

WWF-NCEA

Strategic partnership 2022-2025

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Netherlands Commission for
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1. Introduction

2016-2020

Within its strategic partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), WWF Netherlands collaborated with the NCEA in its Shared Resources Joint Solutions (SRJS) programme 2016–2020. The focus was on capacity strengthening in Indonesia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Suriname/Guyana, Zambia and Mozambique to enable relevant ministries to review Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and carry out Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs), and to engage and support civil society to exercise its right to participate in these processes.

2021-2025

Late 2021, the NCEA signed an MoU with WWF NL until the end of 2025. As a neutral facilitator and advisor, the NCEA supports WWF and its local partners to build dialogues between government, civil society and private sector parties in the context of decision making on sustainability challenges. This cooperation supports the Voices for Climate Action (VCA) programme financed by MoFA. VCA is part of the Power of Voices strategic partnership with MoFA and builds on the previous SRJS programme. Countries involved in SRJS, in particular Suriname, Paraguay and Zambia expressed a clear demand to continue working on ESIA and SEA. To enable the NCEA's involvement in these countries (not being MoFA focus countries), WWF NL had made a budget available for 3 years. Potential demands for NCEA support in other countries were being assessed continuously during the cooperation.

In order to formalize cooperation agreements, a Project Implementation Agreement has been signed by WWF and NCEA in December 2022, and has been renewed in July 2023, July 2024 and January 2025 until December 2025 (no cost extension).

WAY FORWARD

- Comments until 22 June 2023
- Compiling of comments
- Send updated EA Procedures Vol.IX-part 2 with Table of Concordance to stakeholders
- Finalizing of the Draft EA Procedures Vol.IX-part 2
- <https://sites.google.com/view/nimos-eia-repository/home>

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2. Overview of activities

This chapter provides an overview of activities undertaken between 2022 and 2025.



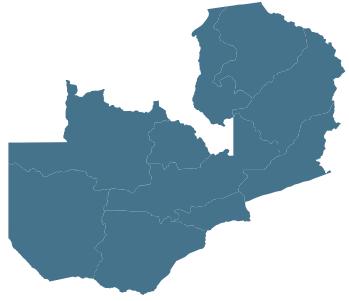
2.1 Suriname

During a 3-day workshop in October 2022 with the team of the National Environmental Authority (NMA, at the time still called NIMOS), NCEA and NMA jointly developed draft ESIA procedures for offshore oil and gas (co-writing sessions). These guidelines concern the exploitation phase and are a follow-up on guidelines for the exploration phase, jointly developed by NMA and NCEA in 2020. The initiative was undertaken with the help of an NCEA external oil and gas expert. Based on NCEA comments received on various subsequent drafts of these ESIA procedures, NMA produced a final draft in order to have a 'good enough' version for stakeholder consultations.

These stakeholder consultations (3 days) and 1 day of jointly discussing / elaborating stakeholders comments took place in June 2023 with NCEA participation. The consultations were held with government representatives, NGO's/civil society, oil and gas operators and consultants. NMA subsequently received additional observations by various stakeholders and prepared a so-called Table of Concordance (answering/clarifying the questions/comments). On some comments they asked for technical assistance and guidance from the NCEA. The table of concordance was discussed in an online meeting with the NMA in September 2023. Thereafter, the Environmental Assessment Procedures Volume IX: Part II Offshore Oil and Gas Development, Production and Decommissioning have been released digitally in January 2024.

No activities were planned thereafter as NMA had indicated that the transition from NIMOS to NMA would require all their available capacity. Contacts were resumed towards the end of 2025, and may lead to a continuation of cooperation under the new NCEA/WWF MoU.

2.2 Zambia



At the request of ZEMA (Zambia Environmental Management Agency) and with WWF Zambia's support, the NCEA has been providing assistance in strengthening ESIA in the mining sector. After a [workshop on ESIA review in the mining sector](#) held in November 2024, the NCEA will continue to support ZEMA and WWF Zambia in formulating guidelines for ESIA review and stakeholder engagement in mining projects. Follow up was discussed in online meetings with WWF Zambia in 2025, however the collapse of various mining tailings dams put these ideas on hold, because it required the full attention of ZEMA. Later in 2025, ZEMA requested NCEA inputs into the process of developing and testing ESIA guidelines for gold mining in Zambia. Their wish is to focus the ESIA guidelines on gold mining and processing. Based on ZEMAs proposal, the NCEA indicated where and how it can contribute to this process.



2.3 Paraguay



In September 2022, the NCEA organized a [3-day workshop in Asunción](#) on SEA undertaken by the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Habitat (MUVH) for a Masterplan for Urban Development in Chaco-í in Asunción. A final draft of the SEA was submitted in June 2023 with the help of consultancy team Geam/Altervida. WWF PY felt that the document still needed some polishing up, and hired an editor to do so and to shorten the document, focusing on main recommendations for government. The SEA documents and annexes were shared with the NCEA, as well as the draft version produced by the editor. The NCEA provided its comments and these were subsequently discussed online with WWF-NL and WWF-PY. WWF-PY is still discussing with MUVH if and when the SEA will be published and in what form.

In 2025, WWF-Paraguay, WWF-NL and the NCEA discussed a Paraguay-The Netherlands exchange on navigation best practices and ESIA/SEA. This exchange visit took place in September 2025 and was co-hosted by Bureau Stroming and HKV amongst others. The NCEA was asked to organize a 1-day program on September 4th. This consisted of a morning visit of the Paraguayan delegation to the NCEA offices, where 4 ESIA and SEA related presentations were given and discussions held. In the afternoon a site visit/excursion took place to Lent (River Park Nijmegen and Room for the River Waal). All presentations were shared with the delegation. For the visit, WWF NL had prepared a nice booklet, with an overview of objectives of the exchange visit, agenda, participating organizations from the Netherlands and Paraguay responsible for the organization, the composition of the visiting delegation and information on the various site visits. The visit to the NCEA led to a request for an [SEA training](#) in November 2025 on the topic of SEA and strategic and sustainable planning for river navigation in the Paraguay river. The 2-day training took place in Asunción with the participation of public institutions, civil society organizations, private sector, and academia.

A similar training may be repeated in 2026, as not all interested parties could participate.



2025



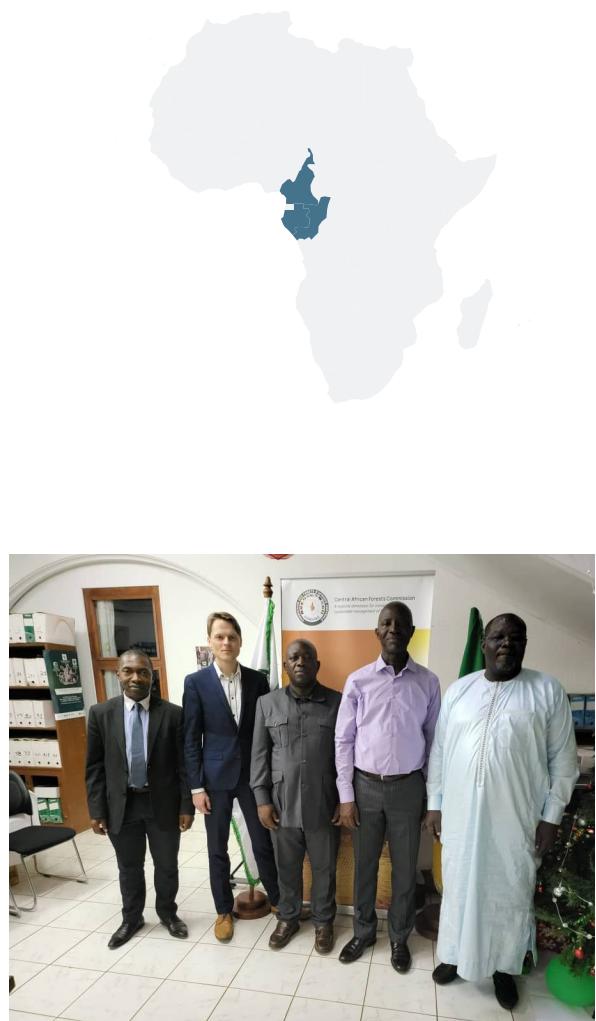
2022



2025

2.4 TRIDOM (Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo)

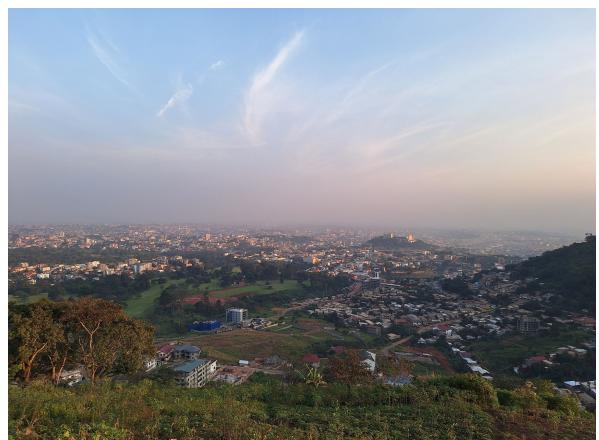
Following an NCEA visit to [Cameroon](#) in 2023, the NCEA started preparing for a regional workshop to kick-off the [**TRIDOM Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)**](#). COMIFAC (Central African Forest Commission) appeared to be best positioned to formally initiate this process and mobilize the different governmental stakeholders. The NCEA approached COMIFAC to do so in 2024, and at the same time WWF met with the Ministries in charge of Environment in the three host countries (Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Gabon), where this initiative was also discussed. WWF and NCEA aimed to organize workshops in each country to discuss the initiative and explore the interest of governmental parties, such as the ministries in charge of mining, environment, and forests in managing an SEA for the TRIDOM area to manage the economic development there. So far, two workshops have taken place. The first was in [Congo](#), where initially all stakeholders were invited. However, as the invitations were not sent on time, the workshop was instead adapted to benefit the civil servants of the Ministry of Environment and members of the Association Congolaise pour l'Evaluation Environnementale (ACEE). This was useful to strengthen their capacity and provide them with skills to engage in an SEA once the occasion arises. Also, the workshop was able to strengthen the relationship between the NCEA and the Ministry of Environment which would be useful once the proposed SEA starts.



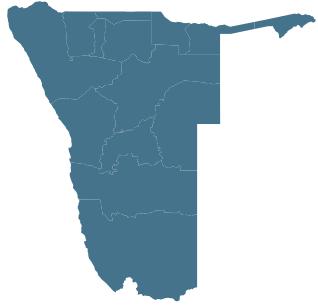


Second, in 2025 a workshop convening key stakeholders (e.g. Mining, Forestry and Environment, amongst others), took place in 2025 in **Gabon**. Stakeholders from various governmental departments were informed about the added value of SEA and the application of this tool for the TRIDOM region was discussed. Unfortunately, there was no representative from the Mining sector, whose participation is essential for the SEA. The COMIFAC country representative did participate and was quite interested in continuing the process. The workshop concluded with a recommendation from the participants to continue developing and planning the SEA. Also, time was spent to prepare for subsequent workshops in Congo and Cameroon.

In September 2025, the NCEA participated and contributed to a 2-day workshop followed by a 2-day conference organized by the Secretariat for Environmental Assessment in Central Africa in **Brazzaville**. The theme was 'SESA as tool for sustainable development'. During the conference the NCEA provided capacity development on SEA, which is a relatively new tool for most participants, and the NCEA presented the TRIDOM case. En marge of the workshop, the NCEA also was able to meet with the minister of Environment. Follow-up steps have been discussed with WWF, Ministry of Environment and COMIFAC. Based on the experiences in engaging with governmental stakeholders in the last months, an alternative strategy is being considered where separate SEAs will be conducted in each of the three TRIDOM states, with strong exchange between the processes. However, a single SEA is still preferable, from an environmental perspective, so efforts will be continued to plan a regional workshop. Given the political circumstances (recent elections in Gabon and Cameroon, elections in Congo in March 2026), the opportune moment would be early 2026. WWF will pick up a more proactive role in approaching and discussing with governmental stakeholders.



2.5 Namibia



In 2025 online meetings took place with WWF's country director for Namibia to explore opportunities to include ESIA/SEA international best practices and independent advice on developments and extractives in particular. This led to subsequent online meetings with WWF's Namibia team. They have good relations with the Namibian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Tourism (MEFT) and contacted them to offer NCEA support. MEFT took actions and compiled and extensive needs assessment, that was shared with the NCEA. This was accompanied by an official letter to the NCEA director requesting NCEA support in capacity development on ESIA and SEA. This led to a one week training of the NCEA to Namibia in November 2025. This training course was commissioned by MEFT and was attended by 25 participants from MEFT various other government agencies. The course was prepared by the NCEA, assisted by the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA). The materials were customized for the audience and focused on issues pertinent to Namibian circumstances, but with examples from many other parts of the world. The overall theme of the course was quality assurance in impact assessment.

The following needs and activities have been identified for future training in 2026:

- Repetition of the ESIA course for other staff members who could not attend due to the fact the group of trainees was limited to 25 people.
- Joint review of complex ESIAAs.
- Training focusing on stakeholder engagement; 2 days for MOEFT staff and 2 days for consultants.
- ESIA follow-up – compliance monitoring and inspection;
- A one week training focusing on ESIA follow-up including on-site inspections.



Next steps

Under a new three-year cooperation agreement starting from January 2026, WWF-NL and the NCEA will continue their collaboration in Paraguay, Zambia, Namibia and TRIDOM. While the collaboration in Suriname is coming to an end in 2026, the NCEA remains available for providing support when a demand may arise, such as in WWF's Latin America landscapes and the newly selected Greater Mekong landscape.

The aim: utilising ESIA and SEA in these countries towards better informed plans, increased transparency about large projects, improved protection for vulnerable nature and meaningful involvement of local communities in decision-making that affects them.

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About the NCEA

For over 35 years, the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) has been involved as an independent advisor and reviewer in high-impact projects and plans in over 100 countries, in sectors such as land use planning, integrated water resources management, mining and energy. Through strengthening Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedures and practices, the NCEA supports balanced and well-informed decision-making.