



A rescued pangolin being returned back to the wild in the Atewa Forest, Eastern Region, Ghana. Credit: WA BiCC

WEST AFRICA BIODIVERSITY AND LOW EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT (WABILED)

The conservation and restoration of West Africa’s remaining tropical forests are crucial to maintain the region’s biological heritage for future generations, meet global carbon emissions reduction targets, and ultimately, reduce the extent and effects of climate change. While measurable progress has been made to reverse past trends, efforts have been hampered by constraints including limited intra-regional coordination and inadequate information and awareness at the general public and policy-maker levels. These challenges, among others, have hamstrung the scale and pace of action required to effectively address the threats to West Africa’s forests, biodiversity and economies.

OBJECTIVES

WABILED works with partners to strengthen the capacity of national and regional networks and institutions to enforce and prosecute wildlife trafficking laws across the region; implement regional and transboundary cooperation and biodiversity conservation strategies in the key forested countries of Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and improve capacity for economic planning and development of low emissions development strategies to reduce West Africa’s greenhouse gas emissions, thus contributing to national and global climate commitments.

The three core objectives of WABiLED are to:

- Support combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) and great ape conservation through improved regional coordination and operationalization of national and regional policies, laws, and regulations.
- Reduce deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss in key forests through technical and knowledge management support.
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase carbon sequestration from land use.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results under the WABiLED program are:

- Increased intra-regional coordination and capacity for the implementation of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)* law enforcement across West Africa.
- Strengthened national capacities for the improved management of protected areas, conservation of critical habitat, and management and disposition of confiscated wildlife and other products.
- Increased strategic private sector partnerships with CITES management authorities, law enforcement and other relevant entities and organizations at the regional, national, and local level.
- Strengthened collaboration among the MRU states for effective natural resource governance that supports both regional policy goals and transboundary forest landscape management.
- Increased protection and management for transboundary forest landscapes and the wildlife that live in them, with a focus on West African chimpanzees.
- Community-identified and enhanced rural livelihoods opportunities that generate income and support sustainable management of forests for timber and non-timber forest products.
- Support collaboration among stakeholders to improve management and conservation of forests that increases carbon sequestration, reduces emissions, while also forging synergies with ongoing programs and projects and incentivizing community-based natural resource management efforts.
- Improved tenure security, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, and other incentives for low emissions land management of protected areas, community resources, and private investments.
- Enhanced responsible land-based private sector investment and innovation to develop and strengthen the value chains of NFTP that support ecosystem services, climate resilience, and social equity.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Goal: PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT, LOW EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA

Life of Program: July 2021 – July 2025

Total USAID Funding: \$49 Million

Geographic Focus: West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Implementing Partners: Tetra Tech ARD, with Winrock International, Born Free USA, TRAFFIC, Re:wild, and Dalberg Advisors