes the *Modernization of Processes* through digitization and automation, particularly in Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA). By improving efficiency and transparency in environmental reporting and compliance, the EPA aims to become a more effective steward of Liberia's natural resources.

The strategic plan is built upon five pillars: *Governance & Management, Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building, Information, Education and Communication, Compliance & Enforcement, and International and National Environmental Commitments*. These pillars will collectively support the EPA in achieving its goals and elevating environmental governance in Liberia.

By the end of the strategic plan period, the EPA aims to achieve enhanced local governance capacities, increased public awareness and engagement with environmental issues, robust compliance frameworks, and modernization to meet international standards. Overall, the Strategic Direction 2025-2029 is intended to transform the EPA into a more effective and responsive institution, promoting sustainable environmental governance in Liberia for the benefit of its natural resources and citizens.

Strategic Plan Structure

This Strategic Plan is organized and presented in seven (6) chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- *This introductory chapter discusses the critical importance of environmental protection on a global scale and outlines Liberia's commitment through various national agendas and policies. It identifies key environmental concerns facing Liberia, such as climate change and deforestation, and reviews the international treaties signed by the nation. The chapter emphasizes the strategic plan's role as a roadmap for environmental governance over the next five years and describes the participatory approach taken to revise the previous plan to align it with current goals. Additionally, this chapter explains how the strategic plan integrates with Liberia's ARREST Agenda, which focuses on inclusive development and environmental sustainability.*

Chapter 2: Situation Analysis

- *This chapter provides a comprehensive assessment of Liberia's political, economic, social, environmental, and technological landscapes. It highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with environmental management in the country. Furthermore, it introduces the organizational structure, functions, and staffing capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), providing essential context for the agency's operations.*

Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis

- *This chapter focuses on evaluating the institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) faced by the EPA. It highlights the internal capabilities and areas for improvement within the agency, as well as the external factors impacting environmental governance in Liberia.*

Chapter 4: Strategic Direction 2025 – 2029

- *This chapter outlines the strategic objectives the EPA aims to achieve from 2025 to 2029, organized into various pillars. It emphasizes key areas of focus, including governance, capacity building, compliance, and adherence to international commitments.*

Chapter 5: Funding Sources and Budget Matrix

- *This chapter presents the funding sources and budget matrix, detailing the financial requirements necessary to implement the strategic activities planned. It categorizes these activities under different pillars and specifies the responsible departments and potential funding sources.*

Chapter 6: Implementation Matrix

- *This final chapter provides an implementation matrix that outlines the framework for executing the strategic plan. It details the strategic objectives, associated timelines, and responsible departments, ensuring a systematic and organized approach to achieve the plan's goals over the five-year period*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Globally, environmental protection is a fundamental priority, prominently featured in international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Nationally, Liberia has progressively integrated environmental considerations into its policies and agendas through a series of initiatives, beginning with the Poverty Reduction Strategy, followed by the Agenda for Transformation, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, and currently, the ARREST Agenda. Each of these national plans underscores the critical importance of safeguarding the environment, mitigating climate change impacts, and enhancing environmental conditions for human well-being. This underscores the intrinsic link between the environment and human development; neglecting environmental care directly jeopardizes human lives, making its protection vital.

Conversely, human activities significantly affect the environment through practices like overpopulation, pollution, deforestation, flooding, improper waste disposal, land degradation, and neglect of biodiversity conservation. These actions trigger adverse outcomes such as climate change, soil erosion, water quality deterioration, and health issues, ultimately diminishing quality of life and reducing life expectancy. Therefore, understanding and addressing the bidirectional relationship between humans and the environment is essential for sustainable development and improved societal well-being.

1.2 Environmental Issues and International Agreements

Environmental issues vary across countries and regions in terms of types and severity. In Liberia, the primary environmental concerns include climate change, the management of chemicals and hazardous materials, flooding, deforestation, waste management, sustainable resource utilization, and the conservation of 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.

1.3 Purpose of the Plan

This Strategic Plan outlines the key issues in environmental governance and management in Liberia for the next five years (2025-2029). It leverages the progress achieved through the previous Strategic Plan (2022-2026) and, although that plan was not yet fully expired, this revision aligns with the vision and mission of the current development agenda, known as the ARREST Agenda, for greater coherence. Additionally, this revised plan addresses unresolved issues identified in the earlier plan. The Plan is fundamentally forward-thinking, prioritizing strategic directions for the Agency, detailing activities under each pillar, and specifying assigned departments and activities necessary to achieve each objective. Serving as a comprehensive "road map," the Strategic Plan provides strategic directions for the Agency. It forms the basis for annual work planning, stakeholder and donor engagement, and resource mobilization. Crucially, it establishes a foundation for predictability, expectation setting, and results-based monitoring and evaluation.

1.4 Revision of the 2021-2026 Plan

The revision of the Plan was developed using a participatory approach that actively involved the management and professional staff of the Agency. Initially, the revision process was informed by a comprehensive review of the Agency's enabling legislation, policies, and regulations. It was further driven by numerous meetings facilitated by a consultant, which served as forums for exchanging perspectives and experiences, and for building consensus on core issues and next steps in environmental governance and management in Liberia.

Four-Step Model for Plan Preparation:

Step 1: Situation Analysis (Where is the Agency currently?)

This step involved a thorough analysis of Liberia's current development context and the existing state of the Agency. It included assessments of the political, economic, social, and technological contexts, evaluations of the Agency's strengths and weaknesses, identification of opportunities and threats in its operating environment, and mapping of stakeholders along with their expectations.

Step 2: Future Destination Determination (Where does the Agency want to be in the next five years?)

This phase entailed a visioning process starting with the clarification of the Agency's mandate. Utilizing results from the situation analysis, this phase refined the Agency's mission and vision statements, developed a motto, and articulated core values. Crucially, it also identified key issues to target and

determined the strategic objectives for environmental governance and management aligned with the current administration's overarching agenda.

Step 3: Strategy Development (How does the Agency intend to get to where it wants to be in the next five years?)

This step focused on identifying the strategies, including key actions and activities, that the Agency intends to employ to achieve each strategic objective under each focal area.

Step 4: Implementation Modality (How will implementation of the plan be managed?)

This final step involved a responsibility analysis detailing who will perform specific tasks, the timelines for completion, and associated costs. It culminated in the development of an implementation framework, encompassing plan implementation management, communication strategy development, and forums for donor and stakeholder engagement, alongside monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

1.5 Alignment with the ARREST Agenda

In 2024, the government developed the Agriculture, Road, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism (ARREST) Agenda, which succeeds the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). The ARREST Agenda is also known as the Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID). This comprehensive five-year strategy (2025-2029) encompasses a Public Sector Investment Plan (PSIP), which detailed development initiative for each of Liberia's fifteen counties. The ARREST Agenda primarily focuses on inclusivity and equitable wealth distribution through a rights-based approach. It targets poverty reduction by enhancing agriculture, road infrastructure, and access to affordable, quality education, revitalizing the tourism sector, and ensuring accountability by enforcing the rule of law. This strategic agenda is informed by Liberia's Vision 2030, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and supports peacebuilding, reconciliation, inclusive development, and poverty reduction.

The Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the ARREST Agenda, which highlights "Energy and Environment" as a core pillar. Within this framework, the ARREST Agenda outlines objectives for effective forest utilization, sustainable management of natural resources, and the decentralization of EPA offices across the 15 counties, with the establishment of regional offices. It also envisions housing the EPA headquarters in a facility powered by clean energy, and upholding international laws and agreements for sound environmental management, all of which fall under Energy and Environment.

2.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 National Context

2.1.1 Political

Liberia is a developing country situated in sub-Saharan Africa, characterized by a small population and rich endowments of natural resources, including minerals and forest resources. The nation endured a devastating 14-year civil conflict, which severely damaged its infrastructure and socio-political systems. According to the 2022 National Census Report, the estimated population of Liberia is approximately 5.6 million, with an annual growth rate of about 2.5%. Notably, just over half (51%) of the population lives in rural communities.

Despite possessing abundant natural resources, Liberia has struggled with poor governance, which has stunted economic growth and human development for several decades. The international community categorizes the country as low income and underdeveloped, reflecting its ranking of 175 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2020).

Central to Liberia's development challenges are the interlinked issues of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty. Illiteracy hampers productive capacity, unemployment inhibits income generation and complicates the fulfillment of basic household needs, while poverty, defined as a state of human deprivation, results from these two factors. Together, illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty create conditions that can foster conflict, further destabilizing the nation.

2.1.2 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*).

2.1.3 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*).

2.1.4 Environmental

Liberia is rich in biodiversity and natural resources, featuring vast forests, rivers, and diverse flora and fauna. However, it faces significant environmental challenges primarily due to climate change and biodiversity loss.

Climate change impacts are severe in Liberia, resulting in altered rainfall patterns, increased flooding, and rising sea levels, which threaten food security, water resources, and public health. The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) warns that rising temperatures and erratic rainfall will exacerbate agricultural vulnerabilities and increase extreme weather events, endangering communities (*Government of Liberia, 2008*).

Liberia's biodiversity is exemplified by one of West Africa's last rainforests, which hosts many endemic species crucial for carbon sequestration and local livelihoods. Deforestation from logging, agriculture, and mining is destroying habitats and jeopardizing biodiversity. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) notes that without sustainable management, many native species may face extinction (*WWF, 2020*).

In response, the Liberian government, in partnership with international organizations, advocates for sustainable land management and conservation. Strategies include creating protected areas and policies focused on biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. The Land Rights Policy and the National Biodiversity Strategy aim to ensure responsible resource use and ecosystem protection (*Government of Liberia, 2013*).

while Liberia possesses vital environmental assets, it faces persistent threats from climate change and biodiversity loss. Ongoing efforts are essential for securing a sustainable future for its ecosystems and population.

2.1.5 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).

2.2 Environmental Protection Agency

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY is the institution in Liberia that manages natural resources and the environment. 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, assisted by the Deputy Executive Director and supported by line managers.

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

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.

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.

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

Motto: Our Environment, Our Future, Our Obligation

The EPA functions through several specialized departments designed to assist the Executive in achieving the Agency's comprehensive legislative mandates as set forth by the EPA 2003 Act. These departments

play a crucial role in the successful execution of policies and programs focused on safeguarding Liberia's abundant natural resources and fostering environmental sustainability.

The EPA is structured into the following key departments:

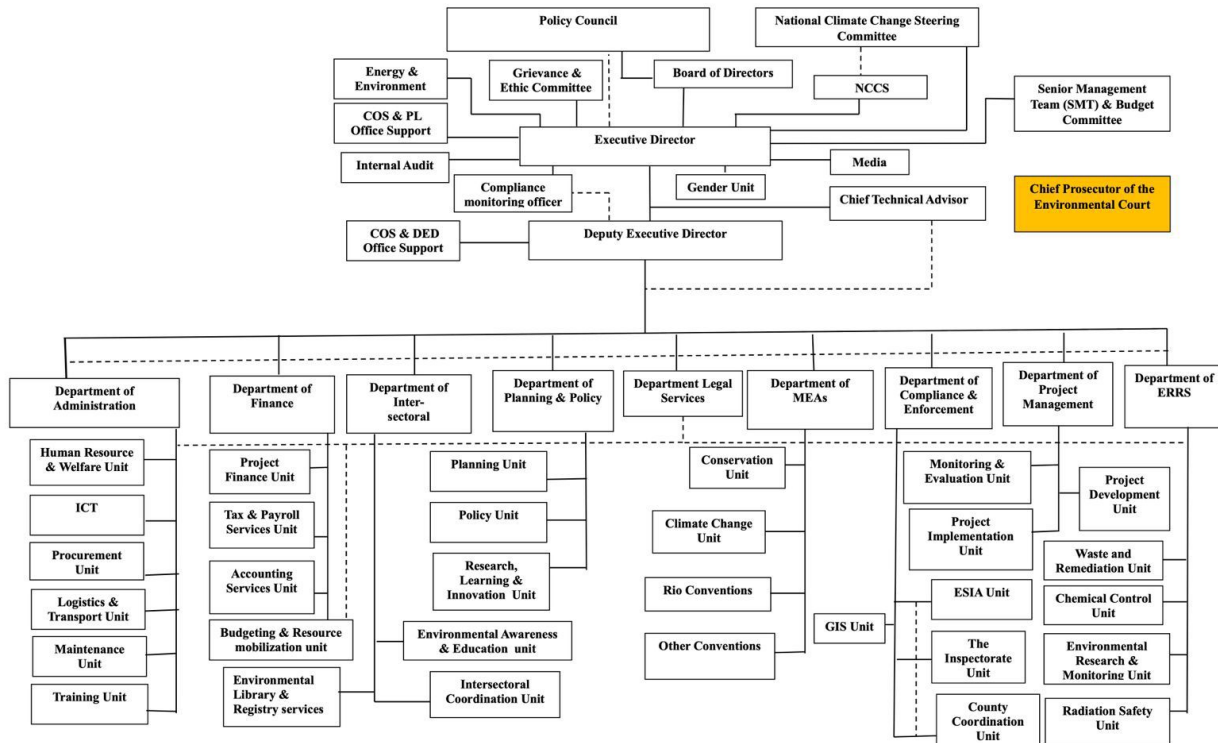
1. **Department of Compliance and Enforcement:** This department is responsible for ensuring adherence to environmental laws and regulations. It conducts inspections, monitors compliance, and takes enforcement actions against violators to maintain environmental integrity. The department is the primary arm of the Agency responsible for the ESIA Process.
2. **Environment Research and Radiation Safety Department:** Focused on advancing environmental science, this department conducts research, assessments, and studies on environmental issues. It also oversees radiation safety protocols, ensuring public health and safety concerning radiological hazards.
3. **Planning and Policy Department:** This department develops strategic plans, annual plan and policies that guide the EPA's actions and initiatives. The department is also responsible for environmental reporting. It analyzes environmental data to inform decision-making and aligns departmental goals with national development objectives.
4. **Multilateral Environmental Agreements Department:** Tasked with engaging in and implementing international environmental agreements, this department ensures that Liberia meets its obligations under global treaties, fostering international cooperation on environmental issues.
5. **Intersectoral Department:** Acknowledging the interrelatedness of environmental challenges across multiple sectors, this department encourages collaboration among various governmental and non-governmental organizations to advance integrated approaches to environmental management. Awareness and education are foundational elements of its core responsibilities.
6. **Administration Department:** This department provides essential administrative support to the EPA, ensuring that its operations run smoothly and efficiently. It handles human resources, logistics, and other administrative functions necessary for effective management.
7. **Department of Finance:** Responsible for managing the financial resources of the EPA, this department oversees budgeting, financial planning, and accountability. It ensures that the agency's fiscal practices align with national financial regulations and support its environmental initiatives.

Each of these departments has specific roles and responsibilities crucial for the EPA's operational success. To enhance their functionality and effectiveness, this Strategic Plan outlines specific tasks assigned to each department to be executed within designated timeframes. This strategic approach aims to

streamline efforts, optimize resource allocation, and ultimately advance Liberia's environmental protection goals while promoting sustainable development.

2.2.1 The New EPA Structure

As of 2024, the EPA has been organized into seven key departments, as outlined under Section 2.2: *Environmental Protection Agency of the Plan*. In response to the current operational realities and the imperative to diversify and decentralize its functions—per the established Act of 2003 Act—the leadership of the EPA has undertaken a strategic restructuring initiative. This initiative aims to create a



more dynamic organizational framework that aligns with the mandate of the EPA.

The proposed organizational structure, developed by the Senior Management Team, has received approval from both the Board of Directors and the Policy Council of the EPA. This updated structure includes the establishment of a few new departments, most notably the Legal Department and the Project Management Department, which are essential for enhancing the agency's operational capacity.

In this revised framework, the Gender Unit has been integrated into the Executive Department, streamlining the agency's approach to addressing gender considerations across its activities. Furthermore, a Grievance and Ethics Committee has been established under the Executive Department, alongside a senior management team budget committee, to ensure robust governance and accountability.

The National Climate Change Steering Committee, coordinated by the National Climate Change Secretariat, has also been incorporated into the organic structure of the EPA, highlighting the agency's commitment to addressing climate issues in a coordinated manner.

The Department of Administration has undergone reorganization, merging several stand-alone units with similar functions to enhance efficiency. Notable merges include the Human Resource and Welfare Unit, which has been combined with the Logistics and Transport Units, creating a new Maintenance Unit to oversee infrastructure upkeep.

Within the Department of Finance, two new units have been formed: The Tax and Payroll Service Unit and the Accounting Services Unit, aimed at improving financial management practices.

Additionally, the Department of Planning and Policy has introduced the Unit for Research and Innovation, reflecting a commitment to fostering evidence-based decision-making and innovative practices.

Finally, under the Environmental Research and Radiation Safety (ERRS) Department, new units such as the Waste and Remediation Unit and the Radiation Safety Unit have been established to address specific environmental challenges effectively.

This comprehensive restructuring is designed to align the EPA with best practices in environmental governance and enhance its capacity to fulfil its strategic objectives in an evolving environmental landscape.

2.2.2 Individual Capacity

As of November 2024, the EPA demonstrates a substantial commitment to environmental protection and management through its diverse workforce of 321 professional staff. This workforce is characterized by a variety of academic backgrounds that are crucial for effectively addressing the complex environmental challenges that the agency faces.

Out of the total staff, 287 are fully employed, while 3 hold interim positions, and 31 are contractors engaged in various projects initiated by the EPA. This staffing composition showcases a blend of expertise, with professionals specializing in key areas such as chemistry, biology, and environmental science. Such diversity is important as it amplifies the agency's capability to research, formulate, and implement impactful environmental policies and programs tailored to the needs of the community and the ecological landscape.

The educational composition of the EPA staff is noteworthy and reflects a strong commitment to advancing knowledge in environmental issues. The workforce includes one PhD holder and 52 staff members with attained Master's degrees, highlighting a robust foundation for research initiatives and regulatory compliance. Additionally, 9 staff are currently pursuing Master's degrees, illustrating a proactive approach to professional development and a culture of continuous learning. Furthermore, the workforce encompasses 111 individuals with Bachelor's degrees and 19 who are pursuing undergraduate studies, creating a solid pipeline of emerging professionals who are well-prepared to take on expanding roles within the agency. The inclusion of staff with Associate degrees are 5 in number alongside 5 individuals

with certificates and 56 high school graduates. This points to the EPA's inclusive staffing strategy, ensuring a comprehensive range of perspectives and skills.

However, despite these strengths, there are areas where improvement is necessary. While the agency possesses significant intellectual capacity, there is a pressing need for enhanced technical and operational skills, particularly in field operations and compliance monitoring. Striking a balance between staff equipped with advanced academic qualifications and those with practical expertise is vital for the effective implementation of the agency's mandates. Retaining emerging professionals, especially those engaged in higher education, should be a priority for the EPA. The agency could benefit from implementing mentorship programs and career progression initiatives that facilitate growth and retention of new talent.

Moreover, targeted training programs designed to enhance the skill set of existing staff can address current knowledge gaps and bolster operational efficacy. Investing in such training not only improves individual performance but also contributes to overall organizational effectiveness in achieving the EPA's mission.

In essence, the EPA has developed a commendable capacity through its diverse and educationally rich workforce, which equips the agency to tackle Liberia's environmental challenges effectively. Nevertheless, optimizing operational roles, enhancing retention strategies for emerging talent, and implementing targeted training programs are critical next steps for maximizing the EPA's effectiveness in promoting sustainable environmental governance throughout the country. By strategically addressing these areas, the EPA can reinforce its role as a leader in environmental protection and ensure its initiatives effectively contribute to the well-being of both the people and the environment of Liberia.

2.2.3 Logistical Capacity

The EPA has established a basic yet limited logistical capacity to support its operations across the country. This analysis examines the agency's logistics and tools, focusing on transportation resources, IT equipment, office infrastructure, and other essential assets that enhance its effectiveness in environmental protection and management.

Transportation is vital for the EPA's field operations and community engagement. The agency's fleet consists of 12 vehicles and 25 motorbikes, enabling staff to access remote areas for site assessments and compliance monitoring. The availability and condition of this transportation directly impact the agency's responsiveness to environmental issues and emergencies throughout Liberia.

With 13 offices strategically located across the country, the EPA ensures regional engagement and effective governance at the local level. This geographical distribution allows the agency to maintain a presence in various communities, promoting better environmental management and compliance.

In terms of technological resources, the EPA is equipped with 28 desktop computers and 72 laptops essential for data management and staff productivity. Networking equipment, including routers and firewalls, supports the agency's IT infrastructure and cybersecurity needs. Additionally, the agency has a server, 54 printers, a plotter, and multiple projectors, which facilitate documentation, reporting, and presentations. Communication tools, consisting of cell phones and desk phones, further enhance internal and external collaboration.

The EPA also prioritizes a comfortable working environment with 71 office desks, 117 office chairs, and 33 visitor chairs. The agency is equipped with 30 workstations and 47 cabinets for organized storage, while conference facilities, including tables, chairs, and TVs, support meetings and training sessions. Additional logistical resources such as air conditioning units, ice boxes, and solar panels contribute to environmental sustainability and staff comfort.

Thus, the EPA of Liberia possesses a reasonable logistical capacity that supports various aspects of its operations, enabling the agency to address diverse environmental challenges effectively. However, ongoing assessments of logistical needs and the integration of additional resources will be essential for further enhancing operational efficiency and ensuring the agency can accomplish its mandate to promote sustainable environmental governance in Liberia.

3.0 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Institutions, like individuals, have distinct sets of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, collectively known as a SWOT analysis.

1. Strengths and Weaknesses(Internal):

- ✦ **Strengths** are the institution's assets—capabilities and resources that differentiate it and help achieve its goals. The Agency plans to utilize these strengths to build a foundation for future initiatives that enhances the EPA goals and objectives.
- ✦ **Weaknesses** are liabilities or areas for improvement. The Agency is committed to rigorously addressing these to enhance performance.

2. Opportunities and Threats(External):

- ✦ **Opportunities** are potential advantages in the external environment that the Agency can exploit for growth and improvement. In a particular sense, the EPA can tap on the ESIA process and the Laws to enhance its capacity.
- ✦ **Threats** are challenges that arise from the external environment, which the Agency will carefully manage to mitigate risks.

The EPA operates within an environment influenced by various opportunities and threats. During the Retreat in 2024, a comprehensive environmental scan was conducted, resulting in a matrix highlighting these external factors.

In summary, this integrated approach equips the Agency with a clearer roadmap for strategic decision-making, ensuring that we build on our strengths, improve upon our weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate risks in our surroundings.

S	W	O	T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Good ESIA process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Limited inter-departmental collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Automation of EPA fees/licensing system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Overlaps of other institution mandate with the EPA's mandate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Capacity Building and merit-based promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ low salary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Cross-departmental/ inter agency collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Political factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Functioning Policy council and Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Logistical challenges due to limited funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Environmental Leadership development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Low budgetary allotment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Inclusive Stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ No appraisal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Introduce an annual staff recognition or reward program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Salary harmonization by central government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Effective reporting channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Low staff morale due to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Mentorship 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Standardized HR policy, quarterly and yearly reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Manual accounting, procurement and monitoring system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Integrated Financial Management System (Procurement, accounting, monitoring and evaluation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Professional growth (external training, workshops, suggestion and grievance boxes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Salary disparity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Increased revenue generation leads to increase salary to commensurate with staff qualification and functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Qualified professionals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Robust advocacy for increased GoL budgetary support to address logistical challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ enhanced Team spirit (working in unity) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Good Laws, Policies, Regulations 		

3.1 Stakeholders' 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, AFDB, CI, World Bank, 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

3.2 Strategic Plan Review

3.2.1 Analysis

The Strategic plan entitled “Strategic Plan: 2022 – 2026 Roadmap for the next five years”. The plan covers a period of five years: 2022-2026 and contains twenty (20) Strategic Objectives. The matrix below presents an assessment of accomplishments, comparing the actual achievements against the targets established for each objective.

3.3 Matrix: Strategic Plan Targets and Achievements

No	Objective	Target	Achievements
1	To strengthen Board of Directors and Policy Council	By 2026 these two governing bodies will become fully active in the operations of EPA.	Tasks under this objective haven't been achieved but there's 20% of task left for the remaining two years of the Strategic plan
2	To develop and implement effective personnel classification & appraisal systems	By 2024 the implementation of personnel classification would be improved and the appraisal system will be in full effect.	There has been significant achievement with this objective in regards to the development process of the appraisal system. The implementation part of this system a work in progress and the time frame for deliverance extends until December 2024
3	To develop and implement an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism	By 2024 mechanisms for alternative dispute resolutions would be developed and implemented.	There has been 0 achievement towards this objective. However, In regards to the workplan there is still room for implementation since the plan done by the responsible department has a timeframe until the end of 2024
4	To strengthen environmental reporting No. Key	In order to improve environmental reporting by 2025	This objective has had 75% not achieved and 25% with room and time to be achieved
5	To strengthen research, policy, and planning capacities to inform governance and	Enhancing planning, policy, and research capabilities to support governance and	The tasks under this objective were not achieved but with two more years to spare, there's still room for improvement

	management decision-making	management decision-making by 2026	
6	To house the EPA in its own modern, custom-designed, furnished headquarters	To have the EPA's own cutting-edge, specially furnished, and designed headquarters by 2025	This objective is partly achieved but it can't be completely achieved until the end of 2026
7			
8	To centralize institutional project management activities	To centralize by 2023, the operations of institutional project management	Tasks under this objective has not been achieved
9	To centralize institutional financial management activities	To achieve financial management activities within institutions being centralized by 2023	All the tasks under this objective have been achieved
10	To strengthen implementation capacity for internationally funded projects.	By 2026 the ability to conduct initiatives that are sponsored internationally will be increased	Tasks under this objective has not been achieved but however there's still time for implementation
11	To increase the understanding of government authorities of the environment and hence the importance, mandate, and roles of the EPA	By 2026 the level of awareness among government officials regarding the environment and, consequently, the significance, authority, and functions of the EPA will be raised	The tasks under this objective were partly achieved as of 2024 and with two years remaining for 50% of the task there is still room for achievement

12	To enhance understanding of the population of environmental issues and the importance, roles, and responsibilities of the EPA	By 2026, to improve knowledge of environmental challenges and the significance, functions, and duties of the EPA	Part achievement has been made in regards to this objective with 30% of the objective being carried on until 2026
13	To increase public awareness of and access to environmental information	Increasing public knowledge of environmental issues and providing access to it by 2026	This objective has been partly achieved. 12 % of the task was to be delivered by 2023 while 88% of it ought to be carried out until 2026
14	To strengthen field operations for monitoring of compliance	By 2026 the development of environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines will be fully carried out.	The tasks for this objective have been partly achieved and the timeline of this objective is 2026 therefore there's still room for growth
15	To strengthen the ESIA process	To improve the ESIA procedure by 2026	Part achievement was made in regards to this objective with tasks being carried on to 2025 and 2026
16	To ensure ISO accreditation of the monitoring & compliance laboratory	For the monitoring and compliance laboratory to be ISO recognized by 2026	Significant achievement has been made towards this objective and the timeframe for tasks under this objective is stretched out until December 2024. Therefore, there is still time for improvement
17	To strengthen Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements	By 2026, to make Liberia more compliant with international environmental accords	Objective not achieved but 50 percent of the tasks is meant to be carried out until 2025 and 2026
18	To effectively and efficiently manage international environmental projects designated to Liberia	To oversee international environmental projects assigned to Liberia by 2025 in an effective and efficient manner	Objectives not achieved but with 100 percent of the task end date is 2024 to 2026 therefore, there is still time for progress

19	To create and strengthen capacity for domestic resource generation	By 2026, to increase and fortify the agency’s ability to generate resources	Objectives not achieved as of year 3. However, 40% of the tasks are rolled over to year 4 and 5 hence, there is still room for achievement
20	To build capacity to mobilize external environmental resources	To increase one's ability to deploy outside environmental resources by 2026	16.6 % of the objective not achieved while 83.4% ought to be carried out from year 3 to year 5

3.3.1 Lessons Learned

- The Agency must clarify its status to effectively diversify its resources in alignment with its mandate and functions.
- The Agency cannot continue to depend solely on the financial support of the Government. It must diversify its resource base to attain financial sustainability.
- 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.
- 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.

3.3.2 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
- Clarify the Status of the Agency and take custody of your mandate and functions
- Construct EPA Headquarters and power it with clean energy
- 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
- Ensure the presence of EPA in regions and counties that you don't have offices
- 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

4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2025 – 2029

This Chapter details the strategic course the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has intentionally charted for the five-year period from 2025 to 2029. These strategies are grounded in the agency's core mandate, its long-term vision, and the specific challenges it faces in fulfilling its environmental responsibilities. Over the next five years, the EPA aims to significantly enhance its operational effectiveness through a holistic and targeted approach that addresses key areas vital to the agency's success.

The EPA's strategic directions encompass several interrelated goals. First, the agency seeks to **strengthen its governance and management structures** to ensure more effective oversight, decision-making, and accountability. This will involve refining the roles of leadership bodies, enhancing internal processes, and ensuring clear lines of responsibility across all levels of the organization. A key focus will be on clarifying the agency's institutional framework and aligning its functions with best practices in environmental governance.

Second, the EPA will work to **build and enhance its institutional capacity**, ensuring that it has the necessary human, financial, and technical resources to meet its environmental goals. This includes investing in staff development, improving infrastructure—such as the construction of a new headquarters—and ensuring that all EPA offices across Liberia are fully equipped and operational. A core part of this effort will be decentralizing the agency's operations to ensure more localized environmental governance, with trained personnel and modern technology available in all regions.

Another critical area is the **improvement of environmental information, education, and communication services**. By expanding its public outreach efforts and improving the dissemination of environmental data, the EPA seeks to raise awareness among the public, policymakers, and local governments. A better-informed public and government will be more capable of making decisions that support sustainable environmental practices. The EPA plans to use various media platforms and educational programs to engage communities across Liberia, with a particular focus on schools and local governments.

Furthermore, the agency is committed to **toughening its compliance and monitoring mechanisms**. This includes updating environmental standards, ensuring stricter enforcement of regulations, and expanding the capacity of its field operations. By deploying additional field staff and improving logistical support, the EPA aims to ensure that environmental regulations are effectively implemented

nationwide. Regular monitoring will be enhanced to ensure that environmental standards are upheld across all sectors, including mining, agriculture, waste management, and urban development.

International collaboration is also a priority. The EPA will work to **boost partnerships with the global environmental community** by strengthening Liberia's adherence to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and participating in international environmental forums. These efforts are aimed at aligning Liberia's environmental policies with global standards, improving knowledge exchange, and securing international support for environmental initiatives. The agency will also focus on fully integrating international agreements, such as those addressing climate change and biodiversity, into its national policies.

Finally, the EPA recognizes the need to **increase resource mobilization** to finance its ambitious plans. Given the financial constraints the agency faces, particularly from limited domestic funding, the EPA will pursue both domestic and external resource generation strategies. This includes lobbying for increased budgetary allocations from the government, establishing a National Climate Change Trust Fund, and exploring innovative financing mechanisms such as a green tax. At the same time, the agency will work to attract international funding through well-prepared project proposals and by demonstrating a track record of accountability and successful project management.

Together, these strategic directions form a cohesive plan aimed at transforming the EPA into a more effective, resilient, and responsive institution. By addressing key areas such as governance, capacity building, public engagement, compliance, international cooperation, and resource mobilization, the agency is well-positioned to lead Liberia towards a future of sustainable environmental governance and management. These efforts are not only designed to protect Liberia's natural resources but also to promote the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of its people, all while fulfilling Liberia's environmental commitments on the global stage.

4.1 PILLAR ONE: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Strategic Objective 1: Decentralization - Establish and operationalize EPA offices, committees, and laboratories in all 15 counties.

Context:

This initiative designed to enhance local capacity in environmental governance. Given the increasing challenges posed by environmental degradation, climate change, and unsustainable practices, this initiative aims to decentralize environmental management and empower counties to effectively address these issues at the local level. By creating dedicated EPA offices, local communities will be better equipped to monitor compliance with environmental regulations, promote sustainable practices, and engage stakeholders in meaningful dialogue about environmental stewardship.

The formation and operationalization of Environmental Committees in all counties serve as a complementary strategy to ensure community involvement in environmental governance. These committees will bring together a diverse range of stakeholders, fostering collaboration and leveraging local knowledge to tackle pressing environmental challenges. By equipping committee members with the necessary training and resources, the initiative seeks to create a network of informed individuals who can advocate for and implement sustainable practices within their communities.

Key Activities: Establish Fully Functional EPA Offices in Each County Capital:

Site Selection and Development: Identify and secure suitable locations in each county capital for the EPA offices. Construct or renovate buildings to meet the operational needs of the EPA, ensuring they are equipped with necessary facilities and powered by solar energy.

Staffing and Training: Recruit qualified staff for each office, including environmental officers, administrative support, and technical experts. Provide comprehensive training on environmental regulations, monitoring, and enforcement to ensure effective local governance.

Resource Allocation: Equip each office with the necessary resources, including vehicles, computers, communication tools, and environmental monitoring equipment. Ensure ongoing support and maintenance to keep operations running smoothly.

Expected Outcome:

Enhanced Local Capacity: The establishment of EPA offices will lead to improved local capacity for environmental governance, resulting in more effective monitoring of environmental regulations and quicker response to local environmental issues.

Informed Stakeholders: Training sessions for EPA staff and Environmental Committee members will result in a well-informed network of professionals and community representatives who understand environmental management principles and can implement them effectively.

County Environmental Committees: The formation of Environmental Committees will facilitate greater community engagement, ensuring that local voices are heard in decision-making processes. This inclusion will help to address environmental challenges in a manner that aligns with the needs and values of the community.

Sustainable Practices: With equipped and trained personnel, the initiative is expected to promote sustainable environmental practices at the local level, leading to improved environmental quality and resilience against climate change.

Clear Accountability Structures: The development of operational guidelines and regular reporting mechanisms will foster transparency and accountability within the Environmental Committees, ensuring that their activities are aligned with overall environmental objectives and local regulations.

Strategic Objective 2: Form and Operationalize Environmental Committees in All Counties

Context:

The formation and operationalization of Environmental Committees in all counties is a proactive strategy aimed at addressing the increasing environmental challenges faced at the local level. With diverse stakeholders such as government officials, community leaders, business representatives, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) coming together, these committees are designed to foster collaboration and collective action for effective environmental management. Acknowledging that environmental issues often vary from one locality to another, the committees will ensure that diverse perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes, thereby making responses more relevant and effective. This initiative also recognizes the importance of equipping committee members with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate complex environmental policies and community dynamics, ensuring the sustainable management of local resources.

Key Activities:

Committee Formation: Establish environmental committees comprising local stakeholders such as government officials, community leaders, business representatives, and NGOs. Ensure diverse representation to address local environmental issues comprehensively.

Training and Capacity Building: Provide training sessions and workshops to committee members on environmental management, policy implementation, community engagement, and conflict resolution. Equip them with the skills needed to effectively oversee local environmental initiatives.

Operational Guidelines: Develop and distribute clear guidelines and protocols for the committees to follow in their environmental oversight roles. Establish regular meeting schedules and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency.

Expected Outcome

The formation and operationalization of Environmental Committees will create a decentralized, participatory framework for environmental management at the local level, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of environmental efforts across all counties.

Strategic Objective 3: Set Up Four (4) Regional and One Central Research and Radiation Safety Laboratories

Context

The establishment of regional laboratories for environmental monitoring and testing is a critical initiative aimed at enhancing the country's capacity to assess and manage environmental quality. Strategic selection of laboratory locations will ensure comprehensive geographical coverage and accessibility, facilitating timely analysis of environmental samples across various regions. By equipping these laboratories with advanced monitoring and testing equipment, the initiative aims to provide reliable data on environmental conditions, which is essential for informed decision-making and accountability in environmental governance. Further, recruiting skilled technicians and scientists, coupled with structured training programs, will ensure that the laboratories operate at high standards of accuracy and operational efficiency. This initiative underscores the importance of scientific rigor in environmental management and seeks to foster collaboration with international entities to enhance local capabilities and knowledge.

Key Activities:

Laboratory Locations and Construction: Select strategic locations for the regional laboratories to ensure comprehensive coverage and accessibility across the country. Construct and equip the laboratories with advanced monitoring and testing equipment to analyze environmental samples effectively.

Staff Recruitment and Training: Hire skilled laboratory technicians and scientists. Provide ongoing training in modern analytical techniques, quality control, and compliance monitoring to ensure high standards of accuracy and reliability.

Operational Framework: Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for sample collection, analysis, and reporting. Establish partnerships with international laboratories and institutions for knowledge exchange and technical support.

Expected Outcome

The activities under this strategic activity aim to create a robust and efficient network of regional laboratories that will enhance the country's ability to monitor environmental quality, ensure compliance with regulations, and promote sustainable environmental practices.

Strategic Objective 4: Create a Centralized Environmental Registry

Context:

To respond to increasing environmental concerns and the need for improved data transparency, a series of activities need to be initiated to enhance the collection, integration, and dissemination of environmental data. The objective is to compile comprehensive data from diverse sources such as field reports, laboratory results, and community feedback, thereby creating a centralized database. This data would serve as a foundation for improved environmental monitoring and decision-making. Alongside data collection, the development of a user-friendly digital platform will be prioritized to ensure public access to the environmental registry. Recognizing the importance of public engagement, an awareness campaign will be designed to educate stakeholders on the availability of the registry and the benefits of utilizing this data for research and advocacy.

Key Activities:

Data Collection and Integration: Compile environmental data from various sources, including field reports, laboratory results, and community feedback, into a centralized database. Ensure data consistency, accuracy, and security.

Digital Platform Development: Develop an online platform to provide public access to the environmental registry. Ensure the platform is user-friendly, secure, and regularly updated with new data and findings from environmental assessments and monitoring activities.

Public Awareness and Access: Launch an awareness campaign to inform the public about the registry and how to access it. Provide training to stakeholders on using the platform for research, policy-making, and environmental advocacy.

Expected Outcome: These initiatives will contribute to enhancing environmental governance through improved data accessibility and community engagement.

Strategic Objective 5: Implement Digital Solutions for Administrative, Financial, and HR Processes

Context:

The compilation and integration of environmental data into a centralized database is essential for effective environmental management and informed decision-making. By gathering data from diverse sources such as field reports, laboratory analyses, and community feedback, this initiative aims to create a comprehensive and reliable repository of environmental information. Developing a user-friendly digital platform to host this environmental registry will facilitate public access to vital information, promoting transparency and stakeholder engagement. The project also recognizes the importance of public awareness and education regarding the registry, as well as the need for training stakeholders to utilize the platform effectively for research and advocacy purposes. This initiative is a

step towards fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry that can actively participate in environmental decision-making processes.

Key Activities:

Integrated Systems: Deploy integrated digital systems to manage administrative tasks, financial transactions, and human resources. Ensure these systems are secure, efficient, and user-friendly.

Staff Training and Support: Provide training to EPA staff on using the new digital systems. Offer ongoing technical support and resources to address any issues that arise.

Data Security and Compliance: Implement robust data security measures to protect sensitive information. Ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations and standards.

Expected Outcome

The aim to create a transparent and inclusive framework for environmental data management that engages the public, enhances collaboration among stakeholders, and supports effective environmental governance.

Strategic Objective 6: Functionalize the Environmental Knowledge Management System (EKMS)

Context:

The integration and management of environmental data into a centralized Environmental Knowledge Management System (EKMS) is crucial for enhancing data coherence and accessibility across environmental agencies. By consolidating data from a variety of sources, including monitoring programs, research studies, and community input, this initiative aims to create a robust repository that supports the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and stakeholders in understanding and addressing environmental challenges. Developing user-friendly interfaces for the EKMS will enable efficient access to information and foster collaboration among users. This system will facilitate decision-making through comprehensive tools for data analysis, visualization, and reporting. A commitment to continuous improvement through regular updates and user feedback will ensure that the EKMS remains relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of its users.

Key Activities:

Data Integration and Management: Integrate environmental data from various sources into a centralized EKMS. Ensure data is organized, searchable, and accessible to EPA staff and stakeholders.

User-Friendly Interfaces: Create intuitive interfaces for accessing and sharing environmental knowledge. Provide tools for data analysis, visualization, and reporting to support decision-making.

Continuous Improvement: Regularly update the EKMS with new data, findings, and technological advancements. Gather user feedback to improve system functionality and usability.

Expected Outcome

The outcome is to create a dynamic and efficient EKMS that serves as a vital resource for environmental data management, ultimately leading to improved environmental governance and more sustainable practices.

Strategic Objective 7: Operationalize a Safeguard Information System (SIS)**Context:**

The development and deployment of a Safeguard Information System (SIS) is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ability to monitor and manage environmental and social safeguards effectively. This system will be designed to integrate seamlessly with existing EPA databases and platforms, ensuring a comprehensive approach to data management and reporting. By implementing the SIS, the EPA seeks to improve its capacity for tracking compliance with environmental and social standards, facilitating timely and informed policymaking. Additionally, there is a recognized need to train EPA staff and stakeholders in utilizing the SIS, ensuring that the system is used effectively for accurate data entry and reporting.

Key Activities:

System Development and Deployment: Develop and deploy an SIS to monitor and report on environmental and social safeguards. Ensure the system integrates with existing EPA databases and platforms.

Training and Capacity Building: Train EPA staff and stakeholders on using the SIS for effective safeguard monitoring. Provide resources and support to ensure consistent and accurate data entry and reporting.

Compliance and Reporting: Use the SIS to track compliance with environmental and social standards. Generate regular reports to inform policy decisions and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders.

Expected Outcome

The expected outcome is to create a more accountable and responsive environmental governance framework, ensuring that social and environmental safeguards are effectively monitored and upheld.

Strategic Objective 8: Conduct and Implement Effective Personnel Classification and Appraisal Systems**Context:**

The current personnel classification within the agency is inadequate, partly due to the ambiguity surrounding the agency's institutional status. The EPA operates as a hybrid entity, functioning as both a regulatory body and a scientific institution, which has created challenges in appropriately classifying

employees. While salaries within the EPA are generally aligned with the broader civil service, this may not fully reflect the semi-scientific and technical expertise required by the agency's work. Reassessing the salary structure and classification system is essential for aligning compensation with the specific skills of employees, which will help retain skilled professionals and enhance career development opportunities. Moreover, there is no formal system for evaluating and rewarding employee performance, which limits the ability to appraise, recognize, and incentivize diligent staff. Without a structured appraisal system, the agency risks underutilizing its talent and failing to identify training needs. Implementing a robust classification and appraisal system will ensure clear job roles, transparent salary structures, and consistent performance evaluations, all of which are critical to boosting morale and fostering a high-performance culture.

Key Activities:**Undertake a Personnel Inventory:**

The first step is to conduct a detailed inventory of all current staff, collecting and analyzing data on their position, job description, qualifications (education, training, and experience), gender, age, and tenure with the agency. This inventory will provide a comprehensive overview of the agency's workforce and serve as the foundation for developing an appropriate classification system. Understanding the specific roles and expertise of employees will help ensure that the new classification system reflects the actual structure and functions within the EPA.

Study CSA and Other Classification Models:

The agency will review classification systems used by the Civil Service Agency (CSA) and other Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) in similar countries. By studying these models, EPA management can learn from international best practices and avoid common pitfalls. This review will provide insights into the structures used by other regulatory and scientific institutions to balance their staffing needs with fair compensation. These models will inform the creation of a customized system that fits the unique requirements of the EPA.

Provide Internal Orientation on Classification and Appraisal Schemes:

Once the personnel classification and appraisal systems are approved, the EPA will conduct orientation sessions for all employees. These sessions will explain the goals, objectives, and processes behind both systems, ensuring that staff fully understand how they will be classified and evaluated. The orientation will also clarify the implementation timelines and the mechanisms for seeking feedback and support. Employees will be encouraged to engage with the appraisal process by setting performance goals and identifying development opportunities. The agency will emphasize that the new systems are designed to create a more supportive and transparent work environment that rewards performance and fosters career advancement.

Conduct Classification Regime:

Based on the personnel inventory and the findings from the CSA and international models, the EPA will conduct a personal classification Appraisal. This system will categorize employees into appropriate grades and levels, with corresponding salary scales and benefits. Special attention will be given to aligning these classifications with the semi-scientific and technical nature of the EPA's work. If it is determined that the EPA should follow CSA guidelines, the classification regime will be harmonized accordingly. The new system will provide clarity in job roles, responsibilities, and career progression, ensuring transparency and fairness in how employees are classified and compensated.

Expected Outcome:

The outcome of this Strategic Objective is designed to create a more organized, efficient, and equitable workforce structure within the EPA, positioning the agency to attract and retain qualified personnel while fostering a culture of professionalism and accountability.

Strategic Objective 9: Develop and Implement an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanism**Context:**

In the field of environmental management, as in many other sectors, conflicts are inevitable. These disputes can vary widely in nature, from disagreements over resource use and land ownership to issues of compliance with environmental regulations. They also range in scale, from small local disputes to large, multi-stakeholder conflicts involving national or even international interests. One of the core responsibilities of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia is to ensure that such conflicts are addressed and resolved in a manner that is fair, transparent, timely, and amicable.

In some countries, dedicated environmental courts exist to handle disputes related to environmental matters. These courts offer specialized legal expertise and a judicial framework that ensures environmental concerns are adjudicated with appropriate urgency and technical understanding. However, establishing such courts in Liberia is a long-term objective. In the near term, the EPA aims to implement a more immediate and flexible solution to address these conflicts: the development and implementation of an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism.

This ADR system will provide a structured, less formal process for resolving environmental conflicts outside the traditional court system, helping to alleviate the strain on judicial resources while offering a faster and more cost-effective path to resolution. It will complement the EPA's existing administrative adjudication processes, providing an additional avenue through which disputes can be managed.

The goal of the ADR mechanism is to offer all stakeholders a clear and effective process for resolving conflicts, which will be particularly useful in a country like Liberia, where many environmental disputes arise from complex, long-standing issues related to land, resource use, and community rights. By offering an alternative to litigation, the EPA hopes to foster a more cooperative approach to dispute

resolution, enabling parties to resolve their differences in a manner that is less adversarial and more focused on finding mutually beneficial solutions.

Key Activities:**Study National Examples of ADR Mechanisms:**

The first step in developing an ADR system for Liberia is to analyze existing models of ADR within the country. Liberia has experience with ADR in other sectors, notably in land governance and management, where mechanisms have been developed to address land disputes without resorting to formal court proceedings. These national examples provide a wealth of practical experience and lessons that can be applied to the environmental sector. The EPA will examine these examples closely to understand their principles, operational structures, and processes. This study will help the agency identify what works well and what can be adapted to the specific context of environmental disputes. Additionally, this review will help the EPA identify the strengths and limitations of existing ADR frameworks in Liberia, providing a foundation for building a robust environmental ADR mechanism.

Undertake Benchmarking Studies of International ADR Mechanisms:

Beyond national models, the EPA will look to international examples of ADR mechanisms, particularly from countries that have successfully implemented such systems in the environmental sector. Several African countries, as well as nations in other parts of the world, have developed ADR processes tailored to their environmental governance needs. These countries have used ADR to handle disputes related to resource allocation, environmental impact assessments, pollution control, and more. The EPA will conduct benchmarking studies to analyse the principles, structures, processes, and lessons learned from these international examples. By studying the experiences of other nations, particularly those with similar legal and environmental challenges, the EPA can ensure that Liberia's ADR mechanism is informed by best practices and is designed to avoid common pitfalls. This will also involve engaging with experts in ADR and environmental governance from these countries to understand the complexities of implementing and managing ADR in an environmental context.

Develop a Sector-Specific ADR Mechanism:

With insights from both national and international studies, the EPA will proceed to develop a sector-specific ADR mechanism tailored to Liberia's environmental landscape. This mechanism will be designed to address the unique challenges of environmental disputes in Liberia, particularly those involving land use, natural resource management, pollution, and community rights. The ADR mechanism will provide a clear, structured process that parties can follow to resolve disputes without resorting to lengthy and costly litigation. It will offer flexibility in its approach, allowing disputes to be resolved through mediation, arbitration, or other ADR processes, depending on the nature of the conflict. This mechanism will serve as a bridge between informal dispute resolution and formal court proceedings, offering a

step short of litigation that still provides a formalized structure for resolving environmental issues. It will be backed by clear procedures and guidelines to ensure consistency and fairness across cases.

Strengthen the Grievance Desk:

As part of the broader effort to implement the ADR mechanism, the EPA will enhance its existing Grievance Desk, which currently serves as a point of contact for individuals and organizations to submit complaints and grievances related to environmental matters. The strengthened Grievance Desk will play a critical role in supporting the ADR process by acting as the first point of entry for disputes. It will be staffed with trained personnel who can guide complainants through the administrative adjudication and ADR processes. These staff members will provide information on how to file grievances, the steps involved in the ADR process, and what outcomes parties can expect. Additionally, the Grievance Desk will offer assistance in navigating disputes, advising stakeholders on the most appropriate resolution pathways based on the nature of the conflict. By offering clear guidance and support, the Grievance Desk will ensure that the ADR mechanism is accessible and user-friendly, particularly for those in rural areas or with limited resources.

Expected Outcomes

By developing and implementing an ADR mechanism, the EPA aims to achieve quicker and more cost-effective conflict resolution, fostering cooperation through mediation. This approach will improve access to justice, especially for marginalized communities, and increase trust in the EPA's processes by ensuring transparency and fairness in handling disputes.

Strategic Objective 10: Enhance the operational capacity and coordination of the EPA

Context:

To establish and strengthen the Legal Unit emerged from the growing challenges in enforcing environmental regulations and addressing complex legal issues related to environmental protection. To effectively tackle these challenges, it was essential to enhance the legal team's capacity, ensure access to necessary resources, and improve the overall legal framework governing environmental policies. The activities aimed to build a robust and informed legal unit capable of effectively addressing the increasing demand for environmental law enforcement and advocacy.

Key Activities: Strengthen the EPA's Legal Unit:

Capacity Building: Provide specialized training to legal staff on environmental law, enforcement, and litigation. Develop a continuous learning program to keep the legal team updated on new regulations and international best practices.

Resource Allocation: Ensure the legal unit has access to necessary resources, including legal databases, research tools, and administrative support.

Policy Development and Advocacy: Support the development and revision of environmental regulations and policies. Advocate for stronger legal frameworks to enhance environmental protection and enforcement.

Expected Outcome

The above listed activities will significantly strengthen the EPA's Legal Unit, enhancing its capability to enforce environmental laws, advocate for policy improvements, and ultimately contribute to more robust environmental protection efforts.

Strategic Objective 11: Strengthen Environmental Reporting

Context:

Effective governance and decision-making at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require accurate, reliable, and timely information. There are two critical types of reporting obligations that must be met.

First, internal reporting is essential to track and summarize the agency's activities at the Head Office, regional, and county levels. Currently, internal reporting lacks a cohesive system for consolidating and analyzing data, which hinders management and policy decisions. A robust Management Information System (MIS) is required to support these functions.

Second, the EPA must accomplish its international reporting obligations, which include the preparation of periodic reports for the global environmental community. One of the most critical of these is **the State of the Environment Report (SoER)**, which is a comprehensive assessment required from all nations every five years. Additionally, other reports, such as climate change updates required every two years, are often delayed due to insufficient internal systems. Meeting these international reporting requirements is vital for Liberia's compliance with global environmental agreements.

Key Activities:

Develop a Management Information System (MIS):

Create an EPA-specific MIS that integrates data and information required for decision-making. This system will define data sources, procedures for collection, methods for processing and storage, and ensure easy access to relevant information. The MIS will serve as the backbone for both internal and international reporting.

Strengthen Internal Reporting:

With the support of the MIS, implement an internal reporting system that consolidates data from various departments. Streamlined quarterly reports will be developed and consolidated by the Planning Department for management's use. These consolidated reports will provide summarized insights for regular board or council meetings to inform decision-making.

Address International Environmental Reporting Challenges:

Prioritize the timely production of the State of the *Environment Report (SoER)*, *Biannual Transparency Report*, *National Communication* and other required reports, such as those focused on climate change. Small, focused work teams will be assigned to manage report development, adhere to schedules, and ensure thorough monitoring and follow-up processes. Where necessary, independent consultants will be engaged to provide additional support in developing these reports to meet international standards.

Incorporate Reporting Elements from Other Sectors:

Develop a comprehensive reporting system that incorporates data from other key sectors, such as the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Ministry of Internal Affairs and municipal bodies like the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC). This inter-sectoral coordination will ensure that reports are reflective of the broader environmental activities and challenges across Liberia.

Expected Outcome

The establishment of a comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) will enhance EPA's capacity to gather, store, and analyze data, enabling more efficient internal operations and better-informed decision-making.

A strengthened internal reporting structure will ensure that management and policy makers receive regular, consolidated updates on EPA's activities, allowing for improved governance and strategic planning. Timely completion of international reports, such as the State of the Environment Report (SoER), Biannual Transparency Report, National Communication and others will ensure Liberia remains compliant with global environmental reporting requirements, enhancing its standing within the international community.

Improved inter-sectoral reporting will result in a more integrated and holistic approach to environmental management across Liberia, incorporating input from key national institutions and sectors, leading to better coordinated national environmental strategies.

Strategic Objective 12: Strengthening Research, Policy, and Planning Capacities to Support Governance and Decision-Making

Context:

Research plays a pivotal role in any institution, providing the evidence-based information and data needed to guide policy-making and management decisions. Effective research enables institutions to monitor and evaluate their operations, identify areas for improvement, and ensure informed governance. However, the EPA's current research capacity is narrowly focused on scientific

investigations, leaving gaps in policy-related research that could inform non-scientific environmental issues.

Similarly, planning is a core function of institutional management, essential for setting priorities, defining objectives, and guiding the execution of strategic goals. Unfortunately, the EPA's planning function is underdeveloped, lacking the necessary tools and frameworks to support effective decision-making. Moreover, there is no dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit to assess the effectiveness of the agency's projects and programs. To enhance the EPA's governance and management capacities, it is critical to expand research functions, establish M&E capabilities, and strengthen planning mechanisms.

Key Activities:

Establish a Research Unit:

The EPA will create a research unit within the Department of Policy and Planning, which will be renamed the Department of Research, Policy, and Planning. This new unit will consist of two specialized teams:

- One team focused on scientific research, conducting investigations into environmental issues and producing data-driven insights.
- A second team dedicated to non-scientific research, focusing on policy-related issues and governance frameworks that affect environmental decision-making.

Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit:

A dedicated M&E unit will be set up within the Department of Research, Policy, and Planning. This unit will be responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of all EPA projects and programs, including those supported by international donors. The M&E unit will ensure that the agency's operations align with its strategic objectives and will help assess the impact of programs to guide future decision-making.

Strengthen Policy Analysis Capabilities:

The EPA will invest in building the policy analysis skills of its staff. Policy-making involves examining complex situations and designing solutions that guide administrative actions, set strategic goals, and hold responsible actors accountable. Staff training in environmental policy analysis will be provided, enabling the department to better study, interpret, and respond to emerging environmental challenges in both the public and private sectors.

Strengthen Institutional Planning Capabilities:

Planning involves forward-thinking, goal-setting, and aligning resources with institutional priorities. To enhance these capabilities, the EPA will expand the skills of its planning staff through targeted training

and development programs. This will include creating comprehensive Annual Agency Work Plans that align with both the EPA's Strategic Plan and ongoing national and international environmental concerns.

Establish Partnerships with Learning and Research Institutions:

To bolster the agency's research capabilities, the EPA will establish formal partnerships with local and international colleges, universities, and research institutions. These collaborations will provide opportunities for networking, capacity building, and collaborative research projects, enabling the EPA to access the latest scientific and policy-related expertise.

Expected Outcome

Expanded Research Capacity: The establishment of a research unit will allow the EPA to generate and utilize a broader range of data—both scientific and policy-related—thus improving decision-making processes across the agency.

Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation: The creation of the M&E unit will ensure that all EPA projects are effectively tracked and evaluated, helping the agency to measure its success, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

Improved Policy Formulation: Strengthening policy analysis capabilities will enable the EPA to develop more effective and informed environmental policies that are responsive to Liberia's socio-economic and environmental needs.

Increased Institutional Effectiveness: By improving planning skills, the EPA will be better equipped to set achievable goals, develop action plans, and allocate resources efficiently, ultimately leading to better implementation of its strategic objectives.

Collaborative Research Networks: Partnerships with academic and research institutions will provide the EPA with access to new research, expertise, and innovative approaches to environmental management, further enhancing its ability to address pressing environmental challenges.

4.2 PILLAR TWO: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Strategic Objective 1: To House the EPA in Its Own Modern, Custom-Designed, Furnished Headquarters

Context:

The head office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is strategically located to provide easy access to organizations and institutions in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. This advantageous position allows for efficient collaboration and communication with governmental entities, NGOs, and international partners. However, the current building does not meet the operational needs of the agency. Originally constructed for a different purpose, it lacks the essential characteristics of a modern office environment.

The existing facility offers limited office space, resulting in overcrowded working conditions that hinder productivity. Crucially, it cannot accommodate specialized functions, such as a fully equipped central laboratory necessary for conducting environmental research and monitoring activities. In response to these deficiencies, the EPA has been renting an annex for additional office space, further complicating operational logistics and diminishing overall efficiency. Furthermore, the office and conference rooms are cramped, and the parking facilities are inadequate, creating challenges for both staff and visitors.

To address these pressing issues and provide a suitable working environment for its staff, the EPA has engaged in a lease agreement with a private property owner. This arrangement allows the agency to operate effectively while preparations are underway for the construction of a new, environmentally sustainable headquarters, known as the EPA Green Building. This initiative is not merely a relocation; it represents a significant investment in the future capabilities of the EPA, ensuring that it can effectively fulfil its mandate to protect and manage Liberia's environmental resources.

Key Activities:

Land Acquisition:

The EPA of Liberia will initiate the process of land acquisition by identifying and purchasing a suitable plot of land in its name. The land will serve the specific purpose of building the EPA Headquarters, facilitating the agency's mission to protect the environment and promote sustainable development in Liberia.

Soil Testing:

Conduct soil testing to inform architectural design, particularly regarding the vertical reach of the main building.

Develop Architectural Design:

Prepare a preliminary custom-designed structure that accommodates all necessary activities at the EPA headquarters. The facility will include a main building and annexes, featuring executive and staff offices, waiting rooms, small and large conference rooms, a training center, a resource center, a central laboratory with storage, warehouses, kitchenettes, canteens, a mini-residence for local and international guests, and adequate parking space. The design will also include a detailed cost analysis for furnishing, equipping, and civil engineering supervision.

Obtain Regulatory Approvals:

After completing the architectural design, secure the relevant regulatory approvals from the Ministry of Public Works concerning the design and location of the building to ensure compliance with zoning and appropriateness standards.

Undertake Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA):

Conduct an ESIA in accordance with the agency's regulations. This assessment will be performed by an independent assessor recognized by the agency to ensure objectivity and integrity in the process.

Mobilize Requisite Funding:

Upon receiving all necessary regulatory approvals, mobilize the required funding for the construction, furnishing, and equipping of the new building and ancillary facilities. Potential funding sources include the Government of Liberia, the agency's own resources, and grants from environmental multilateral partners. Additionally, a loan from a consortium of banks, guaranteed by the Central Bank of Liberia, will also be explored.

Hire Civil Engineering Consultant:

Engage a registered private sector civil engineer to act as the supervisory consultant for the construction project. This consultant will be responsible for ensuring that the construction adheres to the architectural specifications approved by both the EPA and the Ministry of Public Works.

Hire Construction Company:

Select a registered construction company to undertake the building process. This company will collaborate closely with the architect and the supervising civil engineer representing the EPA, and if necessary, with the Ministry of Public Works representing the Government of Liberia.

Expected Outcomes

Enhanced Operational Capacity: The establishment of a modern, custom-designed headquarters will significantly enhance the EPA's operational efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate.

Improved Working Environment: The new facility will provide adequate office space and modern amenities, promoting a conducive working environment for EPA staff.

Increased Public Engagement: The upgraded infrastructure will enable the EPA to host training sessions, workshops, and public engagements more effectively, fostering greater interaction with stakeholders.

Strengthened Institutional Identity: A dedicated headquarters will reinforce the EPA's identity and presence as a leading environmental governance institution in Liberia, enhancing its credibility and authority.

Sustainable Practices: The construction of a green building will set a precedent for sustainable architecture in Liberia, showcasing the agency's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Strategic Objective 2: Enhance Human Capital and Increase Retention of Professional and Technical Staff

Context:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia currently employs several competent professionals who bring valuable skills and expertise to the agency. However, there remains a critical shortage of qualified professionals and technicians across various environmental sectors. This gap results in insufficient capacity to tackle the diverse and complex challenges associated with environmental governance and management. Moreover, the agency lacks a balanced mix of professional and technical skills, which further impedes its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate.

In addition to these staffing deficiencies, the agency's existing incentive structure is inadequate to attract and retain skilled professionals. The low level of incentives has contributed to an increase in staff attrition, as employees often seek better opportunities elsewhere. This trend not only affects operational continuity but also undermines the agency's institutional knowledge and capability to implement environmental programs effectively. Therefore, addressing these staffing challenges is paramount to enhancing the EPA's operational capacity and overall effectiveness.

Key Activities:

Undertake a Comprehensive Manpower Needs Assessment:

To identify gaps and requirements in professional and technical staffing configurations, the EPA will conduct a thorough manpower needs assessment. This assessment will encompass all levels of the agency, including headquarters, regional offices, and county offices. An independent professional will be commissioned to carry out this assessment, ensuring that the findings are unbiased and credible. The assessment will focus on analyzing current staffing levels, identifying key skill shortages, and determining the specific qualifications necessary for each role within the agency. The results will serve as a foundation for developing targeted recruitment and training strategies.

Prepare a Detailed Human Capital Development Program:

Building upon the outcomes of the manpower needs assessment, the agency will design a comprehensive human capital development program. This program will outline specific strategies aimed at addressing identified skill gaps and fostering professional growth within the agency. It will be disaggregated into short-term, medium-term, and long-term initiatives to ensure a phased approach to capacity building. Special emphasis will be placed on gender-sensitive initiatives to promote inclusivity and diversity within the workforce. The program will also include mentorship opportunities, training workshops, and professional development courses tailored to the needs of the staff.

Mobilize Resources and Implement the Human Capital Development Program:

Effective implementation of the human capital development program will require strategic resource mobilization. The agency will actively seek funding and support from various sources, including government budget allocations, international grants, and partnerships with academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. Short, medium, and long-term commitments will be pursued in the form of direct financial allocations for training, scholarships for further education, and personnel attachments to other organizations for knowledge exchange. The implementation process will be meticulous, involving regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that resources are being utilized effectively and that the program remains aligned with the agency's strategic goals.

Develop a Transparent and Fair Incentive Regime:

To enhance staff retention, the EPA will establish a transparent and equitable incentive regime designed to attract and retain competent professionals. This regime will be informed by the newly developed personnel classification system, which will ensure that salaries and benefits are competitive and commensurate with the qualifications and responsibilities of the staff. The incentive program will encompass various benefits, including housing and transportation allowances, communication scratch cards, generous paid leave policies, health insurance, and opportunities for professional development. By creating an environment where staff feel valued and rewarded for their contributions, the agency aims to foster loyalty and commitment among its workforce.

Expected Outcomes:

Increased Capacity of the Workforce: The implementation of this strategic objective is anticipated to result in a significant increase in the number of qualified professional and technical staff within the EPA. This enhancement will directly improve the agency's capacity to address a wide range of environmental concerns effectively, including policy development, compliance monitoring, and public outreach.

Improved Staff Retention Rates: With the introduction of a robust incentive regime, the EPA expects to see a marked decrease in staff attrition rates. Employees will be less likely to seek opportunities

outside the agency when they feel their contributions are recognized and compensated fairly, leading to a more stable and experienced workforce.

Enhanced Professional Development Opportunities: The establishment of a comprehensive human capital development program will provide employees with numerous opportunities for skill enhancement and career advancement. This commitment to ongoing education and professional growth will cultivate a culture of continuous improvement within the agency.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Workforce: A more diverse workforce, particularly one that is gender-sensitive, will be achieved through targeted recruitment and development efforts. By promoting diversity, the agency will benefit from a broader range of perspectives and ideas, which can enhance problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Strengthened Organizational Performance: Ultimately, the expected outcomes of this strategic objective will contribute to a strengthened organizational performance within the EPA. With a capable, motivated, and diverse workforce, the agency will be better positioned to fulfil its environmental governance objectives and respond effectively to the needs of the communities it serves.

Increased Public Trust and Credibility: As the EPA becomes known for its skilled workforce and effective governance practices, public trust and credibility in the agency's capabilities will grow. This enhanced reputation can lead to stronger community engagement and cooperation, further advancing the agency's environmental goals.

Strategic Objective 3: Centralize Institutional Project Management Activities

Context:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently manages numerous projects across various sectors, but these initiatives are often executed in silos, leading to limited information sharing and collaboration among departments. This fragmented approach hinders the agency's ability to achieve synergy in programming and institutional learning, ultimately impacting project outcomes. Given the increasing focus on environmental sustainability and the need for effective project execution, the agency aims to establish a centralized project management system to improve efficiency and accountability.

Key Activities:

Establish a Centralized Project Management Unit (PMU):

A Centralized Project Management Unit will be created to oversee all project activities, including planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. The PMU will prepare comprehensive project proposals and assemble interdisciplinary teams for each project, fostering collaboration and maintaining regular communication with management and staff through structured reporting mechanisms.

Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff:

The PMU will be organized with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, ensuring it is staffed with qualified professionals skilled in project management. The recruitment process will emphasize transparency and fairness, prioritizing internal candidates while also considering external expertise when necessary.

Expected Outcomes:

Improved Project Coordination and Efficiency: A centralized PMU will streamline project management, leading to more effective resource use and timely project completion aligned with strategic goals.

Enhanced Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: Bringing together professionals from various departments will foster teamwork and promote the exchange of best practices, resulting in better project outcomes.

Strengthened Institutional Learning and Capacity Building: Consistent project monitoring and evaluation will facilitate institutional learning, allowing the EPA to refine its practices and identify training needs for ongoing capacity development.

Increased Accountability and Transparency: Standardized reporting mechanisms will improve internal accountability and enhance the EPA's credibility with external partners and donors.

Alignment with National Development Goals: Centralized project management will ensure that all initiatives align with Liberia's national development objectives, contributing to sustainable economic growth and improved environmental governance.

Enhanced International Collaboration and Funding Opportunities: A professional and centralized project management approach will position the EPA as a reliable partner for international organizations, facilitating access to funding and technical assistance.

Strategic Objective 4: Centralize Institutional Financial Management Activities**Context:**

The EPA currently operates under a fragmented financial management system. Financial activities are divided between the agency's routine financial operations and the financial management of externally funded projects, which are often handled by third-party managers like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This dual financial accounting system causes inconsistencies, with external project finances not always being accurately reflected in the agency's overall financial records. To improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability, the agency needs to consolidate all financial activities into a centralized Financial Management Unit (FMU).

Key Activities:

Establish a Centralized Financial Management Unit:

A centralized FMU will be created to oversee all aspects of financial planning, programming, and accounting. This unit will be responsible for managing the agency's entire financial workflow, from budgeting to expenditure tracking, ensuring that financial operations across all departments and projects adhere to international financial management and accounting standards.

Operational guidelines will be developed and institutionalized to ensure that the FMU functions efficiently, meeting both national and international compliance standards.

Staff Rationalization: Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff

The FMU will be carefully structured, with clear job descriptions and specifications created for key positions. It will consist of subunits dedicated to specific financial functions: one will focus on financial planning and budgeting, while another will handle financial accounting, including the accounting for both internal operations and externally sponsored projects.

Recruitment will prioritize transparency and fairness. The agency will give priority to internal candidates who demonstrate the required qualifications, skills, and experience in financial management. External recruitment will target professionals with expertise in accounting, financial management, and donor-funded project oversight.

Expected Outcome: The centralization of the EPA's financial management will lead to greater financial transparency and accountability, with all financial data being consolidated into a single, organized system. The FMU will streamline financial operations, ensuring that both internal funds and external project finances are managed effectively, reducing discrepancies and improving reporting accuracy. This restructuring will also enhance the agency's ability to meet international standards, improve financial oversight, and foster greater confidence among stakeholders, including government and international donors.

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Implementation Capacity for Internationally Funded Projects**Context:**

Due to low institutional capacity, many internationally funded projects in Liberia are currently managed by external organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). While this ensures effective project execution, the management fees involved reduce the funds available for operational and management activities that could otherwise benefit the EPA directly. It is therefore essential for the EPA to develop the internal capacity to manage these projects independently, demonstrating to international funding partners that the agency possesses the necessary professional, technical, and financial management skills to effectively oversee and execute sponsored projects.

Key Activities:**Develop and Solicit a Technical Assistance Program:**

The EPA will create a comprehensive technical assistance program aimed at building institutional capacity in key areas such as project management, financial management, and specialized environmental fields like climate change mitigation, chemicals management, and solid waste management.

The agency will actively seek technical assistance resources from multilateral environmental agreement partners and other relevant stakeholders to ensure these capacities are strengthened.

Establish Twinning Relationships with Advanced Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs):

- The EPA will develop partnerships with one or two advanced EPAs that can provide ongoing mentorship and training for EPA-Liberia staff.
- These twinning arrangements will involve seconding experienced professionals and technicians from the partner agencies to work in Liberia for a few years, helping to transfer knowledge and skills in critical areas of environmental governance.

Establish a Study Tour Program:

- A study tour program will be launched, allowing EPA staff to visit countries with successful environmental programs.
- This program will provide opportunities for professionals and technicians to gain exposure to international best practices and innovations in environmental governance, project management, and technical areas of interest.

Forge Partnerships with Research Institutions:

- The EPA will seek partnerships with both national and international research institutions to collaborate on environmental research projects in Liberia.
- These collaborations will lead to the production of scientific research papers published in peer-reviewed journals, contributing to the global environmental knowledge base and strengthening EPA's institutional learning and research capabilities.

Enhance Technological Capabilities:

- The EPA will investigate and adopt modern technological solutions, such as the use of low-cost drones for environmental monitoring in remote areas.
- The agency will prioritize the rapid acquisition and deployment of relevant hardware and software to improve operational efficiency at both the central and regional levels, ensuring that technological innovations support field operations and project management.

Expected Outcome

The implementation of these activities will significantly enhance the EPA internal capacity to manage internationally funded projects independently. The agency will be able to demonstrate to international partners that it has the necessary expertise in project and financial management, along with specialized knowledge in key environmental areas. This increased capacity will reduce reliance on external agencies like the UNDP and allow more funds to be directed towards critical environmental initiatives in Liberia. As a result, the EPA will improve its reputation and standing within the international environmental community, while also achieving greater operational efficiency and impact in managing environmental projects across Liberia.

4.3 PILLAR THREE: INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION (IEC) SERVICES

Strategic Objective 1: Enhance Government Authorities' Understanding of Environmental Issues and the EPA's Role

Context:

As a relatively new institution within the Liberian government, the EPA is not yet widely understood by key government authorities. Many decision-makers lack a deep understanding of the EPA's mandate, its critical role in environmental governance, and how environmental issues are linked to broader human development objectives. This gap in knowledge is particularly concerning given the growing global focus on environmental challenges like climate change. It is essential for policymakers, legislators, and local governments to grasp the importance of environmental sustainability and the EPA's role in addressing these challenges. By improving their understanding, the EPA can foster greater collaboration and support for environmental initiatives, ultimately strengthening national environmental governance.

Key Activities:

Engage the Cabinet:

The EPA will organize an executive-level workshop specifically for Cabinet members to educate them on the critical link between environmental sustainability and national development. This workshop will highlight the EPA's mandate, functions, and activities, demonstrating how the agency's work aligns with Liberia's broader development goals. The Cabinet's enhanced understanding of the EPA's role will help integrate environmental concerns into higher-level policy discussions.

Engage the Legislature:

The EPA will work with the two standing committees in the Legislature—the House and the Senate—that oversee environmental matters. Specialized workshops will be organized for both committees to provide lawmakers with in-depth knowledge of environmental issues, particularly climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable resource management. These workshops will emphasize how the environment impacts national development and the EPA's critical role in addressing these issues. This engagement is intended to secure stronger legislative backing for environmental laws and policies.

Engage the Judiciary:

The judiciary plays a crucial role in enforcing environmental laws. The EPA will conduct a series of workshops aimed at educating judges and legal practitioners about environmental governance, the EPA's mandate, and the link between environmental protection and socio-economic development. This

engagement will strengthen the judiciary's ability to handle environmental cases effectively and ensure that environmental laws are upheld.

Engage Local Governments:

In collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the EPA will conduct workshops for local government authorities across Liberia. These sessions will help local officials understand how environmental management contributes to community development, public health, and economic prosperity. By enhancing local governments' knowledge of environmental issues and the EPA's role, the agency aims to foster stronger environmental governance at the regional and local levels. Local authorities will be empowered to implement and enforce environmental policies more effectively within their jurisdictions.

Expected Long-Term Impact:

With increased understanding and support from government authorities at all levels, the EPA will be better positioned to implement its policies, achieve higher compliance with environmental regulations, and drive sustainable development initiatives across Liberia. This will contribute to more coordinated and effective environmental governance, leading to improved environmental outcomes, resilience to climate change, and enhanced quality of life for Liberian citizens.

Expected Outcome:

Government authorities, including cabinet members, legislators, the judiciary, and local governments, will have a clearer understanding of environmental issues, their impact on national development, and the EPA's mandate. This increased awareness will lead to stronger policy support for environmental initiatives, improved inter-agency cooperation, and enhanced commitment to sustainable development goals across all levels of government. The outcome will also result in more informed decision-making that integrates environmental considerations into national policies and development plans.

Strategic Objective 2: To Enhance Public Understanding of Environmental Issues and the Roles and Responsibilities of the EPA

Context:

There is a widespread lack of understanding among the general population regarding environmental issues and the critical roles and responsibilities of the EPA. This gap in knowledge impacts all levels of society, from individuals to institutions. The public, as well as many key stakeholders, have limited awareness of how environmental protection relates to socio-economic development. Many do not fully grasp the direct link between environmental sustainability and their own well-being, economic prosperity, and future development.

Currently, the EPA's efforts to raise awareness are constrained by insufficient resources, with only one media officer managing public communication. The magnitude of the challenge requires a far more comprehensive and sustained information, education, and communication (IEC) program to effectively address the public's understanding and engagement in environmental issues. Therefore, the EPA must take significant steps to elevate the population's awareness and ensure its mandate and activities are widely understood and supported.

Key Activities:

Establish a Communications Unit:

The EPA will create a dedicated Communications Unit tasked with managing an ongoing IEC program. This unit will work in close collaboration with other departments and will be responsible for handling public outreach, media relations, and strategic communication. By positioning this unit within the Office of the Executive Director, it will have high-level oversight and alignment with the agency's strategic goals. The unit will ensure that all communication initiatives are consistent, well-coordinated, and effectively target different segments of society.

Revise and Implement the Communications Strategy:

The EPA's communications strategy will be thoroughly revised and expanded to increase public awareness of the agency's mandate and the critical link between environmental health and development. This revised strategy will focus on raising the general population's understanding of how environmental degradation affects economic growth, public health, and overall societal well-being. The goal is to encourage communities, institutions, and individuals to take active roles in environmental protection. The communications strategy will also address media relations, ensuring that key environmental issues and EPA's initiatives receive consistent and accurate coverage.

Enhance Environmental Education in Schools:

To cultivate early awareness and long-term behavioural change, the EPA will partner with the Ministry of Education to enhance environmental education in schools. This initiative will include establishing Environment Clubs in high schools, similar to past efforts in agricultural education. These clubs will help students develop a deeper appreciation for their local environment, engage them in sustainability practices, and foster respect for natural resources. Additionally, the EPA will organize competitions between schools on environmental themes, encouraging creativity and engagement in protecting the environment. Through these efforts, students will become ambassadors of environmental awareness within their families and communities.

Engage Media Institutions:

The EPA will build long-term partnerships with media institutions to promote consistent and accurate reporting on environmental issues. Journalists will be provided with training and resources to effectively

communicate complex environmental concepts to the general public. By building media capacity, the EPA will ensure that environmental concerns receive regular attention in news outlets, and the population remains informed about key developments in environmental policy, compliance, and conservation efforts.

Promote Environmental Activities Across Various Sectors:

The EPA will actively engage key sectors such as Health, Water and Sanitation, Manufacturing, Forestry, and Mining to integrate environmental sustainability into their operations. Tailored IEC programs will be developed for each sector, focusing on promoting sustainable practices and reducing their environmental footprint. The EPA will organize sector-specific exhibitions showcasing eco-friendly innovations and best practices. These initiatives aim to embed environmental responsibility into the core of each sector's activities, fostering a culture of sustainability across industries.

Targeted IEC Services for Specific Publics:

Recognizing that different segments of the population have unique informational needs, the EPA will implement targeted IEC campaigns tailored to specific groups such as teachers, students, marketers, petty traders, and commercial drivers. A mix of multimedia outreach—including audio-visual publicity materials, social media campaigns, and community radio broadcasts—will be used to reach these groups effectively. Each campaign will be designed to educate the targeted audience on the environmental issues most relevant to their daily lives and work, aiming to change their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) toward the environment in a positive and lasting way.

Expected Outcome

By implementing this strategic objective, the EPA anticipates increased public awareness of its mandate and the importance of environmental health to socio-economic development. The population will become more informed and capable of making environmentally responsible decisions. Environmental education in schools will be strengthened, fostering a generation of sustainability-conscious citizens. Media engagement on environmental issues will rise, ensuring wider coverage. Various sectors will collaborate more on eco-friendly practices, resulting in reduced environmental degradation. Overall, public behaviour will shift towards better waste management, pollution reduction, and stronger community involvement in conservation efforts.

Strategic Objective 3: To Increase Public Awareness of and Access to Environmental Information

Context:

There exists a significant gap in public knowledge regarding environmental issues, coupled with limited access to relevant information. To foster a more informed citizenry, it is essential to provide reliable and timely environmental information to the public. This necessitates that such information is well-organized, securely stored, and readily accessible through various means on a sustained basis.

Moreover, to remain relevant and effective, this information must be periodically updated to reflect current environmental conditions and developments.

Key Activities:**Employ All Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Vehicles:**

A comprehensive mapping of all available IEC channels will be conducted to ensure that the public has access to environmental information. This includes utilizing a diverse array of IEC instruments such as radio stations, television networks, newspapers, billboards, social media platforms, and community radio stations, particularly in rural areas. By strategically leveraging these mediums, the EPA aims to disseminate vital environmental information effectively and widely, enhancing public awareness.

Direct Public to the EPA Website and Resource Libraries:

The public will be actively directed to the EPA's official website and its resource libraries, located at the head office and throughout the counties. These platforms will serve as centralized repositories for environmental awareness and educational materials, ensuring that citizens can easily access crucial information regarding environmental protection, regulations, and initiatives.

Transmit IEC Messages in Simple Liberian English:

To promote better understanding among the populace, IEC messages will be communicated in simple Liberian English. This will be achieved through the use of jingles, flyers, and promotional materials designed to convey essential information about environmental issues and the roles and responsibilities of the EPA in a clear and accessible manner.

Transmit IEC Messages in Local Languages:

To further enhance comprehension and engagement, IEC messages will be translated and transmitted in local languages that are predominant in specific counties. Utilizing jingles, flyers, and promotional materials in these languages will ensure that the information resonates with local communities, thereby fostering greater awareness and involvement in environmental initiatives.

Establish Local Government Environment Committees:

In collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the EPA will work to establish and empower Environment Committees within the fifteen (15) local government areas (counties). These committees will play a crucial role in facilitating environmental protection education and awareness, tailoring their efforts to address local environmental issues effectively and engaging the community in proactive environmental stewardship.

Establish Environmental Committees in Local Communities:

In partnership with local governments, the EPA will initiate the formation of Environmental Committees in communities to enhance local engagement in environmental education and awareness initiatives. These committees will prioritize the involvement of women and youth, recognizing their pivotal role in environmental protection. By fostering grassroots participation, the EPA aims to create a culture of environmental consciousness and action at the community level.

Expected Outcome:

The expected outcomes of this strategic objective include a significant increase in public awareness of environmental issues, achieved through diverse communication channels and simplified messaging. This effort will lead to a more informed citizenry that recognizes the importance of environmental protection. Additionally, accessible resource libraries and a user-friendly website will enhance public access to vital environmental information, empowering citizens to engage actively in environmental matters.

The formation of local and community-based Environmental Committees will promote grassroots involvement in environmental initiatives, ensuring that local perspectives and needs are integrated into policies and practices. Furthermore, targeted efforts to include women and youth in these committees will enhance their understanding and engagement, empowering them to advocate for environmental protection in their communities. Finally, collaboration with local governments will foster synergies between the EPA and communities, resulting in more cohesive and effective environmental management strategies at the local level.

Strategic Objective 4: To Positively Change Public Environmental Behaviour

Context

In Liberia, a wide range of public behaviours negatively impact the environment, manifesting in both public and private institutions as well as within households across communities. These detrimental practices contribute to environmental degradation, and if not adequately addressed, they could lead to severe environmental crises both now and in the future. For instance, the common practice of consuming water from plastic sachets, followed by discarding the empty sachets improperly—such as littering on the ground instead of disposing of them in designated garbage bins—has become a significant issue nationwide. Additionally, the disposal of waste, particularly plastic, into rivers and wetlands is harming marine life and degrading essential ecosystems.

To counter these behaviors, there is a pressing need to transform public knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions (KAP) regarding environmental stewardship. This transformation is vital to fostering a culture of sustainable practices and mitigating the negative impacts of harmful behaviors.

Key Activities

Inform, Educate, and Communicate with the Public: The EPA will leverage a comprehensive range of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) tools to enhance public understanding of environmental issues and their connection to human development. Key activities will include:

Sustained IEC Campaigns: Implement ongoing educational initiatives designed to deepen knowledge of environmental challenges and their impacts on community well-being.

Demonstrating Environmental Impacts: Regularly showcase the consequences of improper waste disposal, including the effects on ecosystems and public health, to motivate behavioural change.

Behavioural Correction Initiatives: Actively engage in outreach efforts to address and rectify public behaviours detrimental to the environment, emphasizing the importance of correct knowledge and responsible attitudes.

Community Mobilization: Collaborate with various groups, including public and private institutions, media outlets, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and local communities, to foster a collective effort towards environmental advocacy.

Train Media Personnel: The EPA will identify select media professionals from various outlets and provide them with specialized and continuous training on environmental topics. This initiative will involve:

Curriculum Development: Create tailored training programs focused on environmental governance, sustainable practices, and effective communication strategies.

Motivation for Specialization: Cultivate a sustained interest among media personnel in environmental issues, encouraging them to adopt environmental reporting as a specialization.

Periodic Workshops: Organize specialized workshops on current and relevant environmental issues, enabling media professionals to produce informed and impactful coverage.

Undertake Door-to-Door Campaigns in Communities: Beginning with a pilot program, the EPA will initiate door-to-door educational campaigns in various communities during the dry season. Activities will include:

Utilizing Student Volunteers: Engage students on vacation as part of the outreach effort to educate their communities about environmental protection and sustainability.

Educational Materials Distribution: Provide informational materials that reinforce messages about proper waste disposal and the importance of environmental stewardship.

Implement Routine Environmental Talks in Schools: The EPA will develop a structured program to conduct regular environmental talks in secondary schools. This program will involve:

Curriculum Integration: Collaborate with educators to integrate environmental topics into school curricula, ensuring that students receive consistent and comprehensive environmental education.

Motivational Speaking Events: Organize interactive sessions where students can learn about the importance of environmental conservation and their roles in protecting the environment.

Environment Club: Empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become environmental ambassadors within their families, schools, and communities. Equip students with practical tools and information about sustainable practices. Encourages them to engage in meaningful conversations with their families, fostering awareness about environmental challenges.

Expected Outcome:

A cadre of trained media personnel capable of effectively reporting on environmental issues, thereby raising public awareness and influencing positive behavioral changes. Increased community engagement and participation in environmental protection initiatives, leading to a noticeable shift in public attitudes towards sustainable practices. Enhanced environmental literacy among students, resulting in a ripple effect that fosters greater environmental consciousness within families and communities.

4.4 PILLAR FOUR: COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

Strategic Objective 1: Develop Comprehensive Environmental Standards, Regulations, and Guidelines

Context:

Compliance and enforcement in environmental management are driven by well-defined standards, which are embedded within regulations and guidelines. However, to date, only six key regulations have been developed, validated, and published by the EPA of Liberia. These regulations include Mining Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines, Waste Management Regulations, Forest EIA Guidelines, Air Quality Regulations, and Water Quality Regulations. Although several additional regulations were developed between 2007 and 2009, including policies for dispersants and in-situ burning, these remain pending validation. Consequently, significant gaps exist in Liberia's environmental regulatory framework, particularly in areas related to emerging environmental challenges. Without these validated standards and regulations, the EPA's ability to enforce environmental protections remains limited, reducing the efficacy of compliance interventions across key sectors.

Key Activities:

Develop Environmental Standards for the Sectors:

In alignment with Part IV of the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia (EPML), the EPA will prioritize the development of environmental standards in areas where gaps persist. These sectors will include waste management, air quality, water quality, soil quality, emission control, and ionization and radiation. This will provide a comprehensive set of criteria for industries and sectors to follow, ensuring the protection of Liberia's natural resources and public health.

Formulate Regulations and Guidelines for Sector-Specific Areas:

The EPA will develop detailed regulations and guidelines, informed by updated Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), for critical sectors such as mining, agriculture, oil palm, wetlands, forestry, industries, infrastructure, land use and urban planning, ecosystems, energy, and disaster management (e.g., oil spills, dispersant policy, and in-situ burning). These sector-specific regulations will provide clear frameworks for operational compliance, ensuring that environmental considerations are systematically integrated into development activities.

Update and Expand ESIA:

Additional ESIA that require updates will be revised to reflect current environmental realities. These will include the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) standards, and guidelines for sand mining, road construction projects, fumigation practices, and burials. These updates are crucial to address new development trends and environmental challenges, particularly in areas such as infrastructure expansion and resource extraction.

Strategic Objective 2: Modernize EPA processes through digitization and automation.

Context:

The EPA recognizes the need for a more efficient and inclusive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process. Current challenges include bottlenecks in processing ESIA reports and limited accessibility for stakeholders, which can hinder timely decision-making and community involvement. To address these issues, the EPA aims to decentralize the ESIA process by leveraging digital technology to streamline submissions, enhance public access to information, and foster greater transparency. This initiative aligns with the agency's commitment to promote sustainable development while ensuring that environmental assessments are conducted in a manner that involves and considers the input of local communities and stakeholders.

Key Activities: Decentralize the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Process

Digital Platforms for ESIA: Develop digital platforms that facilitate the submission, review, and approval of ESIA reports at regional levels. Ensure the platforms are accessible to project proponents, reviewers, and the public.

Regional Training: Train regional EPA staff and stakeholders, including consultants and developers, on using the digital ESIA system. Provide guidelines and support to ensure smooth adoption and use.

Transparency and Public Access: Make ESIA reports and decisions available online to promote transparency and public participation. Allow for public comments and feedback during the assessment process.

Expected Outcome:

The decentralization of the ESIA process is to strengthen the EPA's capacity to conduct timely and thorough assessments, improved stakeholder engagement, and reinforced the agency's role as a facilitator of environmental compliance in Liberia.

Strategic Objective 3: Automate ESIA Permitting Processes

Context:

The EPA faces challenges in managing the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) permitting process due to manual workflows and a lack of real-time tracking systems. These

inefficiencies can lead to delays in permit approvals, hinder effective compliance monitoring, and create barriers to transparency and accountability in environmental governance. To address these challenges, the agency has identified the need for workflow automation and enhanced reporting capabilities, introducing the software solutions that streamline the ESIA permitting process. The EPA aims to improve operational efficiency, reduce processing times, and enhance oversight of environmental assessments.

Key Activities:

Workflow Automation: Implement software solutions to automate the workflow of ESIA permitting, from application submission to final approval. Streamline steps to reduce processing times and improve efficiency.

Tracking and Reporting: Develop tools for tracking the status of permits in real-time. Generate automated reports on ESIA activities, including compliance and enforcement actions.

Expected Outcome:

The implementation of these activities will strengthen the EPA's operational capabilities, promote a more efficient, transparent, and responsive ESIA permitting process. The process will also enhance the workflow automation and real-time tracking which will not only improve the agency's internal processes but also foster greater trust and engagement with the public and project proponents.

Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen Field Operations for Monitoring Compliance

Context:

Field operations are a critical component of effective environmental management, serving as the primary mechanism through which environmental standards, regulations, and guidelines are enforced. However, the current capacity of the EPA's field operations is insufficient to meet the growing needs of the country. With only 34 field staff, limited logistical resources, and inadequate maintenance support, the agency faces significant challenges in ensuring consistent compliance monitoring. To address these gaps, there is an immediate need to expand the workforce and enhance logistical and administrative support systems. The plan proposes hiring an additional 54 personnel over the next five years, bringing the total to 88 field officers. Additionally, the logistical infrastructure—currently comprising only two vehicles and 31 motorbikes—must be substantially improved to enable efficient operations in Liberia's vast and often challenging terrain. The lack of consistent maintenance further exacerbates these issues, hindering the agency's ability to perform routine monitoring and enforcement duties.

Key Activities:

Hire Additional Field Personnel: The EPA will incrementally hire and train 54 additional field staff over the next five years, ensuring that recruitment processes are transparent, merit-based, and gender-sensitive. The newly recruited personnel will be strategically deployed across Liberia's counties, with a focus on areas where field presence is lacking. The Agency will prioritize deploying candidates who have already been assessed, selected, and trained to minimize delays in expanding field operations. These efforts will ensure that each county has the necessary staff to effectively monitor compliance with environmental regulations, increasing EPA's oversight capabilities.

Enhance Logistical Support: The logistical framework for field operations will be significantly upgraded. Key logistics to be procured include vehicles, motorbikes, laptops, onsite mini-laboratory monitoring kits, GPS devices, and internet-enabled gadgets. These resources will be distributed to field personnel in each county, with the goal of ensuring that all teams are equipped to perform comprehensive environmental monitoring tasks. By providing the right tools and technologies, the EPA aims to reduce response times, improve data collection, and ensure timely enforcement of environmental standards.

Strengthen Administrative Support Services: To support field monitoring activities, a robust administrative system will be put in place. This will involve ensuring reliable supplies of fuel for vehicles, regular preventive maintenance of all logistical equipment, and timely provision of office supplies. Field officers will be provided with essential equipment, including air-conditioning units, generators, office furniture, personal protective equipment (PPE), rain gear, scratch cards for communication, and appropriate field uniforms. These measures will ensure that field officers have the necessary operational support to work efficiently, even in remote and challenging environments.

Ongoing Human Capacity Building: The EPA will launch a comprehensive Human Capital Development Program aimed at continuously upgrading the skills and competencies of field personnel. Short, medium, and long-term training programs will be organized both domestically and internationally. These training sessions will focus on modern environmental monitoring techniques, the use of advanced technologies, data analysis, and the enforcement of updated environmental regulations. This ongoing capacity-building initiative will ensure that the EPA's field staff remain equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to tackle evolving environmental challenges.

Complete Decentralization of Field Monitoring Structures: The EPA will finalize the establishment of its regional monitoring structures, creating three or four regional hubs that will coordinate field operations across multiple counties. The agency will also ensure that field monitoring offices are established in the remaining underserved counties: Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Kru, Rivercess, and River Gee. This will ensure nationwide coverage for compliance monitoring. The regional hubs will serve as central points for coordination, resource distribution, and reporting, streamlining the EPA's monitoring efforts and improving the overall efficiency of operations.

Expected Outcome:

By the end of the five-year period, the EPA's field operations will be significantly strengthened, with a well-equipped and adequately staffed field force of 88 officers covering all counties in Liberia. Enhanced logistical support and improved administrative services will enable more efficient and timely monitoring of environmental compliance. This will result in a notable increase in the enforcement of environmental standards across sectors such as mining, agriculture, waste management, and urban development. The decentralization of field structures and ongoing capacity building will further ensure that the EPA can respond swiftly to environmental violations, thus improving overall environmental governance and protection in Liberia.

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Process

Context:

The current ESIA process in Liberia requires significant improvements to meet the evolving demands of environmental governance. While the ESIA guidelines were completed in 2017, they are now outdated and do not fully encompass all sectors that impact the environment. Existing guidelines for critical industries

like mining and forestry also need revision to align with modern practices and emerging environmental challenges. Furthermore, several sectors lack ESIA guidelines entirely, and the fee structure associated with the ESIA process is neither comprehensive nor aligned with international best practices. It is imperative to address these gaps to ensure that the ESIA process effectively captures sector-wide environmental impacts, promotes sustainable development, and adheres to global standards.

Key Activities:

Revisit and Update the ESIA Fees Regime: A comprehensive review and rationalization of the ESIA fee structure will be conducted. This will ensure that fees reflect the scale and impact of major sector activities, bringing the fee regime in line with international standards. The updated fees will promote transparency and fairness while generating sufficient resources to support the EPA's regulatory and monitoring efforts.

Decentralize the ESIA Process Across the Country: The ESIA process will be decentralized by establishing County and District Environmental Committees. These committees will facilitate more localized ESIA reviews, ensuring broader community participation. Additionally, ESIA licensure training for environmental consultants will involve local government representatives, ensuring that environmental governance is robust at both regional and district levels. Public hearings for environmental impact assessments will be mandated to take place within the counties where projects are proposed, allowing local stakeholders to have a voice in decision-making.

Promote Awareness of the ESIA Process: As part of the EPA's Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) services, extensive awareness campaigns will be launched to educate the public,

industries, and government agencies about the ESIA process. This initiative will involve multi-sectoral coordination to enhance understanding and compliance, drawing on lessons learned from the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) Project.

Introduce the ESIA Process as a Course at Colleges and Universities: In collaboration with educational institutions, the EPA will develop and introduce an ESIA-focused curriculum in colleges and universities. This course will equip students with the technical skills and knowledge needed to conduct and manage environmental assessments, ultimately increasing the pool of qualified professionals available to support Liberia's environmental governance needs.

Expected Outcome

By strengthening the ESIA process, Liberia will have a more robust, transparent, and inclusive system that ensures environmental and social impacts are comprehensively assessed across all sectors. This will lead to more informed project approvals, better protection of natural resources, and sustainable economic growth. Furthermore, decentralization and public participation will ensure that environmental decisions are made with input from local communities, while the introduction of ESIA education in academic institutions will foster long-term capacity building. Ultimately, these efforts will align Liberia's ESIA practices with international standards, contributing to improved environmental governance and sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 6: Attaining ISO Accreditation for the Monitoring and Compliance Laboratory

Context:

The Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Laboratory (ERRSL) serves as the scientific backbone of the EPA, responsible for conducting crucial environmental research and monitoring in Liberia. Currently, however, the ERRSL lacks the capacity to meet international standards due to inadequate laboratory infrastructure and reliance on external commercial laboratories for some environmental analyses. To achieve ISO accreditation, the ERRSL must undergo significant enhancements, including the expansion of workspace, the procurement of advanced analytical equipment, and a systematic upskilling of laboratory personnel. Achieving this accreditation is critical for the EPA, as it will elevate the laboratory's credibility, ensure the accuracy and reliability of environmental testing, and support Liberia's ability to meet both domestic and international environmental obligations.

Key Activities:

Improve Laboratory Workspace: A key component of the EPA's new headquarters will be the construction of a modern, purpose-built laboratory facility. The laboratory will be equipped with adequate space for the preparation, analysis, and storage of environmental samples, ensuring optimal conditions for research and testing. This expanded workspace will facilitate better workflow, improve sample handling, and provide dedicated areas for quality assurance and control.

Procure Advanced Analytical Equipment: To meet the rigorous standards required for ISO accreditation, the laboratory will be outfitted with state-of-the-art, calibrated analytical equipment. This includes highly sensitive instruments capable of conducting precise and reliable environmental tests across various parameters, such as air and water quality, chemical pollution, and radiation safety. In addition to physical equipment, the laboratory will acquire specialized software tools that enable data analysis, storage, and reporting in line with international best practices. A reliable and consistent supply of reagents and consumables will also be secured to ensure uninterrupted laboratory operations.

Provide Ongoing Staff Training and Skill Upgradation: Continuous professional development of laboratory personnel will be a core part of achieving and maintaining ISO accreditation. As part of the EPA's broader Human Capital Development program, laboratory staff will receive both specialized training on the use of new analytical equipment and software, as well as generic skills development related to laboratory management, quality control, and safety standards. This training will be conducted regularly to ensure that the team remains updated on the latest scientific techniques, methodologies, and ISO requirements. Mentorship programs, workshops, and certifications will be integrated into the staff development plan to foster a culture of excellence within the laboratory.

Expected Outcome:

Upon successful completion of these key activities, the EPA's Environmental Research and Radiation Safety Laboratory will achieve ISO accreditation, positioning it as a leading institution in environmental testing and monitoring in Liberia. The enhanced laboratory will provide more accurate and reliable environmental data, support better decision-making by the EPA, and reduce reliance on external commercial laboratories. With ISO accreditation, the ERRSL will gain international recognition, bolstering Liberia's ability to comply with global environmental standards and agreements. Ultimately, these improvements will not only strengthen the EPA's operational capacity but also contribute to protecting Liberia's ecosystems and public health by ensuring that environmental risks are properly monitored and addressed with scientific precision.

4.5 PILLAR FIVE: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen Liberia's Adherence to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Context:

Liberia is currently a signatory to fourteen Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), each of which comes with specific obligations that the country must fulfil. However, Liberia has not yet acceded to or ratified all relevant agreements. The lack of full integration of these agreements into Liberia's legal and institutional frameworks has created gaps in compliance and hindered the country's ability to fully meet its obligations. Additionally, limited human, institutional, and financial resources have constrained Liberia's capacity to operationalize the MEAs effectively, preventing the country from fully benefiting from the global environmental community. Addressing these gaps will require not only the domestication of these agreements into national laws and policies but also significant capacity-building efforts to strengthen the institutions responsible for their implementation.

Key Activities:

Domesticate Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs):

- **Mainstreaming Agreements:** The first step towards strengthening adherence to MEAs is to fully integrate these international agreements into Liberia's legal framework. This includes updating national environmental laws, policies, and regulations to reflect the commitments made under each MEA.
- **Specialized Studies:** Conduct comprehensive studies to assess the country's environmental challenges in the context of these agreements. These studies will help tailor the domestication process, ensuring that the agreements are not only implemented but are also effective in addressing Liberia's specific environmental concerns.

Build Human and Institutional Capacities:

- **Capacity Building Programs:** To ensure effective implementation of MEAs, Liberia must develop its human and institutional capacities. This will be achieved through a vigorous human capital development program, informed by a thorough manpower and institutional capacity assessment.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Key institutions responsible for implementing the MEAs, such as the EPA, will undergo targeted training and development to ensure they have the skills and expertise required to manage these agreements. This will also involve enhancing technical expertise, management processes, and coordination mechanisms across all relevant sectors.

Ensure Compliance with Reporting Obligations:

- **Timely Reporting:** One of the fundamental requirements of the MEAs is regular and timely reporting to the international environmental community. Liberia will establish robust mechanisms to ensure that all reporting obligations are met on time. This will involve setting up internal schedules, monitoring tools, and ensuring that relevant data is collected, analyzed, and submitted to the international bodies as required.
- **Dedicated Reporting Teams:** Specialized teams will be formed within the EPA and other key institutions to handle the preparation of reports for each MEA. These teams will be trained in the specific requirements and formats needed for international compliance reporting.

Regularize Participation in International Fora:

- **Sustained International Engagement:** Liberia's active participation in international environmental fora is critical not only for compliance but also for knowledge-sharing, networking, and institutional learning. Moving forward, Liberia will ensure sustained and consistent representation at global environmental conferences, conventions, and workshops.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Attending these events will provide opportunities to exchange best practices with other countries, form partnerships, and learn from global experiences. This participation will be used to strengthen Liberia's capacity to implement the MEAs effectively.

Accede to or Ratify Additional MEAs:

- **Accession and Ratification:** Once Liberia has built the necessary institutional and human capacities, it will proceed with the ratification or accession of additional MEAs. This process will be gradual, ensuring that the country is fully prepared to meet the obligations associated with each new agreement.
- **Leveraging MEAs Membership:** Accession to additional MEAs will open doors for Liberia to access international funding and technical support for environmental projects. It will also facilitate collaborative ventures with other member countries, enabling Liberia to benefit from global environmental programs, sponsorships, and capacity-building initiatives.

Expected Outcome:

By the end of the period (2025-2029), Liberia is expected to have significantly enhanced its adherence to multilateral environmental agreements. The domestication of these agreements into national laws, policies, and regulations will ensure that Liberia is fully aligned with its international environmental commitments. A strengthened institutional framework, coupled with increased human capacity, will enable the EPA and other relevant bodies to efficiently manage and implement the MEAs. Liberia's timely reporting and active participation in international fora will demonstrate its commitment to the global environmental community, while the gradual accession to additional MEAs will position the country as a proactive participant in international environmental governance. The

overall impact will be an improved environmental governance structure that contributes to sustainable development, better resource management, and stronger resilience to environmental challenges.

Strategic Objective 2: Develop Liberia's Carbon Market Role Map and Framework

context:

As Liberia seeks to participate effectively in the global carbon market, there is an urgent need to establish a robust regulatory framework that promotes accountability, transparency, and adherence to a rule-based approach. The country's involvement in carbon trading initiatives presents both opportunities and challenges in terms of sustainable development and environmental protection. To maximize the benefits of the carbon market, the government must formulate comprehensive policies and laws that delineate clear guidelines for emission reductions, trading mechanisms, and sustainable practices. Additionally, establishing effective monitoring and reporting procedures is crucial for tracking progress and evaluating the success of carbon market initiatives. Engaging stakeholders and building capacity within communities will further enhance public awareness and foster widespread participation, ensuring that the carbon market contributes to Liberia's development goals in an equitable manner.

Key Activities:

- Formulate comprehensive policies and laws to enhance accountability, transparency, and adherence to a rule-based approach within the country's carbon market.
- Design a strategic framework that outlines Liberia's role within the carbon market, including clear guidelines on emission reduction targets, trading mechanisms, and sustainable practices.
- Establish monitoring and reporting procedures to track progress, ensure compliance, and evaluate the effectiveness of carbon market initiatives.
- Integrate mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and public awareness to foster widespread participation and understanding of carbon market activities.

Expected Outcome:

The expected outcome is to position Liberia as a proactive participant in the carbon market, promoting sustainable development while addressing climate change challenges effectively. The comprehensive approach will not only strengthen governance but also foster collaboration among various stakeholders, contributing to a healthier environment and enhanced livelihoods for the people of Liberia.

Strategic Objective 3: Establish a National Carbon Market Coordinating Body

Context:

In the context of the Paris Agreement, Articles 6.2, 6.4, and 6.8 provide mechanisms for countries to cooperate in achieving their climate goals, particularly through carbon markets and international emissions trading. Recognizing the importance of these provisions, Liberia aims to establish a dedicated national body to coordinate activities related to these articles within its carbon market. This initiative is crucial for ensuring that efforts are aligned with both national development objectives and international climate commitments. By defining the roles and responsibilities of this coordinating body, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and establishing robust frameworks for oversight and information sharing, Liberia can effectively navigate the complexities of the carbon market while maximizing environmental and economic benefits. Moreover, building partnerships with regional and international organizations will enhance Liberia's capacity to implement best practices and innovate in climate initiatives.

Key Activities:

- Create a dedicated national body tasked with spearheading efforts to coordinate activities related to Article 6.2, 6.4, and 6.8 of the Paris Agreement within Liberia's carbon market.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the coordinating body in facilitating collaboration among key stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations.
- Develop a framework for effective oversight, data management, and information sharing to streamline decision-making and ensure alignment with international climate agreements.
- Foster partnerships with regional and international organizations to leverage expertise, resources, and best practices in advancing carbon market initiatives and achieving climate goals.

Expected Outcome:

This is expected to position Liberia as a leader within the carbon market space, enhancing its ability to meet international climate commitments while promoting sustainable development and collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 4: Develop a national botanical garden to promote biodiversity conservation and environmental education.

Context:

The establishment of a Botanical Garden as a biodiversity conservation site is a key initiative aimed at preserving and showcasing Liberia's rich floral diversity. Given the increasing threats of habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental pressures, the creation of a dedicated space for native and endangered plant species is crucial for conservation efforts. Additionally, a botanical garden can

serve as an educational resource for the community, promoting awareness and appreciation of biodiversity while fostering sustainable practices. The planning and development phases of this project will involve site selection, design and layout considerations, and species selection to ensure that the garden effectively contributes to conservation goals and environmental education.

Key Activities:

Plan and Develop the Botanical Garden as a Biodiversity Conservation Site:

Site Selection: Identify and secure a suitable location for the botanical garden. Conduct environmental impact assessments to ensure the site is appropriate for conservation purposes.

Design and Layout: Develop a detailed design and layout that prioritize biodiversity conservation and sustainability. Include features such as thematic gardens, walking trails, and educational exhibits.

Species Selection: Select a diverse range of plant species, focusing on native and endangered species. Develop a planting plan that supports biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Expected Outcome:

The establishment of the Botanical Garden as a biodiversity conservation site is expected to play a pivotal role in protecting Liberia's natural heritage, enhancing public awareness of environmental issues, and fostering sustainable practices in biodiversity management.

Strategic Objective 5: Use the Garden as an Educational Resource for Schools and the Public

Context:

In an effort to enhance public awareness and understanding of biodiversity and conservation, the establishment of educational programs at the Botanical Garden is essential. The garden serves not merely as a conservation site but also as an interactive learning environment designed to engage the community, especially students. By developing educational programs and materials tailored for schools and visitors, the Botanical Garden can play a pivotal role in promoting environmental stewardship among younger generations. Collaborative efforts with local schools will further strengthen this initiative, offering students enriching experiences that foster a deep connection to nature and awareness of the importance of biodiversity.

Key Activities:

Educational Programs: Develop educational programs and materials for schools and visitors. Include activities such as guided tours, workshops, and interactive exhibits.

Workshops and Tours: Organize workshops, guided tours, and interactive exhibits to educate the public about biodiversity and conservation. Partner with local schools to integrate botanical garden visits into their curricula.

Collaboration with Schools: Partner with schools to integrate botanical garden visits into their curricula. Provide resources and support to teachers to enhance the educational value of visits.

Expected Outcome:

This Strategic Objective is intended to transform the Botanical Garden into a vibrant educational hub, fostering collaboration between the garden, schools, and the community. The initiatives will enhance understanding of biodiversity and conservation, promote sustainable practices, and empower individuals to take an active role in protecting the environment.

Strategic Objective 6: Promote the Garden as a Tourist Attraction to Support Eco-Tourism

Context:

The establishment of a Botanical Garden presents a unique opportunity to promote biodiversity conservation while also attracting tourism. As global interest in eco-tourism grows, it is essential for the Botanical Garden to implement a marketing strategy that highlights its unique features and educational offerings. Creating a welcoming environment with well-designed visitor facilities will enhance the overall experience and encourage longer stays. Collaborating with tour operators to develop eco-tourism packages that include visits to the garden will position it as a key attraction for both local and international tourists, thus contributing to the region's economic development while promoting environmental education and conservation efforts.

Key Activities:

Marketing Strategy: Develop and implement a marketing strategy to attract tourists to the botanical garden. Use various media channels to promote the garden and its unique features.

Visitor Facilities: Build facilities such as visitor centers, cafes, and gift shops to enhance the visitor experience. Ensure these facilities are sustainably designed and operated.

Eco-Tourism Packages: Collaborate with tour operators to create eco-tourism packages that include visits to the botanical garden. Promote these packages through tourism websites, travel agencies, and other channels.

Expected Outcome:

The Botanical Garden will serve as a prominent eco-tourism destination, contributing to both its conservation goals and the economic development of the region. By enhancing visitor experiences and broadening public engagement, the garden will play a crucial role in promoting a sustainable relationship between people and nature

Strategic Objective 7: To Effectively and Efficiently Manage International Environmental Projects Designated to Liberia

Context:

Comprehensive assessments of the EPA have revealed three critical areas of need that must be addressed for the successful implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). These needs are categorized as follows.

Key Activities:

Foundational Capacity: This includes the development and alignment of environmental laws, policies, regulations, standards, and guidelines. While some progress has been made, with key legal and regulatory instruments established by ministries such as Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Public Works, and Transport, there are still significant gaps in full regulatory alignment and enforcement.

Institutional Capacity: This refers to the logistics, infrastructure, systems, and procedures necessary for national, regional, county, and district-level offices to function effectively. While there has been some improvement in institutional capacity within environmental and line ministries, including the EPA, many gaps remain in achieving a cohesive and efficient environmental management framework across the country.

Individual Capacity: This involves building human resource competencies, including training and expertise in environmental management and project implementation. Although some capacity building has occurred, the existing human resource infrastructure is still inadequate to meet the growing complexity of international environmental project management and compliance with MEAs. Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain, particularly in sustaining the progress made and addressing ongoing resource constraints. For Liberia to meet its obligations under international environmental agreements and benefit from these arrangements, substantial improvements must be made in all three areas: foundational, institutional, and individual capacities.

Expected Outcome:

To significantly advance Liberia's ability to meet its international environmental obligations, thereby promoting sustainable development and effective management of its rich natural resources.

Strategic Objective 8: Strengthen Actions on Key International Environmental Issues**Context:**

Liberia is confronted with various environmental challenges exacerbated by climate change, biodiversity loss, and inadequate ecosystem management. The impacts of climate change present significant risks, such as coastal erosion, flooding from rising sea levels, and altered rainfall patterns leading to increased heat waves and bushfires. These changes threaten the livelihoods of communities and the integrity of vital ecosystems. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia recognizes

the urgency of addressing these issues through the full implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy Framework, alongside enforcing relevant policies and collaborating with sectoral partners in agriculture and forestry to develop mitigation strategies.

Additionally, the unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity, including the over-harvesting of flora and fauna, poses a major threat to Liberia's natural ecosystems. Addressing this challenge requires robust governance structures, legal frameworks, and financial mechanisms to support biodiversity conservation. The EPA is committed to prioritizing the monitoring of biodiversity trends and conducting strategic environmental assessments for development initiatives to ensure that biodiversity is protected and sustainable use practices are maintained.

Furthermore, effective ecosystem and habitat management is critical for harmonizing economic development with natural resource preservation. Recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge and the involvement of indigenous communities, the EPA seeks to create a collaborative approach that incorporates these perspectives into biodiversity management. This effort includes collaborating closely with the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) on a National Land Use Policy and Strategy, as well as the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) on a Community-Based Forestry Policy and Strategy.

Climate Change: Liberia faces significant risks from climate change, including coastal erosion, flooding due to rising sea levels, and changing rainfall patterns leading to increased heat waves and bushfires. The EPA will focus on fully implementing the National Climate Change Strategy Framework, enforcing relevant policies, and collaborating with sectoral partners such as agriculture and forestry to mitigate these impacts.

Biodiversity: The unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity, including flora and fauna, poses a major threat to Liberia's natural ecosystems. The EPA will prioritize monitoring biodiversity trends and addressing governance, legal, and financial challenges related to biodiversity conservation. Strategic environmental assessments will be conducted for development initiatives to ensure that biodiversity is protected and sustainable use practices are enforced.

Ecosystem and Habitat Management: A balance will be established between economic development and the preservation of natural resources, with particular emphasis on the role of traditional knowledge and the involvement of indigenous communities in biodiversity management. The EPA will collaborate with the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) on a National Land Use Policy and Strategy and with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) on a Community-based Forestry Policy and Strategy.

Expected Outcome: In implementing these activities, the EPA aims to significantly improve its capacity to manage internationally sponsored environmental projects with a high degree of proficiency, transparency, and accountability. The successful execution of these projects will enhance the country's ability to sustainably develop its natural resources, adapt to climate change, and fulfil its international

environmental commitments. This will result in improved environmental quality, economic resilience, and social well-being for the Liberian people.

Strategic Objective 9: Domestic Resource Generation Strategy

Context:

The EPA of Liberia faces significant challenges in securing adequate financial resources to support its operations. Currently, the primary source of funding is the Government of Liberia, which allocates funds through the National Budget. However, due to ongoing economic challenges, fiscal resources are severely constrained. Additionally, there are competing demands from other critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, which receive the majority of the government's financial attention.

Over the years (2020-2024), the EPA has received a total budget of \$7.3 million, most of which is allocated to salaries, leaving insufficient funds for essential operational costs. The limited financial resources hinder the EPA's ability to carry out its environmental protection and governance mandate effectively. While the agency collects fees from Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), these revenues are relatively small and do not meet the overall operational needs. Similarly, fines and other charges collected by the EPA are directed to the central government rather than the agency's own financial pool, further limiting its fiscal flexibility.

Given this financial shortfall, the EPA must enhance its capacity for both domestic and external resource mobilization. By adopting a proactive and diversified approach, the EPA aims to secure additional funding streams that will enable it to fully execute its mission and meet national environmental priorities.

Key Activities:

Lobby for Additional Budgetary Support: The EPA will engage with political decision-makers, including legislators and key government officials, to advocate for increased financial support through the National Budget. The agency will emphasize the urgent need for enhanced funding by highlighting global environmental concerns such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and their devastating impacts on Liberia. The lobbying efforts will focus on aligning EPA's financial needs with national priorities and international commitments to environmental sustainability. By positioning the agency as crucial to the country's ability to meet international obligations, the EPA aims to secure increased budget allocations.

Establish a National Climate Change Trust Fund: Recognizing climate change as one of the most pressing global environmental challenges, the EPA, in collaboration with the Government of Liberia, will establish a National Climate Change Trust Fund. This fund will be dedicated to financing climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives across Liberia. The Government will serve as the grantor, the EPA as the beneficiary, and a reputable third-party financial institution (such as a bank) as the

trustee. The EPA and the government will collaborate to set clear rules and guidelines for managing the fund, ensuring transparency and accountability. The fund will enable the agency to mobilize resources from both domestic and international donors to address climate-related challenges effectively.

Establish a Green Tax: In line with international best practices, the EPA will work with the Government of Liberia to introduce a Green Tax aimed at generating revenue to support environmental protection initiatives. The tax will apply to individuals, businesses, and corporations, all of whom contribute directly or indirectly to environmental degradation. The tax will target products such as plastics and other materials known to have adverse environmental impacts. Revenue from the Green Tax will be managed outside the central government's consolidated fund and instead 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) and the EPA will jointly oversee this account, ensuring that all funds are used specifically for environmental protection efforts.

Activate the Conservation Trust Fund: A Conservation Trust Fund was established in the past but became defunct due to a lack of matching funds from the government. To reactivate this important financial instrument, the EPA will work with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to establish clear, sustainable guidelines for matching funds. The new framework will ensure that deposits into the Conservation Trust Fund are matched by identifiable fiscal sources, allowing the fund to become a reliable source of revenue for conservation projects, biodiversity protection, and other environmental initiatives.

Diversify and Strengthen the Collection of Fees: The EPA will work to diversify its domestic resource base by revising and strengthening the fee collection process. Specifically, the agency will focus on rationalizing the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) fee regime, which is currently one of the lowest in Africa. By reconstructing the ESIA fee structure to align with regional and international standards, the EPA can significantly increase its domestic revenue. The updated fee structure will reflect the true cost of conducting comprehensive environmental assessments, ensuring that industries and developers contribute appropriately to environmental oversight.

Enforce Laws and Regulations on Performance Bonds: The EPA will also strengthen its enforcement of performance bond regulations. Companies operating in environmentally sensitive sectors, such as mining and construction, are required to post performance bonds as a guarantee of compliance with environmental standards. The EPA's Legal Office will review the existing regulations, and any necessary revisions will be made to ensure stronger enforcement. For companies that fail to meet environmental standards, the EPA will ensure that their performance bonds are forfeited, following due process. Forfeited bonds will be transparently auctioned, and the proceeds will be deposited into the EPA's account to support environmental monitoring and enforcement activities.

Expected Outcome

Through the successful implementation of these key activities, the EPA expects to significantly enhance its capacity for domestic resource generation. The establishment of the National Climate Change Trust Fund and the Green Tax will provide sustainable, dedicated revenue streams for climate action and environmental protection initiatives. Reactivating the Conservation Trust Fund will unlock additional resources for biodiversity conservation, while reforms to the ESIA fee structure will ensure that the EPA receives fair compensation for its oversight role. Stronger enforcement of performance bonds will hold corporations accountable and generate additional funding for environmental compliance.

Strategic Objective 10: Build Capacity to Mobilize External Environmental Resources

Context:

With the global focus on climate change and other pressing environmental issues, there are numerous opportunities for countries like Liberia to attract and access external environmental resources. These resources are not limited to financial aid but also include non-financial contributions such as laboratory equipment, supplies, technical expertise, and knowledge transfer. In order to capitalize on these opportunities, the EPA of Liberia must strengthen its capacity to engage effectively with the international environmental community. By building this capacity, the EPA can position itself as a trusted partner, capable of managing and utilizing external resources to advance environmental protection and sustainability initiatives in Liberia.

Key Activities:

Develop Project Proposals for External Funding: To successfully attract external environmental resources, the EPA will develop well-structured project proposals targeting international environmental priorities such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, waste management, and sustainable energy. These proposals will outline clear goals, objectives, timelines, and expected outcomes, ensuring that they align with the interests of international donors and environmental organizations. The agency will aim to secure funding from a diverse range of sources, including multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), foreign governments, international NGOs, and private sector donors.

Enhance Project Management Capabilities: A key factor in attracting and retaining external support is demonstrating a high level of competence in managing externally funded projects. The EPA will invest in training staff on best practices in project management, ensuring that they have the technical expertise to implement, monitor, and report on international projects. This will include the adoption of modern project management tools and frameworks to ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the delivery of project goals. By doing so, the agency will build trust with international partners and enhance its reputation as a capable steward of external resources.

Ensure Accountability and Compliance in Financial Management: The EPA will uphold the highest standards of accountability for all financial resources it receives, whether from domestic or external

sources. This will involve implementing rigorous financial management protocols to ensure that funds are used for their intended purposes and that all contractual obligations are met. The agency will also ensure that non-financial resources, such as equipment and technical assistance, are utilized effectively and maintained in accordance with agreed-upon terms. Regular financial audits and reports will be produced to demonstrate the transparent use of resources, further strengthening the agency's credibility in the eyes of donors and partners.

Monitor and Evaluate Project Impacts: To ensure the success of externally funded programs and projects, the EPA will establish robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. These systems will track the progress of projects in real-time, allowing for timely interventions if activities deviate from the expected outcomes. At the conclusion of each project, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted to assess whether the project achieved its goals and generated the desired environmental impacts. The findings from these evaluations will inform future project design and management, ensuring continuous improvement in how the agency handles external projects.

Expected Outcome:

In successfully building its capacity to mobilize external environmental resources, the EPA will enhance its ability to secure both financial and non-financial support from the global environmental community. This will result in increased funding and resources for critical environmental programs in Liberia, such as combating climate change, preserving biodiversity, managing waste, and promoting sustainable development. Additionally, by fostering strong relationships with international partners, the EPA will position itself as a trusted leader in environmental governance, capable of executing high-impact projects that contribute to both national and global environmental goals. Ultimately, this strategic focus will empower the EPA to deliver meaningful, long-term environmental benefits to Liberia, improving the country's resilience to environmental challenges while ensuring a sustainable future for its people.

5.0 Funding Sources and Budget Matrix

The table below outlines key activities that the EPA will implement over the next five years, from 2025 to 2029. These activities are categorized under specific strategic objectives organized within five main pillars: *Governance and Management, Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building, Information, Education, and Communication Services, Compliance & Enforcement, and International and National Environmental Commitments.*

For each strategic objective, the table specifies the responsible departments tasked with executing the activities, as well as the sources of funding, indicating whether the financial support will come from internal resources or external partners. The table also provides an estimated budget for implementing each activity, ensuring transparency and accountability in resource allocation.

PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT				
No	Key Activities	Responsible Department (s)	Funding Source: (Internal/External)	Budget (USD)
Strategic Objectives 1: Decentralization - Establish and operationalize EPA offices, committees, and laboratories in all 15 counties				
1	Site Selection and Development	Administration	External	150,000
2	Staffing and Training	Administration, ERRS and C&E	Internal	2,700,000
3	Resource Allocation	Executive	Internal	2,500,000
	Sub-Total			5,350,000
Strategic Objective 2: Form and Operationalize Environmental Committees in All Counties				
1	County Environmental Committees	Executive	External	75,000
2	Training and Capacity Building	C&E, Planning & Policy and Administration	External	500,000
3	Operational Guidelines	ERRS and C&E	External	50,000
	Sub-Total			625,000
Strategic Objective 3: Set Up Four (4) Regional and One Central Research and Radiation Safety Laboratories:				
1	Laboratory Locations and Construction	ERRS and Amin	Internal	45,5000
2	Staff Recruitment and Training	Administration	Internal	250,000
3	Operational Framework	ERRS	Internal	350,000
	Sub- Total			1,055,000
Strategic Objective 4: Create a Centralized Environmental Registry				
1	Data Collection and Integration	ERRS, C&E and Planning & Policy	Internal	75,000

2	Digital Platform Development	C&E,ERRS and Administration	Internal	50,000
3	Public Awareness and Access	Interpectoral	Internal	25,000
	Sub-Total			150,000.00
Strategic Objective 5: Conduct and Implement Effective Personnel Classification and Appraisal Systems				
1	Undertake a Personnel Inventory	Administration and Planning & Policy	Internal	0
2	Study CSA and Other Classification Models	Administration	Internal	0
3	Provide Internal Orientation on Classification and Appraisal Schemes	Planning & Policy	Internal	5,000
4	Conduct Classification Regime	Planning & Policy and Administration	Internal	10,000
	Sub Total			15,000.00
Strategic Objective 6: Develop and Implement an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanism				
1	Study National Examples of ADR Mechanisms	Planning and Policy	Internal	5,000
2	Undertake Benchmarking Studies of International ADR Mechanisms	Planning and Policy	Internal	5,000
3	Develop a Sector-Specific ADR Mechanism	Planning and Policy	Internal	50,000.00
4	Strengthen the Grievance Desk	Interpectoral and Executive	Internal	270,000
	Sub-Total			330,000
Strategic Objective 7: Strengthening Research, Policy, and Planning Capacities to Support Governance and Decision-Making				
1	Establish a Research Unit	Executive	External	270,000
2	Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit	Executive	Internal	270,000
3	Strengthen Policy Analysis Capabilities	Executive	External	500,000

4	Strengthen Institutional Planning Capabilities	Planning and Policy	Internal	10,000
5	Establish Partnerships with Learning and Research Institutions	Executive	External	500,000
	Sub Total			1,550,000
Strategic Objective 8: Centralize Institutional Project Management Activities				
1	Establish a Centralized Project Management Unit (PMU)	Executive	Internal	500,000
2	Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff	Executive and Administration	Internal	250,000
	Sub Total			750,000
	Sub-Total for Internal			7,100,500
	Sub-Total for External			1,545,000
	PILLAR 1: SUB-TOTAL			8,645,500
PILLAR TWO: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING				
Strategic Objective 1: To House the EPA in Its Own Modern, Custom-Designed, Furnished Headquarters				
1	Land Acquisition	Executive and Administration	Internal	150,000
2	Soil Testing	ERRS	Internal	3,000
3	Develop Architectural Design	Administration	Internal	2,500
4	Obtain Regulatory Approvals	Executive	Internal	10,000
5	Undertake Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)	C&E	Internal	25,000
6	Mobilize Requisite Funding	Executive	External	4,000,000
7	Hire Civil Engineering Consultant	Administration and Executive	Internal	250,000
8	Hire Construction Company	Administration and Executive	Internal	250,000

	Sub-Total			4,690,500
Strategic Objective 2: Enhance Human Capital and Increase Retention of Professional and Technical Staff				
1	Undertake a Comprehensive Manpower Needs Assessment	Planning & Policy and Administration	Internal	10,000.00
2	Prepare a Detailed Human Capital Development Program	Planning and Policy	Internal	7,000.00
3	Mobilize Resources and Implement the Human Capital Development Program	Executive	External	250,000
4	Develop a Transparent and Fair Incentive Regime	Administration and Executive	External	250,000
	Sub-Total			517,000.00
Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Environmental Reporting				
1	Develop a Management Information System (MIS)	Planning and Policy	Internal	5,000.00
2	Strengthen Internal Reporting	Planning and Policy	Internal	5,000.00
3	Address International Environmental Reporting Challenges	MEAs	External/Internal	150,000
4	Incorporate Reporting Elements from Other Sectors	Planning and Policy and MEAs	Internal	10,000.00
	Sub-Total			170,000.00
Objective 4: Centralize Institutional Financial Management Activities				
1	Establish a Centralized Financial Management Unit	Executive	Internal	100,000
2	Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff	Executive and Administration	External	150,000
	Sub-Total			250,000
Objective 5: Strengthen Implementation Capacity for Internationally Funded Projects				
1	Develop and Solicit a Technical Assistance Program	Planning and Policy	Internal	5,000.00

2	Establish Twinning Relationships with Advanced Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs)	Executive and MEAs	External	75000
3	Establish a Study Tour Program	Executive	External	250000
4	Forge Partnerships with Research Institutions	Executive	External	175000
5	Enhance Technological Capabilities	Executive and Administration	External	20000
	Sub-Total			525,000.00
	Sub-Total for Internal			907,500.00
	Sub-Total for External			5,245,000.00
	PILLAR 2: SUB-TOTAL			6,152,500
PILLAR THREE: INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION (IEC) SERVICES				
Strategic Objective 1: Enhance Government Authorities' Understanding of Environmental Issues and the EPA's Role				
1	Engage the Cabinet	Executive	Internal	250,000
2	Engage the Legislature	Executive	Internal	250,000
3	Engage the Judiciary	Executive	Internal	250,000
4	Engage Local Governments	Executive	External	200,000
5	Expected Long-Term Impact	Executive	External	10,000
	Sub-Total			960,000
Strategic Objective 2: To Enhance Public Understanding of Environmental Issues and the Roles and Responsibilities of the EPA				
6	Establish a Communications Unit	Executive	Internal	250,000
7	Revise and Implement the Communications Strategy	Intersectorial	Internal	75,000
8	Enhance Environmental Education in Schools	Intersectorial	External	250,000
9	Engage Media Institutions	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
10	Promote Environmental Activities Across Various Sectors	Intersectorial	External	200,000

11	Targeted IEC Services for Specific Publics		External	150,000
	Sub-Total			1,175,000
Strategic Objective 3: To Increase Public Awareness of and Access to Environmental Information				
1	Employ All Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Vehicles	Intersectorial	Internal	100,000
2	Direct Public to the EPA Website and Resource Libraries	Intersectorial	Internal	100,000
3	Transmit IEC Messages in Simple Liberian English	Intersectorial	External	100,000
4	Transmit IEC Messages in Local Languages	Intersectorial	External	100,000
5	Establish Local Government Environment Committees	Executive	External	375,000
6	Establish Environmental Committees in Local Communities	Executive	External	500,000
	Sub-Total			1,275,000
Strategic Objective 4: To Positively Change Public Environmental Behavior				
1	Inform, Educate, and Communicate with the Public	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
2	Sustained IEC Campaigns	Intersectorial	External	250,000
3	Demonstrating Environmental Impacts:	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
4	Behavioral Correction Initiatives	Intersectorial and C&E	External	250,000
5	Community Mobilization	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
6	Train Media Personnel	Intersectorial	External	250,000
7	Curriculum Development	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
8	Motivation for Specialization	Intersectorial	External	250,000
9	Periodic Workshops	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
10	Undertake Door-to-Door Campaigns in Communities	Intersectorial	External	250,000
11	Utilizing Student Volunteers	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000

12	Educational Materials Distribution	Intersectorial	External	250,000
13	Implement Routine Environmental Talks in Schools	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
14	Curriculum Integration	Intersectorial	External	250,000
15	Motivational Speaking Events	Intersectorial	Internal	250,000
16	Environmental Club	Intersectorial	External	250,000
	Sub-Total			4,000,000
	Sub-Total for Internal			3,525,000
	Sub-Total for External			3,885,000
	PILLAR 3: SUB-TOTAL			7,410,000
PILLAR FOUR: COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT				
Strategic Objective 1: Develop Comprehensive Environmental Standards, Regulations, and Guidelines				
1	Develop Environmental Standards for the Sectors	C&E and ERRS	Internal	120,000
2	Formulate Regulations and Guidelines for Sector-Specific Areas	C&E and ERRS	Internal and External	250,000
3	Update and Expand ESIA's	C&E	Internal and External	150,000
	Sub-Total			520,000
Strategic Objective 2: Modernize EPA processes through digitization and automation.				
1	Digital Platforms for ESIA	C&E	External	50,000
2	Regional Training	C&E	External	60,000
3	Transparency and Public Access	C&E	Internal	15,000
	Sub-Total			125,000
Strategic Objective 3: Automate ESIA Permitting Processes				
1	Workflow Automation	C&E	External	50,000

2	Tracking and Reporting	C&E	External	20,000
	Sub-Total			70,000
Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen Field Operations for Monitoring Compliance				
1	Hire Additional Field Personnel	Administration	External	0
2	Enhance Logistical Support	Administration	External	300,000
3	Strengthen Administrative Support Services	Administration	Internal	0
4	Ongoing Human Capacity Building	Administration	Internal	0
5	Complete Decentralization of Field Monitoring Structures	C&E and ERRS	Internal and External	200,000
	Sub-Total			500,000
Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Process				
1	Revisit and Update the ESIA Fees Regime	C&E	Internal	25,000.00
2	Decentralize the ESIA Process Across the Country	C&E	Internal	100,000.00
3	Promote Awareness of the ESIA Process	Intersectorial	External and Internal	50,000.00
4	Introduce the ESIA Process as a Course at Colleges and Universities	C&E	External	100,000.00
	Sub-Total			275,000.00
Strategic Objective 6: Attaining ISO Accreditation for the Monitoring and Compliance Laboratory				
1	Improve Laboratory Workspace	ERRS	Internal	75000
2	Procure Advanced Analytical Equipment	ERRS	Internal	175000
3	Provide Ongoing Staff Training and Skill Upgradation	ERRS	Internal	60000
	Sub-Total			31,0000
	Sub-Total for Internal			895,000
	Sub-Total for External			855,000

	PILLAR 4: SUB-TOTAL			1,750,000
PILLAR FIVE - INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS				
Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen Liberia's Adherence to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)				
1	Domesticate Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)	MEAs and Planning and Policy	External/Internal	500,000
2	Build Human and Institutional Capacities	MEAs and Planning and Policy	External/Internal	250,000
3	Institutional Strengthening	MEAs	External/Internal	150,000
	Sub-Total			900,000
Strategic objective 2: Ensure Compliance with Reporting Obligations				
1	Timely Reporting	Planning and Policy & MEAs	External/Internal	200,000
2	Dedicated Reporting Teams	Planning and Policy & MEAs	External/Internal	100,000
	Sub-Total			300,000
Strategic Objective 3: Regularize Participation in International For a				
1	Sustained International Engagement	MEAs	External/Internal	300,000
2	Networking and Collaboration	MEAs	External/Internal	75,000
3	Accession and Ratification	MEAs	External/Internal	75,000
4	Leveraging MEAs Membership	MEAs	Internal	50,000
	Sub-Total			500,000
Strategic Objective 4: To Effectively and Efficiently Manage International Environmental Projects Designated to Liberia				
1	Adhere to Implementing Agency Guidelines	MEAs and Planning and Policy	Internal	70,000
2	Undertake Proficient Program/Project Implementation	MEAs	Internal/External	250,000
3	Ensure Reliable Information Sharing	MEAs and Intersectorial	Internal	60,000
4	Undertake Impact Assessments of Programs/Projects	MEAs and Planning and Policy	Internal	80,000

	Sub-Total			460,000
Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Actions on Key International Environmental Issues				
1	Climate Change	MEAs	External/Internal	500,000
2	Biodiversity	MEAs	External/Internal	400,000
3	Ecosystem and Habitat Management	MEAs	External/Internal	350,000
	Sub-Total			1,250,000
Strategic Objective 6: Strengthen actions on key domestic environmental issues				
1	Chemicals and Hazardous material	ERRS	Internal	100,000
2	Wastes	C&E, MEAs and ERRS	External	100,000
3	Sustainable Resource utilization	MEAs	Internal & External	300,000
4	Wetlands	MEAs	External	50,000
	Sub-Total			550,000
Strategic Objective 7: Domestic Resource Generation Strategy				
1	Lobby for Additional Budgetary Support	Executive	Internal	100,000
2	Establish a National Climate Change Trust Fund	Executive	External	100,000
3	Establish a Green Tax	Executive	External	100,000
4	Activate the Conservation Trust Fund	Executive	External	100,000
5	Diversify and Strengthen the Collection of Fees	Intersectorial, C&E and ERRS	Internal	100,000
6	Enforce Laws and Regulations on Performance Bonds	Executive	Internal	100,000
	Sub-Total			700,000
Strategic Objective 8: Build Capacity to Mobilize External Environmental Resources				
1	Develop Project Proposals for External Funding	MEAs	External/Internal	250,000
2	Enhance Project Management Capabilities	MEAs	External/Internal	200,000

3	Ensure Accountability and Compliance in Financial Management	Executive and Administration	Internal	0
4	Monitor and Evaluate Project Impacts		Internal	0
Sub-Total				450,000
	Sub-Total for Internal			2,760,000
	Sub-Total for External			2,600,000
	PILLAR 5: SUB-TOTAL			5,360,000
	OVERALL TOTAL FOR INTERNAL			15,188,000
	OVERALL TOTAL FOR EXTERNAL			16,890,000
			GRAND TOTAL:	32,078,000



6.0 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: Strategic Objectives, Timelines, Responsible Department (s)

To effectively implement this Strategic Plan, a comprehensive implementation matrix has been developed. This matrix outlines several strategic objectives, delineating specific timelines and assigning responsibilities to relevant departments.

The strategic objectives target key areas requiring attention, such as enhancing regulatory frameworks, promoting sustainable practices, and improving community engagement in environmental initiatives. Each objective is coupled with a timeline to ensure accountability and track progress—these timelines vary in length depending on the complexity and scope of the objectives, potentially ranging from short-term goals of less than a year to long-term initiatives extending over several years.

Furthermore, the implementation matrix specifies the responsible departments, which may include divisions such as Policy Development, Compliance and Enforcement, Research, and Public Outreach. By clearly defining the timeline and responsible parties for each strategic objective, the EPA aims to create a structured approach that facilitates prompt action, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts across departments, ultimately enhancing the agency's effectiveness in achieving its strategic goals.

To summarize, this implementation matrix serves as a tool for operationalizing the EPA's Strategic Plan, ensuring that objectives are pursued systematically and efficiently, leveraging departmental strengths to foster a healthier environment.

The table below indicates departments and the colours used in shading the timeframe for implementation.

Executive	
Administration	
Finance	
C&E	
MEAs	
Planning & Policy	
ERRS	
Intersectoral	

PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT							
Strategic Objectives 1: Decentralization - Establish and operationalize EPA offices, committees, and laboratories in all 15 counties							
NO.	KEY ACTIVITIES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT (S)
1	Site Selection and Development						Administration
2	Staffing and Training						Administration, ERRS and C&E
3	Resource Allocation						Executive
Strategic Objective 2: Form and Operationalize Environmental Committees in All Counties							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)

1	County Environmental Committees						Executive
2	Training and Capacity Building						C&E, Planning & Policy and Administration
3	Operational Guidelines						C&E and ERRS
Strategic Objective 3: Set Up Four (4) Regional and One Central Research and Radiation Safety Laboratories:							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Laboratory Locations and Construction						ERRS and Amin
2	Staff Recruitment and Training						Administration
3	Operational Framework						ERRS
Strategic Objective 4: Create a Centralized Environmental Registry							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Data Collection and Integration						ERRS, C&E and Planning & Policy
2	Digital Platform Development						C&E,ERRS and Administration
3	Public Awareness and Access						Interpectoral
Strategic Objective 5: Conduct and Implement Effective Personnel Classification and Appraisal Systems							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)

1	Undertake a Personnel Inventory						Administration and Planning & Policy
2	Study CSA and Other Classification Models						Administration
3	Provide Internal Orientation on Classification and Appraisal Schemes						Planning & Policy
4	Conduct Classification Regime						Planning and Policy and Administration
Strategic Objective 6: Develop and Implement an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanism							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Study National Examples of ADR Mechanisms						Planning and Policy
2	Undertake Benchmarking Studies of International ADR Mechanisms						Planning and Policy
3	Develop a Sector-Specific ADR Mechanism						Planning and Policy
4	Strengthen the Grievance Desk						Intersectoral and Executive
Strategic Objective 7: Strengthening Research, Policy, and Planning Capacities to Support Governance and Decision-Making							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)

1	Establish a Research Unit						Executive
2	Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit						Executive
3	Strengthen Policy Analysis Capabilities						Executive
4	Strengthen Institutional Planning Capabilities						Planning and Policy
5	Establish Partnerships with Learning and Research Institutions						Executive

Strategic Objective 8: Centralize Institutional Project Management Activities

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Establish a Centralized Project Management Unit (PMU)						Executive
2	Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff						Executive and Administration

PILLAR TWO: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Strategic Objective 1: To House the EPA in Its Own Modern, Custom-Designed, Furnished Headquarters

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
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1	Land Acquisition						Executive and Administration
2	Soil Testing						ERRS
3	Develop Architectural Design						Administration
4	Obtain Regulatory Approvals						Executive
5	Undertake Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)						C&E
6	Mobilize Requisite Funding						Executive
7	Hire Civil Engineering Consultant						Administration and Executive
8	Hire Construction Company						Administration and Executive
Strategic Objective 2: Enhance Human Capital and Increase Retention of Professional and Technical Staff							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Undertake a Comprehensive Manpower Needs Assessment						Planning & Policy and Administration
2	Prepare a Detailed Human Capital Development Program						Planning and Policy
3	Mobilize Resources and Implement the Human Capital Development Program						Executive

4	Develop a Transparent and Fair Incentive Regime						Administration and Executive
Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Environmental Reporting							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Develop a Management Information System (MIS)						Planning and Policy
2	Strengthen Internal Reporting						Planning and Policy
3	Address International Environmental Reporting Challenges						MEAs
4	Incorporate Reporting Elements from Other Sectors						Planning and Policy and MEAs
Strategic Objective 4: Centralize Institutional Financial Management Activities							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Establish a Centralized Financial Management Unit						Executive
2	Develop Organizational Structure and Recruit Competent Staff						Executive and Administration

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Implementation Capacity for Internationally Funded Projects							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Develop and Solicit a Technical Assistance Program						Planning and Policy
2	Establish Twinning Relationships with Advanced Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs)						Executive and MEAs
3	Establish a Study Tour Program						Executive & Planning and Policy
4	Forge Partnerships with Research Institutions						Executive & Planning and Policy
5	Enhance Technological Capabilities						Executive and Administration
PILLAR THREE: INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION (IEC) SERVICES							
Strategic Objective 1: Enhance Government Authorities' Understanding of Environmental Issues and the EPA's Role							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Engage the Cabinet						Executive
2	Engage the Legislature						Executive

3	Engage the Judiciary						Executive
4	Engage Local Governments						Executive
5	Expected Long-Term Impact						Executive
Strategic Objective 2: To Enhance Public Understanding of Environmental Issues and the Roles and Responsibilities of the EPA							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Establish a Communications Unit						Executive
2	Revise and Implement the Communications Strategy						Intersectorial
3	Enhance Environmental Education in Schools						Intersectorial
4	Engage Media Institutions						Intersectorial
5	Promote Environmental Activities Across Various Sectors						Intersectorial
Strategic Objective 3: To Increase Public Awareness of and Access to Environmental Information							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Employ All Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Vehicles						Intersectorial

2	Direct Public to the EPA Website and Resource Libraries						Intersectorial
3	Transmit IEC Messages in Simple Liberian English						Intersectorial
4	Transmit IEC Messages in Local Languages						Intersectorial
5	Establish Local Government Environment Committees						Executive
6	Establish Environmental Committees in Local Communities						Executive

Strategic Objective 3: To Increase Public Awareness of and Access to Environmental Information

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Employ All Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Vehicles						Intersectorial
2	Direct Public to the EPA Website and Resource Libraries						Intersectorial
3	Transmit IEC Messages in Simple Liberian English						Intersectorial

4	Transmit IEC Messages in Local Languages						Intersectoral
5	Establish Local Government Environment Committees						Executive
6	Establish Environmental Committees in Local Communities						Executive

Strategic Objective 4: To Positively Change Public Environmental Behavior

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Inform, Educate, and Communicate with the Public						Intersectoral
2	Sustained IEC Campaigns						Intersectoral
3	Demonstrating Environmental Impacts:						Intersectoral
4	Behavioral Correction Initiatives						Intersectoral and C&E
5	Community Mobilization						Intersectoral
6	Train Media Personnel						Intersectoral
7	Curriculum Development						Intersectoral
8	Motivation for Specialization						Intersectoral

9	Periodic Workshops						Intersectorial
10	Undertake Door-to-Door Campaigns in Communities						Intersectorial
11	Utilizing Student Volunteers						Intersectorial
12	Educational Materials Distribution						Intersectorial
13	Implement Routine Environmental Talks in Schools						Intersectorial
14	Curriculum Integration						Intersectorial
15	Motivational Speaking Events						Intersectorial
16	Environmental Club						Intersectorial

PILLAR FOUR: COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

Strategic Objective 1: Develop Comprehensive Environmental Standards, Regulations, and Guidelines

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Develop Environmental Standards for the Sectors						C&E and ERRS

2	Formulate Regulations and Guidelines for Sector-Specific Areas						C&E and ERRS
3	Update and Expand ESIA's						C&E
Strategic Objective 2: Modernize EPA processes through digitization and automation.							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Digital Platforms for ESIA						C&E
2	Regional Training						C&E
3	Transparency and Public Access						C&E
Strategic Objective 3: Automate ESIA Permitting Processes							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Workflow Automation						C&E
2	Tracking and Reporting						C&E
Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen Field Operations for Monitoring Compliance							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Hire Additional Field Personnel						Administration
2	Enhance Logistical Support						Administration

3	Strengthen Administrative Support Services						Administration
4	Ongoing Human Capacity Building						Administration
5	Complete Decentralization of Field Monitoring Structures						C&E and ERRS

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Process

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Revisit and Update the ESIA Fees Regime						C&E
2	Decentralize the ESIA Process Across the Country						C&E
3	Promote Awareness of the ESIA Process						Intersectorial
4	Introduce the ESIA Process as a Course at Colleges and Universities						C&E

Strategic Objective 6: Attaining ISO Accreditation for the Monitoring and Compliance Laboratory

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Improve Laboratory Workspace						ERRS

2	Procure Advanced Analytical Equipment							ERRS
3	Provide Ongoing Staff Training and Skill Upgradation							ERRS

PILLAR FIVE - INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen Liberia’s Adherence to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Domesticate Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)						MEAs and Planning and Policy
2	Build Human and Institutional Capacities						MEAs and Planning and Policy
3	Institutional Strengthening						MEAs

Strategic objective 2: Ensure Compliance with Reporting Obligations

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Timely Reporting						MEAs and Planning and Policy
2	Dedicated Reporting Teams						MEAs and Planning and Policy

Strategic Objective 3: Regularize Participation in International For a							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Sustained International Engagement						MEAs
2	Networking and Collaboration						MEAs
3	Accession and Ratification						MEAs
4	Leveraging MEAs Membership						MEAs
Strategic Objective 4: To Effectively and Efficiently Manage International Environmental Projects Designated to Liberia							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Adhere to Implementing Agency Guidelines						MEAs and Planning and Policy
2	Undertake Proficient Program/Project Implementation						MEAs
3	Ensure Reliable Information Sharing						MEAs and Intersectorial
4	Undertake Impact Assessments of Programs/Projects						MEAs and Planning and Policy
Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Actions on Key International Environmental Issues							

No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Climate Change						MEAs
2	Biodiversity						MEAs
3	Ecosystem and Habitat Management						MEAs
Strategic Objective 6: Strengthen actions on key domestic environmental issues							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Chemicals and Hazardous material						ERRS
2	Wastes						C&E, MEAs and ERRS
3	Sustainable Resource utilization						MEAs
4	Wetlands						MEAs
Strategic Objective 7: Domestic Resource Generation Strategy							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Lobby for Additional Budgetary Support						Executive
2	Establish a National Climate Change Trust Fund						Executive
3	Establish a Green Tax						Executive

4	Activate the Conservation Trust Fund						Executive
5	Diversify and Strengthen the Collection of Fees						Intersectorial, C&E and ERRS
6	Enforce Laws and Regulations on Performance Bonds						Executive
Strategic Objective 8: Build Capacity to Mobilize External Environmental Resources							
No.	Key Activities	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Responsible Department (s)
1	Develop Project Proposals for External Funding						MEAs
2	Enhance Project Management Capabilities						MEAs
3	Ensure Accountability and Compliance in Financial Management						Executive and Administration
4	Monitor and Evaluate Project Impacts						

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