



Report on the Mid-Term Review of the Conservation Trust Fund's Strategic Plan

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ACRONYMS

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSSL	Conservation Society of Sierra Leone
CTF	Conservation Trust Fund
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EFA	Environmental Foundation for Africa
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental protection Agency
EU	European Union
FCC	Freetown City Council
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M&E	Monitory and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NMA	National Mineral Agency
NPAA	National Protected Area Authority
RAP-SL	Reptiles and Amphibians Programme Sierra Leone
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SP	Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Conservation Trust Fund's (CTF) Strategic Plan (SP). The review was conducted using a comprehensive methodology, including document analysis, stakeholder interviews, and field assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of CTF's governance, resource mobilization, strategic partnerships, and programme components.

The MTR employed a qualitative approach to gather and analyze data. Key stakeholders, including CTF staff, board members, and donors, were interviewed to gain diverse perspectives. Document analysis included reviewing the SP, and relevant legislative frameworks. Field assessments were conducted to observe project implementation and community impact firsthand.

Key Findings

Governance: The governance structure of CTF revealed significant gaps. Despite the pivotal role of the Board of Trustees, issues such as infrequent meetings and lack of strategic direction were evident. The Chairman has not convened a board meeting in over a year. While this remains a concern for effective oversight and decision-making, there is a need to reassess the composition of the Board to ensure gender diversity and inclusivity, as currently, it is predominantly male.

Resource Mobilization: Resource mobilization remains a critical challenge for CTF. Although a Resource Mobilization Manager was appointed, his tenure was short-lived, and subsequent efforts are yet to meet expectations. The absence of a robust fundraising strategy and technical capacity gaps contribute significantly to inadequate funding. During the last fiscal year, CTF raised an amount significantly below the target required to support the NPAA's annual programme budget, reflecting an urgent need for strategic improvement in this area.

Strategic Partnerships: CTF's approach to building and maintaining strategic partnerships has been suboptimal. The collaboration with NPAA has been strained, characterized by competitive rather than cooperative efforts in fundraising. This lack of synergy has led to duplication of efforts and inefficient resource use. However, CTF has engaged in some successful joint initiatives, such as the law enforcement project with Wetlands International, demonstrating the potential for effective partnerships when properly managed.

Programme: The implementation of programme components has been inconsistent. While some projects align well with national biodiversity conservation efforts, the overall execution of the SP is lacking. Internal capacity limitations, particularly in programme management and monitoring, have hampered progress. The need for comprehensive capacity-building initiatives is evident to ensure effective programme delivery and sustainability.

Conclusion

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Conservation Trust Fund's (CTF) SP highlights critical areas for improvement in governance, resource mobilization, collaboration with the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), and overall organizational efficiency. It identifies the need to separate the roles of the Executive Chairman and the Board Chairman to avoid conflicts of interest, establish regular Board meetings, and develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy. Additionally, it underscores the importance of capacity building, improving communication and outreach, leveraging Board expertise, and fostering a collaborative approach with NPAA.

Commented [o1]: The board could not hold meeting in the last 1 year, because the reviewed act stipulates a new rearrangement of board members.

Commented [o2]: Not too sure of the findings on partnership, but realized that only NPAA is mentioned and our partnership drive goes beyond that. NPAA is not supposed to be included as partner rather they should be an implementing institution as by the NPAA and CTF Act

Commented [o3]: This is clearly indicated in the NPAA and CTF act and any proposed changes will have to go through a review process

Considering the proposed recommendations, CTF can enhance its ability to support environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management effectively.

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following targeted actions are recommended to reinforce CTF's governance structure, boost fundraising efforts, build robust partnerships, and ensure effective programme execution.

- For Governance, it is recommended to reassess and diversify Board composition to include more gender-balanced representation, regularize Board meetings and ensure active participation, and strengthen the strategic oversight role of the Board
- In Resource Mobilization, a comprehensive fundraising strategy should be developed, coupled with capacity-building initiatives for staff and collaboration with NPAA to avoid competition.
- Partnerships should focus on strengthening stakeholder relations through transparent communication, promoting joint initiatives, and expanding CTF's network and influence.
- Programme recommendations include prioritizing the implementation of the strategic plan, aligning programmes with strategic goals, and enhancing public awareness and engagement through robust communication strategies.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) is an independent institution mandated to provide sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation and wildlife management in Sierra Leone. Functioning as an intermediary between funding agencies and implementing partners, the CTF operates as a multi-funded entity managing various financial streams such as endowments, grants, and revolving funds. It serves as a cornerstone in the nation's commitment to sustainable biodiversity conservation and wildlife management. The primary objective of CTF is poverty reduction through the effective financing of conservation activities carried out by the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA). Unlike directly implementing conservation initiatives, the CTF focuses on resource mobilization, ensuring optimal funding utilization, and fostering strategic partnerships to safeguard Sierra Leone's diverse ecosystems.

Logically, the success of the CTF is intricately tied to its organizational structures, resource mobilization mechanisms, programme development, and strategic partnerships. However, it should be emphasized that the CTF's foundations include its role as a sustainable financing institution, responding to the high demand for resources from conservation partners. Effective resource management by the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), coordination of diverse stakeholders expressing interest in conservation, and crucially, the support and commitment of the government are integral components for the CTF's establishment and continued success.

As we delve into the mid-term review, understanding these preconditions is vital for assessing the CTF's effectiveness and its ongoing contribution to biodiversity conservation and wildlife management in Sierra Leone. The CTF plays a pivotal role in shaping Sierra Leone's environmental landscape in its pursuit of biodiversity conservation and wildlife management. At the core of its strategic direction is the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive framework delineating its mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies in alignment with key national

development aspirations, policies, and legal frameworks. Embedded within its SP are the principles that steer its actions, reflecting a commitment to excellence, sustainability, and responsiveness to emerging challenges.

As critical juncture in the institution's trajectory, the midterm review (MTR) aims not only to assess the progress and effectiveness of the SP but also to chart a course for its enhanced impact and sustainability. This MTR is therefore, both a reflection of the CTF's ongoing dedication and a proactive response to the dynamic environmental context. It stands as a testament to the CTF's commitment to adaptive management, ensuring that its goals, objectives and strategies resonate with evolving national priorities. The focus of the MTR extends beyond a mere assessment of past performance and we recognize the SP as a living document, responsive to the pulse of Sierra Leone's conservation needs. In this spirit, the review incorporates the emerging issues of paramount importance: the "Feed Salone" initiative, Climate Change, and Environment Protection.

1.2. Objectives and Scope

The overarching objective of this MTR is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the CTF's Strategic Plan. By doing so, the exercise aims to assess the institution's progress in achieving its strategic objectives, aligning with national priorities, and overcoming challenges encountered during the first half of the SP's implementation. Specific objectives guiding this review include:

- i. Assess the CTF's performance against the strategic objectives outlined in the plan.
- ii. Evaluate the alignment of the CTF's strategies with the evolving needs and priorities of Sierra Leone's conservation and environmental landscape.
- iii. Identify challenges, risks, and opportunities encountered during the implementation of the plan.
- iv. Provide actionable recommendations for adjustments, improvements, and focus areas to address emerging issues, including climate change, the "Feed Salone" food security initiative, and other evolving priorities.

This MTR endeavours to capture the multifaceted dimensions of the CTF's operations and strategic plan. The scope of the review encompasses an assessment of progress made towards strategic objectives; evaluation of resource mobilization, and funding sources; analysis of stakeholder engagement strategies and partnerships; examination of community-based conservation efforts and involvement; assessment of alignment with national development goals, policies, and legal frameworks; and identification of challenges, and opportunities encountered during the implementation of the SP. In the addition, study attempted to evaluate the extent to which emerging issues can be seamlessly incorporated into the second half of the strategic plan's implementation for increased viability and donor-friendliness.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach to data collection and analysis was applied to conduct the mid-term review. The methodology aims to provide an understanding of the CTF's progress, effectiveness, and alignment with its strategic objectives. Starting with document review, the consulting conducted a thorough review of CTF's internal documents including the SP and the Act to gain insights into the organization's historical performance, challenges, and achievements.

Interviews, roundtables, and group discussions were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders, including CTF Board and staff members, implementing, and funding partners. Through the individual and group interviews,

the review team captured a broad spectrum of perspectives, insights, and feedback related to the Strategic Plan's implementation.

Site visits were undertaken to selected project sites and protected areas as the on-the-ground approach which allowed for firsthand observation of implementation activities, community engagement, and real effort of conservation initiatives in sample communities.

An analysis mainly qualitative was performed thematically to produce this report. This includes scrutinizing overall performance metrics and assessing progress toward strategic objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. A stratified purposive sampling technique was used with the Board, Staff, and partners being the strata engaged in interviews and discussions leading to the information presented in this report. Respondents and key informants were carefully selected from these categories considering the following criteria:

- i. Knowledge of CTF's work,
- ii. Working having bearing with CTF
- iii. Interaction with CTF during the time under review
- iv. Expert knowledge of the subject matter

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

3.1. Governance

Governance in the context of conservation focuses on providing for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote co-operative governance, and procedures for coordinating environmental functions exercised by MDAs. The governance (structure and system) of the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) came into being with the enactment of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) and the CTF Act of 2012. According to the Act, the CTF shall be administered by a Board of Trustees (BoT) consisting of a Chairman and not less than five members appointed by the Minister by notice published in the Gazette. A critical review of the same Act shows that the utmost duty of the Board of Trustees is to protect CTF's best interest through decisions made on its behalf. The review further reveals that it plays a critical role in overseeing and safeguarding CTF's interests, making decisions that impact its mission, financial stability, and overall performance.

In assessing the governance aspect of CTF's strategic plan, the review team examined the goal set out in the SP, which is to strengthen participatory governance by increasing support to community conservancies. With this goal the CTF aims to take a holistic, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder approach to governance, which considers working with NPAA to ensure community conservancies scale up the inclusion of women and youth in environmental management.

Effective governance is crucial for the success of CTF as a financial mechanism established to provide long-term, sustainable funding for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Key elements and best practices for governance in CTF include a clear legal framework, Board of Trustees, staff management, strategic planning, and financial management. According to the Act, the Board of Trustees is mandated by law to provide overall guidance, stewardship, direction, and support to the work of CTF. Even though there is a strong sense of responsibility at least among the Board members interviewed, what the review found portrays a major lapse revolving around the structure and function of the Board of Trustees.

Commented [o4]: 2022 as amended

Commented [o5]: The 2022 act states 1 plus 4 the executive chairman included

The Governance Structure

As provided for by the Act, the Executive Chairman responsible for the day-to-day running of CTF also serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. If the Chairman of the Board is responsible for the running of the CTF, he remains with absolute authority that raises concerns on checks and balances. Best practices recommend separating the roles of Board Chair and Executive leadership to ensure independent oversight and accountability. While the Act determines the Board's composition, there might be opportunities to advocate for amendments that allow more flexibility in achieving a diverse and representative Board. In a closed interview, one of the Board members pointed out the anomaly of the Executive Chair of CTF also serving as the Board Chairman. Notwithstanding, this arrangement as well as the Board's gender composition is dictated by the Act, suggesting limitations in altering its setup.

Commented [o6]: This is in consonant with the act and can only be altered through a review of the act

What was also intriguing to note, is having the Human Resource Manager sits in Board meetings serving as a note-taker, even though she is a non-member of the Board. Having two active staff members, including the Executive Chairman, on the Board could lead to conflicts of interest. The Chairman of the organization also serving as the Chairman of the Board appears unusual and may hinder independent oversight. This implies that the Executive Chairman is not answerable to the Board. Rather, interviews with the Board Chairman reveals that he reports to the Minister of the Environment as direct report who is not a member of the Board.

Commented [o7]: The HR seats on the board as note taker for convenience and she is not taking part in neither the discussion nor decision making

More of a concern is that the composition of the board is not gender-sensitive. Presumably, the role of individuals and not their gender, was considered to determine who should be on the Board of Trustees. The low representation of women on the Board is concerning. Although it was established by the Act, striving for gender balance can enhance the diversity of perspectives and decision-making quality. The lack of clarity on community representation, particularly women and youth, suggests a need for greater inclusivity as per the strategic plan.

The Board Performance

The Board has supported strategic development, recruitment of resource mobilization personnel stakeholder engagement, and provided guidance on focus areas. The review shows that it has facilitated connections with key stakeholders like the EU and UNDP. While the engagement with key stakeholders indicates networking, the Board's active involvement in strategic and operational support shows its commitment to the organization's mission. According to key members of the Board interviewed individually, the Board has not been very active in carrying out its mandate. An instance cited to this effect is that fact that the Board does not meet as often as planned, the last meeting being held over a year ago. The inability to meet regularly as planned limits the Board's effectiveness in carrying out its mandate. Related to this, another Board member pointed out that the tenure of the current Board has elapsed, meaning that technically, there is no active Board of Trustees at the time of the review. This sense of uncertainty among the Board members affects commitment to support governance and the operations of CTF.

Commented [o8]: The board could not hold meeting in the last 1 year, because the reviewed act stipulates a new rearrangement of board members.

Suggestions for consideration

What could be done to address these gaps including the following?

- Consider restructuring to separate the roles of Executive Chair and Board Chair to enhance independent oversight and mitigate conflicts of interest.
- Establish clear policies to manage potential conflicts of interest arising from having active staff members on the Board.

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- Advocate for legislative changes if necessary to allow for a more gender-balanced and representative Board.
- Ensure that future Board appointments consider gender diversity and the inclusion of community representatives, including women and youth.
- Introduce term limits and regular rotation for Board members to bring in fresh perspectives and avoid stagnation.
- Provide regular training for Board members on governance best practices, financial oversight, and strategic planning.
- Implement transparent processes for Board member selection, emphasizing merit, diversity, and alignment with the CTF's mission.
- Regularly review and update the Board's governance practices to align with international best practices, contemporary issues and evolving organizational needs.
- Enforce the term limits and regular rotation for Board members to bring in fresh perspectives and avoid stagnation.
- Provide regular training for Board members on governance best practices, financial oversight, and strategic planning.

The Board Participation, Communication, Networking, and Collaboration

Findings from the review provide key aspects of the CTF Board of Trustees' involvement in the organization's activities, as well as the importance of communication, networking, and collaboration.

- Board Participation in CTF's Work/Operations:** The Board members are seasoned professionals with decades of experience in environmental conservation. Feedback from key informant reveals that this extensive expertise among Board members is a valuable asset that is currently underutilized. This represents a missed opportunity for CTF to benefit from the strategic insights and technical advice that the Board members can offer. Despite their expertise, the Board members feel their knowledge and experience are not fully utilized in CTF's governance and technical operations. To leverage the Board's expertise, CTF should create structured opportunities for Board members to contribute to strategic planning, programme development, and operational decisions. This could include forming specialized committees or advisory panels.
- Communication:** Effective communication fosters transparency, builds trust, enhances decision-making, and resolves conflicts. Communication is part of CTF's day-to-day work but needs enhancement. Stakeholders feel the rate of environmental degradation requires better communication about the issues and CTF's efforts. Improving communication strategies can help raise public awareness about environmental issues and CTF's conservation efforts. This transparency can build public support and enhance the organization's credibility. Regular updates and clear communication with stakeholders can ensure that everyone is aligned with CTF's goals and progress. This can also help in garnering more support and involvement from the community and partners.
- Networking:** Networking involves forming and maintaining relationships with professionals and stakeholders to share insights and collaborate. At the time of the review, CTF's networking efforts were ongoing though room for improvement. Stakeholders suggest that CTF needs to be more present in meetings, conferences, and decision-making forums. Being active in relevant fora and conferences is crucial for CTF to stay informed about industry trends, gain access to new opportunities, and advocate for funding. A strategic approach to networking can help CTF build partnerships and secure necessary resources. Invariably, CTF should ensure it is represented at key events and decision-making tables to influence outcomes and secure support for its projects. Board members can play a vital role in this by using their connections and influence.
- Collaboration:** Effective collaboration brings together diverse skills and viewpoints, leading to innovative solutions and well-informed decisions. Collaboration is a part of CTF's operations, however, stakeholders' desire enhanced collaboration to address the rapid degradation of natural resources. Partners

Commented [o9]: The board is also challenge by conflict of interest, that is having a board members who runs an NGO and in the case of applying for funding for the same project as CTF he/she will prefer his/her NGO

like EU are concerned that CTF is missing in the conservation and natural resource management discourse. By enhancing collaboration with other organizations, government agencies, and local communities, CTF can create a more coordinated and effective approach to conservation. Joint initiatives can amplify impact and resource efficiency. Ensuring that all collaborators feel empowered and respected can lead to more effective contributions and stronger partnerships. Findings indicate that lack of consistent and regular feedback mechanisms makes it difficult to achieve this.

Suggestions for consideration

As a recommendation to address the gaps identified, CTF should consider the following:

- Form committees that allow Board members to contribute their expertise to specific areas such as fundraising, strategy, or technical operations.
- Schedule regular consultations with Board members to discuss strategic issues and leverage their knowledge.
- Develop campaigns to inform the public about environmental issues and CTF's efforts. Use various media channels to reach a broader audience.
- Provide regular updates to stakeholders through newsletters, reports, and meetings to keep them informed and engaged.
- Ensure CTF representatives are present at important conferences, meetings, and forums. Use these platforms to network, advocate, and secure funding.
- Actively seek and develop partnerships with other organizations, government bodies, and international donors.
- Collaborate with other organizations on joint conservation projects. This can pool resources and expertise for greater impact.
- Engage local communities in conservation efforts, ensuring their involvement in decision-making and implementation.

Governance-related concerns in resource mobilization

Analysis based on interviews and discussion on CTF's Governance-Related Concerns in Resource Mobilization presents critical concerns affecting the CTF ability to effectively mobilize resources and support the National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA). The review uncover prolong resource mobilization challenges. The CTF is mandated to raise funds for NPAA from diverse sources, including parliamentary appropriations, donations, carbon trading, ecosystem services revenue, investments, and foreign aid. However, there is a lack of a coherent fundraising strategy and technical capacity within CTF. The absence of a comprehensive fundraising strategy and skilled personnel is a fundamental issue. CTF needs to develop a robust resource mobilization strategy that includes identifying potential donors, developing proposals, and creating engagement plans.

The position of Resource Mobilization Manager has been unstable, contributing to suboptimal performance in fundraising. The turnover in the Resource Mobilization Manager position highlights the need for stability and effective hiring practices. Ensuring that this role is filled by a competent individual with the necessary skills and support is critical.

Records on fund raising indicate that the amount raised by CTF during the last fiscal year is insufficient, representing only a fraction of NPAA's total annual budget requirements. Quite a part, NPAA is also engaging in fundraising independently, leading to competition rather than collaboration between the two entities. This competition undermines joint planning and donor relations. The competitive approach between CTF and NPAA

Commented [o10]: Which is in contravention of the act

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contradicts the collaborative spirit intended by the 2012 Act. This not only confuses donors but also dilutes the effectiveness of fundraising efforts. A unified approach is essential for maximizing resource mobilization.

Commented [o11]: And 2022 act as amended

The absence of a comprehensive fundraising strategy and skilled personnel is a fundamental issue. CTF needs to develop a robust resource mobilization strategy that includes identifying potential donors, developing project proposals, and creating engagement plans.

While these issues continue, the review uncovered that the Board has not met for over a year, impeding its ability to provide oversight and strategic direction. The Board has not been facilitated to function effectively, lacking the necessary support to fulfill its governance role. Notably, CTF has failed to submit regular reports on its activities to the Board, compromising transparency and accountability. The Board members emphasize that CTF should focus on implementing its existing SP before taking on new issues. They stress the importance of evaluating current performance before expanding focus areas. Prioritizing the implementation of the existing SP is sensible. This ensures that CTF builds a solid foundation of achievements before diverting resources to new initiatives.

Commented [o12]: The board has been part of the CTF day to day running until when their tenure expired and surly a new board will be reconstituted. Also the board has not been innovative enough to device method or strategies to help the CTF in their revenue generation drive

Suggestions for consideration

As a recommendation to address the gaps identified, CTF should consider the following:

- Ensure that the roles of the Executive Chairman and the Chairman of the Board are held by different individuals to maintain independent oversight.
- Establish a schedule for regular Board meetings to ensure continuous oversight and strategic direction.
- Create a detailed resource mobilization strategy, identifying diverse funding sources and engagement plans.
- Ensure the Resource Mobilization Manager position is filled with a competent individual and provide the necessary support for them to succeed.
- Foster a collaborative environment with NPAA, including joint programme planning and unified fundraising efforts to present a cohesive approach to donors.
- Establish clear agreements outlining the roles and responsibilities of CTF and NPAA in fundraising activities.
- Provide the Board with the necessary resources to function effectively, including logistical support and access to information.
- Implement a structured reporting mechanism where CTF submits regular updates on its activities and financial status to the Board.
- Conduct regular reviews of CTF's performance against its SP to identify successes and areas for improvement.
- Prioritize the implementation of the current SP before expanding to new areas, ensuring that CTF can demonstrate success and impact in its core functions.
- Actively engage Board members in strategic planning and decision-making processes, and provide the necessary support and resources for them to fulfil their roles effectively.

3.2. Resource Mobilization

Understanding that resource mobilization involves securing various forms of support for an organization, including both new resources and better utilization of existing ones, the evaluation team assessed the effectiveness of the Conservation Trust Fund's (CTF) fundraising strategies. To execute their mandate, CTF relies on effective resource mobilization. It helps to sustain its support for the National Protected Areas Authority (NPAA), enhance organizational sustainability, and facilitate improvements and scaling up of protected area management. The

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NPAA and CTF Act of 2012 outlines CTF's key role in raising funds to support NPAA's work, specifying various functions and programmes that require funding. These include protecting natural ecosystems, managing reserves and sanctuaries, regulating wildlife, promoting ecotourism, and conducting biodiversity research and education programmes. The Act also identifies sources of funding for CTF, including parliamentary appropriations, donations, revenue from carbon trading and ecosystem services, returns on investment, foreign aid, and other sources. Additionally, the Act stipulates that CTF funds should be used exclusively for NPAA's approved budget, emphasizing the importance of NPAA developing a work programme and budget at the beginning of each fiscal year to guide CTF's resource mobilization efforts toward priority areas.

Commented [o13]: And 2022 as amended

Commented [o14]: According to the reviewed act of 2022 80% of funds raised should go to the NPAA operation and 20% to CTF

The Gap in Resource Mobilization

The Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) is committed to diversifying and expanding its resource mobilization strategies to support conservation activities and natural resource management, especially in protected areas. The strategies outlined in the strategic plan, aim to ensure financial stability and the execution of CTF's mission. Key strategies enshrined in the SP include: institutionalizing resource mobilization, promoting investment opportunities, building technical capacity, establishing fundraising mechanisms, engaging external expertise, developing partnerships, developing concept notes and proposals, communication and promotion, supporting ecotourism and ensuring accountability. While these strategies aim to enhance CTF's capacity to mobilize resources effectively, sustain financial stability, and support conservation efforts in protected areas, findings reveal that efforts to implement these strategies were futile. On a good note, the review team learned from discussions with staff that CTF was able to raise US\$XXX, representing XXX% of the total annual programme budget for 2022. This resource cannot somewhat be considered as an optimal outcome because to a large extent, views from interviews with key informants indicate that the CTF fails to deliver on its mandate for resource mobilization as outlined in the provisions provided in the Act. Fundraising has been one of the very challenging aspects of CTF's operations hence, the inability of the Trust to fully support the mandate of financing the conservation of the natural reserves through the work of NPAA.

Commented [o15]: The effort of CTF has been up to speed and we have involve in eco-tourism activities ie prefeasibility assessment for eco-tourism potential in protected areas (Lake Sonfon, Loma, OKNP etc) and prefeasibility assessment on Blue Carbon in the Sherbro river estuary

Commented [o16]: Was able to generate resources instead quoting figures as we are also on a robust local revenue generation drive (Bottom Oku, Hamilton, Tombo, Rokel etc) and also generating resources through offset payments

However, the review noted factors that contributed to the Conservation Trust Fund's (CTF) failure to deliver on its mandate for resource mobilization. A key informant from a potential donor agency mentioned a lack of strategic planning as a contributing factor. Despite developing a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy aligned with its mission and objectives, the CTF struggled to identify and pursue viable funding opportunities effectively without a clear plan. This largely comes from limited internal capacity. From a roundtable discussion with the staff of CTF, the review team noted that the institutional capacity [including personnel and grant management system] necessary to implement successful resource mobilization strategies has capacity issues. For example, at the time of the review, the institution lacks technical staff with fundraising experience. As a result, donor resources could not be mobilized as expected simply because those who play resource mobilization roles within the CTF lack an understanding of donor requirements. Before now, a personnel was hired as Resource Mobilization Manager. Unfortunately, the person resigned from the position and his replacement has not been able to perform effectively because the personnel appears to be overwhelmingly engaged in other work. The capacity gaps and challenges include the lack of a fundraising or resource mobilization strategy, as well as other relevant technical gaps in grant management.

Commented [o17]: This is not the case, rather it could be some kind of misinformation or lack of knowledge on CTF operations

Commented [o18]: CTF has got a clear vision and a mission to accomplished and well positioned to execute its fiduciary responsibility

Additionally, the CTF failure to cultivate strong partnerships with donors, government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders of the private sector. This hindered CTF's ability to access funding. Without effective collaboration and networking, CTF will continue to miss out on potential funding opportunities and support for conservation and protected area management. Donor engagement requires enhancement. For instance, during this mid-term review, a prominent donor emphasized the importance of receiving regular progress reports from CTF regarding

Commented [o19]: The CTF requires capacity building, but never lacks the required technical expertise and knowledge to attract funding and this is evident, as they secured and completed projects funded by EU (Law enforcement) and Wetlands and their partners (prefeasibility study)

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the implementation of the strategic plan. They also expressed interest in receiving an annual work programme from CTF for consideration of funding support. It is imperative to maintain consistent and professional communication with key stakeholders, including but not limited to the EU, CSSL, Tacugama, EFA, EPA, NPAA, Forestry, FCC, CRS, Torcaire, IUCN, Wetlands International, RSPB, RAP-SL, and Reptiles and Amphibians.

Additionally, NPAA has assumed a fundraising role, despite such actions being prohibited by the 2012 Act. This approach has led to a sense of competition rather than cooperation between CTF and NPAA, creating a rift between the two entities. Furthermore, joint programme planning, which would facilitate prioritization of fundraising efforts, is lacking. During discussions with a key donor, concerns were raised about the lack of collaboration between the two entities. The donor highlighted instances where CTF and NPAA separately approached donors for the same issues, sometimes in a competitive manner. Addressing these issues is crucial to eliminate overlapping mandates and foster effective collaboration between CTF and NPAA.

Inadequate communication and visibility stood out clearly in all discussions and interviews conducted. The review team found that the CTF failed to effectively communicate its mission, activities, and impact not only to potential donors and stakeholders, but also to the communities and wider public. From the findings, portray poor visibility and limited outreach efforts resulting in a lack of awareness about CTF's work, subsequently reducing its attractiveness to potential funders.

Many potential funding opportunities available to the CTF remain underutilized. For instance, the review team found no evidence indicating that the private sector is contributing financially to the use of conservation areas. Key informants have highlighted that the agriculture and mining sectors pose significant threats to protected areas. However, individuals or entities violating environmental and conservation laws typically do not compensate CTF for their actions. According to informants interviewed in closed sessions, owners (squatters) of over 1,000 structures within the green belt act with impunity, while royalty fees for forest destruction are not paid to CTF for restoration purposes. This has resulted in CTF overly relying on a narrow range of funding sources, primarily government allocations (Subventions). Such dependency on limited funding sources makes CTF susceptible to fluctuations in funding, hindering its ability to diversify revenue streams. Additionally, political changes and economic downturns have disrupted funding flows, making it challenging for CTF to secure consistent financial support from the government.

Nowadays funders are increasingly becoming interested in innovation. The failure to adapt to changing trends in fundraising or explore innovative financing mechanisms negatively affected the implementation of the CTF's strategic plan. The lack of innovation and creativity prevented the CTF from generating revenue from emerging sources such as Feed Salone or corporate partnerships.

Further, failure to adhere to legal and regulatory requirements, as well as lack of transparency and accountability in financial management also contributed to the failure to deliver on resource mobilization. In one instance a key informant raised concern over the involvement of the CTF in implementing a project alongside NPAA. This action according to the informant eroded trust and confidence in CTF among donors and stakeholders, making it difficult to secure funding. Consequently, donors prefer working directly with the NPAA as an implementing partner and not CTF whose mandate focuses on mobilizing resources to finance the work of the NPAA.

Addressing these challenges requires proactive measures such as strategic planning, capacity building, partnership development, effective communication, diversification of funding sources, and adherence to best practices in financial management and governance.

Commented [o20]: CTF as an institution is far ahead in developing and operationalizing partnership with various institutions across the board (EFA, RAPSL, WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL, FBC, EPA, FORESTRY DIVISION, MFMR, EU AGRO FOR DEVELOPMENT etc)

Commented [o21]: And 2022 as amended

Commented [o22]: Also the CTF has been innovative enough to develop and pilot offset payment and plans to do a offset mapping exercise to enhance and improve a sustainable revenue generation strides

Commented [o23]: This could be an oversight but the reality is that CTF was just on the project to perform their fiduciary responsibility that is, ensure transparency and accountability

The Implications of the findings

The implications of the CTF inability to fulfill its mandate for resource mobilization are multifaceted and far-reaching. The failure to effectively raise funds for conservation initiatives carries significant consequences across various domains, impacting financial sustainability, conservation activities, organizational credibility, capacity-building efforts, collaborative opportunities, and progress towards sustainable development goals. These implications underscore the critical importance of implementing robust resource mobilization strategies and adhering to best practices in financial management to advance conservation objectives effectively.

Commented [o24]: The CTF has not been short of ideas or strategy to raise funds, rather they are challenged with an overcrowded funding environment and bureaucratic arrangement (deliberate overlapping, usurping of function and omission of CTF in long term sustainable revenue generation opportunities eg..REDD+), hence they have been innovative enough to look at local revenue source which proves to be sustainable

CTF's inability to mobilize resources is a significant financial shortfall for conservation efforts. This could lead to funding gaps in critical areas such as protected area management, wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, and community engagement initiatives.

Commented [o25]: I think this is not required

Lack of funding has impact on conservation activities. It may hamper the implementation of essential conservation activities, including monitoring and research, habitat protection, species conservation, and community outreach programmes. This could result in increased threats to biodiversity, habitat loss, and degradation of natural ecosystems.

Donors, stakeholders, and the public may lose trust and confidence in CTF's ability to effectively manage and allocate funds for conservation. This loss of credibility could diminish CTF's reputation as a reliable steward of conservation resources, making it challenging to secure future funding and partnerships.

Commented [o26]: This is not required

Insufficient funding may hamper CTF's capacity-building efforts, including training programme, technical assistance, and institutional strengthening initiatives. This could impede the development of local expertise and institutional capacity needed to effectively manage conservation projects and initiatives.

Failure to mobilize resources effectively can result in missed opportunities for collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, local communities, and other stakeholders. Collaborative partnerships are essential for leveraging additional resources, sharing expertise, and maximizing the impact of conservation efforts.

Commented [o27]: To be remove

CTF's failure to deliver on resource mobilization can undermine progress towards achieving various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, sustainable land management, and climate action. Without funding for conservation initiatives, efforts to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development can be frustrated.

Suggestions for consideration

To address shortfalls in the CTF resource mobilization, several recommended actions can be taken into account. Below are recommended actions for consideration. The CTF can strengthen its resource mobilization efforts, enhance financial sustainability, and effectively support conservation activities and natural resource management in protected areas.

- Develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy aligned with CTF's mission, objectives, and conservation priorities. This strategy should outline specific goals, target funding sources, and identify key activities to enhance fundraising effectiveness.
- There is a need to ensure a sustainable and diversified funding base. As reported by one of the Board members in a closed interview, Sierra Leone is using its natural resources to support itself. This is affecting deforestation and the depletion of the overall natural resource base. To diversify its funding

sources, CTF should seek new environmental financing opportunities and engage with development partners and donor agencies like UNDP, World Bank, USAID, and others. Additionally, CTF should explore local revenue generation, grant opportunities with bilateral and multilateral agencies, ecotourism, payment for ecosystem services, and the polluter-pay tax mechanism.

- There is also the need to support community forests so that communities cannot tamper with the “big forests” and reserves. This would require building the skills of the communities to do their conservation with adaptive measures to limit their dependency on the natural resources in the protected areas.
- Invest in building the technical expertise, human resources, and institutional capacity necessary for successful resource mobilization. Building technical expertise includes providing training programmes, workshops, and mentorship opportunities to staff members involved in fundraising activities.
- Strengthen partnerships with donors, government agencies, NGOs, local communities, and other stakeholders to expand funding opportunities and leverage additional resources. Foster collaborative relationships based on trust, mutual benefits, and shared conservation goals.
- Enhance CTF’s visibility and communication efforts to raise awareness about its mission, activities, and impact. Utilize various channels such as social media, websites, newsletters, and events to engage with donors, stakeholders, and the public.
- Explore and diversify funding sources beyond traditional sources such as government subvention. Identify and pursue opportunities for grants, donations, corporate partnerships, impact investing, and revenue-generating initiatives such as ecotourism or payment for ecosystem services.
- Embrace innovative financing mechanisms and fundraising approaches to adapt to changing trends and seize emerging opportunities. Explore new technologies, platforms, and strategies for mobilizing resources effectively in the digital age.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to fundraising, financial management, and governance. Uphold transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in all fundraising activities to build trust and confidence among donors and stakeholders.
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for improvement in resource mobilization efforts. Regularly review and adjust strategies based on lessons learned and feedback from stakeholders.
- The CTF recognizes the importance of fundraising to support its mission and aims to generate revenue from diverse sources. This includes exploring funding opportunities such as parliamentary appropriations, gifts, endowments, carbon trading, ecosystem services sales, and returns from investments, foreign aid, and donor assistance as outlined in the Act.

3.3. Strategic Partnership

Despite the subvention received from the government of Sierra Leone, the CTF requires additional resources to support its operation. Because partnership provides opportunities to support the financing of the protected area management, consideration was made to establish strategic and reliable partnerships to implement CTF Strategic Plan. However, the findings from the MTR present evidence indicating that partnership is yet to work well for the CTF partly because the visibility that attracts partnerships does not work and of course, internal capacity issues prevent the effective use of partnership strategies and approach.

Partnerships with Communities

Community engagement in conservation and protected area management refers to the active involvement of local communities, stakeholders, and indigenous peoples in decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of conservation initiatives (Berkes, F. 2004. Rethinking community-based conservation). Using this approach means that the CTF would have recognized the interconnectedness between human well-being and ecosystem

Commented [o28]: The CTF has made visible and viable partnership strides with MDAs, NGOs, Private Sector etc. hence the implementation of the prefeasibility study, collaboration efforts with wetlands international, NTB, RAPSL, Agro for community development and empowerment, forest edge communities etc.

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health, aiming to foster sustainable practices while addressing the needs and aspirations of local communities. Partnerships between communities and conservation organizations or government agencies like CTF could have allowed communities to be involved in various activities such as participatory planning, collaborative resource management, education and awareness programmes, and capacity building. Community partnerships not only enhance the effectiveness of conservation efforts but also promote social equity, cultural preservation, and economic development. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the failure to establish partnerships with communities is a miss of opportunity.

Commented [o29]: CTF has established regular community engagement and sustained buy-in of all their activities with established MOUs signed

Partnership with MDAs

Recognizing that partnerships between the CTF and government entities such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Mineral Agency (NMA), and Ministry of Agriculture could have several potential implications, effort was made to assess the partnership relationships along this line. Partnering with government agencies could have provided CTF with access to additional resources, technical expertise, and funding opportunities. Effective collaboration could have strengthened CTF's capacity to implement conservation initiatives, conduct research, and undertake conservation projects on a larger scale. However, from the findings, it could be reported that progress is yet to be made in this regard. Despite the link between the CTF and these entities, the lack of evidence of partnership with them suggests that collaboration is yet to exist among them. Repeatedly, key informants from various disciplines reported of poor relationship between the CTF and the NPAA. What findings brought to light ironically indicates that instead of implementing funds mobilized by the CTF, the NPAA equally competes for limited funding opportunities. Given this scenario, NPAA appears to engage in overlapping mandates. According to findings, the NPAA is yet to relinquish its fundraising function simply because from inception, they have been attracting funding opportunities from partners who prefer to work with them instead of the CTF directly.

Commented [o30]: There are clear and magnifying evidences of effective partnership and collaboration with MDAs as stated above and this is evident in the monthly inter agency meeting

On a good note, the CTF and Ministry of the Environment (MoE) were reviewing the Act at the time of the review. However, the working relationship could not be construed as a partnership because the MoE is the supervisory ministry of the CTF. By collaborating with MoE, the CTF had the opportunity to influence legal reform, policy development and decision-making processes related to conservation, environmental protection, and natural resource management came as a result of the cordial working relationship. While this could lead to the implementation of more effective and sustainable policies that align with CTF's conservation goals, key informants observed in closed interviews that conservation laws are not well constituted and some laws remain very old. Hence, a need for legislative review to have an updated legal and policy framework. From roundtable discussion with staff of CTF, it was noted that under the revised Act, the MoE may help ensure that CTF's conservation activities are conducted in compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and policies. This could mitigate potential conflicts and legal challenges, as well as enhance the credibility and legitimacy of CTF's initiatives within the broader legal framework.

Government entities often have a broader reach and influence than non-governmental organization. Therefore partnering with them could help CTF expand its reach and impact, reaching more communities, stakeholders, and ecosystems across a larger geographic area. However, findings indicate that the CTF has been less involved in national engagements where decisions are made about conservation. This may have limited partnership opportunities. The review noted that funds generated for conservation purposes by various government agencies such as NMA and EPA are believed to be kept somewhere while CTF remains unaware of what is happening with it. Collaboration with government agencies could have facilitated better coordination and cooperation among stakeholders involved in conservation efforts. By working together, CTF and government entities could have

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leveraged each other's strengths, share information and data, and avoid duplication of efforts, leading to more efficient and impactful conservation outcomes.

Partnership with INGOs and Donor Agencies

A strategic partnership with donor agencies in the context of conservation and protected area management entails a collaborative and coordinated effort between CTF and external development partners or funders to achieve shared conservation goals. This approach emphasizes mutual understanding, long-term planning, and harnessing the strengths and resources of each partner to optimize conservation outcomes. According to experts (Kaplan-Hallam, M., Rowen, J. L., & Baird, T. D. 2019), strategic partnerships with donor agencies typically involve several key components including resource mobilization, capacity building, joint planning and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Partnerships come from deliberate efforts to attract other agencies who can potentially add value to the work of the CTF. Donor agencies provide financial, technical, and/or in-kind support to enable conservation organizations like CTF to fund and implement conservation projects and initiatives. This support may include grants, technical assistance, capacity building, and access to networks or expertise.

However, in a closed interview, a key informant from a prominent donor agency revealed that the lack of collaborated and uncoordinated fund-raising actions leaves the CTF with open partnerships where no funding commitment was made towards the implementation of their strategic plan. From building partner relationships to developing competing proposals and reporting, there have been weaknesses internally cultivated by the lack of support and opportunities for capacity building. According to a key informant from the EU, the Lack of a comprehensive work programme for the CTF since its SP was developed, made partners like the EU refrain from a partnership with the CTF.

Partners collaborate to build the capacity of local organizations or government agencies involved in conservation and protected area management. However, dependency and reliability on national resources to fund conservation initiatives failed to effectively ensure better-protected area management. Partnering with the EU for instance, could alleviate the dependence on national resources for funding conservation efforts. By accessing external funding sources, CTF could have enhanced its financial sustainability and ensured better management of protected areas, thereby helping to mitigate the risk of failure due to insufficient funding.

In partnership, partners work together to develop and implement conservation projects and programmes. This includes joint planning, decision-making, and coordination of activities to ensure alignment with strategic objectives, optimize resource allocation, and minimize duplication of efforts. On the contrary, findings from the review show that limited effort was made to have donor partners in one room to strategize a partway to conservation. For example, the review team noted that EU is still waiting to receive a report on the implementation of the CTF strategic plan.

Partnership with the private sector

Working with the private sector is another means through which the CTF could have diversified income for sustainable financing. However, findings reveal that the private sector is not cooperating in terms of their contribution to CTF for utilizing conservation areas. Unfortunately, people are not penalized for the misuse of the protected areas. This raises a concern for one to question how involved CTF is in dealing with the persons in conflict with the law.

Suggestions for consideration

Commented [o31]: There is a partnership and collaboration with the EU, Irish aid, CRS etc. though there are challenges to get it on a smooth platform. the CTF received funds from EU through IUCN for a project on law enforcement in Yawri Bay

Commented [o32]: It is already in the hands of the EU

- The CTF should strengthen collaboration and coordination with NPAA.
- Compelling actions to be taken by the CTF Board to ensure other agencies like NMA and EPA work collaboratively towards supporting efforts concerning protected area management.
- The CTF should consider investment in visibility as some partners believe they are not known to partners and the wider public.
- Work closely with partners to ensure that mechanisms exist to replace what is taken from the forest is replaced by adequate provisions to manage the protected areas.
- CTF should have a strong advocacy role to support the Feed Salone initiative. This will require working closely with the EPA to conduct EIA in every site where the Feed Salone initiative will be implemented.
- The CTF should engage in socioeconomic study to ensure that the livelihoods of communities are not adversely affected by the Food Salone Initiative.
- Reduced dependence on national resources by building partnerships with the relevant donor agencies.
- Embark on increased visibility and partnership opportunities
- Strengthen capacity-building efforts to ensure that opportunities are created to enhance efficiency in resource mobilization.
- Establish follow-up mechanisms through structured communication channels and regular reporting, to maintain strategic engagement with donor agencies over time. This could help build trust and convince partners of the benefits of collaboration and partnerships.
- The CTF should strengthen collaboration and coordination with NPAA to have good work relationship.
- Robust actions to be taken by the CTF Board compelling other agencies like NMA and EPA to work collaboratively towards supporting efforts concerning protected area management.
- The CTF should consider investment in visibility as some of the partners believe that they are not known to partners and the wider public.
- Work closely with partners to ensure that mechanisms exist to replace what is taken from the forest with adequate provisions to manage the protected areas.
- CTF should have a strong advocacy role to support in the Feed Salone initiative. This will require working closely with the EPA to conduct an Environmental Impact Assess (EIA) in every site where the Feed Salone initiative will be implemented.
- The CTF should engage in socioeconomic study to ensure that the livelihoods of communities are not adversely affected by the Food Salone Initiative.

3.4. Programme Development

The key focus of the CTF programme development strategies is to strengthen community and stakeholder engagement and participation in biodiversity conservation and wildlife management, particularly around Protected Areas. This is outlined through three strategic objectives. The first objective seeks to empower local communities to take a leading role in conservation and natural resource management. Strategies to address this objective include promoting community-based conservation initiatives, supporting integrated livelihood projects, coordinating land management, providing alternative income sources, and involving local people in resource planning and management. Another area of focus is improving revenue drive and policy reform. This objective focuses on advocating for policy reforms and enhancing revenue generation. Strategies under this objective include conducting research on wildlife ownership laws and land tenure policies, supporting unified programmes, establishing steering committees, conducting impact studies, and researching the impact of mining on biodiversity and wildlife. In addition, the CTF seeks to raise awareness at all levels on effective natural resource management. The Strategies employed to have this done include supporting information dissemination and educational programmes, raising awareness on biodiversity conservation and related environmental issues, promoting community engagement and outreach sessions, engaging with the media, supporting the production and

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distribution of informational materials, and collaborating with various stakeholders including government agencies, local councils, schools, and community-based organizations.

The gaps in programme development

In the course of the review, the team examined these strategies to ascertain progress made in achieving the programme development objectives. Observably, bad environmental practices continue in the protected areas including game parks with no income coming directly to the CTF. This simply implies that the institution does not receive funds from those involved in such practices. As a result, the CTF lacks the basis to undertake programme development initiatives. Lack of sustainable means of funding means that the CTF cannot support the implementation of initiatives leading to better conservation and good management of the protected areas. Findings based on the review justify that the CTF was unsuccessful in achieving its programme development objectives. Several factors contribute to this, including a lack of evidence-informed concept notes and proposals and poor interaction with forest edge communities.

Lack of collaboration may hinder the successful implementation of conservation projects and initiatives. In the views of informants, stakeholder engagement was poorly handled. Learning from closed interviews with stakeholders revealed that the CTF failed to actively engage and involve local communities and other stakeholders including partner organizations in programme development efforts. This resulted in limited participation and support from such people.

Additionally, inadequate investment in capacity-building initiatives both for local communities and staff, hindered the ability of the CTF team to effectively participate in programme development activities. Lack of training, technical assistance, and skill development opportunities limited staff capacity not just in developing competing project proposals but also in generating initiatives with concept notes to attract funding.

Poor strategic planning, coordination, and weak monitoring mechanisms came out as another area of weakness. While this can lead to inefficiencies and misalignment of activities, the technical team in place lacks clear work objectives and performance indicators. This was observed in the disjointed efforts and limited progress toward programme development goals.

Poor communication, coordination, and collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community groups, can hinder programme implementation and coordination efforts. Lack of information sharing, stakeholder engagement, and partnership development may lead to missed opportunities and fragmented approaches.

As earlier stated, several funding sources exist for the CTF to explore including parliamentary appropriations, donations, revenue from carbon trading and ecosystem services, returns on investment, foreign aid, and other sources. However, the review found no evidence to report that programmes were developed to mobilize resources from these funding streams. Although the CTF continues to receive parliamentary appropriations (government subventions), the overwhelming need for the conservation of the protected areas surpasses the funding that comes from government subventions, which is mostly meant to support the administrative cost of the CTF. Hence, a need to pursue the other funding opportunities as provided for in the Act. Given the findings of the review, it could be stated that the CTF lacks the necessary systems for fundraising. This includes human resources and a detailed strategy that informs programme development.

The Implications

Commented [o33]: There is effective collaboration and communication on the work of the CTF across the forest edge communities

Commented [o34]: CTF has on a regular bases engage and inform stakeholders across the board on all of their activities

Commented [o35]: There couple of proposal and concept notes awaiting funding and the CTF is poised to work on programs that will improve the revenue and resource mobilization (offset mapping concept, regulation development concept funding and REDAA proposal)

Commented [o36]: There clear objective and indicators, hence there is a yearly work plan and activities aligned and the technical team is poised and up to speed to achieving this

Commented [o37]: There are capable individuals in place and the SP and strategic direction is apt to achieve the set goals

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Failure to develop programmes can result in an inability to mobilize resources for the conservation of the protected areas.

Commented [o38]: The CTF is not short program and activities but rather funding streams are competitive

Not having the right technical structure to support programme development means that the existing structure could hardly deliver on the programme development mandate given the current staffing arrangement. Testimony from a senior office of NPAA indicates that CTF has a similar staffing structure as that of NPAA although their mandates are different.

Commented [o39]: There is a competent technical team in place

Without the necessary financing support towards NPAA, the CTF is likely to lose its legitimacy. This consistent lag in supporting NPAA has contributed to the current poor working relationship between the two entities.

Commented [o40]: Agreed, it is a challenge but both institution came in to existence through an act and it is very unrealistic for one to usurp the function or responsibilities of the other

In the absence of programmes, the CTF will lose its relevance to the donor partners. Key informants interviewed from a donor agency as well as implementing partners expressed dismay over CTF's inability to share their programme plans and progress reports. Because the partners are not abreast with the work of CTF, it becomes difficult for them to support their work. Consequently, the CTF is left with no support other than the government subvention.

Commented [o41]: This is addressed already and should be removed

Suggestions for consideration

Addressing these gaps requires proactive measures such as:

- CTF should strongly consider having the right technical capacity for programme development. This will require both thematic and general specialists. Related to this will be capacity-building initiatives to bolster the current technical capacity of the CTF for programme development. Further, the CTF should consider tapping into the technical capacity of NPAA which is more efficient for acquiring the necessary data and information required for programme development.
- CTF should leverage the programme development skills and expertise of the partners associated with conservation through strengthening planning, coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms. Given their lean structure, CTF's programme development effectiveness and efficiency can be enhanced through collaboration with partners already having robust programme development systems in place.

3.5. Cross-cutting issues

3.5.1. Synergies

Effective collaboration and combining efforts are crucial for successful conservation and natural resource management. Established through an Act of Parliament, the CTF was created to support the preservation and management of Sierra Leone's biodiversity. CTF's primary role is to raise funds and allocate them to the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) for the implementation of biodiversity preservation, conservation, and natural resource management projects.

Although CTF has not fully implemented its Strategic Plan, the projects that have been executed align well with other national biodiversity conservation efforts. These projects create synergies and linkages both internally and externally with similar initiatives. For example, internally, CTF collaborated with Wetlands International on a project aimed at enhancing law enforcement in protected areas. This initiative was supported by a grant from Wetlands International, which enabled CTF to provide resources to NPAA for law enforcement enhancement in

the Yawri Bay protected area. The project included provisions for housing and sustenance support for law enforcement officers and patrolling equipment such as patrol boats, thereby strengthening conservation efforts in the area.

Externally, CTF's projects are coherent with national efforts to protect the environment and address biodiversity conservation issues. However, to fully realize its mandate under the NPAA/CTF Act of 2012, CTF must intensify its resource mobilization efforts. Enhancing synergy and coherence requires sustained collaboration with key partners in the environmental conservation sector. Maintaining consistent and professional communication with stakeholders such as the European Union, Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Forestry Division, Freetown City Council (FCC), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Trocaire, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Wetlands International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Reptiles and Amphibians Programme Sierra Leone (RAP-SL), and others is imperative for the success of CTF's initiatives.

Commented [o42]: And 2022 as amended

3.5.2. Capacity Building

Capacity building is a crucial process involving the development and enhancement of skills, knowledge, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations and communities need to thrive in a dynamic environment. Effective capacity building can significantly improve an organization's efficiency and effectiveness, leading to better service delivery, enhanced decision-making, and increased productivity. It also empowers local communities by encouraging them to take action on local issues, fostering ownership and empowerment.

CTF planned to integrate capacity building into all operational areas of the organization and its staff. This comprehensive approach was intended to develop skills and capabilities, enhance resources, and streamline systems and processes. The key anticipated outcomes included improved performance, better service delivery, enhanced decision-making, and increased productivity.

The primary mandate of CTF is to mobilize resources for the conservation of the country's biodiversity reserves, through initiatives executed by NPAA using the funds raised by CTF. However, interviews revealed that since the SP was launched over two years ago, CTF has not made significant progress in building the capacities and resource mobilization capabilities across its various functions. For example, had the capacity building been effective, the Human Resources department would have the capability to identify, hire, and retain skilled technical and fundraising staff. Similarly, the programme and fundraising departments would have the capacity to develop and implement robust tactical and operational plans from the Resource Mobilization pillar of the Strategic Plan. This includes conducting studies, research, and needs assessments, engaging in local resource mobilization, developing accurate annual work programmes and budgets, creating successful project proposals, and providing necessary support, monitoring, and supervision to NPAA.

Commented [o43]: This does not necessary involve capacity building but rather it is more of funding issue to hire and retain staff

Commented [o44]: The CTF has identify numerous projects and programs, it is a funding issue that is holding them aback

Additionally, effective capacity building would enable the communications department to develop strong capabilities for public communication and constructive engagement with key stakeholders. The finance department would have robust systems in place for managing and reporting donor funds.

Commented [o45]: This should be remove

Feedback from many interviewees indicated that CTF needs to invest significantly in overall capacity building. By mainstreaming capacity building across all departments and providing relevant training to staff, CTF would be better positioned to fully realize its mandate and deliver on its strategic objectives.

Commented [o46]: Capacity building is needed by every institution in order to catch up with emerging issues and innovative ideas such as the feed Salone

3.5.3. Knowledge Management

Knowledge management involves the systematic process of creating, storing, using, and sharing knowledge within an organization. It encompasses various methods for managing an organization's knowledge and information, including capture, storage, organization, verification, security, distribution, and utilization. A well-implemented knowledge management system provides rapid and efficient access to the organization's knowledge base, creates a shared organizational memory, informs decision-making, improves operational efficiency, and enhances collaboration and trust within the workplace.

CTF aimed to integrate knowledge management across the organization. However, evaluations and discussions with staff and stakeholders revealed that CTF has neither consciously **invested in nor taken deliberate steps to establish a comprehensive knowledge management system.** The organization has not actively engaged in identifying, organizing, storing, or disseminating information systematically. Ideally, CTF should have implemented either a decentralized approach, where individual departments maintain their own knowledge management systems and databases feeding into a consolidated platform, or a centralized system supporting all departments and employees. This is critical to ensuring that staff and stakeholders have timely access to necessary information.

To establish an effective knowledge management system that fosters informed decision-making and improve organizational performance, CTF should consider the following:

- Systematically gather valuable information from both structured and unstructured sources within the organization.
- Develop and curate new knowledge pertinent to the organization's objectives and operations.
- Ensure all collected data is organized in a logical, accessible manner.
- Conduct regular reviews and analyses to keep the knowledge base up-to-date and relevant.
- Facilitate the dissemination and application of knowledge within the organization to support its operations and strategic goals.

3.5.4. Disaster Risk Management

Disaster Risk Management (DRM) involves a systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and reducing disaster risks, including those related to personal safety and security. It encompasses the application of policies and strategies to prevent, mitigate, and manage disaster risks, thereby enhancing the resilience of individuals, households, and communities. Effective DRM contributes to sustainable development by avoiding the creation of new risks, improving resilience to extreme events, and reducing disaster losses through prevention, mitigation, risk transfer, and preparedness measures.

CTF aimed to integrate DRM into all aspects of its operations. However, an assessment of the organization's systems and discussions with staff and stakeholders indicated that CTF has not made significant investments or undertaken deliberate actions to implement DRM. At the organizational level, CTF lacks a comprehensive DRM policy, strategy, or action plan to guide its efforts. There is also an absence of a trained and qualified DRM focal point to coordinate and lead these efforts.

In terms of system protection, CTF requires an IT policy and a robust data/information recovery system to safeguard its operations. **Similarly, at the community level, CTF needs to develop risk management and risk reduction initiatives to protect biodiversity reserves and surrounding communities from disasters.**

Commented [o47]: Efforts have been made, like development of a website though there are technical issues, proper filling system functional official email for all staff

Commented [o48]: I think we will think of this when we start investing

Commented [o49]: This should be done by NPAA

On the personal and staff levels, CTF should have measures in place to ensure staff safety, such as fire escape and evacuation plans, first aid kits, and training in fire safety and first aid. However, the organization has not invested in critical DRM activities, including:

- Systematically assessing potential disaster risks that could impact the organization and its operations.
- Educating staff and stakeholders about disaster risks and developing the necessary knowledge to manage these risks.
- Informing staff and stakeholders about their risks and the importance of DRM.
- Integrating DRM considerations into organizational planning and investment decisions.
- Developing and reinforcing institutional and policy frameworks for effective DRM.
- Ensuring that DRR is embedded across various departments and units within the organization.

Furthermore, CTF needs to plan and conduct routine simulation exercises, which are critical for fostering a culture of disaster risk reduction and preparedness within the organization. By addressing these gaps and systematically implementing DRM practices, CTF can enhance its resilience and ability to manage disaster risks effectively.

3.5.5. Networking and Collaboration

Networking involves establishing and maintaining connections with individuals or organizations to build relationships, share information, and create a network of contacts. Collaboration, on the other hand, entails working together with others towards common goals, emphasizing joint efforts, shared resources, and synergy. While networking helps an organization stay informed, meet potential partners, and gain access to resources, collaboration bridges distances, enhances communication, and empowers the organization to achieve its objectives more effectively.

CTF planned to integrate networking and collaboration into its organizational structure. This required equipping staff across different departments with the necessary skills to engage in networking and collaboration with various sectors of society and providing the support needed to do so effectively. Additionally, it meant that CTF needed to develop systems and a culture conducive to networking and collaboration with like-minded organizations, partners, donors, government agencies, and the public.

Despite these plans, interviews with staff, board members, and partners revealed that CTF has significant room for improvement in networking and collaboration, particularly with the NPAA, which is essential for fulfilling the organization's mandate. The current relationship between CTF and NPAA is at an impasse, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration. Moreover, CTF needs to strengthen its networking and collaboration with the Board of Trustees and key donors such as the EU.

To address these gaps, CTF should establish a formal process for defining the purpose and objectives of its networking and collaboration efforts. This involves clearly articulating what the organization aims to achieve from these efforts and identifying key stakeholders, experts, and individuals who can contribute to these goals. Bringing together a diverse group with complementary skills and perspectives can help avoid duplication of efforts and leverage existing resources. Effective networking and collaboration should lead to systemic change, addressing broader issues, solving complex problems, and creating lasting improvements.

Overall, while CTF has recognized the importance of networking and collaboration, it needs to make concerted efforts to implement these practices effectively to achieve its strategic objectives and maximize its impact in conservation and natural resource management.

3.5.6. Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a policy approach that assesses the different implications of actions on individuals of various genders. The United Nations defines it as the process of evaluating the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, across all areas and levels. It aims to integrate the concerns and experiences of both women and men into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes to ensure equal benefits and prevent the perpetuation of inequality. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming can enhance the quality and effectiveness of policies by addressing the needs of both men and women, empower women by tackling gender-based discrimination, enhance the skills and potential of the population and labour force, and increase the participation and representation of women in decision-making processes. It involves incorporating a gender perspective into decision-making processes, policies, and programmes to ensure that both women's and men's concerns are considered equally.

Despite some efforts by CTF to mainstream gender across its operations, significant gaps remain. For instance, the Board of Trustees consists entirely of male members. Although CTF cites the constitution of the Board formulated by the Act as a challenge to achieving gender equality, the overall representation within the organization still shows a male dominance. Interviews with Board members revealed a notable gender imbalance, although it was acknowledged that the environmental and biodiversity sector may not be as attractive to females. Additionally, CTF's SP aimed to incorporate community youth and women into governance structures at various levels, but this has yet to be realized.

To more effectively mainstream gender in its operations, CTF needs to make deliberate efforts. This includes appointing gender champions and focal points to coordinate the move towards a gender-transformative organization. Conducting a thorough gender analysis and assessment will help identify existing disparities, stereotypes, and power imbalances. CTF should develop programmes that explicitly address gender equality, ensuring that different genders are considered in the programme's impact. This involves making appropriate investments and resource allocations for gender transformation, prioritizing actions that advance gender equality, and implementing policies and programmes with a gender lens. The organization should also focus on raising awareness about gender issues and use gender-sensitive indicators to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.

3.5.7. Communication and Outreach

Communication and Outreach are critical components in engaging stakeholders and disseminating information effectively. Communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, or messages between individuals, groups, or organizations through various channels such as verbal, written, or visual media. Effective communication is vital for understanding, collaboration, and achieving common goals. Outreach, on the other hand, focuses specifically on engaging with a target audience or community to disseminate information, promote causes, or build relationships.

To enhance its visibility and impact, the CTF must make concerted efforts to inform the public, partners, and communities about its activities. For instance, key donors have expressed a desire for regular and detailed reports, annual work programmes, and other relevant information to better understand how to support CTF's initiatives. Additionally, stakeholders suggested that CTF should increase its media presence to inform the public about its work comprehensively.

To achieve effective communication and outreach, CTF should consider hiring a dedicated communications specialist. This role would involve crafting clear, consistent messages delivered through trusted channels to promote the organization's cause and support local resource mobilization efforts. Both communication and

Commented [o50]: We think it is not an issue of hiring but rather it is an issue of making good use of the existing personnel by providing the much needed resources

outreach are deliberate attempts to connect with people and play crucial roles in development and conservation work.

Interviews with stakeholders indicated that to effectively integrate communication and outreach into its operations, CTF should first develop a comprehensive communication strategy and plan. This strategy should guide efforts to ensure effective messaging and engagement with the intended audience. Key steps include conducting research, defining objectives, identifying target audiences, developing key messages, and selecting appropriate communication channels.

Commented [o51]: CTF has communication strategy and plan

3.5.8. Community engagement

Community engagement is a dynamic and collaborative process that involves interacting with and involving target communities to address issues, solve problems, and make decisions that affect their well-being. Effective community engagement is essential as it contributes to building and sustaining cohesive communities, improving development project outcomes, ensuring community member empowerment, promoting sustainable decisions, and driving social transformation and responsibility.

The CTF engages with communities primarily through project implementation conducted by the NPAA, given CTF's primary role as a fundraising entity. However, CTF also has a critical monitoring and supervision role, ensuring that NPAA's implementations effectively and efficiently impact target communities. Proper execution of this function can lead to increased community acceptance of CTF's work, more effective solutions, empowerment of people in targeted areas, and enhanced trust between CTF and the communities.

Commented [o52]: CTF has engaged numerous communities across the country on local revenue generation and has piloted it

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that CTF's community engagement efforts need to be more strategic and impact-driven. To integrate effective community engagement into its operations, CTF should develop clear engagement strategies and implement comprehensive community engagement action plans. This approach will ensure that community engagement is not only an operational priority but also a fundamental component of CTF's strategic framework, fostering stronger, more sustainable relationships with the communities they serve.

3.6. Emerging Issues and Adaptations

Climate Change

The environmental changes being driven by climate change are disturbing natural habitats and species in ways that are still only becoming clear. There are signs that rising temperatures are affecting biodiversity while changing rainfall patterns, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification are putting pressure on species already threatened by other human activities. The threat posed by climate change to biodiversity is expected to increase, yet thriving ecosystems also have the capacity to help reduce the impacts of climate change. A major impact of climate change on biodiversity is the increase in the intensity and frequency of fires, storms or periods of drought. Rising temperatures in the oceans affect marine organisms. Corals are particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures and ocean acidification can make it harder for shellfish and corals in the upper ocean to form shells and hard skeletons. Despite the threats posed by climate change to biodiversity, we also know that natural habitats play an important role in regulating climate and can help to absorb and store carbon. Mangroves are significant sinks for carbon. Safeguarding these natural carbon sinks from further damage is an important part of limiting climate change.

CTF was created to support the conservation and management of Sierra Leone's biodiversity. In order to do this, CTF (through NPAA and partners) has to ensure that proactive actions are taken to maintain the country's biodiversity. Loss of biodiversity would imply loss of business for CTF. Hence, even though not a climate change agency, CTF can play a role in supporting climate change-related actions that would help in the conservation of the country's biodiversity.

Feed Salone

The "Feed Salone" initiative is a flagship programme launched by the Government of Sierra Leone since the reelection of H.E President Bio. It is focused on revitalizing the agricultural sector to achieve food security and economic growth. This ambitious programme aims to reduce the country's dependence on food imports by boosting local agricultural productivity. Key objectives include increasing the production of staple foods like rice, onions, and poultry, enhancing export earnings from cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm, and cashews, and creating jobs, particularly for the youth and women in rural areas. While the initiative emphasizes sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices to help farmers adapt to climate change, promoting environmental protection in the course of implementation is essential.

The climate-sensitive agriculture sector provides livelihoods for 75% of the population and contributes more than 50% of GDP. Sierra Leone has extensive natural resources, but these are under pressure from population growth, dependence on biomass for energy needs, water pollution, and environmentally unsound mining activities, leading to high rates of deforestation, increased rates of soil erosion, and the occurrence of landslides. High dependence on agriculture and natural resources, coupled with high rates of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation, leave Sierra Leone vulnerable to climate change impacts. As a result of poor yields, even in rural areas, three-quarters of the population rely on markets for access to food. Poverty and exposure to international food price volatility are the underlying causes of vulnerability. Additionally, forest edge communities that is, communities located around the protected areas have resulted to exploiting the natural ecosystems in and around the reserve areas for their livelihood through poaching, hunting, fishing, firewood, timber, stone and sand mining. In the process, the biodiversity reserves including wildlife and wetlands remain under threat.

The following are approaches worth the CTF could consider to address these emerging issues.

1) *Integrate Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*

- Support the design and implementation of conservation programmes that directly address climate change impacts. Focus on mobilizing resources to support projects that enhance ecosystem resilience, such as reforestation, mangrove restoration, and wetland conservation.
- Encourage and support sustainable agricultural, forestry, and fisheries practices that reduce carbon footprints and enhance carbon sequestration. Provide training and resources to local communities on climate-smart agriculture.
- Establish robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of climate change on conservation areas. Use data to adapt strategies and ensure that programmes remain effective under changing climatic conditions.

2) *Align with Feed Salone Initiative*

- Collaborate with Feed Salone to promote sustainable agricultural practices that conserve biodiversity and natural resources. Encourage agroforestry, organic farming, and other methods that align with both conservation and food security goals.
- Implement projects that enhance the productivity and sustainability of local food systems while protecting natural habitats. For instance, integrate conservation efforts with community gardens, agroforestry, and permaculture projects that support both biodiversity and food production. Work closely with local communities to build their capacity for sustainable agricultural practices. Provide education, training, and resources to help communities implement practices that improve food security and conservation outcomes simultaneously. CTF (through NPAA and partners) could support the following actions:

- Supporting mechanization and irrigation of agriculture production;
- Providing farmers with seeds, tools, and other farming inputs;
- Supporting food aggregation, processing, and marketing;
- Financing community farming activities

- Empowering youth and women to produce food through the “Feed Salone” initiative
- Work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency to Advocate for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to be done at all food production sites before the commencement of the projects
- Empowering youth and women to produce food through the “Feed Salone” initiative
- Providing the affected populations with livelihood options through other income generation initiatives, such as Village Savings and Loans activities, and other enterprising initiatives; and

3) *Collaborate with Stakeholders*

- Align CTF’s initiatives with national policies on climate change and food security. Engage with government agencies to ensure that conservation efforts support broader policy goals, such as those outlined in the Feed Salone initiative.
- Diversify Partner with NGOs, international organizations, and other stakeholders to leverage expertise, resources, and funding. Collaborative efforts can enhance the reach and impact of CTF’s programmes addressing climate change and food security.
- Foster strong relationships with local communities to ensure their needs and perspectives are integrated into CTF’s programmes. Involve community members in planning and implementation to ensure that initiatives are culturally appropriate and sustainable.

4) *Resource Mobilization*

- Seek funding from diverse sources, including international climate funds, environmental grants, and private sector investments. Highlight the dual benefits of addressing climate change and enhancing food security to attract a wider range of donors.
- Explore opportunities to generate revenue through carbon trading by implementing projects that sequester carbon, such as reforestation and sustainable land management practices.

5) *Public Awareness and Education*

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders about the interconnectedness of climate change, conservation, and food security. Highlight the importance of integrated approaches to achieving sustainable outcomes.
- Develop educational programmes and materials that inform the public and stakeholders about sustainable practices and the benefits of integrating conservation with food security initiatives.

3.7. Lessons Learnt

During the MTR, the following lessons were noted providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the organization’s operations and governance.

- The dual role of the Executive Chairman as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees compromise accountability highlights the need for a clear separation of powers to avoid conflicts of interest.
- The competitive dynamic between CTF and NPAA in fundraising efforts has detrimental effects indicating the need for a collaborative approach.

Commented [o53]: This suggestion goes against the act

CTF Strategic Plan Review

- The lack of a coherent fundraising strategy and technical capacity gaps significantly hamper the ability to mobilize resources effectively. Hence the need to develop and implement a detailed resource mobilization strategy that includes diversified funding sources and fosters collaboration with key partners like NPAA.
- Knowledge and experience not fully leveraged internally can be demotivating and lead to low morale.
- The Board has not been facilitated to function as intended, limiting its ability to provide strategic guidance and support.
- The review highlights the need for better communication with the public and stakeholders about environmental issues and CTF's efforts.
- In the absence of clear communication strategies, raising awareness and building public trust will be undermined.
- Lack of transparent communication and strategic engagement weakens relationships with stakeholders and donor agencies. Effective communication can build trust, enhance collaboration, and attract support from donors and partners.
- Lack of joint programme planning with NPAA leads to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for collaborative fundraising.
- Approaching donor agencies separately has the tendency to create confusion and competition, indicating the need for a unified approach. Foster joint planning and collaborative efforts with NPAA and other partners to present a cohesive and effective approach to donors and stakeholders.
- Taking on emerging issues without sufficient implementation of the existing plan can be counterproductive.
- Focus on implementing the existing SP effectively, and regularly evaluate performance to identify successes and areas for improvement before expanding to new initiatives.
- Lack of regular reports from CTF hinder transparency and accountability. Hence, the need to establish regular reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous monitoring of progress towards strategic goals.

Commented [o54]: This should be remove or modify

Commented [o55]: The board was fully operational and involve in all CTF strategic decision making, just that some members interest lie elsewhere

Commented [o56]: There is a communication strategy

Commented [o57]: CTF has been engaging and communicating with all stakeholders in a transparent manner

Commented [o58]: Reports have been submitted in an appropriate and timely manner

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The MTR of CTF's SP provides a thorough assessment of the organization's progress, challenges, and areas needing improvement. Based on the findings and analysis presented in this report, technical conclusions have been drawn summarizing the essential findings from the review, offering practical recommendations for CTF's management response. By considering these conclusions and subsequent recommendations, CTF can strengthen its governance framework, enhance its resource mobilization efforts, improve collaboration with the NPAA, and increase overall organizational efficiency. These elements are crucial for CTF to effectively support environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management.

The dual role of the Executive Chairman as the Chairman of the Board creates a conflict of interest that must be addressed by separating these roles to ensure independent oversight and unbiased governance. Additionally, the Board of Trustees has not met regularly, indicating a significant governance gap. Regular Board meetings are crucial for providing effective oversight and must be scheduled and adhered to immediately.

The absence of a comprehensive fundraising strategy is a major impediment to CTF's effectiveness. A detailed resource mobilization plan needs to be developed, identifying diverse funding sources, outlining engagement strategies, and setting specific fundraising targets. Furthermore, the instability in the Resource Mobilization Manager Position and existing capacity gaps highlight the need for targeted capacity building. Training and professional development should be provided to key staff involved in fundraising to enhance their effectiveness.

The competitive dynamics between CTF and NPAA in fundraising is counterproductive and must be replaced with a collaborative approach. Both entities should engage in joint programme planning and present a unified approach to donors to maximize funding opportunities and avoid confusion. Establishing clear roles and

Commented [o59]: I am sure there are better ways of checking the effectiveness and excesses of the chairman by the board and the minister as he reports directly to rather than separating the two role as it also limits the powers of the chairman to execute his responsibilities effectively.

Commented [o60]: I am sure better condition of service can also reduce the seeming position turnover in that regard

responsibilities for CTF and NPAA in fundraising activities is essential to foster cooperation and prevent overlap.

The substantial expertise of Board members in environmental conservation is currently underutilized. CTF should actively engage Board members in governance, strategic planning, and resource mobilization efforts. Providing the necessary resources and logistical support for the Board to function effectively, including facilitating regular meetings and ensuring access to relevant information and reports, is also crucial.

CTF needs to enhance its communication strategies to improve transparency and public awareness about its activities and conservation efforts. This will build public trust and attract more support from donors and stakeholders. Strengthening relationships with key stakeholders through effective and regular communication can help build strong networks and alliances critical for resource mobilization.

CTF should prioritize the implementation of its existing SP before taking on new issues, ensuring that the organization builds a solid foundation of achievements. Regular evaluations of CTF's performance against its SP are essential for identifying successes and areas needing improvement, guiding future strategic adjustments.

Investing in capacity building for both staff and Board members is essential, including training in resource mobilization, governance, and strategic planning to enhance overall effectiveness. Ensuring stability in critical positions, especially those related to fundraising and resource mobilization, can be achieved through effective hiring practices and ongoing support for staff.

CTF must implement a structured and regular reporting mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability. This includes regular updates from CTF to the Board on activities and financial status. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is also necessary to track progress towards strategic goals and make informed decisions based on data and evidence.

Commented [o61]: The board has also not been coming forward to provide their expertise especial in revenue mobilization as some has similar organization with an interest of source funds for them

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the comprehensive insights and findings from the MTR, the consultant presents a series of high-level recommendations aimed at addressing key challenges and enhancing the organization's overall performance. These recommendations are strategically categorized into four primary thematic areas: Governance, Resource Mobilization, Partnerships, and Programmes. By adopting these specific recommendations, CTF can reinforce its governance structure, boost its fundraising efforts, build more robust partnerships, and ensure the effective execution of its programmes. The detailed recommendations outlined below provide a clear and actionable roadmap for CTF's management, guiding them towards improved organizational efficiency and a greater impact on their mission to support environmental conservation and sustainable development. Each recommendation is crafted to address the unique needs identified during the MTR, ensuring that CTF is well-equipped to navigate future challenges and opportunities.

Governance

- **Enhance Board Structure:** Separate the roles of Executive Chairman and Chairman of the Board to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure independent oversight. Regularize Board meetings to ensure consistent and effective governance.
- **Strengthen Board Engagement:** Actively involve Board members in strategic planning and decision-making processes. Provide necessary support and resources to enable the Board to function effectively, including regular access to relevant information and reports.

- *Implement Accountability Mechanisms:* Establish structured reporting and monitoring systems to ensure transparency and accountability. Regularly update the Board on CTF's activities, financial status, and progress towards strategic goals.

Resource Mobilization

- *Develop a Comprehensive Fundraising Strategy:* Create a detailed resource mobilization plan that identifies diverse funding sources, outlines engagement strategies, and sets specific fundraising targets.
- *Build Capacity:* Invest in training and professional development for staff involved in fundraising to enhance their effectiveness. Ensure stability in key positions, especially those related to resource mobilization.
- *Foster Collaboration with NPAA:* Establish clear roles and responsibilities for CTF and NPAA in fundraising activities to foster cooperation and prevent competition. Engage in joint programme planning and present a unified approach to donors.

Partnerships

- *Strengthen Stakeholder Relations:* Enhance communication strategies to build stronger relationships with key stakeholders, including donors, partners, and the public. Use transparent communication to build trust and support.
- *Promote Collaborative Efforts:* Foster joint planning and collaborative initiatives with NPAA and other relevant partners. Develop a unified approach to fundraising and programme implementation to maximize impact and avoid duplication of efforts.
- *Expand Network and Influence:* Actively participate in relevant forums, conferences, and networks to expand CTF's influence and access to resources. Leverage the expertise and connections of Board members and staff to build strategic alliances.

Programmes

- *Focus on Strategic Implementation:* Prioritize the effective implementation of the existing SP before taking on new issues. Regularly evaluate performance to identify successes and areas needing improvement.
- *Align Programmes with Strategic Goals:* Ensure that all programmes are aligned with CTF's strategic objectives and priorities. Use data and evidence to guide programme development and implementation.
- *Enhance Public Awareness and Engagement:* Develop robust communication strategies to raise public awareness about CTF's programmes and the importance of environmental conservation. Engage the public through outreach, education, and participation initiatives.