

2.7. Sustainability and Replicability

Sustainability

1. The concept of sustainability in climate change adaptation projects is different than in other types of GEF-funded projects. The reason for this is that adaptation projects seek to raise adaptive capacity to long-term climate change. Raised adaptive capacity implies, fundamentally, sustainability. That is, the project's very *raison d'être* is sustainability and this is central to its strategy and approach.
2. In addition, the project has the following elements to increase sustainability:

Ecological Sustainability

3. Given that an overall aim of the project is to improve sustainable resource use in order to help manage coastal resources and coastal ecosystems, all elements of the project approach should contribute to ecological sustainability. By maintaining ecological balance and supporting integrated management, the project should directly contribute to ecological sustainability. Moreover, in at least one site, the project aims to make a major contribution to conserving mangroves. Finally, the project will build capacity for sustainable resource use at both county and national level.

Institutional Sustainability

4. This is important at both local and national levels. At local levels, the main measures in the project design to achieve this are: training for local people; supporting existing agencies and experts; empowering communities and county decision-makers; developing capacity to undertake income revenue activities, and; strengthening existing consultation and decision-making structures. The project will build into existing organisations (County government) and processes (e.g. County Development Agenda).
5. At the national and county levels, although the stakeholders and issues are different, the approach to assure institutional sustainability is the same. There will be important awareness raising to secure political commitment, and the direct involvement of several Ministries (MLME, MPW, MIA, and EPA) can help ensure that commitment – as will the dedication of the MPEA. Moreover, there will be significant training to ensure that qualified personnel remain active after the project. In addition, all project activities will be designed/approved through the use of existing consultation and decision-making structures, and all activities will be an integral part of existing (approved) development and sectorial plans.
6. The project builds into ongoing initiatives to develop integrated coastal zone management and coastal protection namely the GoL/UNDP/LDCF project “Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas to Climate Change Risks in Liberia”. Finally, the project aims to leave behind a strong cadre of experts able to plan, design, build, and monitor coastal protection measures. This cadre will be able to sustain project impacts after the project has been completed. In particular, the project efforts to build up university teaching capacity aims to firmly achieve sustainability.

Financial/Economic Sustainability

7. This is a particular challenge. Although many coastal protection measures are low cost or no-cost, many others are high to medium cost. Moreover, many coastal protection measures require ongoing maintenance, which can only be achieved if there is sufficient local organisational capacity.
8. The project will take many steps to achieve financial and economic sustainability. First, the measures to be demonstrated are to be achieved at costs which are largely affordable in Liberia. By building capacity to undertake all steps in constructing these measures locally, this will further lower the cost of these measures – all capacity will be available locally. Further, the project will build local organisational capacity to demonstrate that, in the complex Liberian context, communities can maintain the physical constructions.
9. Another step taken by the project is to build capacity in the County of Montserrado to mobilise financial resources to coastal protection. Elements of this include (i) strengthening data and information management capacity, so that future designs can be improved and better targeted; and (ii) developing capacity to prepare proposals and designs, notably economic analysis capacity.
10. It is important to note that the ‘*demonstration*’ aspect of the project has implications for sustainability. In part, the project aims to demonstrate innovation, and to capture lessons learnt. Both of these are processes which require financing. Once something has been ‘demonstrated’, it does not require demonstrating again, so the costs associated with demonstration can be one-off (and do not need to be recovered).

Replicability

11. Climate change adaptation is at a very early stage of development in Liberia – this is perhaps the first project in this sector in the country. This project can therefore identify new and innovative mechanism for adaptation to climate change in coastal areas and coastal protection. These mechanisms may be of interest to other countries facing similar challenges. Accordingly, this project is explicitly designed to facilitate the replication of successes and lessons learnt. The strategy for this replication is two-fold:
 - First, the project will demonstrate adaptation in a range of situations. This will lead to the generation of a sizeable body of lessons and experience;
 - Also, the project will document and actively and strategically disseminate the lessons learnt from its implementation. Replication is envisaged to cover: other communities along the Liberian coast as well as in other West African countries and even internationally. A range of inputs and activities will be organised under Outcome 2 to actively ensure this replication.
12. The project will make use of the GEF ALM to ensure that the lessons learnt from the project contribute to, and benefit from, experience in adapting to climate change across the whole of the GEF portfolio.