USAID | WEST AFRICA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FACT SHEET

Sustainable & Thriving Environments for West Africa Regional Development Phase III (STEWARD)

STEWARD
Saving Forests Together

Goal:
Conserve biodiversity in the Upper Guinean Tropical Forest

Life of Program:
October 2011 – March 2016

Total USAID Funding:
U.S. $18 million

Geographic Focus:
Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

West African Partner:
Mano River Union

Implementing Partners:
U.S. Forest Service, International Programs, lead implementing partner with:

- CARE
- Population Communications International (PCI) Media Impact
- Bio Climate
- Auder

Background:
There is a growing concern in the international community about the need to preserve West Africa's ecosystems. The Upper Guinean Forest has an estimated 9,000 species of plants. Of these, 2,250 (25 percent) are believed to be endemic. However, this forest is highly degraded, having experienced dramatic encroachment by expanding human activities and fragmentation that has reduced the forest to approximately 15 percent of its original coverage. Only an estimated 20,000 km^2 of the land is protected under national parks and reserves.

Project Description:
STEWARD was conceptualized in 2005/2006 as USAID's regional program for conserving biodiversity in the Upper Guinean Tropical Forest. Currently, STEWARD is in its third phase of implementation.

Program Objectives:
Expanding on the results from STEWARD Phases I & II, the primary objectives of STEWARD Phase III is to:

- Promote sustainable livelihoods in communities adjacent to forests and within buffer zones.
- Assist in the development and implementation of forest management plans on community lands and in protected areas to promote biodiversity conservation.
- Develop climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene systems and services among rural populations.
- Monitor program impact on land use and land cover change using remote sensing and satellite image analyses.
- Develop viable payment for ecosystem service models including carbon finance.
- Develop viable and sustainable non-timber forest product value chains.
- Improve policy and legal frameworks for natural resources management, biodiversity conservation and climate change.