

Training Manual on HIA Formation: *HIA Management Board, Key Documents, & Implementation Committee*



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Acknowledgements

This manual was developed by the Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC) as part of the Partnership for Productivity, Protection and Resilience in Cocoa Landscapes (3PRCL), which is led by Touton Ghana. The project aims to achieve a deforestation-free cocoa landscape, support the development of a market for climate-smart cocoa beans, and develop and pilot a landscape-wide governance framework in the Juabeso-Bia landscape in the Western North Region of Ghana.

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What is the Purpose of this Manual?

This manual is designed to help guide the establishment and operation of Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs), target landscapes which have been prioritized for the implementation of activities, at a landscape scale, to reduce deforestation and foster climate-smart cocoa production, so as to improve cocoa livelihoods and support community-based governance and management of Ghana's forest and agricultural resources.

The manual has been drafted as a continuation of the initial HIA Manual—*Training Manual for Community Leaders on Sub-HIA Formation and Governance* (NCRC, 2019). The first manual provided a detailed description of REDD+ and the reasons for developing HIAs, as well as an overview of the CREMA, Sub-HIA and HIA governance structures, and the main steps in the Sub-HIA development process. This manual begins where the first manual left off by reviewing the full development process, and then describing the highest level HIA bodies, key steps in their formation, and the roles and responsibilities of HIA leaders.

Who is The Manual Targeting?

This manual is designed to serve community leaders, community governance trainers, and HIA partners who will play key roles in the development of HIAs. It can also serve as a reference document for CREMA, Sub-HIA and HIA executives and staff, or as reference for community-based conservation and sustainable production leaders and stakeholders who are interested in initiating similar processes in other countries or for different commodity production landscapes.

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF HOTSPOT INTERVENTION AREAS

1.1 What is an HIA?

An HIA is a landscape of approximately 100,000 to 200,000 ha that includes communities, forest reserves, national parks, cocoa farms, and other agricultural lands. The HIA model envisions a multi-tiered, institutional system that includes the traditional leadership, landowners, communities and cocoa farmers in a set of structures from the community level (Community Resource Management Committees (CRMCs)) up to Community Resource Management Areas Executive Committee (CEC), to a set of Sub-HIA Executive Committees (SHECs), to an over-arching HIA Management Board (HMB), as shown in Figure 1. The HMB works in partnership with a Consortium of Stakeholders from the private sector, government and civil society. Together, they implement agreed activities and actions through a joint HIA Implementation Committee (HIC). Through this nested structure and set of partnerships, the HIA spearheads localized decision-making, management decisions, and enforcements based on local values and beliefs, in concert with national laws and policies, and through financial and technical support.

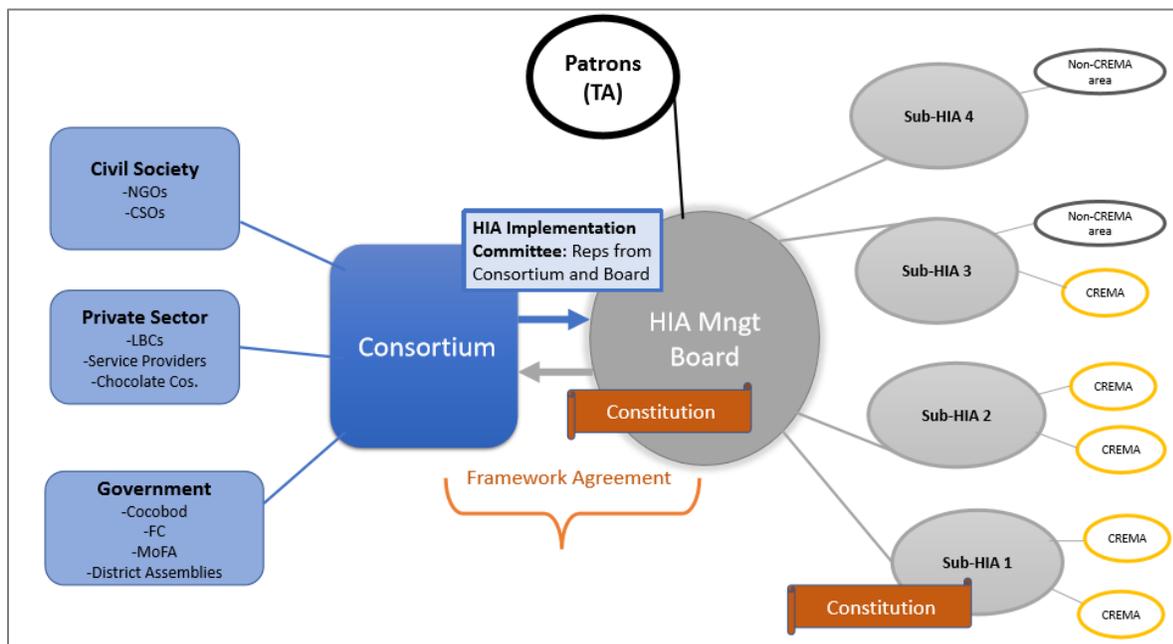


Figure 1: HIA governance structure

1.2 What is the HIA development process?

There is no one-way to establish an HIA. Depending on conditions on the ground, funding opportunities and stakeholders' priorities, the process can take slightly different paths. However, as outlined in the, "Learning About Cocoa Landscape Approaches: Guidance Document and

Toolbox” (NCRC, 2020), the following steps are meant to serve as a high-level guide to the process, with Figure 2 summarizing the main steps that are described below.

Step 1 Identification of a cocoa landscape:

HIA development begins with the **identification of a cocoa landscape** by at least one NGO and a private sector cocoa company. An HIA landscape should be well-known to the NGO stakeholder and a priority for the cocoa company as an important sourcing area. The landscape should also have a significant area of forest that needs protection, and the presence of other stakeholders who could partner.

Step 2 Determine interest and willingness at local level:

It is then wise to determine if there is an **interest and willingness to partner at the local level**. In most cases, local leaders will express a desire to participate, but if they do not, then it is best to look elsewhere or adjust the conceptual boundaries.

Step 3a Landscape baseline assessment:

With local buy-in, **two major activities can begin**. The first is a **landscape baseline assessment**. This starts with **community engagement**—to reach out to community, traditional, and district leaders (opinion leaders, chiefs and queen mothers, and assembly men and women) in dominant communities to introduce the “project” and the upcoming work. With their blessing, the **social-cultural-economic survey** and an **assessment of the forest resources** begin. The assessment of forest resources is most informative when it includes an analysis of land use, land use change over the preceding years, and mapping of deforestation. The FC has the capability and resources to conduct this type of analysis.

During the survey and assessment, if it is found that there are **major land disputes** or **extreme and dangerous levels of illegal mining** then it is **advisable to find another site** or redefine the potential boundaries.

Step 3b Build a consortium of partners:

The second aspect is to begin to **expand the consortium** by identifying additional companies, NGO, and government agencies that are active in the landscape and would be interested to join, and then initiating **partnership discussions**. It is not necessary for agreements to be reached immediately. Work can continue while consortiums are established and grown.

Step 4 Determine where to start working in the landscape:

With a deeper understanding of the landscape due to the survey and assessment, the next step is to **determine where to start working in the landscape**. This is likely to be at Sub-HIA level (s). Each Sub-HIA territory should have significant overlap with the cocoa farmer societies that fall within one of the cocoa/chocolate company’s supply chains.

Step 5 Initiate process to build HIA governance, CSC, and hold consortium meetings:

This is the point where the heart of the **landscape governance work begins**, in tandem with the **implementation of climate-smart cocoa activities (i.e. sustainability investments into the supply chain farmers)**. It involves the **formation of CRMCS, CECs (optional), SHECs** and eventually an **HMB**. Along the way, CREMA, Sub-HIA and eventually the HIA **constitutions** must be drafted and ratified, and **by-laws** need to be drafted and gazette by the district assemblies. In support

of this process, there will be multiple workshops, trainings, and capacity building exercises. **The process takes time—on the scale of 2-3 years—to fully develop the HIA governance system.** While it is possible to push a rapid process, it will only result in governance problems and failures on the ground.

At the same time, there should be **regular meetings of the consortium partners** to discuss how each organization, company, and agency's work is progressing and to plan for collaboration on the ground.

Step 6a HIA bodies draft landscape management plan:

Once the governance bodies are sufficiently developed, the leaders of the HMB and SHECs **start the process to draft a management plan for the sustainability of the cocoa farms, forests and financing of the landscape.** This process is led by the HMB and SHECs but receives substantial input from the consortium and technical support from the NGO partner(s). The best approach is to develop Sub-HIA Management Plans, which are then integrated into an HIA Management Plan.

Step 6b Consortium drafts landscape implementation plan and vision and framework agreement:

At the same time, the **Consortium** agrees upon an **implementation plan and vision for the landscape** that clearly defines what each entity will support or do in terms of activities, and ultimately aligns to the Management Plan of the Sub-HIA/HIA. This will also enable the Consortium to **draft and negotiate the HIA Framework Agreement** which is signed with the government and the World Bank so that the HIA is eligible to receive carbon benefits, as intended in the GCFRP Benefit Sharing Plan.

Step 7 Finalize the management plan and framework agreement:

Completing the management plan requires extensive back-and-forth and review between the leaders of the HIA and the Consortium. The Consortium should ensure that it captures the vision, sustainability priorities, and commitments of the corporate and non-corporate partners. Completion the management plan represents a significant milestone.

Step 8 Adapt a landscape M&E system:

Once the management plan is agreed, then the HIA needs to adapt a monitoring and evaluation system from existing models and individual partners' efforts. The **M&E should be a system for collaborative monitoring of goals and indicators**, as well as **patrolling to check effectiveness of enforced by-laws**. The Consortium should ensure that the M&E system **incorporates priority corporate KPIs**.

Step 9 Implement the landscape management plan:

Once agreed, the landscape **management plan goes into implementation**. It will be **adapted over time** by the SHECs/HMB and Consortium to reflect progress in the landscape, new challenges, changing conditions, and new opportunities.

Step 10 Implement the M&E system:

The HIA and Consortium work together to **collect data on indicators, analyze results, and use the shared data and results for various reporting purposes**. It is important that the Consortium receive periodic updates on information for corporate and CFI KPIs. This system will also need to be reviewed and **adapted over time**.

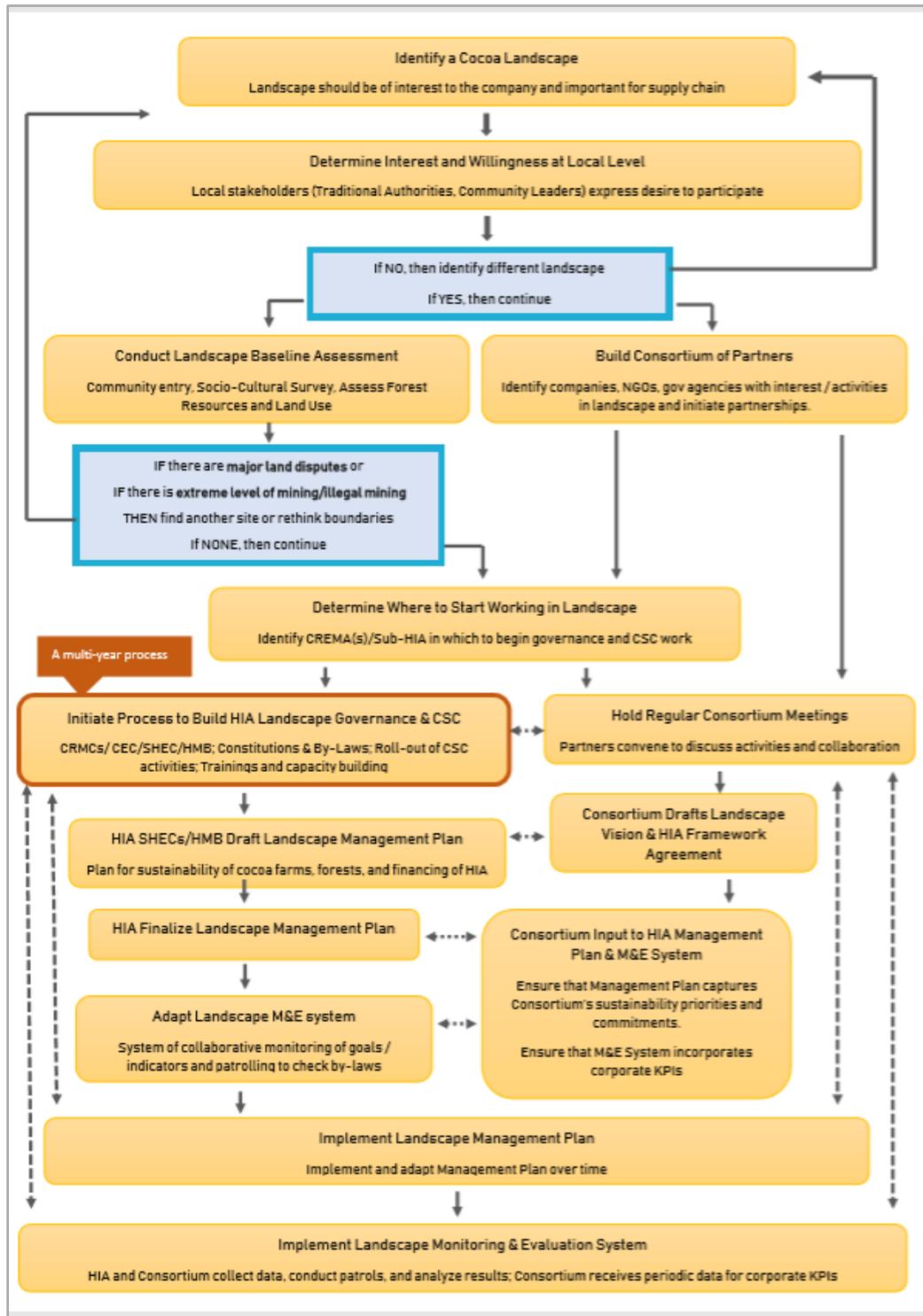


Figure 2: Steps in landscape governance development process—adopted from NCRC (2020)

SECTION 2: HIA GOVERNANCE BODIES, PROCESSES AND MAIN DOCUMENTS

2.1 HIA Management Board

The highest HIA governance unit is the HIA Management Board (HMB). It serves as the HIA's apex body to align and unite the Sub-HIAs and CREMAs. The purpose of the HMB is to be the over-arching community representation body for the entire HIA, responsible for HIA management decisions, while in recognition of the potential individual decisions of SHECs, and responsible for entering into agreements with external partners and parties on behalf of the HIA.

Ideally, the **HMB is constituted by 2-3 representatives from each of the SHECs.** The criterion for HMB members is that they must be selfless, transparent, and honest individuals who are known to be team players. Gender parity is highly recommended through representation of at least one woman to the HMB from each SHEC. Though not voting members of the HMB, Consortium members (including Ghana Forestry Commission and Cocoa Board, private sector companies, and civil society organizations) can partner the HMB as *ex-officio* members to give technical assistance and support to help manage the HIA. The Patrons (traditional authorities) supervise, guide, and help to mediate governance disputes should they arise.

The HMB is led by executives who are elected by the HMB membership. HMB leadership roles include, but are not limited to a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary. The authority of the HMB executives derives from the HMB's constitution, which specifies the executives' roles and responsibilities.

2.2 HMB Constitution and Inauguration of Executives

The first step upon constituting an HMB is for the board to draft and validate a constitution. The drafting of the constitution is therefore best led by an interim HMB Executive Committee under the facilitation of a technical partner. The constitution lays out the name, aim/preamble, area of jurisdiction, governing body, rules of operation, and roles and responsibilities for the HMB and the HIA. The draft constitution goes through several stages of review by the HMB and consortium members before its final approval and adoption.

The adoption of the HMB constitution follows an approval process. Approval of the constitution will usually involve a detailed reading and subsequent signing of the document by an elected executive (e.g. Chairperson), patron(s) and sometimes consortium members. Its adoption legitimizes the HMB and the HIA as a whole, and it sets out the process of constituting the substantive executives and committees and spells out their roles and responsibilities.

The adoption of the HIA constitution empowers the HMB to formally elect its executives, who are subsequently given recognition through an inauguration ceremony in which they are sworn-in.

2.3 Gazettement of By-laws

The HIA by-laws empower the constitution, and consolidate and integrate the rules and regulations (or by-laws) of constituent Sub-HIAs so as to harmonize CSC and deforestation measures across the landscape. Draft bye-laws, which are legitimized within the district or region through the local government act, are achieved through a series of engagements between the constituent SHECs, HMB, the Consortium, patrons and the District Assembly.

Under the HIA concept, by-laws are meant to support sustainable and climate-smart cocoa farming, while also supporting conservation and protection of forests, by defining actions and activities that are prohibited or setting clear limitations and conditions of use. By-laws can also support improved soil fertility management, agro-forestry, woodlot establishment, riverbank management, livestock management, and small-scale mining activities depending on community needs.

By-laws are often based upon traditional values, taboos and norms, but require approval by the District Assembly to enable full enforcement. In drafting by-laws, HIAs can set locally relevant penalties or fines that are meant to dissuade people from breaking the by-laws. By-laws should be developed with the goal of supporting the HIA's management plan and associated rules, monitoring and enforcement. The main steps in the drafting and gazettelement of by-laws are shown in Figure 3, below.

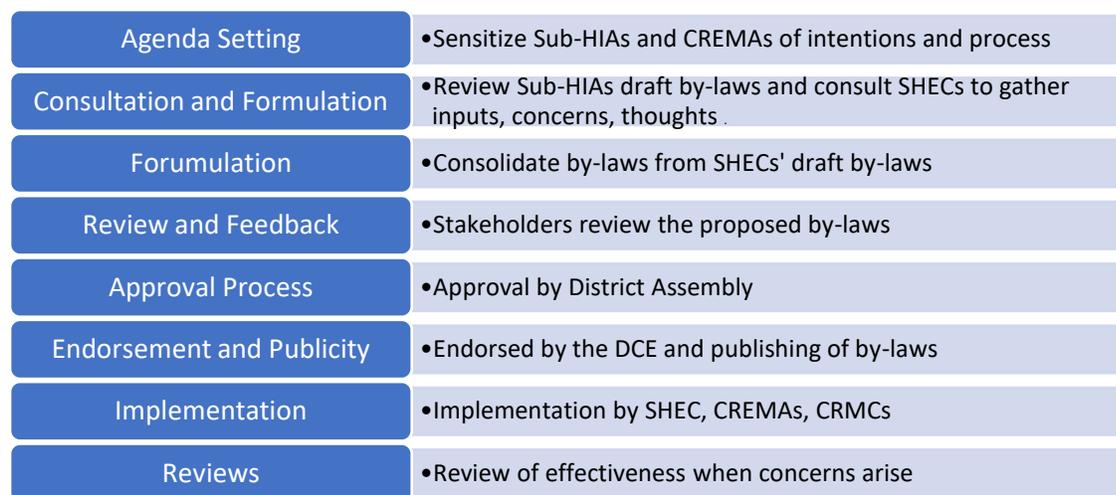


Figure 3: By-law development process

Passage of by-laws at the District Assembly/Assemblies is needed to give them full legal support and backing. However, if the SHECs have already gazetted their by-laws at the District Assembly for each Sub-HIA, then the HMB only needs to consolidate a full set of *draft* by-laws for the entire HIA as they are already covered under the district laws. However, if the SHECs have

only established draft by-laws or rules and regulations for each Sub-HIA, then the HMB is responsible to facilitate the passage of the by-laws by the District Assemblies within their jurisdictional oversight.

Draft by-laws are submitted to the by-laws drafting committee (Justice and Security Committee) of the District Assembly. This committee deliberates on the draft by-laws ensuring they do not infringe upon existing national and district assembly by-laws. When satisfied, by-laws are forwarded to the Regional Coordinating Council for further review and consideration. Without any objection from the RCC, draft by-laws are signed into effect by the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Chief Executive and later gazetted. Where HIA boundaries cover multiple districts, the process is replicated across those districts.

The HMB and constituent SHECs and CREMAs are sensitized on the approved by-laws and enforcement responsibility placed in their hands. With offences clearly stipulated in the by-laws, offenders are taken through various disciplinary measures which may include cautions, fines, seizure of equipment, expulsion, and some cases prison terms.

2.4 HIA Management Plan

Every HIA should have a landscape-level management plan that is developed from the bottom up through the integration of the Sub-HIA and CREMA (if applicable) management plans. HIA management plan needs to be developed in a collaborative manner with SHEC and HMB leaders, as well as Consortium partners (including government, NGOs, and the private sector), and other external experts. Though it should align to the Consortiums vision and goals for the landscape, it should not be developed as an external exercise and then parachuted onto the HIA. The draft management plan should be reviewed and revised with the HMB and the constituent SHECs and CREMAs and must reflect the agreed by-laws.

A management plan is backed by the constitution and by-laws, and should describe in relevant detail:

- the natural resource base of the area or landscape,
- the main land-use activities that happen in the area,
- the rules and regulations that apply to the different activities and areas.
- consortium partners' roles and responsibilities,
- benefit sharing arrangements/agreements,
- a sustainable financing plan.

Sustainable financing plans are critical to HIA sustainability. Given that community-based governance bodies are generally not subsidized by the state to operate, and are typically only supported during the start-up stage by grants given to government or NGOs, HIA must therefore generate their own sustainable income or risk collapse over time.

The most successful governance bodies will be those that have diversified and environmentally sustainable sources of income, which are clearly linked to management plans and operated with

the support of the HMB and Consortium partners. This has already been clearly demonstrated with some existing CREMAs across Ghana.

2.5 Framework Agreement

Signing of a framework agreement makes the HIA eligible to receive benefit sharing payments from the World Bank Carbon Fund. It defines an HIA's purpose, commitments, and the associated roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. It is a non-binding document that is signed by representatives of the Ghana Forestry Commission and Cocoa Board, the Chairperson of the HMB, and the main partners to the Consortium in an annex so that partners can be added and removed over time. A framework agreement broadly articulates pre-competitive strategies, and outline high level actions and activities to be carried out by the different Consortium members to maximize efficiency (leverage resources) and equity (ensure as many farmers and communities benefit as possible). It can also articulate and formalize the partnership between the HMB and the Consortium, if a partnership agreement has not yet been signed.

2.6 HIA Implementation Committee

The main purpose of the HIA Implementation Committee (HIC) is to serve as a coordination and implementation body that actively connects the HIA members, through the HMB, with the Consortium partners so as to ensure clear and open communication, planning, and implementation of key activities. In its capacity, the HIC is the body that will coordinate, oversee, carry out, and/or collaborate on important actions and engagements across the HIA, in alignment with the HIA management plan, and including but not limited to issues relevant to “benefit sharing” under the GCFRP.

HIC establishment follows the setting-up of the HIA Management Board, and reflects an operational and engaged Consortium of partners to the landscape. By establishing the HIC, both entities are better equipped and united to oversee and support the successful implementation of interventions and on-the-ground activities geared towards realizing the vision and goals of the HIA and the broader GCFRP.

The work of the HIC will be to support the efficient and timely implementation of activities and actions laid out in the management plan of the HIA (or similar), as well as other initiatives or efforts that may be agreed upon by HIA and Consortium stakeholders. In particular, the HIC will support companies, NGOs and the government to effectively coordinate and implement their actions and activities across the various Sub-HIAs.

The HIC will play a lead role in the equitable distribution of carbon benefits (both monetary and non-monetary benefits) to farmers, communities and Traditional Authorities emanating from Sub-HIA and HIA level actions to reduce deforestation and emissions, **as outlined in the Benefit Sharing Plan of the GCFRP**, and in emerging documents and protocols being generated by a

World Bank supported consultant to the NRS to set up the REDD+ Dedicated Account (RDA) and the Fund Flow Mechanism (FFM), which are both critical elements of the benefit sharing process.

The responsibilities of the HIC include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining communication between the HMB and the consortium;
- Participating in consortium and HMB meetings (as necessary);
- Working on-the-ground with SHEC and CEC leaders and members;
- Helping to coordinate, plan, and implement activities and foster strong coordination and collaboration between the various partners;
- Implementing, monitoring and reporting on the equitable disbursement of performance-based benefits across the HIA, as prescribed in the final BSP and related documents;
 - Establishing a bank account to facilitate payment of benefit sharing funds for the HIA.
 - Confirmation of “registered” CSC farmers to receive benefits
 - Managing a “call for proposals” from Sub-HIA for communities to benefit from the carbon funds through “development projects”;
 - Identifying Traditional Authorities who are eligible to receive benefits;
 - Managing the procurement, reporting and auditing processes for purchase of in-kind benefits to CSC farmers in the HIA;
 - Managing the procurement, reporting and auditing processes for contracting of development projects in selected communities;
 - Reporting to the RDA Board.
- Supporting and playing a role (as necessary) in HIA monitoring, including monitoring of indicators under the BSP, GCFRP monitoring plan and the CFI.
- Reporting to the HMB and consortium on other relevant actions and activities related to the HIA Management Plan (including company activities, NGO activities, government activities)

2.6 Constituting the HIC

The HIC will be made up of representatives from the HMB and the consortium. It should be limited to individuals who are literate, present the majority of time in the landscape, have a proven track-record in transparent financial management, and who have the energy, capacity and knowledge to oversee the implementation of complex collaborative activities. This may include grant writing, procurement, financial and technical reporting, logistical planning, and stakeholder engagement and sensitizations.

The committee shall be made up of six members, as recommended in the GCFRP BSP and articulated in further work to establish the REDD+ Dedicated Account and Fund Flow Mechanism. **Three of these members shall be from the HMB while the other three come from the Consortium** (one from private sector, one from a government agency, and one from a CSO/NGO).

Fair gender representation is strongly recommended and should be prioritized in the selection of HMB representatives to the HIC.

The HIC will maintain 3-leadership positions—an HIC Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer. It is recommended that if the positions exist, the committee shall be chaired by the Manager of the HIA whose job it is to oversee implementation of the HIA Management Plan. The Chair of the HIC shall be deputized by a vice-chair, who will be selected from the consortium representatives on the HIC and internally agreed upon by the committee. The Treasurer shall manage the financial transactions and financial reporting of the HIC. She/he shall be selected from the representatives of the Consortium to the HIC, as stipulated by the BSP.

The HIC is a standing committee under the HMB and as allowed for under the constitution that shall **exist in line with the life span of the GCFRP and/or the HIA.** Members of the committee, however, may be changed according to the time frame of the HMB members or as specifically agreed by the HMB. The cost of HIC activities will be borne by government funding related to the BSP and HIA monitoring, as well as private sector and NGO support to the HIA, either as in-kind engagement of staff onto the HIC (i.e. salaries are paid) and/or with financial support to operations and activities aligned to the Management Plan.