

## Conservation International: Blue Oceans Programme

	<b>Implementing partner(s)</b>	Conservation International – Liberia
	<b>Location</b>	Liberian coastline
	<b>Agreement period</b>	December 2020 (Exact date TBD)-30 June 2024
	<b>Budget total (Sweden)</b>	20 000 000 SEK (indicative – TBD)

### Overview and objectives

A healthy ocean is essential to sustaining life on Earth and it underpins ecosystem and human well-being. More than half of the Liberian population lives along Liberia's 565km coastline with their survival and well-being directly linked to the ocean.

The 2019 Blue Oceans Conference held in Monrovia was the first ocean-focused international meeting held in West Africa. Four thematic areas were discussed at the conference: **climate change, marine pollution, sustainable fishing, and blue economy**. The Blue Oceans programme seeks to build on the themes and efforts of that conference, to **promote the sustainable management of Liberia's coastal and marine ecosystems**. It will work toward the conservation and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystem services to alleviate poverty, protect biodiversity, and mitigate and adapt to climate change. The objectives of the programme are:

- Enhanced **science-based understanding** of drivers impacting coastal and marine ecosystem health and services;
- Enhanced circular economy approaches addressing **marine pollution**;
- Effective governance and **integrated management** of coastal and marine ecosystems;
- Enhanced education and **outreach/public awareness**.



*Figure 1: Participants at the Blue Oceans beach clean-up in Robertsport, July 2019. Photo credit: Blue Oceans Liberia*

### Activities

Some of the activities to be conducted under this programme include:

- **Inception:** A project inception phase to further define the scope and context of the programme.
- **Science-based understanding:** Collect and analyse scientific data on the ocean and coastline to create a baseline and use this information to inform Liberian policy makers.
- **Marine pollution:** Survey the most common forms of plastic waste found in the marine environment and use this data to support the Government of Liberia to ban problematic single use plastics; work with partners to identify alternatives to water sachets, which are a common form of marine plastic litter; identify and promote practices for reuse and recycling of plastic waste.
- **Integrated management:** Develop a multi-stakeholder Blue Oceans Strategy and Action Plan; share project successes and lessons learned; build capacity of government, communities and partners.
- **Outreach/public awareness:** Run beach clean-ups, forums, panels, radio interviews and social media communications; establish of a Blue Oceans Ambassador programme to support a network of coastal and marine conservation champions; engage the surf community.