## BASIC INFORMATION

### A. Basic Project Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Parent Project ID (if any)</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>P172012</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberia Sustainable Management of Fisheries (P172012)</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Estimated Board Date</th>
<th>Practice Area (Lead)</th>
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<td>Oct 30, 2020</td>
<td>Environment, Natural Resources &amp; the Blue Economy</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing Instrument</th>
<th>Borrower(s)</th>
<th>Implementing Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Project Financing</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance and Development</td>
<td>National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

Improve the management and utilization of selected fisheries.

### PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

#### SUMMARY

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Financing</td>
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<td>of which IBRD/IDA</td>
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<td>Financing Gap</td>
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#### DETAILS

**World Bank Group Financing**

| International Development Association (IDA) | 20.00       |
| IDA Credit                                  | 20.00       |

**Environmental and Social Risk Classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantial</th>
<th>Concept Review Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue</td>
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B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. Liberia’s economic performance over the last four decades has remained uneven, with marked deterioration in recent years. During 2004-2013, Liberia’s economy registered an average annual rate of 7.4 percent. The outbreak of the Ebola in 2014 and the sharp decline in global prices for iron ore and rubber disrupted the growth of the Liberian economy and real GDP growth slumped to 0.7 percent in that year and zero percent in 2015. The longer-than-expected terms of trade shocks, exacerbated by the draw-down of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeeping forces, pushed the economy into recession in 2016. An incipient recovery then ensued during 2017-2018, which has since proved to be tepid and short-lived. Liberia’s economy is projected to contract by 1.4 percent in 2019, owing principally to weak macroeconomic management and delayed policy responses to growing macroeconomic imbalances, stalled structural reforms, weak governance and low capacity. After 18 months of slow and insufficient policy response to the deterioration in economic conditions, the Government has now expressed its firm commitment to implementing policies that will ensure macroeconomic stability and improve public service delivery and return Liberia to a sustainable and inclusive growth path, including through engaging with development partners to unlock external financing.

2. The 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HEIS) estimated Liberia’s national poverty rate at 50.9 percent, with 40.9 percent of the population living under the international poverty line of US$1.9/day in 2011 purchasing-power parity (PPP) terms. By 2017-2018 the PPP had sunk to 42.4 percent as a result of negative per capita GDP growth rates. Non-monetary poverty indicators, including access to healthcare, education, and basic utility services are also low by regional and international standards, with especially acute rural-urban and gender disparities. Significant urban-rural, and gender disparities in poverty rates are driven, inter alia, by unequal access to land and other productive assets, infrastructure and public services, and markets for both goods and labor. Human development indicators for Liberia are among the lowest in the world: Liberia ranks 177 out of 188 countries evaluated by the latest United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index in 2016, and access to basic services is very limited. Liberia is also a fragile state, emerging from past conflicts and the recent Ebola epidemics that resulted in the erosion of some important gains made in reducing poverty and vulnerability. Liberia is heavily dependent on foreign investment and imports, leaving it highly vulnerable to international markets fluctuations.

3. Like in many economies of West Africa coastal countries, Liberia and its populations are heavily dependent on the health of the marine and coastal environment – a common and shared asset of the region. The coastal economy and population directly benefit from the goods and services that the marine and coastal environment provides, and extractive industries of renewable and non-renewable natural resources (e.g., fish, oil and gas) are a major source of income to Liberia and rural households. Important ecosystem benefits provided by the coastal and marine environment include natural coastal protection, climate regulation, carbon storage and biodiversity. Liberia has a long coastline of 570 kilometers with a continental shelf supporting marine fish resources that could make a significant contribution to local economic growth. Liberia has a continental shelf averaging of 34 km in width, affording an area of about 20,000 km² of fishing ground extending to 200 nautical miles, and the coastal area is home to some 58 percent of the population.

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1 Coastal area is defined as an area between 50 m below mean sea level and 50 m above the high tide level or extending landward to a distance 100 km from shore. Source: United Nations Millennium Assessment. This definition also applies to coastal states.

2 http://www.fcwc-fish.org/about-us/member-countries/76-liberia
Although per capita fish consumption is relatively low compared to the world average, fish contributes to the animal protein needs of an estimated 80 percent of the total population.\textsuperscript{3}

4. The marine and coastal environment provides opportunities for growth as fisheries are inherently shared and represent a large asset to Liberia. Migratory stocks such as high value tuna stocks and other pelagic fisheries stocks migrate through the waters of West African nations and together with non-migratory stocks are targeted by both local artisanal and foreign fleets. Through better management decisions for healthier and more productive fish stocks, less overcapitalization of the industry, and more value added locally, Liberia will be in a better position to help reduce poverty in coastal countries and supply nutritious food to the continent.

5. Liberia is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and more frequent and severe extreme weather events directly threaten coastal population in Liberia and elsewhere along the West African coast. Rising ocean temperature, acidification and changes in currents affect both the quantity and distribution of the fish species. Coastal mangroves provide natural protection (‘green infrastructure’) against winds and waves to prevent erosion and floods. They are also critical habitat for fish. However, mangroves are under constant threat from coastal communities’ energy needs for cooking and smoking fish. Thus, conservation of natural assets such as coastal mangrove and sea grass bed contributes to the physical resilience of coastal communities and ensures the replenishment of fish stocks. Furthermore, due to expected shifts in the distribution of fish species in response to higher water temperatures, and a decrease in net primary productivity, Liberia’s total annual landings are expected to be reduced by around 50 percent by the 2050s (IUCN Report, 2016). Better managed fisheries can help enhance the capital resilience of Liberia by providing better income and awareness for the local communities. Better equipment for the fishing vessels such as life jacket and Automatic Information System (AIS) can help improve safety at sea. Climate smart coastal infrastructure can help mitigate severe weather damage risk. Environmental protection and sustainable management of fisheries, therefore, must be addressed as part of an integrated effort toward sustainable and inclusive growth.

**Sectoral and Institutional Context**

6. The coastal counties of Liberia are endowed with some of the richest fishing grounds in the world, contributing in a significant way to people’s livelihoods, nutrition and the overall economies. Fisheries currently represent at least 10 percent of Liberia national GDP. The fisheries sector directly and indirectly employs more than 3 million people throughout coastal West Africa. In Liberia, the sector provides a means of employment and livelihood for about 11,250 people who are engaged on a full-time basis, and perhaps hundreds of thousands more on a part-time basis.\textsuperscript{4} During the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, fish was the main source of food when the agriculture sector almost collapsed. Ensuring the productivity of the fishery sector and reducing post-harvest loss can help contribute to both the food security and value generation agenda.

7. Despite the importance of Liberia’s marine fisheries, this industry has been seriously underperforming over the last twenty years due to biological and economic overfishing. As a result, overall fish stocks are dwindling, and the fishing industry is not profitable. Overfishing is mainly the result of poor fisheries governance and management as well as Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, costing the Liberia and the West Africa region an estimated US$1.3 billion in lost legal revenues a year.\textsuperscript{5} Overfishing in the region is consistent with global trends; it is estimated\textsuperscript{6} that aggregate fishing

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effort would need to be reduced by over 50 percent to reach a profit-maximizing equilibrium, which would allow additional 1.9 million tons of catch per year and an increase in profits from US$0.3 billion in 2012 to US$10.3 billion annually in perpetuity.\footnote{World Bank (forthcoming). \textit{The Sunken Billions Revisited: Progress and Challenges in Global Marine Fisheries.}} During WARF-P Phase I, registration for canoe sectors was completed, but the licensing scheme was only introduced in the industrial and semi-industrial sectors. How to control new entrants, reduce existing fishing effort among all the sectors is critical to move the sector forward towards a more ecological, social, and economically sustainable manner.

8. **The profitability of the seafood industry in Liberia is also limited by poor post-harvest practices.** Like in many countries in the region, poor handling practices, both on board and on shore, result in losses in the quantity and quality of products. Globally, a third of reported catches is said to be wasted in various parts of the seafood value chain. Adopting simple measures to preserve catches onboard vessels and along the value-chain could reduce spoilage and increase the value of catches. Improving marketing practices can help fishers obtain better prices. Investments in post-harvest practices, specifically, in the reduction of post-harvest losses, could increase the value of fish production without catching more fish, thereby improving national and local food security and safety.

9. **Aquaculture has increasing demand from Liberia and other West Africa countries.** Aquaculture is currently estimated to account for approximately 13 percent (10.2 million tons) of world fish production. Local and international demand for fish products is expected to continue increasing, creating additional pressure on the resources. Farming fish as a source of income and food has only recently begun to be exploited in Liberia and other West Africa countries, but holds a great yet untapped potential because of its suitable natural environment and the relatively stable political climate in Liberia currently. In Liberia, the capacity is low from the hatchery facilities for fingerlings, to feed supply and farming equipment and technology. However, some pilots on tilapia, and other species are ongoing. It is important to support research on business model development, suitable species identification, and demonstration farm establishment for Liberia and coastal counties so both the public and private sector can benefit from it and develop their investment strategy accordingly.

10. **Under the West Africa Regional Fisheries Program (WARF-P) funded by the World Bank, Liberia developed Inshore Exclusive Zone (IEZ) for artisanal fishermen, and drafted the enabling legislation; completed registration of small-scale fishing fleets; achieved improvements in the national fishing fleet licensing policies in a number of fisheries and an overall enhancement in licensing transparency; improved monitoring capabilities by putting in place a satellite-based vessel monitoring system for industrial fleets; increased sea patrols to combat illegal fishing; and witnessed official recognition of community fisheries management rights in a number of pilot sites.** To date just a single Community Managed Association (CMA) was set up in Liberia. Based on an evaluation of by using Fishery Performance Indicators (FPIs) in a sample community in Liberia, WARF-P has helped the country to achieve better performance in social, economic, and ecological dimensions, which is also verified from the interview of the local fishing communities. Overall, the WARF-P had a particular impact on the levels of illegal fishing in Liberia, with the rate of infractions declining by over 50 percent. As a result, on a localized basis, fishing communities in Liberia have started to see the resource base rebuild and productivity increase (Figure 1).
11. **With the WARF-P closed, Liberia requires continued support to maintain the positive results achieved, and scale up the effort at the regional, national and community levels.** In fact, Liberia is merely at the beginning of the long-term process normally needed to transition into sustainable management systems of the fisheries sector. Liberia needs to expand its policy reforms and adequately manage its fishing capacity and fishing activities in the small-scale segment. At the community level, it is key to obtain full and active engagement of fishing communities in policy design and certain fisheries management activities (e.g., access control and surveillance) in promoting good practices at the community level.

12. **The proposed project will integrate lessons learned from earlier projects within and outside the WARF-P.** At the regional, national, and community levels, the WARF-P gained a wealth of experience and observations from which the new project can learn. First of all, tangible progress in combatting IUU fishing in Liberia and other West African countries was achieved as the first step in governance reform, with most of the WARF-P’s targets met if not exceeded – though this still requires continued effort and investment to be sustained. WARF-P had to acknowledge that many West African states simply lacked the capacity to deliver fisheries governance reform at the spatial scales needed, but also that community management pilots managed to effectively change rules to limit fishing effort and increase overall benefits. Overall, government officials often were unwilling to pursue reforms that would affect easy revenues and possible vested interests.

13. The proposed project aims to look for additional incentives to support reforms and performance, learning from the good experience of using disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) in the WARF-P projects in Guinea and Mauritania. The proposal is to use DLIs to improve the rigor and transparency in the project M&E processes and to enhance ownership of the project and motivations for delivering results by the client countries. Liberia will be required to publish specified fisheries management information for the disbursement of portions of the credit. In conjunction with the DLI mechanism, the project will also adopt a “training-for-results” approach, where well performing key civil servants receive specific training upon meeting a set of criteria of DLIs. As most African civil servants have a genuine eagerness for receiving training as a path for career development, it is expected to be a highly effective incentive.

14. **With proper governance and careful planning, the fisheries sector could generate significantly greater economic benefits.** Successful efforts to control illegal industrial trawlers within Liberian territorial waters gave confidence to the EU to sign a five-year partnership agreement on tuna fisheries. Under this agreement, Liberia can receive an annual license fee and catch bonus from its industrial pelagic fishery subsector, which previously provided little benefit to the country. The agreement boosted the annual revenue of the Bureau of National Fisheries (BNF) to about US$2.6 million in 2016, or 30 times its 2006-2010 average. The composition of revenue also shifted from primarily fines to primarily license fees, indicating a positive trend toward financial sustainability. The healthy status of Liberia’s fish stocks provides a valuable opportunity to develop Liberia’s domestic industrial and semi-industrial fisheries. To seize this opportunity, the government needs to provide secure fishing rights, strong legal enforcement, and consistent stock monitoring and
surveillance, while fishery operators will need to utilize modern multi-purpose vessels and land selected products for processing.

Relationship to CPF

15. The proposed project is aligned with the FY19-FY24 Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Liberia and regional strategies and objectives and the countries’ IDA/IFC/MIGA engagement strategies.

16. **Country Partnership Framework (FY19-FY24):** Specifically, CPF Pillar 1 (Strengthening institutions and creating an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable growth) encompasses three objectives aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive growth. Objective 1 reflects the government’s emphasis on public-sector transparency and probity as a foundation for good governance. Objective 2 emphasizes the development of the rural economy outside land concessions, where most of the poor derive their livelihood from low-productivity farming. Objective 3 addresses the need to enhance the business climate for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to expand employment and income-generating opportunities in both the urban and rural economies and in the value chains that link them. The potential of Liberia’s agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors that account for over 60 percent of Liberia’s GDP and provide livelihoods for about two-thirds of the population remains largely untapped. The sector employs an estimated 15,000 fishermen, as well as an additional 25,000 fish processors and traders, and seafood provides at least 60 percent of national protein requirements. However, the sector operates far below its potential and faces significant governance and sustainability challenges. Expansion of employment opportunities, especially for the country’s large and growing cohort of young workers, can encourage more investment in value addition across the primary sector and boost the output of agriculture, agribusiness, fishing, and forestry and facilitate inclusive growth.

17. **Africa Strategic Framework:** The proposed project is very closely aligned with the Region’s priority areas of creating opportunities for growth and poverty reduction by boosting agricultural productivity and commercial farming; and building resilience and supporting growth. In particular, the project is aligned with the Strategic Priority of helping countries find sources of growth beyond minerals, oil and gas by filling knowledge gaps, removing policy constraints and identifying constraints to long term financing. The project will support these priorities by sustainably increasing the competitiveness of the West African fishing industries through governance reform and strengthening the enabling environment for private investment. Furthermore, as stated in the previous Country Partnership Strategies (CPSs), the Bank committed to support the promotion of competitive, sustainable and modern fisheries in both countries, through improved management and productivity of the sector, ultimately contributing to job creation and poverty reduction. Within this framework, the proposed project’s long-term development impact is to spur growth and promote poverty reduction by strengthening of the fisheries sector, addressing fragility and building resilience.

**Project Location**

18. The proposed project will be implemented with focus on the coastal communities covering the coastal counties in Liberia. However, in the case of promoting aquaculture development in the country, project areas could extend to other onshore parts of the country.

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8 Africa Region: Sustaining Growth and Fighting Poverty amid Rising Global Risks (Regional Update 2016)  
C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

19. The PDO of the proposed project is to improve the management and utilization of selected fisheries.

Key Results (From PCN)

20. The proposed PDO-level results indicators of the project are as follows:

   (1) Fisheries management plans developed and implemented (number) (corporate results indicator - CRI) (to be defined exactly what a fisheries management plan means).

   (2) Share of local population consulted in preparation of fisheries management plans (disaggregated by interest group and gender) (citizen engagement and gender indicators).

   (3) Number of women adopting improved fish smoking, drying and packaging technologies (citizen engagement and gender indicators).

   (4) Fishing effort in selected fisheries aligned with the precautionary principle (number of registered/authorized boats and vessels, tonnage, duration of license (month)/closed season (month)

   (5) Share of landings under improved practices at selected landing sites (%) (including 1. handling on boats/vessels and 2. On-shore handling and initial processing).

D. Concept Description

Component 1: Improving management of selected fisheries (US$2.5 million)

Sub-component 1.1. Institutional strengthening and capacity building

21. This sub-component will support ongoing reforms of key aspects of the sector’s institutional, policy and legislative regimes, and also strengthen and equip national and subnational fisheries institutions with capacity to sustainably manage the sector and fisheries resources. The component will also support enhancing cooperation and coordination mechanisms and capacity building across the various sector actors. Specifically, this component will support among others (i) the implementation of the Fisheries Bill and regulations; (ii) organizational reform of fisheries administration; (iii) the harmonization of fisheries policies and legislation (particularly those related to fishing licensing, close seasons, MPAs, etc.) with other sectoral policies; (iv) strengthening of National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) capacity through training of staff and improving the observer program; (v) specialized training on MCS technology, data sharing and analysis; (vi) enhancing functionality of national monitoring center; (vii) development and operationalization of a national fisheries information system (dashboard); (viii) improving the national vessel registry; (ix) peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and study tours/workshops/conferences/internships; (x) mobilize regional technical expertise to support the implementation of project-funded national and community-level activities; (xi) conducting fisheries stocks assessment in national waters to value the available resources and better planning of the balance between conservation and commercial fisheries sector development; (xii) formal training of NaFAA staff at M.Sc and Ph.D level; and (xiii) development and implementation of fisheries curriculum at the university of Liberia.

22. Aquaculture production holds a largely untapped potential for Liberia and other countries in the West Africa region. With a suitable natural environment, and a relatively stable political climate Liberia offers a potential investment destination for aquaculture. Thus, this sub-component will complement support received by Liberia from other financiers by supporting the development of policy and regulatory framework for sustainable aquaculture and improvement of capacity to support aquaculture. Project funds will be used to finance pilot aquaculture technology research, such as...
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catfish, cutlass fish, tilapia, and shellfish. Besides, the sub-component will support developing zoning strategy to help identify prone aquaculture areas along the coastline.

Sub-component 1.2. Improving management of selected fisheries

23. This sub-component will sustain and enhance the national fisheries reform results obtained during the WARF-P project and prepare Liberia for the long-term goal of sustainable fisheries sector growth led by the private sector and embracing stronger and sustained participation by fishing communities. The project will provide support towards the sustainable management of the sector and fisheries resources. Project funds would provide:

(a) Support to the management of fisheries resources and fleet through diverse interventions directed towards helping to (i) develop fishery management plans for selected fisheries; (ii) conduct stock assessment for selected fisheries; (iii) improve the inland fishery management. Also, the component will focus on the management of fleet by supporting (i) MCS’ activities such as vessels inspections at sea, at port, and beach combing; (ii) regularly publishing license information; (iii) developing infraction report and analysis template and generating newsletter or bulletin for management on a regular basis; (iii) piloting drones as a cost-efficient way to conduct MCS as the patrol boat running cost is very high; (iv) ensuring observer program 100% coverage with proper training and data collection; (v) strengthening registration, marking and licensing regime and improving its reliability and consistency; and (vi) piloting of alternative fishing vessels, gears and technologies.

(b) Support to community-led fisheries management. Under this pillar the project will seek to empower fishing communities with the capacity to better manage local fishery resources and become active participants in the process of inclusive and sustainable development. Specifically, this pillar will (i) support community-based fishery management by working with national and local fishermen associations or CMAs, facilitating their establishment and helping with bylaw development, rights recognition through policy and local authority, and empowering the local communities with skills and better knowledge; (ii) support the establishment of co-management and co-administration mechanisms between CMAs and LAFA; (iii) support an improvement on community surveillance as there are reported cases of fish smuggling without correct documentation in the border areas and illegal fishing activities in the artisanal sector; (iv) provide credit for alternative livelihood to reduce fishing effort; (v) conduct sensitization and awareness campaigns safety at sea, HIV/AIDS prevention, etc.; and (vi) undertake coastline management, including mangrove conservation, re-forestation and rehabilitation in coastal communities.

(c) Support to management of information on fisheries. This sub-component will (i) digitalize data collection and the supporting statistics system by using cellphone apps; (ii) scale-up the use of Automatic Identification System (AIS) technology, taking lessons from successful pilot applications carried out in Robertsport and West-Point in Liberia, to collect landing data on daily basis. Also, AIS technology can help improve safety at sea for small-scale fishing vessels and curtail IUU fishing by enabling monitoring activity at sea. In addition, the AIS Class B technology, can track fishing routes; and (iii) conduct VMS and AIS data analysis training and reporting.

Component 2: Improving handling of fish and fish products (US$15.0 million)

24. Sub-component 2.1. Strengthening national post-harvest value systems. This sub-component will support (i) procurement of fishing equipment and gears, including fiber glass semi-industrial vessels for piloting in 9 counties; (ii) expansion of the NaFAA office to create additional work space for project and NaFAA staff; (iii) construction/expansion of the fishery hub at the Mesurado pier which is under development in Monrovia to provide for a semi industrial and artisanal fish landing site with shore facilities for fish auction, processing and marketing, and provision for private sector investment
in ice production and chill storage. Facilities will include a quay, central fish market, processing area, landing pontons, ice plant, chill stores, etc.; (iv) finance fisheries landing site improvements are also planned at Buchanan, Greenville, River Cess and Harper; (v) other basic infrastructure construction or rehabilitation to provide better landing sites, markets, toilets, water facilities, and post-harvest processing facilities in selected communities; (vi) training and skills upgrading, and provision of financial and technical assistance to fishers, fish producers, handlers and processors, fishmongers and exporters on basic hygiene practices and sanitary procedures; (vii) value-addition to enhance market access and shelf-life; (viii) product branding and certifications to adhere to standards and sustainability requirements; (ix) facilitate the procurement of legal fishing materials through private business people; and (x) identifying needs, feasibility and development for suitable landing sites, ice making and cold storage facilities in selected fishing communities.

25. **Sub-component 2.2. Support focused on women.** As women are important players in the fisheries sector in Liberia, particularly in the post-harvest sector, the project will have specific activities to support women and women entrepreneurship development, including financial management such as (i) helping set up women associations to increase their voice as a stakeholder in the fisheries sector; (ii) providing training and demonstration on better product handling, especially in fish smoking and drying technology as well as packaging to enhance shelf-life; (iii) providing training in business development and book-keeping; (iv) adoption of improved smoking technologies; (v) providing micro-credit for women and women associations to implement their business ideas; (vi) developing women leadership skills; and (vii) improving the sanitary and hygiene conditions in the fishing communities.

**Component 3: Project management (US$2.5 million)**

26. This component will support the implementation, management, coordination and oversight of the proposed project, including establishing and implementing a simple and smart monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, and training of the implementing entities on applying the new World Bank’s environmental and social framework (ESF) and standards (ESS). Among others, this component will also finance the establishment and operations of project implementation units/entities (PIUs), including the salaries of staff hired to implement the proposed project. Furthermore, the component will provide funds for new and relevant studies identified and agreed during implementation of the project. Funds from this component can also be used to prepare follow on projects or additional financing.

**Project Preparation Advance (US$2.17 million)**

The Government will be submitting a request for a project preparatory advance (PPA) to finance a number of preparatory activities, including consultancy services and studies, non-consultancy services, operation and maintenance as well salaries of project staff. The estimate under the PPA amounts to US$2,169,516.00 and will be part of the total project envelope of US$20 million.

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<td>Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60</td>
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</tbody>
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Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts
CONTACT POINT

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