

PV CLIMATE

PROJECT IDEA NOTE

Nnaa Samaa Mankolou

'Mangroves for Our Future'

Sankandi, Lower River Region, The Gambia

Version 3.0
November 2024

Developed by:

Project Coordinators:

Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services (ACES)

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Overview

Project Title:	Nnaa Samaa Mankolou, 'Mangroves for our Future'
Location:	The Gambia, Lower River Region, Kiang West Peninsula, Sankandi Village, along the Bintang Bolong.
Project Coordinator:	<p>In UK: The Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Robyn Morland, robyn@aces-org.co.uk ● Amber Baker, amber@aces-org.co.uk <p>In The Gambia: Sankandi Youth Development Association (SYDA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ansumana Darboe, ansumanad77@gmail.com ● Omar Jobarteh, omarjobarteh@gmail.com
Project Area:	<p>Total proposed project area: 136.3 ha, composed of areas for protection interventions (13.3ha) and areas for restoration (123ha).</p> <p>Plans for expansion: This project is open to the inclusion of other riverside communities in the Kiang West Peninsula.</p>
Project Participants:	<p>Proposed project participants: SYDA employees (2) and the community members of Sankandi (~60-70 households, ~1000 individuals - not all of which are residents of Sankandi but are subject to the community bylaws) are the proposed project participants of this project.</p> <p>Plans for expansion: SYDA is looking to become the hub of mangrove restoration in the Kiang West Peninsula and are open to including other interested communities</p>
Project Intervention(s):	<p>The proposed project interventions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Afforestation/reforestation (Restoration); 2. Avoided deforestation (Protection); 3. Education on forest management (Improved management); 4. Promotion of alternative income-generating activities (Improved management).
Expected Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate benefits: carbon sequestration by protected and enhanced mangrove forest as a result of the project and key planting activities; ● Ecosystem benefits: the restoration of the local mangrove forest along the Bintang Bolong, this blue carbon ecosystem which will reduce saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands and water. Restoring habitat for important species (including shellfish and fin fish) will increase in biodiversity of the immediate area; ● Livelihood benefits: access to secure and long-term financing for community development through the revenue from carbon credits, and no loss of income - alternative income-generating activities will be sought for any activity that involves the degradation of the habitat. The restored mangrove forest, as a result of this project, will support increased food security and offer increased protection from sea level rise and flooding events to the local community.

Methodology:	<p>This project will initially submit a PDD without carbon benefit calculations, so Plan Vivo can begin the review of the PDD of the non-technical aspects of the project. Carbon benefit calculations and other relevant sections will be completed once the Plan Vivo Coastal Blue Carbon methodology is finalised and released in 2025. Then, carbon calculations will be included in subsequent versions of the PDD for review during the review process e.g. after the first review.</p> <p>The initial PDD will use IPCC guidelines to give an approximation of the carbon benefits, to allow for a financial plan to be drafted.</p>
PIN Version:	3.0
Date Approved:	19/11/24

1 General Information

1.1 Project Interventions

Table 1.1 – Project Interventions

Intervention Type	Project Intervention	Expected Benefits
Restoration	<p>Afforestation/reforestation/assisted natural regeneration: Active restoration (planting seedlings or propagules) is not always the best approach to mangrove restoration but is necessary at this site due to a lack of wild propagules and the high level of salinisation; SYDA have demonstrated high levels of survival and healthy growth of <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> in areas close to the river. Similar unplanted areas will be planted with <i>R. mangle</i>. Areas zoned for <i>Avicennia germinans</i> restoration will be directly planted with this species and areas of natural regeneration will be assisted through a range of nursery techniques such as employing sea purslane as a nurse plant and the formal protection of the area.</p>	<p>Restoration of the former mangrove forest containing both <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> and <i>Avicennia germinans</i>. Restoration of large areas that have become bare saline flats since the mangrove die back in the area. Continued natural regeneration of <i>Avicennia</i> in the local area. Community protection from flooding, saline intrusion, and potential restoration of soil through planting activities and presence of established mangroves (increase in organic matter content of the soil). Increased fish stocks and local biodiversity supported by increased ecosystem health. Carbon benefits, carbon sequestration.</p>
Protection	<p>Avoided deforestation: The formal protection of the recently planted areas (of <i>Rhizophora mangle</i>) along with existing natural stands of mangroves (mostly naturally regenerated <i>Avicennia germinans</i>) within the project area. The formal protection of this area and the mangroves within it – supported by the sale of carbon credits for community development income – will avoid deforestation for timber or</p>	<p>Formal protection of mangrove forest, inclusive of the intended restoration areas and established planted areas. Protection from flooding, saline intrusion, and potential restoration of soil through planting activities and presence of established mangroves (increase in organic matter content of the soil). Increased biodiversity supported by increased ecosystem health. Carbon</p>

	<p>charcoal, which has become increasingly popular (despite being illegal in The Gambia) due to economic pressures. This will involve formal monitoring and reporting, along with the recruitment of forest rangers, to guard against illegal cutting and incursions.</p>	<p>benefits, carbon sequestration.</p>
<p>Education on forest management</p>	<p>Education: Raising awareness on the importance of the mangrove forest and its benefits. Access to secure and long-term financing for community development through the revenue from carbon credits.</p>	<p>Increased community participation in active and passive restoration activities. Increased community involvement and empowerment including often marginalised groups such as youths and women who would be given priority in activities and training such as training for mangrove nursery managers, terrestrial forest nursery managers Schools will serve as a catalyst for youth involvement, there is potential to include education on climate change and giving them seedlings to grow. Increasing awareness, involvement and knowledge of the natural world and the understanding of the threats facing it.</p>
<p>Improved management</p>	<p>Promotion of alternative income-generating activities: Potential planting of woodlots to provide firewood and timber as a response to widespread pressure on natural forests, beekeeping activities, and employment of local forest patrollers. A community action plan and priority list will be developed by the community to inform</p>	<p>Employment opportunities, no reduction or loss of income for the community through the conservation of this ecosystem. Increased community involvement and empowerment including often marginalised groups such as youths and women. An example of women's empowerment is the micro-finance scheme developed by</p>

	<p>and guide the use of the community development fund. Some activities will be implemented as part of the funding for project development, this includes a beekeeping initiative across five different communities initiated by the request from the Kiang West Chief and SYDA's efforts in the past e.g. ACES helped SYDA secure a grant for the purchasing of hives. Current project development funding also allows for other initiatives, these will be decided by consultation with the community and Village Development Committee with a focus on women's empowerment and therefore are likely to support horticultural activities.</p>	<p>SYDA; SYDA lent 5000D at 0% interest to petti-trader women to develop their business to increase their income. Support for horticultural activities e.g. development of storage, water access, perimeter fences.</p>
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1.2 Project Boundaries

Geospatial data files will be submitted to Plan Vivo at PDD stage.

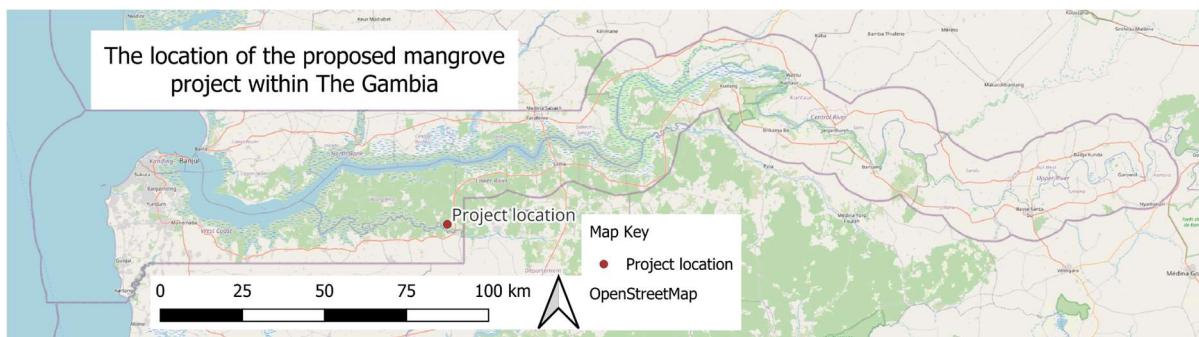


Figure 1. The location of the proposed project area in the Lower River Region of The Gambia

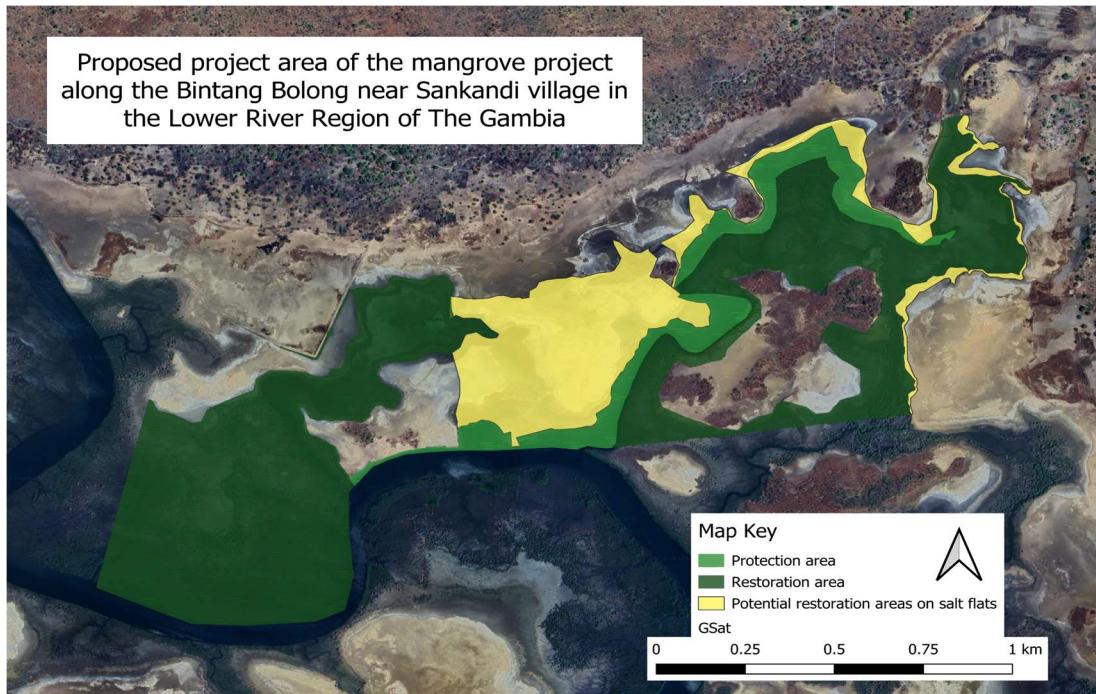


Figure 2. The proposed project area within the degraded mangrove forest in Sankandi owned land and illustration of the intended interventions

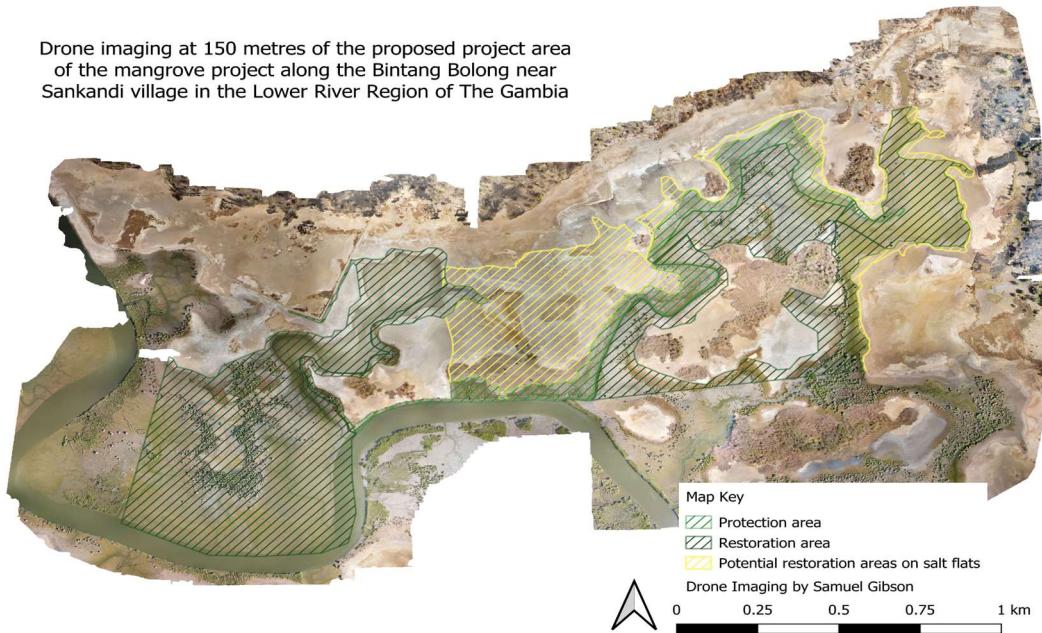


Figure 3. Drone imaging of the project area captured in January 2024 to illustrate the current condition of the project area in contrast to the Google Satellite imaging in Figure 2.

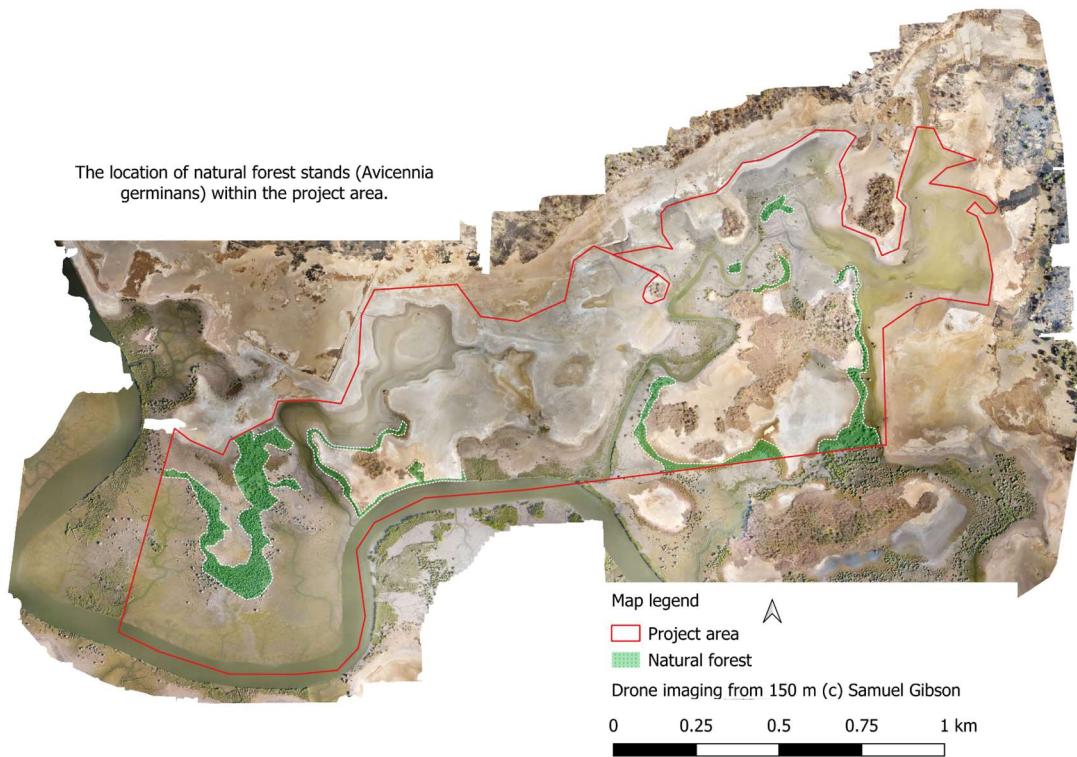


Figure 4. Drone imaging of the project area captured in January 2024 to illustrate the current condition of the project area and location of older *Avicennia germinans* stands.

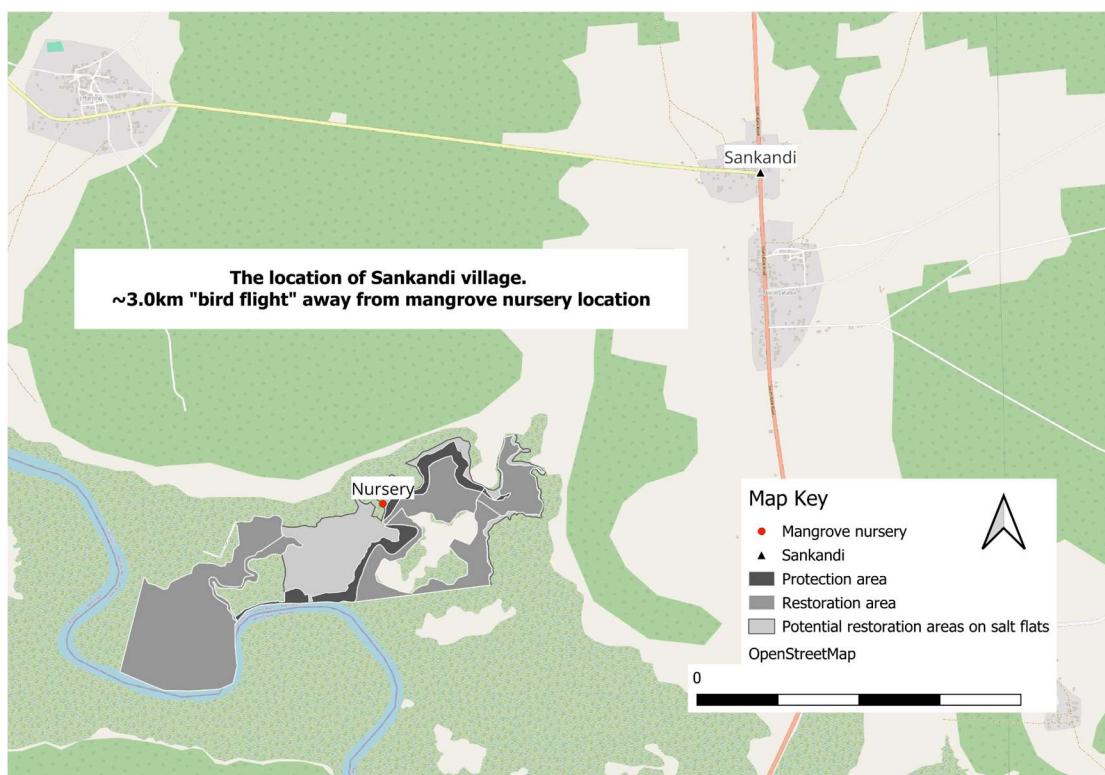


Figure 5. The location of the involved community (Sankandi) within the project region and distance from the project area.

Table 1.2 Project Boundaries

Location:	The Gambia, Lower River Region, Kiang West Peninsula, Sankandi Village, along the Bintang Bolong River. Coordinates of project location: 13.2752163,-15.8505474										
Project Region(s):	<u>Table 1.2.1. The number and total extent (in hectares) of the proposed project region</u> <table border="1" data-bbox="504 557 1378 736"> <tr> <td>Number of project regions</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total extent (in ha)</td><td>2000</td></tr> </table>	Number of project regions	1	Total extent (in ha)	2000						
Number of project regions	1										
Total extent (in ha)	2000										
Project Area(s):	<u>Table 1.2.2. The number and total extent (in hectares) of the proposed project areas</u> <table border="1" data-bbox="504 900 1378 1163"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project area interventions</th><th>Area (ha)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Protection</td><td>13.3</td></tr> <tr> <td>Restoration</td><td>92</td></tr> <tr> <td>Potential restoration areas on salt flats</td><td>31</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Project area</td><td>136.3</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Project area interventions	Area (ha)	Protection	13.3	Restoration	92	Potential restoration areas on salt flats	31	Total Project area	136.3
Project area interventions	Area (ha)										
Protection	13.3										
Restoration	92										
Potential restoration areas on salt flats	31										
Total Project area	136.3										
Protected Areas:	There are currently, and to the best of our knowledge, no legally designated protected areas within or adjacent to the project region.										

1.3 Land and Carbon Rights

Sankandi, and therefore the project area, is under customary tenure, which is legally recognised in The Gambia under the Forest Act 2018. Some remnant areas within Sankandi, due to the historic early settlers, are family-owned, these areas are relatively small as some families have relinquished their private rights to change their land to community-owned; these areas are not within the proposed project area. Therefore, the community of Sankandi hold legal tenure and has ownership of the project area.

According to the Forest Act 2018 “peat” is considered “forest produce”; the land (above and below) is considered as the forest and forest products therefore includes the above and below ground carbon stores. This means that the community has a right to the carbon within the trees and stored within the ground and can sell this. These points were confirmed by the Regional Forest Officer, please see the document provided below:



REPUBLIC OF

THE GAMBIA

Regional Forestry Office, Jarra Soma, Lower River Region Tel. 220, 2745254

Dear Sir,

Confirmation of pin section 1.3

This is to confirm that the pin section 1, 3 is as stated in that I confirm that According to the forest act of the Gambia 2018, the area under the project is within the customary land area of Sankandi and therefore the legal ownership is entirely vested on the community of Sankandi, in the same vain all areas with vegetation around the identified project area is considered to be under the protection of the community of Sankandi and thereby can be added to the project area when traditional ownership is handed over to the community by those lands owners or families

It is also confirmed that anything within the selected project area that is of any environmental, social economic and scientific values above and or below the ground is considered as a forest product and shall be controlled by the projects implementing community e.g. dead woods, all flora and fauna, peat, minerals etc.

According to the Gambia forest management concept, 200,000 hectares of forest and other wooded lands including feasible protected areas and watersheds should be transferred to the local communities which mandated the department of forestry to engage local communities to venture into forest, mangrove and other wooded lands management with the sole aim of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Thank you



Lamin Bajo
Regional forestry officer
Lower River Region

More on the customary tenure system in The Gambia: Three types of tenure exist in The Gambia (freehold, leasehold and customary). Freehold and leasehold tenure were introduced by the British, customary tenure evolved and has persisted from the traditions and practices of the indigenous communities. Customary land tenure, land and forest ownership and rights in The Gambia are strongly and explicitly recognised in national legislation – see the Lands (Region) Act and the Forest Act 2008. This form of tenure is applied to most of the land in the country. Land and other natural resources under customary tenure are administered through lineage, the founding families' descendants are Alkalos – village chiefs; access to land can be inherited through birth, marriage and by forged political alliances. The Alkalo can distribute village land to existing and new community members for them to build and farm on, the rural population of The Gambia are subsistence farmers. Land is held by the head of the household (usually male) and must be returned to the Alkalo if the family leaves the village so that it can be passed onto someone else.

Therefore, the land is owned by the Sankandi community – or more specifically the Sankandi Alkalo – inclusive of the project area and project region; the forested areas (terrestrial and mangrove) are also owned by the community and the relevant legal authority responsible for the enforcement of legal management is the Department of Forestry. This is inclusive of carbon which is included in the Forest Act's definition of "forest produce".

The Sankandi Alkalo has expressed understanding that this project is community owned and that he is not the sole beneficiary. SYDA sought confirmation from the Alkalo which is provided in the written confirmation provided below - please note that English is used as the official written language in The Gambia and is common practice for documents to be written in English and translated to local languages and for meetings conducted in local languages, such as Mandinka or Wolof, to be transcribed into English for reporting or other purposes:

Date: 13/11/24

I' (BAKARY DARBOE), the Alkalo of Sankandi village, located in the Lower River Region of The Gambia, understand that the Nnaa Samaa Mankolou project is a community-led and a community benefit project. Three types of tenure exist in The Gambia (freehold, leasehold and customary). Sanknadi is formally recognised as being under customary land tenure. Customary tenure are administered through lineage, the founding families' descendants are Alkalos – village chiefs; access to land can be inherited through birth, marriage and by forged political alliances. As Alkalo, I can distribute village land to existing and new community members for them to build and farm on, the rural population of The Gambia are subsistence farmers. Land is held by the head of the household (usually male) and must be returned to the Alkalo if the family leaves the village so that it can be passed onto someone else.

Therefore, the land is owned by the Sankandi community – or more specifically the Sankandi Alkalo – inclusive of the project area and project region. Although, I, as Alkalo, own this land under the customary tenure, I formally recognise that any project benefits from the Nnaa Samaa Mankolou project will be fairly distributed through the defined Benefit Sharing Mechanism to support community development projects and the project operational costs. I therefore understand that I cannot solely benefit from this project and that I am not a sole owner of this project. I am bound by this understanding.

Sign:

 Mr Bakary Darboe

Alkalo, Sankandi Village

Cc: Village Development Committee (Sankandi Village)



2 Stakeholder Engagement

2.1 Stakeholder Identification

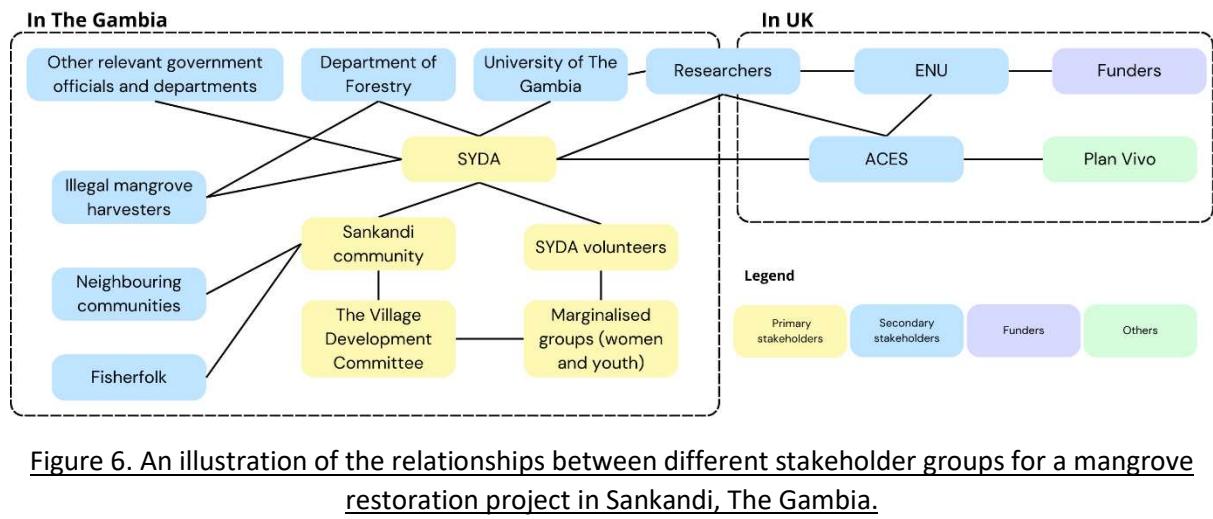
The project was initiated by members of SYDA and the Sankandi community who made initial contact with ACES. They have worked with ACES on smaller projects over seven years and have demonstrated mangrove planting success. These stakeholders are aware of the negative impact of the degraded mangrove ecosystem and are interested in restoring it to support their livelihoods, most notably fishing and rice cultivation activities. SYDA focuses on the empowerment of women and youth, as the local community has remarked that many youths are moving away from the village to seek employment; women often support themselves or their households through rice cultivation and other horticultural activities which has been severely impacted by saline intrusion into agricultural lands. This project, therefore, would support the women and youth in the local community.

This project is being coordinated in partnership between SYDA and ACES. ACES, Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) and The University of The Gambia will be working in collaboration to support a Gambian PhD student, registered at Napier but based in The Gambia. Appropriate funding has been secured for project development. These funds are from a philanthropic organisation and are supporting the development of the PIN, PDD and planting activities in The Gambia in 2024; further funding from this funder is contingent on progress and ACES and SYDA meeting agreed objectives and milestones.

ACES and ENU will lead on funder reporting; the in-country work will be led by SYDA and supported by the relevant governmental organisations such as the Department of Forestry.

The community of Sankandi, the custodians of the project area, include groups of women and youth who rely on the area for fishing and rice cultivation and are considered Indigenous under the IUCN (2016) definition iii criteria. The community has customary tenure and relies on the ecosystem services provided by the intended project area.

Stakeholder groups are described in the figure below:



2.2 Project Coordination and Management

ACES will act as the project coordinator for this project and is responsible for the prudential management of this project.

SYDA will also act as a project coordinator and is responsible for delivering key in-country activities such as planting.

The different responsibilities of these two organisations have been defined and agreed upon.

ACES is a registered Scottish charity (SCO 43978); this organisation helped to establish and now helps to run Mikoko Pamoja, the world's first community-led mangrove conservation project to be funded through the sale of carbon credits. Mikoko Pamoja and its sister project Vanga Blue Forest are both based in Kenya and are formally accredited under the Plan Vivo carbon standard, which emphasises community benefit and control. Hence the charity has unique expertise in using the carbon market to provide long-term support for coastal conservation and livelihood benefits in Africa.

ACES is led by Robyn Morland, who has 10 years of experience in the carbon market and political ecology research. Robyn is supported by Amber Baker who works as the Project Officer. Professor Mark Huxham of Edinburgh Napier University (also ACES Chairperson) has 20+ years experience of research and project development in African mangroves and seagrass, including in biodiversity surveys and carbon accounting.

SYDA is a legally registered community-based organisation, based in Sankandi village and run by and for local people; it is restoring community-owned land. This organisation has organised community-led restoration efforts on part of a 15km strip of denuded mangrove along the Bintang Bolong. With limited national and international help (including some funds facilitated through ACES), 150,000 *Rhizophora sp.* mangrove tree saplings have been planted by the community, and in 2018 this was extended to include a further 20,000 propagules - these efforts can be viewed in this video Nnaa Saama Mankolou - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBEvuZRsB0w>. The established trees from these planting exercise (with a survival rate of ~60% (calculated by an Edinburgh Napier Masters student – their thesis can be shared at the request of Plan Vivo) - the 90% survival rate in the video was an assumption during the planting exercise) are included within this project under the Protection interventions. The success and survival of the trees planted by SYDA in 2018 can be seen in the images below:



Photo 1 © ACES - Signage proving the age of the mangroves from the 2018 SYDA and Sankandi community planting activities.



Photo 2 © ACES - Established *Rhizophora mangle* mangroves from the 2018 SYDA and Sankandi community planting activities.

The community has ambitions to plant a total of 400,000 saplings and eventually restore, through planting, the stretch of denuded mangrove between their restoration site and a former restoration site managed by a neighbouring community at Kalagi.

SYDA is led by Ansumana Darboe who is one of the organisation's co-founders and now thanks to project development funding, is the first employee of this organisation. Ansumana has demonstrated commitment and success in organising mangrove restoration over the past eight years and commitment to community development initiatives. Ansumana will be supported by Omar Jobarteh the Project Assistant and the Regional Forest Officer who will support SYDA and the project with relevant legal processes.

Copies of the project coordinators' registration certificates are provided in Annex 2.

Table 2.2 Responsibility for Project Coordination and Management Functions

Project Coordination and Management Function	Responsible Party/Parties
Stakeholder engagement during project development and implementation	SYDA/ACES
Ensuring conformance with the Plan Vivo Carbon Standard (PV Climate) and compliance with applicable policies, laws and regulations	SYDA/ACES

Developing technical specifications, land management plans and project agreements with project participants	SYDA/ACES
Ensuring that the PDD is updated with any changes to the project	SYDA/ACES
Registration and recording of land management plans, project agreements, monitoring results, and sales agreements	SYDA/ACES
Managing project finances and dispersal of income to project participants as described by the benefit sharing mechanism	SYDA/ Sankandi VDC/ ACES
Managing Plan Vivo Certificates in the Plan Vivo Registry	ACES
Preparing annual reports and coordinating validation and verification events	SYDA/ACES
Securing certificate sales and other means of funding the project	ACES
Assisting Project Participants to secure any legal or regulatory permissions required to carry out the project	SYDA/ACES
Providing technical assistance and capacity building required for project participants to implement project interventions	SYDA/ACES
Monitoring progress indicators, livelihood indicators and ecosystem indicators and providing ongoing support to project participants	SYDA/ACES
Measurement, reporting and verification of carbon benefits	SYDA/ACES

2.3 Project Participants

Project participants include SYDA and the community of Sankandi (this includes women, youth, SYDA volunteers and individuals who are not resident within Sankandi). The Sankandi community includes elders, women, youth and disabled individuals (disabled since birth, from medical interventions or from accidents).

Individuals who are not resident in Sankandi include those originally from Sankandi who have had to leave, due to a lack of income generating activities available in rural areas and move to more urban areas to seek employment opportunities, this is a country-wide trend, over half of the population of The Gambia live within the Greater Banjul Area. Connection and incentives to the project and the protection of the mangrove forest include familial ties to Sankandi. Incentive to protect the area despite not living in Sankandi could be: hope of returning to their familial home; that family members still resident in Sankandi can sustain themselves and provide for themselves.

Other participants include SYDA volunteers who are individuals who actively participate in the activities and initiatives led by the Sankandi Youth Development Association (SYDA). These volunteers may come from diverse backgrounds, including members of the Sankandi community, neighbouring areas, or individuals affiliated with SYDA. They contribute their time, skills, and efforts towards various projects and activities aimed at community development, including mangrove conservation and restoration. These individuals may have been involved in SYDA activities for many years. SYDA plans to retain its volunteers throughout the project implementation phase, leveraging their local knowledge, dedication, and expertise to achieve project objectives. For example, one volunteer has a family home in a different village but spends time in Sankandi offering his driving skills to the project. Due to this volunteer spending time in the village, he is subject to the village bylaws. The village bylaws consider people living in Sankandi as citizens, even non-natives, therefore they are also included in community projects. So - although this volunteer may not be a resident in Sankandi - when there is a need for community participation or his skills he is expected to participate or contribute financially.

We iterate that the community there are mostly sustenance farmers and were reliant on the availability of the once freely available and abundant fish within the mangrove forest, the degradation of the mangrove forest has declined the availability of fish incurring a loss of the cultural practice of *Baamo*; fish is now caught on the coast and driven on ice to rural villages at an increasingly high costs and lowering availability. Moreover, fishing trade has almost disappeared from Sankandi despite it being a generational trade. Residents of The Gambia are acutely aware of the changes in their environment and the impacts of climate change and desertification, daily impacts such as increased dust from desertification, increased temperatures, decreased water and food availability, economic crisis are all well known.

Project participants are represented by the already established Sankandi Village Development Committee (VDC). The VDC is led by an elected chairperson, an executive committee, and consists of two representatives from each Kabiloo (neighbourhood/clan); there are two Kabiloos in Sankandi: Sarra-kunda and Sami; Kabiloos are a governance mechanism for communities, they are a means of segmentation in the community, grouping familial groups, this is to ensure representation in community governance in the VDC. The VDC also holds representatives of local Community Based Organisations (CBO), such as SYDA, providing a link to the community and a platform to discuss and plan activities (e.g. SYDA consult the VDC in the decision-making process for planting). The number and the role of the CBOs is completely dependent on the needs and wants of the community. The committee election process is illustrated in Figure 8 of Section 4.1

There are eight officially listed ethnic groups in The Gambia (Mandinka, Fula, Jola, Wolof, Serer, Serahuli, Manjago and Aku). The Mandinka are the largest group in The Gambia and the Sankandi community, there are also a small number of Fulas and Jolas who have settled in Sankandi by marriage or have job postings in the village e.g. police force or other government civil servants.

Project participants are Type I, they manage and use land and natural resources in the project region for subsistence or small-scale production.

Table 2.3. The potential project participants for each intervention and their location in relation to the project area and project region

Intervention	Project participants	Location in relation to the project area and region
1. Afforestation/reforestation (Restoration)	Sankandi community, SYDA and SYDA volunteers	Local (from Sankandi or included in the village bylaws)
2. Avoided deforestation (Conservation)	Sankandi community, SYDA and SYDA volunteers	Local (from Sankandi or included in the village bylaws)
3. Education on forest management (Improved management)	Sankandi community, SYDA and SYDA volunteers	Local (from Sankandi or included in the village bylaws)
4. Promotion of alternative income-generating activities (Improved management)	Sankandi community, SYDA and SYDA volunteers	Local (from Sankandi or included in the village bylaws)

2.4 Participatory Design

SYDA first approached ACES in 2017 asking for help in creating a mangrove restoration project in The Gambia similar to - ACES project in Kenya - Mikoko Pamoja. ACES has worked with SYDA since then, assisting with successful grant applications for small scale capacity building and bee hives.

In January 2023, Professor Mark Huxham (ACES convenor) and Evie Ward (from Plan Vivo) visited The Gambia for a scoping visit, this visit was funded by Plan Vivo. They conducted a site assessment at Sankandi to ensure the appropriate scientific, social and governance elements were present to permit the development of a mangrove carbon project there. Having confirmed that, this proposed project is one outcome of that visit.

A community meeting was held in January 2024. This meeting was open to the community of Sankandi was attended by over 100 - 200 community members (so around 10-20% of the residents of Sankandi), although a register was not kept of attendees, packs of canned drinks were brought to the meeting as an offering of respect. Five (5) packs of 24 drinks and some loose cans were purchased and brought initially and two (2) additional packs were purchased quickly at the end of the meeting as the attendance had grown as the meeting had gone on - not everyone got a canned drink hence the estimation of 100 – 200 attendees. The attendance grew as the meeting went on for multiple reasons, for instance the meeting was held on a day of the funeral of a Sankandi community member; ACES and SYDA did ask the Alkalo if the meeting should be held on a different day, but he thought it best to continue with the meeting as planned. Additionally, many women were busy with their horticultural responsibilities and arrived as the meeting went on. During this meeting the project agreement and project timeline were explained in English and Mandinka (the local language), and questions were welcomed and answered. The Village Development Committee (VDC) then took the evening to think about whether they would sign the agreement. The following day the project agreement was translated in full to the VDC and was signed by the VDC representatives.



Photo 3 © SYDA - Some of the members of the Sankandi VDC and other community members was taken at the end of the community meeting on the 28th of January 2024, with ACES representatives.



Photo 4 © Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy - This image was taken during the meeting as ACES Project Officer Amber Baker explained the project timeline and Interim Director of Operations at National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) of The Gambia, Momodou Ceesay, translated these explanations into Mandinka.



Photo 5 © Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy - ACES convenor Professor Mark Huxham explaining the partnership between ACES and SYDA and how Ansumana Darboe has led the development of this partnership and is a key actor in the project and will direct the in-country activities.



Photo 6 © Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy - Some of the women attendees was taken at the end of the community meeting on the 28th of January.

SYDA and volunteers (community members) have shown motivation and success in their intervention efforts so far; SYDA and the community have led the development of the project interventions. This project aims to formalise the protection of the already planted and established mangroves and enable further restoration activities in community-owned land. This process will be followed throughout the project, with SYDA and the Sankandi community developing project activities that will be supported by ACES.

Project participants are represented by the already established Sankandi VDC. The VDC is the structure that will be used to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of the community and marginalised groups are consistently understood and addressed. The VDC is led by a chairperson, an executive committee, and consists of two representatives from each Kabiloo (neighbourhood/clan; there are two Kabiloos in Sankandi: Sarra-kunda and Sami; Kabiloos are a governance mechanism for communities, they are a means of segmentation in the community, grouping familial groups, this is to ensure representation in community governance in the VDC) and local CBOs (number of representatives can vary – 2, 3 – but there is at least one representative per CBO. For CBOs including male and female members there are at least two representatives, e.g. in the Youth Group there is a male representative and a female representative) as illustrated below:

The Village Development Committee

Executive Committee:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Assistant
- Treasurer
- Auditor
- Youth Leader
- Women Leader
- Persons with Disabilities representative
- 2 representatives for each Kabiloo
- Community-Based Organisations

(including Women's Group, Youth Group, Beekeepers Group, Village Health Worker, Community Birth Companion, SYDA)

Mandated Advisors

- Alkalo (Village Chief)
- Imam (Pastor)

Figure 7. Illustration of the composition of the Village Development Committee in Sankandi however, there is no set structure of the VDC; this can be set according to the needs of the community.

2.5 FPIC Process

The community of Sankandi, custodians of the project area, includes groups of women and youth that rely on the land for fishing and rice cultivation, and are considered Indigenous under the IUCN (2016) definition iii criteria. This community has customary tenure and relies on the ecosystem services provided by the intended project area. Women tend to rice cultivation and horticultural gardens and some trading activities; although rice cultivation and horticultural activities are usually the dominant activities for women, there has been a notable rise in the number of women turning to burning charcoal to sell for income. Fishing in Sankandi was mostly carried out by two men who have since passed, these men served as the main source of fish for the community since their passing there has been no fishing activity in Sankandi despite there being people who have the skill, due to the lack of fish, materials (such as fishing nets, canoes and landing sites).

The community representatives, the VDC, offer an inclusive committee to enable a collective decision and provide a platform to the community members and marginalised groups to negotiate project conditions. SYDA has led, alongside the community, the consideration of the proposed project; having begun restoration interventions in a volunteer capacity. SYDA have actively engaged with the community in the project design process by conducting consultations and collaborative meetings with various stakeholders, including all the ethnic groups within the community, as well as the elderly, and disabled persons within the community. These consultative meetings have facilitated meaningful discussions, input, and feedback, ensuring that the project reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the local community. For example, to decide on appropriate days for mangrove propagule planting in the past, SYDA and the VDC held consultation meetings to understand and determine the best time for planting activities for the community as many people are busy managing their farms.

SYDA has also engaged with the community in the project design process and will continue to lead on this during the development of the Project Design Document; in addition to this, a community meeting was held in January 2024 to explain the project, the subsequent project timeline and project agreement with ACES during which it was made clear that the community, and VDC, can amend and withdraw from the agreement at any time they decide. It was also specified that with this project, mangrove cutting will not be possible - it is already an illegal practice in The Gambia, although enforcement is very limited - as it would forfeit the project and the project benefits. There will be no access restrictions to the mangrove forest in the project area. There was severe degradation of the mangrove forest (a loss of ~90% of the mangroves) due to the use of the mangroves for timber which was one of the main drivers of mangrove decline in the past –the risk to the mangroves in the project area and to the restoration of the area remains due to the need for firewood and increasing trend of burning charcoal to sell and generate income. Therefore, the income from the carbon credits will be used to fund forest patrollers who will act as a deterrent and record any illegal activities and report to the relevant authorities (the Forest Department) rather than enacting enforcement activities. In addition to this, ways to mitigate for any negative pressures on the mangrove forest, such as the requirement of firewood and income generating activities, are being considered; this includes the development of woodlots, bamboo nursery and development of smokeless briquettes (see Divine Bamboo).

Gambian partners, especially SYDA, made the initial requests to develop this project and have led in building capacity and understanding to reach the current position.

The project will involve multiple stakeholders, as described in the stakeholder map - in Section 2.1 of this document - those central to the project implementation are illustrated below:

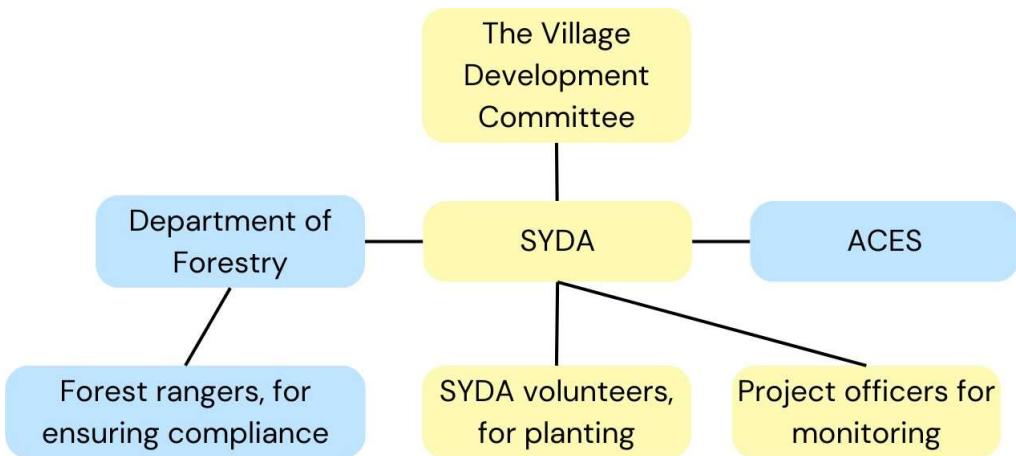


Figure 8. Illustration of the main stakeholders involved in the implementation of project activities.

3 Project Design

3.1 Baseline Scenario

In the absence of this project there would be no *de facto* protection for the project area; although there is *de jure* protection for existing trees under the Forest Act 2018 enforcement is limited and illegal cutting is widespread. There is already evidence of encroachment and illegal cutting of the mangroves, as well as adjacent terrestrial trees, this was one of the main drivers of the mangrove decline leading to the degradation of the ecosystem. The fact that some community members remember the forest before its decline, highlights the intensity of this pressure. Additionally, there is evidence of poor planting practice on Sankandi community-owned land and within the proposed project area, this is contested planting by a neighbouring community and a different project. Many of these planted mangroves, which are often in the wrong area, are already dying, wasting resources such as propagules, time, and money while also impacting the Sankandi community-led efforts e.g. there is an instance of the encroaching planting activity having taken place around SYDA planted mangroves and them now blocking a planned entrance into the mangrove forest. Without proper technical advice, sustainable funding and locally based, well-coordinated monitoring and reporting, mangrove planting in the area may waste resources and breed friction and disillusionment among communities.



Photo 7 © ACES - To the right of the line, mangroves planted by SYDA volunteers; to the left side of the line, smaller seedlings planted without permission on Sankandi community-owned land by another project not directly involving the community of Sankandi.

The management of the accidental planting is being led by SYDA with the assistance of the Regional Forest Officer (RFO) of the Lower River Region. SYDA and the RFO have been trying to contact the manager of the different project since January 2024, to no avail. The goal was to communicate and ensure the common understanding that these areas of accidental planting within this proposed project area are owned by the community of Sankandi and therefore cannot be part of the other project. Despite a meeting being organised, the manager of the different project did not appear. Therefore, SYDA and the RFO are pursuing a rights-based approach to resolve this issue and avoid any potential conflict with this project and in the future. As the planting has occurred on Sankandi owned land, legally recognised under the customary tenure in The Gambia, SYDA and the RFO are beginning the gazetting process under the Forest Act (2008); this process will secure documentation to clarify community tenure, provide further recognition of the ownership of the land and register this land into official government records, ensuring no double-counting of the project area.

3.2 Livelihood Baseline

Participants: SYDA employees (2); the local community of Sankandi (~60 households/compounds of multiple households; ~1000 individuals); the volunteers of SYDA (~200 members - it is the main youth

group for the community, youth is defined in The Gambian constitution as 18-35 years old but SYDA welcomes those outside of this age range). The average education level is Junior/Secondary school level with some people even sceptical about climate change but aware of the local environmental changes.

Most Sankandi residents are not formally employed; the average household income is estimated at 1500-2000D per month; however, this may be less if a woman is the head of the household. A typical family will have small ruminants, some compounds have their own garden to grow food but sometimes this is shared with other members of the community. The community consists of mainly subsistence farming (80-90% of the community), however excess produce is sold at the local market - sometimes at a loss due to lack of storage and means of preservation facilities – access to food storage and preservation means are some of the goals that the community would like to prioritise with the community development fund, consultative meetings with SYDA and the VDC will determine a Community Action Plan, listing priorities for the community.

Saline intrusion has impacted the local rice fields and rice cultivation, this staple food is quickly becoming inaccessible (an average Gambian salary is 3000D per month and one 20kg bag of Saama rice costs 2900D, in January 2024). The local gardens are also at risk, the demand for water is growing and the supply is limited – wells have been dug by women to increase access but many women have deserted their horticultural gardens and share community gardens due to impacts from water pressure. There are fencing needs, a lack of garden tools, seeds, secure market and storage facilities impacting food security and income generation.



Photo 8 © ACES - Already abandoned rice fields adjacent to the project area.

Local fish stocks and accessibility to fish have decreased and the cultural practice of *Baamo* (fish caught and left for the people - from the local and neighbouring communities - to come and collect freely due to their abundance) has stopped. Now, access to fish relies heavily on imports from the coast; fish are caught on the coast then driven on ice in vans and sold as they pass through the villages, this has decreased accessibility to fish and increased their price (3 pieces of fish is 50D) as the supply cannot fulfil the demand.

Mangroves were used for timber and firewood leading to the decline of the local mangrove forest; without new sources of income, and/or new approaches to cooking, the pressure on the natural resources - notably the terrestrial and mangrove forest for the sale of wood, coal and charcoal - will continue to increase. There is already an increasing trend of charcoal production by women and youth due to limited income, this pressure under the baseline scenario will impede any progress and hope of natural restoration of the mangrove forest without formal protection and project benefits. The Gambia is suffering rapid rates of deforestation, driven by cutting for fuel, wildfires and growing aridity, with the Kiang West Peninsula as the most important region for wood cover remaining in the country. The baseline scenario is for these trends to continue, within the project area and beyond.

Under the baseline scenario, the reliance on food and fuel imports will increase due to the degradation of the agricultural lands and mangrove ecosystem. Food security would be compromised, residents would face nutritional challenges for themselves, and their families and it is likely that people will eventually have to abandon the community in search of formal employment. Cultural practices, such as *Baamo*, would be lost.

This proposed project will give formal protection to the naturally regenerating and planted mangroves, it is expected that the restoration of this ecosystem will help to slow and stop the saline intrusion further into the agricultural lands and will improve the availability of fish and lobsters which will improve food sufficiency in the village. The sale of carbon credits on the voluntary carbon market will provide a sustainable stream of funding to fund important community development activities and projects.

3.3 Ecosystem Baseline

Currently, prior to the start of the project, there is abundant evidence of environmental degradation, desertification, and encroaching salinisation. On a regional level there is continual pressure on the green belt of the Lower River Region, the last major green area of The Gambia.

The project is located along the north bank of the Bintang Bolong, habitat types within the project area include mangrove forest (of both *Avicennia germinans* and *Rhizophora mangle*), seasonally flooded salt flats, low and high riverbank. Before the planting efforts led by SYDA and the Sankandi community, ~90% of the original (before 1980) mangrove cover had been lost. Without the proposed project there are significant risks that the trees recently planted, without formal mechanisms to support monitoring, protection and reporting, will not survive causing a further loss of habitat for many species of birds, desertification and continued salinisation.

Adjacent to the project area is terrestrial forest and abandoned rice fields. These adjacent rice fields would be fully abandoned, and the gardens and local water wells will become saline, forcing the

community to dig further from the river to find access to freshwater, these impacts will worsen with expected sea level rise.

Without this project, access to freshwater will decrease for both humans and wildlife, increasing the risk of human-wildlife conflicts. There have already been instances of monkeys and other dangerous animals such as wild pigs and baboons forcing their way into the community compounds to access water.

3.4 Project Logic

Table 3.4 Initial Project Logic

Aim		
	Description	Assumptions/Risks
Outcomes – Intended overall project aim		
Carbon Benefit	<p>Carbon sequestration in wood, vegetation and sediment by the protection and enhancement of the mangrove forest in the project area.</p>	<p>Assumption of successful project certification and clarification of community tenure and boundaries of project area.</p> <p>Assumption of successful nursery and planting activities; the procurement of sufficient seeds, propagules and seedlings and their survival before and after planting. The development and application of locally relevant nursery and planting techniques to help restore saline land in the project area.</p> <p>Survival of planted mangroves and the assumption of no extreme weather events that would negatively impact their survival.</p> <p>Assumption of the establishment of a community-accessible and</p>

		Plan Vivo aligned mangrove carbon monitoring process.
Livelihood Benefit	<p>Income and community development, alternative income activities developed and capacity building; expected outcomes include increased food security and access to fresh water as mangrove planting and establishment will reduce rate of saline intrusion in the soil and the nearby agricultural lands and freshwater sources.</p>	<p>Assumption of successful planting and sale of carbon credits and therefore the survival and establishment of the mangrove seedlings.</p> <p>Assumption of development, implementation and expansion of alternative income activities by the community members and potentially other surrounding villages (e.g. beekeeping, a pilot beekeeping project is soon to be launched involving five Kiang West communities including Sankandi). These activities are dependent on funding which is likely to include sources additional to carbon money (using fundraising capacity of ACES) and the availability of materials for procurement, prices are rapidly rising in The Gambia and many items are imported from other countries.</p> <p>Assumption that if the salinity levels can be reduced enough to be treated with lime to increase pH level enough to become usable for agriculture, the farmers would return. Please note that it has been over 30 years since these fields were used due to the increasing saline intrusion.</p>
Ecosystem Benefit	Improved and restored mangrove forest, consisting of a mix of the two dominant local species (<i>Rhizophora mangle</i> and <i>Avicennia germinans</i>). Improved sediment and soil	Assumption of successful replanting and survival rate of the mangrove propagules and the assumption of no extreme

	<p>health, with enhanced carbon and silt and reduced salinity. Improved habitat connectivity with adjacent mangrove and terrestrial forests. Improved habitat for fish and other species including birds.</p>	<p>weather events that would negatively impact their survival. Potential establishment of a nursery species (the sea purslane or a material to mimic the benefits it seemingly provides) in the area to support the propagules.</p> <p>Assumption that the local biodiversity may also be monitored during annual reporting to provide further detail on the benefits of this project and the restoration of this mangrove ecosystem</p>
Outputs		
Output 1	<p>Formal protection, monitoring and reporting plan for recently planted <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> stands established by SYDA, along with any natural regeneration of mangroves.</p>	<p>Without formal training and capacity SYDA has only partial records of dates and mortalities; we will need to infer some growth and mortality data (based on subsampling). Protection will require income from carbon sales or other fundraising activities to pay for forest rangers.</p>
Output 2	<p>Planting of <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> (20ha to be planted within the Restoration areas – exact location not yet determined - in first year of project development and a further 20ha across two years if the additional two years of funding are secured from current project funder) to restore remaining areas of wet, lower salinity river bank suitable for this species.</p>	<p>Areas will probably need active planting (rather than ecosystem-based restoration allowing passive regrowth) because local evidence suggests propagule limitation.</p> <p>Hence nurseries will require sourcing of high-quality disease-free propagules for planting and further exploration of role of the sea purslane as a nurse species.</p> <p>Risk of unsuccessful nursery due to procurement difficulties, mitigated by</p>

		upfront funding for project development with specific budget for nursery development.
Output 3	Restoration of dryer, more saline land using a mix of species but with emphasis on <i>Avicennia germinans</i> (10ha to be planted across the three year project development period); this and the sea purslane may act as a nurse species for the natural regrowth of <i>mangroves</i> .	<p>The main risk is high mortality of any planted seedlings caused by high salinity/aridity. A related but smaller risk is slow growth of surviving trees. These risks will be mitigated by applying locally relevant nursery, planting and restoration techniques. These will include using high density planting and sea purslane as a nursery species.</p> <p>An Edinburgh Napier enrolled PhD researcher linked to the project and based at the University of The Gambia will ensure professional testing and evaluation of restoration approaches.</p>
Output 4	The establishment of a secure and sustainable funding stream to support community development through the sale of carbon credits issued from the project.	<p>Risks include fluctuations and uncertainties in the carbon market and price. Risk of uncertainty around carbon sequestration potential of project areas; Limited potential for carbon sequestration on more saline ground.</p> <p>Political risks of The Gambian government demanding increasing returns from carbon projects or preventing communities from benefiting. Because ACES has unique experience of selling blue carbon credits it is well placed to mitigate risks coming from market uncertainty. ACES also</p>

		has a track record of fundraising in other
Output 5	<p>Improvement of livelihoods and local capacity building, including enhanced capacity for local women to produce and store agricultural produce including mangrove honey. Increased capacity for SYDA to develop and launch project. A project related, Gambian Edinburgh Napier University PhD student investigating planting techniques and relevant national policy. Local community development project funded through project development funding and carbon credit income.</p>	<p>Assumption of successful project certification, launch and clarification of community tenure and boundaries of project area.</p> <p>Assumption of the establishment of a community-accessible and Plan Vivo aligned mangrove carbon monitoring process.</p> <p>Assumption of sale of carbon credits and risks including fluctuations and uncertainties in the carbon market and price.</p> <p>Assumption of successful beekeeping pilot project and honey harvests.</p> <p>Assumption of successful collaboration and no delays to beginning of project, project certification, sufficient project undoing and no delays to start of PhD project.</p>

3.5 Additionality

Table 3.5 Initial Barrier Analysis

Project Intervention	Main Barriers	Activities to Overcome Barriers
Restoration: Afforestation/reforestation	Lack of technical expertise; lack of financial support to fund activities and for monitoring, evaluation and reporting; lack of capacity to ensure long-term sustainability.	SYDA capacity funding, inclusive of project development funding which funds the formal employment of one of the founding members of SYDA, Ansumana Darboe, and Omar Jobarteh by SYDA to lead on the project

		<p>interventions activities involving the community (with guidance from ACES), and with long-term local institutional support (Department of Forestry and Edinburgh Napier University) for success and building expertise to plant the right tree in the right place. Community involvement from project design, in project implementation and development is with the intention of community ownership of the project, empowerment to encourage knowledge sharing and participation in volunteering. Project development funding for transportation and procurement of materials. Training of in-country experts including a PhD student through the collaboration between ENU and the University of The Gambia.</p>
<p>Conservation: Avoided deforestation</p>	<p>Lack of enforcement to protect local lands and forests; ambiguity over ownership and governance arising from poor understanding of legislation and boundaries by other project; lack of alternatives and lack of capacity.</p>	<p>Funding for forest rangers through the sale of carbon credits or other fundraising activities. The clarification of Sankandi community tenure by securing documentation and registering project in relevant authorities' records; raising awareness (locally and identifying gaps in national governmental policies through project-related research); provision of alternatives and capacity building for income generation.</p>
<p>Improved management: Education on forest management</p>	<p>Lack of participatory forest management; lack of capacity and technical knowledge, e.g.</p>	<p>Direct training of volunteers and giving them employment opportunities; South-South</p>

	no protocols and application of perverse incentives (REDD+ project paying community members 500D a day to plant mangroves and insufficient community engagement).	knowledge exchange with (ACES project in Kenya) Mikoko Pamoja; Gambian and overseas research, skills and knowledge; direct community involvement and benefit from forest produce (in this case: carbon benefits). Engagement with schools.
Improved management: Promotion of alternative income-generating activities	Lack of sufficient financial support; lack of capacity; loss of traditional skills and knowledge.	Community development project funding from carbon credit income; capacity building an alternative livelihood income generation; bringing traditional skills back, paying people to retrain e.g. oysters and other fishing activities.

3.6 Exclusion List

Please refer to Annex 3 for the completed Plan Vivo Exclusion List.

3.7 Environmental and Social Screening

Please refer to Annex 4 for the completed Plan Vivo E&S Screening.

Table 3.7 Environmental and Social Risks

Risk Area	Potential Risks
Vulnerable Groups	This project will be managed by a local charitable organisation, SYDA. SYDA involved local people as volunteers, this community is considered an Indigenous group under the IUCN (2016) definition criteria iii. As this project aims to empower local people, especially women and youth there is limited risk of the project and its activities negatively impacting vulnerable groups.
Gender Equality	The risk of this project harming gender equality is limited, women are explicit stakeholders of this project (please refer to Section 2.1). This project aims to empower women in all aspects of the project and will follow relevant legal

	requirements whilst respecting appropriate local customs and norms.
Human Rights	This project does not infringe any human rights. It is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, and reduce saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands. It aims to improve local capacity, livelihoods and education. Women and other marginalised groups are explicit stakeholders of this project (please refer to Section 2.1).
Community, Health, Safety & Security	To the best of our knowledge there is minimal to no risk of endangering health, safety and security. Project coordinators will follow due diligence procedures and will be working with local and national organisations e.g.
Labour and Working Conditions	Project activities will undergo the relevant risk assessments and appropriate Health and Safety procedures will be applied. Project coordinators of this project are subject to the relevant legislation and reporting requirements of The Gambia. Volunteers and students from outside of The Gambia will prepare appropriate risk assessments before visiting.
Resource Efficiency, Pollution, Wastes, Chemicals and GHG emissions	There is minimal risk associated with project activities such as GHG emissions from the transport to the site and litter/plastic pollution from improper disposal of project materials. But these impacts will be mitigated where possible.
Access Restrictions and Livelihoods	There is minimal risk of negative impacts from this project; the project area is under community ownership and access will not be denied.
Cultural Heritage	There is no risk of the project negatively impacting the cultural heritage of the community - this project aims to restore an important ecosystem and its associated ecosystem services.
Indigenous Peoples	There is minimal risk of negative impact on the local community of Sankandi who are, custodians of the project area, including groups of women and youth that rely on the land for fishing and rice cultivation and are considered

	Indigenous under the IUCN (2016) definition iii criteria, as they are the key stakeholders in this project and will seek carbon rights and will benefit from the project and its co-benefits.
Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources	There is no risk of the project negatively impacting biodiversity and natural resources this project aims to restore an important ecosystem and its associated ecosystem services.
Land Tenure Conflicts	The land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia.
Risk of Not Accounting for Climate Change	Sea level rise is already impacting this community; this project aims to restore the mangrove ecosystem, effectively restoring important ecosystem services which may mitigate some of these impacts.
Other – e.g. Cumulative Impacts	No other negative impacts.

3.8 Double Counting

There are no currently operational greenhouse gas emission reduction projects, programmes or initiatives that overlap with the proposed project region(s) and there is no potential for generating transferable emission reduction or removal credits from carbon pools or emission sources as none are included in the project.

According to the VERRA registry ([Project 3223](#)) there is a project currently in the ‘Registration requested’ phase of project development. According to the documentation from the 20th of June 2022, this project aims to “generate greenhouse gas removals and reductions through mangrove restoration and avoided deforestation” across “the entire mangrove landscape (...) of The Gambia”. Despite international partner to this project, Orsted, claiming on their website (see <https://orsted.com/en/insights/expert-take/our-approach-to-nature-based-climate-solutions-in-the-gambia>) that “More than 10,000 people from 63 communities along The Gambia River together planted 40 million trees across approximately 5,000 hectares of land – equivalent to 5,000 soccer fields.” these communities are not named in any documentation, the only named communities are Jiffarong, Bajana, Keneba, Kantig Kunda and Joreng on the project website (see <https://www.gambiamangrove.com/> which also mentions that 50 communities are involved).

Despite this project’s claim of a country-wide project, the Sankandi community is in no way involved with this project. They are not named in any of the available documentation of this project and have not signed a MoU with any of the project partners. Furthermore, on the publicly available maps of the already planted areas (see <https://www.gambiamangrove.com/about-3>) the mapped planted areas do not overlap with the SYDA project area.

Table 3.8 National Level Legislation, Policies and Instruments

	Yes/No/Unsure	Details
Is there a national registry for land-based carbon projects?	No	
Are carbon rights defined in national legislation?	Yes	The term “carbon” is not defined in the Forest Act 2018 or The Long Term Climate Change Strategy of the Gambia 2022. According to the Forest Act 2018 “peat” is considered “forest produce”; the land (above and below) is considered as the forest and forest products therefore includes the above and below ground carbon stores. This means that the community has a right to the carbon within the trees and stored within the ground and can sell this. These points were further confirmed by the Regional Forest Officer.
Are there any carbon pricing regulations existing or in development (e.g. emissions trading scheme or carbon tax)	No	
Does the country receive or plan to receive results-based climate finance through bilateral or multilateral programs?	Unsure	<p>However, the Gambian government is pursuing related opportunities such as 7 million euros from the French government for general restoration activities (see https://www.afd.fr/en/actualites/afd-group-working-protect-preserve-and-restore-biodiversity).</p> <p>According to the VERRA registry there is a mangrove REDD+ project underdoing development/registration; this project claims that it will restore all of The Gambia’s mangroves, however, according to Gambian national legislation (Forest Act 2008), such a project and agreement does not seem possible or legal.</p>
Are there any other relevant regulations, policies or instruments?	Yes	Relevant policies include The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), The Gambia 2050 Climate Vision, and The Gambia’s Long-Term Climate-Neutral Development Strategy 2050 (LTS), aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

4 Governance and Administration

4.1 Governance Structure

Central actors of this project are SYDA and ACES (who offer technical support and the prudential management of the project). SYDA will work within Sankandi village, in close contact with the community, the VDC, and within the project area. Decision-making will be led by the community, the VDC, and SYDA.

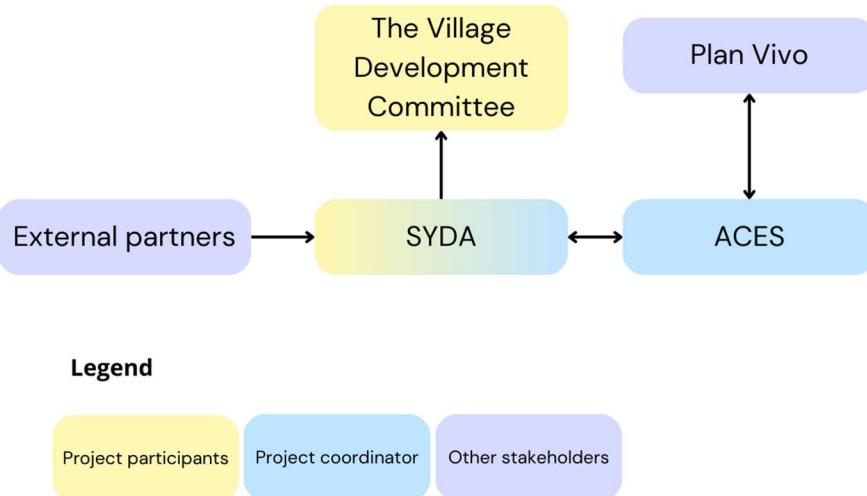


Figure 9. Organigram that demonstrates how the Project participants, Project coordinators and Other stakeholders will be involved in the project.

Project participants and other local stakeholders are represented by the already established Sankandi VDC. The VDC is led by a chairperson, an executive committee, consists of two representatives from each Kabiloo (neighbourhood/clan), and local CBOs offering a main and accessible channel for input. The selection processes to ensure a participatory process and representative VDC are already established on a Governmental level. Members of the VDC are elected by the community members to undergo training by The Department of Community Development which follows the steps outlined below (the training is dependent on funding and is a time-limited process:

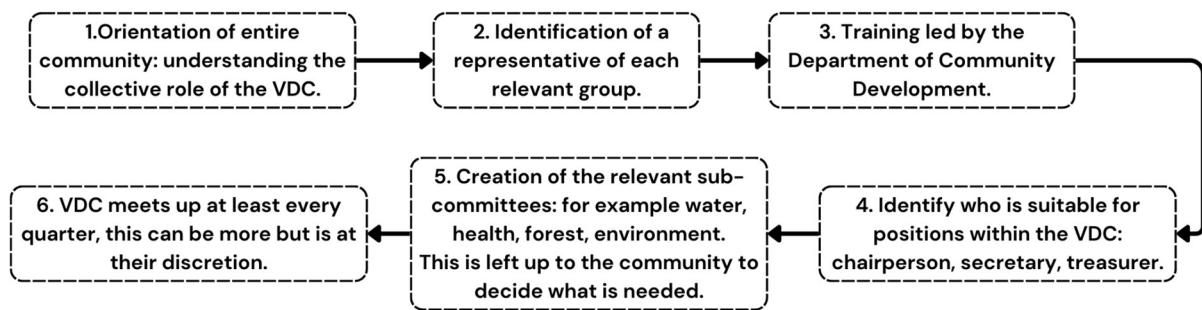


Figure 10. An illustration of the VDC representatives' selection process.

The VDC offers an inclusive committee structure and meets regularly, this is the structure that will be used to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of the community and marginalised groups are consistently understood and addressed.

4.2 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

As the project area contains mangrove forests, the Department of Forestry is the national level authority with overall legal responsibility for the legal management of this ecosystem; as defined in the Forest Act (2008): “Protected Forest” includes all mangrove areas and all riverine forests managed for the main purpose of protecting the natural forest cover and its associated biodiversity. Part II Article 4 of the Forest Act (2008): categorises the forests of The Gambia into (a) State forests (inclusive of forest parks and forest reserves); (b) Community Forest; and (c) Private forests. Therefore, the Regional Forest Officer of the Lower River Region is responsible for the management of the project area and is the necessary authority figure to be informed of the project. Moreover, the Forest Act (2008) “Part IX Article 62: Liaising with national and international organisations” defines that the Department of Forestry is responsible for cooperating and liaising with national and international organisation and bodies over the world on matter of forestry; therefore, the RFO will lead on informing, with the assistance of SYDA and ACES where and when required, all other relevant authorities and organisations of this project. The clarification of tenure for the project region and appropriate documentation will be secure through the gazetting process, this will provide public notification of the tenure of this land and project will be registered on a national level.

While Forest reserves and Forest parks will be managed by the Department of Forestry, Community forests shall be owned and managed by the designated communities in accordance with the Forest Act for the purpose of timber, firewood and non timber forest produce production, forest grazing and protection. The Forest Act (2008) and other legislation legally recognise customary tenure and therefore the Sankandi community’s ownership of the land and project area. The Regional Forest Officer has signed the project agreement to demonstrate awareness of and support for this project and its intended interventions and outcomes - a scanned copy of this page is provided in Annex 5. His signing also demonstrates that he will be engaged with SYDA and ACES for any necessary actions e.g. legal procedures. SYDA, with the assistance of the RFO, are pursuing the gazetting process under the Forest Act (2008) to secure documentation and clarify community tenure of the project area and Sankandi-owned land.

In summary, the project area is legally owned under customary tenure by the Sankandi community. The Department of forestry recognises this ownership and are the relevant authority managing forest resources in The Gambia including enforcing penalties to any offences within these forests e.g. mangrove cutting, forest clearing, uncontrolled fire setting, damages or destruction of forest produce; the Department of Forestry could support training of community forest rangers, the Department offers Forest ranger training and issues certificates at the end of this training.

Below is a statement that the project will operate in full compliance with all national and international policies, laws and regulations.



Statement of project governance

The Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services, "ACES", a charity registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO. REG SC043978) under the laws of the Scottish Government. This charity is run by experts in marine conservation, blue carbon science and project management with the charitable goals of environmental protection and poverty alleviation through the development of equitable and sustainable community-led projects certified by the internationally recognised standard Plan Vivo. ACES pioneered the world's first community-led blue carbon project Mikoko Pamoja.

This organisation aims to develop a PV Climate certified project called '**Nnaa Samaa Mankolou**', Mandinka for: Mangroves for our future, with Sankandi Youth Developmetn Association (SYDA).

SYDA is a legally registered community-based organisation, based in Sankandi village of the Kiang West area of the Lower River Region of The Gambia, run by and for local people. Registered under company act of 1955 as a Community Based Organization (CBO) under the office of Bajul (ref. no356/2005).

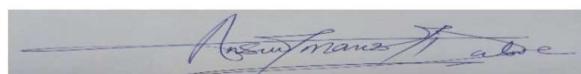
This project is intended to be a carbon-based forest management project, involving forest restoration measures for the regeneration of mangrove forest(s), and facilitating the instigation of long-term sequestration of carbon dioxide through community-based restoration, in the village of Sankandi of the Lower River Region of The Gambia. This project aims to secure long-term and sustainable funding to implement social and environmental improvements for the people of Sankandi and will be developed and operated in full compliance with all national and international policies, laws and regulations.

Signed by:

On behalf of ACES Robyn Shilland, Director



On behalf of SYDA Ansumana Darboe, Project Coordinator



On the 20th of February in the year 2024 concluded virtually.

4.3 Financial Plan

Financial support for the initial steps of project development through to project validation has been secured through a philanthropic grant from Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy.

Current funding has been secured for 2024 allowing for the development and submission of the PIN and PDD, and for the planting of 20ha of *Rhizophora* in the project protection areas. A further two years of funding is contingent on meeting these funder goals and will be determined by the end of 2024.. Funding over a total of three years is contingent on meeting pre-agreed project objectives in the first year, which include the successful submission of a Project Design Document and the demonstration of successful on-site planting. Both ACES and SYDA are aware of these objectives. Regular reporting and updates to the funder are scheduled which will allow for transparency and flexibility with deadlines if needed. With the assumption the objectives for 2024 are met and further funding for two years is secured, funding is secured to support project validation (2025) and launch (expected late 2025). The funding should support the project until the first issuance and sale of carbon credits - expected in 2027.

The project and project coordinators may seek further funding opportunities before the issuance of credits to support or further develop this project. One option for expanding on and diversifying community income is the development of a terrestrial carbon project in Sankandi owned land as well as the development and implementation of alternative income generating activities.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Project Boundaries

Geospatial data files for project region and project area boundaries will be provided at the PDD stage as requested from Plan Vivo.

Annex 2 –Registration Certificate

Project coordinator registration certificates are included below:

-Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services

**THIS DOCUMENT IS IMPORTANT
PLEASE RETAIN IT FOR YOUR RECORDS
Please ensure all charity trustees are aware of this document**



Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

Professor Mark Huxham
The Association For Coastal Ecosystem Services Your ref:
Our ref: RS/STA/13-0060



02 May 2013

Dear Professor Huxham

Decision on your application for Incorporation as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

I am pleased to tell you that your application for incorporation as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) has been successful. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is satisfied that the organisation meets the charity test and the legal requirements for being a SCIO, and has entered it in the Scottish Charity Register. This means it is now an incorporated body having charitable status under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The details of your charity's entry in the Register are set out below.
Please check these details and let us know of any errors.

Your SCIO's registered name is:	The Association For Coastal Ecosystem Services
Your charity number is:	SC043978
Your SCIO was registered on:	30 April 2013
Your SCIO's 'known as' name is:	
Your principal contact address is:	
Your charitable purposes are:	A - the prevention or relief of poverty B - the advancement of education G - the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science M - the advancement of

- The Sankandi Youth Development Association:



Annex 3 – Exclusion List

The exclusion list has been completed by responding 'Yes' if the activity is included in the project and 'No' if the project does not include the activity.

Activities	Included in Project (‘Yes’ or ‘No’)
Any project activities leading to or requiring the destruction [1] of critical habitat [2] or any forestry project which does not implement a plan for improvement and/or sustainable management.	No
Any activity which could be associated with the significant impairment of areas particularly worthy of protection of cultural heritage (without adequate compensation in accordance with international standards).	No
Trade in animals, plants or any natural products not complying with the provisions of the CITES/Washington convention [3].	No
Illegal, harvesting or trading in any wildlife resources.	No
Destructive fishing methods or drift net fishing with a net more than 2.5 km in length, explosives and/or poison.	No
Large-scale commercial logging operations for use in primary tropical moist forest.	No
Production or trade in wood or other forestry products other than from sustainably managed forests [4].	No
Exploitation of diamond mines and marketing of diamonds where the host country has not adhered to the Kimberley Process, and exploitation of other conflict minerals [5]	No
Activities involving harmful or exploitative forms of forced labour, [6] harmful child labour [7], modern slavery and human trafficking [8].	No
Projects that include involuntary physical displacement and/or forced eviction.	No
Production or activities that encroach on lands owned, or claimed or occupied by Indigenous Peoples, without full documented Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of such peoples [9].	No
Harmful and unsafe production, use, sale or trade of pharmaceuticals, ozone layer depleting substances [10], and other toxic [11] or dangerous materials such as asbestos or products containing PCB's [12], wildlife or products regulated under CITES, including all products that are banned or are being progressively phased out internationally	No
Production or trade of arms, ammunition, weaponry, controversial weapons, or components thereof (e.g., nuclear weapons and radioactive ammunition, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction, cluster bombs, anti -personnel mines, enriched uranium).	No
Procurement and use of firearms.	No
Provision of finances to military institutions involved in conservation or security activities.	No
Production or trade of strong alcohol intended for human consumption or other alcoholic beverages (excluding beer and wine).	No
Production or trade of tobacco and other drugs	No
Gambling, gaming establishments, casinos or any equivalent enterprises and undertaking [13].	No
Any trade related to pornography, prostitution or sexual exploitation of any form.	No
Production or trade in radioactive material. This does not apply to the procurement of medical equipment, quality control equipment or other application for which the radioactive source is insignificant and/or adequately shielded	No

Production or trade in unbound asbestos. This does not apply to the purchase or use of cement linings with bound asbestos and an asbestos content of less than 20%.	No
Production, trade, storage, or transport of significant volumes of hazardous chemicals, or commercial scale usage of hazardous chemicals. Hazardous chemicals include gasoline, kerosene, and other petroleum products.	No
Transboundary trade in wastes, except for those accepted by the Basel Convention and its underlying regulations [14].	No
Any activity leading to an irreversible modification or significant displacement of an element of culturally critical heritage [15].	No
Production and distribution, or investment in, media that are racist, antidemocratic or that advocate discrimination against a part of the population.	No
Projects involving the planting or introduction of invasive species	No
Projects that increase the dependency of primary participants and other stakeholders on fossil fuels.	No

Notes:

[1] Destruction means (1) the elimination or severe reduction in the integrity of a habitat/area caused by a major and long-term/prolonged change in land-use or water resources or (2) the modification of a habitat such that this habitat's ability to fulfil its function/ role is lost.

[2] The term critical habitat encompasses natural and modified habitats that deserve particular attention. This term includes (1) spaces with high biodiversity value as defined in the IUCN's classification criteria, including, in particular, habitats required for the survival of endangered species as defined by the IUCN's red list of threatened species or by any national legislation; (2) spaces with a particular importance for endemic species or whose geographical range is limited; (3) critical sites for the survival of migratory species; (4) spaces welcoming a significant number of individuals from congregatory species; (5) spaces presenting unique assemblages of species or containing species which are associated according to key evolution processes or which fulfil key ecosystem services; (6) and territories with socially, economically or culturally significant biodiversity for local communities. Primary forests or high conservation value forests must also be considered as critical habitats

[3] <https://cites.org/eng/disc/text.php>

[4] Sustainably managed forests are forests managed in a way that balances ecological, economic and socio-cultural needs.

[5] Conflict minerals, including tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold, can be used to finance armed groups, fuel forced labour and other human rights abuses, and support corruption and money laundering. See the EU Regulation on conflict minerals:

https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/conflict-minerals-regulation/regulation-explained_en

[6] Forced labour means all work or service, not voluntarily performed, that is extracted from an individual under threat of force or penalty.

[7] Harmful child labour means the employment of children that is economically exploitative, or is likely to be hazardous to, or to interfere with, the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Employees must be at least 14 years of age, as defined in the ILO's Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

(C138 – Minimum Age Convention, Article 2), unless local laws require compulsory school attendance or a minimum working age. In such circumstances, the highest age requirement must be used.

[8] Modern slavery is comprised two key components: forced labour and forced marriage. These refer to situations of exploitation that a person cannot leave or refuse due to threats, violence, deception or coercion. (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf)

[9] <https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/fpic/en/>

[10] Any chemical component which reacts with, and destroys, the stratospheric ozone layer leading to the formation of holes in this layer. The Montreal Protocol lists Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), their reduction targets and deadlines for phasing them out.

[11] Including substances included under the Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention and WHO "Pharmaceuticals: Restrictions in Use and Availability".

[12] PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are a group of highly toxic chemical products that may be found in oil-filled electrical transformers, capacitors and switchgear dating from 1950 to 1985.

[13] Any direct financing of these projects or activities involving them (for example, a hotel including a casino). Urban improvement plans which could subsequently incorporate such projects are not affected.

[14] Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal (1989).

[15] "Critical cultural heritage" is considered as any heritage element recognised internationally or nationally as being of historical, social and/or cultural interest.

Annex 4 - Environmental and Social Screening

The table below has been completed by answering each risk question and, where relevant, details have been included of any activities that will be carried out to better understand or mitigate potential risks.

Topic	Risk Questions	Project Coordinator Response
Environmental and Social Risks		
Vulnerable Groups	Are there vulnerable or disadvantaged groups or individuals, including people with disabilities (consider also landless groups, lower income groups less able to cope with livelihood shocks/ stresses) in the project area, and are their livelihood conditions well understood by the project?	The livelihood conditions of members of Sankandi village are well known to the project coordinators. SYDA is based in Sankandi village and involves the local community in voluntary activities, volunteers are then supplied with a meal as compensation for a day's work. ACES has worked and supported SYDA efforts for the past 7 years and ACES

		<p>Chairperson and a member of Plan Vivo's Secretariat visited the project area and Sankandi village in early 2023. The majority of the population relies on fishing, rice and groundnut cultivation but these activities have been severely impacted by the mangrove forest degradation and saline intrusion. Women often cultivate rice to generate income. Many people, especially youths, have left the village in search of employment.</p>
	<p>Is there a risk that project activities disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, due to their vulnerability status?</p>	<p>The right to land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia. As SYDA already involve members of the community in volunteering activities and includes women and youths there is limited risk of the project activities impacting vulnerable groups. However, an iterative and participatory approach to stakeholder consultation through the VDC will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement.</p>
	<p>Is there a risk that the project discriminates against vulnerable groups, for example regarding access to project services or benefits and decision-making?</p>	<p>The project area is outside the village of Sankandi and there will be no access restriction to members of the community. It may be necessary to restrict grazing in the planting areas, but these are currently bare and so do not provide any grazing at the moment nor would do so under the</p>

		<p>baseline scenario. As SYDA already involve members of the community in volunteering activities and includes women and youths there is limited risk of the project activities impacting vulnerable groups. However, an iterative and participatory approach to stakeholder consultation through the VDC will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement.</p>
<p>Gender equality</p>	<p>Is there a risk of adverse gender impacts due to the project/ project activities, including for example discrimination or creation/exacerbation or perpetuation of gender-related inequalities?</p>	<p>This risk is limited due to the participatory approach and stakeholder consultation that will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement. Women and other marginalised groups are explicit stakeholders of this project (please refer to Section 2.1) and are represented by the VDC. Accessibility to the project and its benefits will be monitored throughout the project's lifespan as part of the socio-economic reporting.</p>
	<p>Is there a risk that project activities will result in adverse impacts on the situation of women or girls, including their rights and livelihoods? Consider for example where access restrictions disproportionately affect women and girls due to their roles and positions in accessing environmental goods and services?</p>	<p>This risk is limited due to the participatory approach and stakeholder consultation through the VDC that will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement. The VDC has a Women's representative. As this project aims to restore the mangrove forest and to reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands; this will support women who often rely on rice cultivation for income, but this activity has been severely</p>

		impacted by the saline intrusion. Capacity building and any educational or awareness materials will be made accessible to women.
	Is there a risk that project activities could cause or contribute to gender-based violence, including risks of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment (SEAH)? Consider partner and collaborating partner organizations and policies they have in place. Please describe.	To the best of ACES' knowledge, there are no records of SEAH problems in the Sankandi community due to voluntary activities with SYDA. The VDC has a grievance procedure in place already which will be monitored and modified if necessary; both ACES and SYDA will have whistleblower policies in place before the project launch and will familiarise project participants and community members of the process to ensure that any issue is brought to our attention.
Human Rights	Is there a risk that the project prevents peoples from fulfilling their economic or social rights, such as the right to life, the right to self-determination, cultural survival, health, work, water and adequate standard of living?	No; this project is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, and reducing the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands upon which this community relies and ultimately improve access to their economic, cultural survival, work and other rights. Women and other marginalised groups are explicit stakeholders of this project (please refer to Section 2.1) and are represented in the VDC (please refer to Section 4).
	Is there a risk that the project prevents peoples from enjoying their procedural rights, for example through exclusion of individuals or	No; this project is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands

	<p>groups from participating in decisions affecting them?</p>	<p>upon which this community relies and ultimately improve access to their economic, cultural survival, work and other rights.</p> <p>There are no proposals to change current procedures governing access to decisions.</p>
	<p>Are you aware of any severe human rights violations linked to project partners in the last 5 years?</p>	<p>No; ACES has been supporting SYDA efforts for the past 7 years.</p>
<p>Community, Health, Safety & Security</p>	<p>Is there a risk of exacerbating existing social and stakeholder conflicts through the implementation of project activities? Consider for example existing conflicts over land or natural resources, between communities and the state.</p>	<p>The right to land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia. As SYDA already involve members of the community in volunteering activities and includes women and youths there is limited risk of the project activities impacting vulnerable groups. However, there is evidence of planting activities on Sankandi land from a neighbouring community and a project that did not involve the Sankandi community, SYDA is being supported by the Department of Forestry to resolve this before the project launch. Project activities may highlight the existence of previous bad practices but by clarifying and communicating existing laws and boundaries the project will help to prevent future conflicts.</p>
	<p>Does the project provide support (technical, material, financial) to law enforcement activities? Consider support to government agencies and to</p>	<p>No; there are no formal law enforcement activities involved in this project. However, the project will employ forest rangers to help</p>

	<p>Community Rangers or members conducting monitoring and patrolling. If so, is there a risk that these activities will harm communities or personnel involved in monitoring and patrolling?</p>	<p>enforcement. These rangers will not have official powers of arrest or enforcement but will act in concert with the Department of Forestry if required. They will be trained to assess appropriate interventions, and their main role will be patrolling and reporting, not physically enforcing.</p>
	<p>Are there any other activities that could adversely affect community health and safety? Consider for example exacerbating human-wildlife conflict, affecting provisioning ecosystem services, and transmission of diseases.</p>	<p>No; this project is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, and reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands upon which this community relies and ultimately improve the ecosystem services.</p>
<p>Labour and working conditions</p>	<p>Is there a risk that the project, including project partners, would lead to working conditions for project workers¹ that are not aligned with national labour laws or the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (discriminatory working conditions, lack of equal opportunity, lack of clear employment terms, failure to prevent harassment or exploitation, failure to ensure freedom of association etc.)?</p>	<p>The project and SYDA functions as a CBO, so is beholden to the local employment laws. ACES is a UK NGO, and any involved governmental organisation in The Gambia is subject to the relevant legislation and reporting requirements.</p>
	<p>Is there an occupational health and safety risk to project workers while completing project activities?</p>	<p>There are risks involved in working within a marine area. Relevant Health and Safety procedures and policies will be put in place and risk</p>

		assessments will be developed for project activities.
	Is there a risk that the project support or be linked to forced labour, harmful child labour, or any other damaging forms of labour?	No; all tasks will be undertaken by the project partners who are registered organisations as detailed above.
Resource efficiency, pollution, wastes, chemicals and GHG emissions	Is there a risk that project activities might lead to releasing pollutants to the environment, cause significant amounts of waste or hazardous waste or materials?	No; this project is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, and reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands upon which this community relies and ultimately improve the ecosystem services of this ecosystem. This will be achieved through restoration, conservation and improved management activities. An indirect but small risk will be the proper disposal of any plastic bags used to transport any purchased mangrove seedlings to the site and other litter introduced to the site due to project activities, however, guidance will be issued on the proper disposal of any materials.
	Is there a risk that the project will lead to significant consumption of energy, water or other resources, or lead to significant increases of greenhouse gases?	No; this project is designed to improve local ecosystem health, by restoring the mangrove forest, reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands upon which this community relies, and ultimately improve the ecosystem services of this ecosystem. Minor amounts of greenhouse gas emissions related to this project will be due to transportation.
Access restrictions and livelihoods	Will the project include activities that could restrict	No; this project does not include denying access to the

	<p>peoples' access to land or natural resources where they have recognised rights (customary, and legal). Consider projects that introduce new access restrictions (e.g. creation of a community forest), reinforce existing access restrictions (e.g. improve management effectiveness and patrolling of a community forest) or alter the way that land and natural resource access restrictions are decided (e.g. through introducing formal management such as co-management).</p>	<p>project area but focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest and reduce the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands. It may be necessary to restrict grazing in the planting areas, but these are currently bare and so do not provide any grazing at the moment nor would do so under the baseline scenario. The designation of the project areas has been achieved through a participatory approach through stakeholder consultation as well as the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement.</p>
	<p>Is there a risk that the access restrictions introduced /reinforced/ altered by the project will negatively affect peoples' livelihoods?</p>	<p>No; this project does not include denying access to the project area but focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest and reducing the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands. It may be necessary to restrict grazing in the planting areas, but these are currently bare and so do not provide any grazing at the moment nor would do so under the baseline scenario.</p>
	<p>Have strategies to avoid, minimise and compensate for these negative impacts been identified and planned?</p>	<p>No; this project does not include denying access to the project area and is not expected to incur negative impacts from the project interventions.</p>
Cultural heritage	Is the Project Area officially designated or proposed as a	No.

	cultural site, including international and national designations?	
	Does the project site potentially include important physical cultural resources, including burial sites and monuments, or natural features or resources of cultural significance (eg. sacred sites and species, ceremonial areas) and is there risk that the project will negatively impact this cultural heritage?	No; this project focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest, and reducing the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands - supporting important aspects of the community's culture and heritage.
	Is there a risk that the project will negatively impact intangible cultural heritage? Consider for example cultural practices, social and cultural norms in relation to land and natural resources.	No; this project focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest and reducing the saline intrusion on the community's agricultural lands - an important aspect of the community's culture.
Indigenous Peoples	Are there Indigenous Peoples ² living within the Project Area, using the land or natural resources within the project area, or with claims to land or territory within the Project Area?	The local community of Sankandi, custodians of the project area, includes groups of women and youth that rely on the land for fishing and rice cultivation, and are considered Indigenous under the IUCN (2016) definition iii criteria, they are key stakeholders in this project.
	Is there a risk that the project negatively affects Indigenous Peoples through economic displacement, negatively affects their rights (including right to FPIC), their self-determination, or any other social or cultural impacts?	This risk is limited due to the participatory approach through stakeholder consultation that will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement.
	Is there a risk that there is inadequate consultation of	This risk is limited due to the participatory approach and

	Indigenous Peoples, and/or that the project does not seek the FPIC of Indigenous Peoples, for example leading to lack of benefits or inappropriate activities?	stakeholder consultation through the VDC that will be applied to the project design and the benefit-sharing agreement.
Biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources	Is there a risk that project activities will cause adverse impacts on biodiversity (both in areas of high biodiversity value, and outside of these areas) or the functioning of ecosystems? Consider issues such as use of pesticides, construction, fencing, disturbance etc.	No; this project focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest and reducing the salinisation of the nearby agricultural lands. The project area is currently very degraded, and the project activities will have a positive impact on biodiversity and ecosystem function. There is no anticipated requirement for the use of pesticides, fencing may be used to delimit the perimeter and avoid grazing/human disturbance, but these would incur minimal impacts.
	Is there a risk that the project will introduce non-native species or invasive species?	Project activities include planting of <i>Rhizophora</i> and <i>Avicennia</i> species which naturally occur in the project region. This project focuses on restoration, conservation and improved management activities by restoring the mangrove forest. Whilst the project may support the planting of terrestrial woodlots, potentially using exotic species, in order to address pressure on local timber and fuelwood supplied, any species chosen would be already naturalised, locally common, and carefully managed.

	<p>Is there a risk that the project will lead to the unsustainable use of natural resources? Consider for example projects promoting value chains and natural resource-based livelihoods.</p>	NA
Land tenure and conflicts	Has the land tenure and use rights in the project area been assessed and understood?	Yes, the right to land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia.
	Is there a risk that project activities will exacerbate any existing land tenure conflicts, or lead to land tenure or use right conflicts?	The right to land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia. However, there is evidence of planting activities from a neighbouring community and a project that did not involve the Sankandi community, SYDA is being supported by the Department of Forestry to resolve this before the project launch. By pursuing a rights-based approach to clarify tenure and by communicating current laws and boundaries the project will help to reduce conflicts.
Risk of not accounting for climate change	Have trends in climate variability in the project areas been assessed and understood?	Yes, climate change and its associated sea level rise is already impacting this community, this project and the restoration of the mangrove ecosystem will mitigate these impacts.
	Has the climate vulnerability of communities and particular social groups been assessed and understood?	Yes, to the extent of the current impacts and relevant estimated future impacts.

	<p>Is there a risk that climate variability and changes might influence the effectiveness of project activities (e.g. undermine project-supported livelihood activities) or increase community exposure to climate variation and hazards? Consider floods, droughts, wildfires, landslides, cyclones, etc.</p>	<p>Yes, sea level rise is already impacting this community, this project aims to restore the mangrove ecosystem, effectively restoring important ecosystem services which may mitigate these impacts. Under the Forest Act 2018 measures must be taken to minimise the risk of fires spreading e.g. fire breaks. The Gambia as a whole is losing forest cover and becoming hotter; if this trend accelerates unexpectedly then it will make restoration and preservation of forests harder.</p>
Other – eg. cumulative impacts	<p>Is there a risk that the project will contribute cumulatively to existing environmental or social risks or impacts, for example through introducing new access restrictions in a landscape with existing restrictions and limited land availability?</p>	No.
Safeguard Provisions		
Stakeholder engagement	<p>Has a stakeholder analysis been conducted that has identified all stakeholders that could influence or be affected by the project, or is this still to be completed? Please describe.</p>	<p>Yes, the stakeholder map provided in this document - please refer to Section 2.1 - illustrates the local/primary stakeholders and the other stakeholders involved in this project. How these stakeholders interact with each other and the project is understood.</p>
	<p>Are the local community and indigenous peoples statutory or customary rights to land or</p>	<p>The right to land and resources in Sankandi are under customary rights which have</p>

	<p>resources within the project area already clear and documented, or is further assessment required? Please describe.</p>	<p>been understood and are legally recognised in The Gambia.</p>
	<p>Are local governance structures and decision-making processes described and understood (including details of the involvement of women and marginalized or vulnerable groups), or is further assessment required? Please describe.</p>	<p>The local governance structure, the Sankandi VDC, an inclusive and representative committee empowered by the government has been understood and is described in this document - please refer to Section 4 of this document for more information.</p>
<p>Stakeholder consultation</p>	<p>Does the project have a Stakeholder Engagement Plan with clear measures to engage Vulnerable Groups, or is this plan still to be developed? Please describe.</p>	<p>The vulnerable groups involved in this project include women and youth; these groups are represented within the VDC. This project does not yet have a defined Stakeholder Engagement Plan but the project coordinators will develop this for the PDD.</p>
	<p>Has the Project Coordinator informed all stakeholders of the project, through providing relevant project information in an accessible format, or does this still need to be completed? Please describe.</p>	<p>A community meeting was held in Sankandi, with the Alkalo (village chief), VDC, women and youth in attendance. SYDA and ACES explained the project and this was translated into Mandinka (the local language). A physical copy of the signed project agreement and copies of the project timeline are in Sankandi with SYDA and are publicly accessible. SYDA will set up a billboard outside their recently acquired office space and use culturally appropriate ways to keep the community aware of project updates and general information regarding the project.</p>

	<p>Does the project have a Stakeholder Engagement Plan with clear measures to engage Vulnerable Groups, or is this plan still to be developed? Please describe.</p>	<p>The vulnerable groups involved in this project include women and youth; these groups are represented within the VDC. This project does not yet have a defined Stakeholder Engagement Plan but the project coordinators will develop this for the PDD.</p>
Free, Prior and Informed Consent	<p>Has the project analysed and understood national and international requirements for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)? Please describe.</p>	<p>This project understands the specific right of Free Prior and Informed Consent granted to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). This right ensures the participatory involvement of the IPLCs, ensuring their right to consent, withhold consent, and withdraw consent from any project or its activities on their territories.</p>
	<p>Has the project identified potential FPIC rightsholders and potential representatives in local communities and among indigenous peoples, or is this still to be completed? Please describe.</p>	<p>The project has identified the FPIC rightsholders and representatives in the local community and among Indigenous peoples. The community of Sankandi can be defined as Indigenous under the IUCN 2016 definition. The VDC represents the community and rightsholders (including the Alkalo, the village chief).</p>
	<p>Has the project worked with rightsholders and representatives of local communities and indigenous peoples to understand the local decision-making process and timeline (ensuring involvement of women and vulnerable groups), or is this still to be completed? Please describe.</p>	<p>The project coordinators have worked with rightsholders and representatives of the local community and Indigenous peoples to understand the local decision-making process - the VDC. This is the decision-making process that the project will follow, centred around SYDA activities.</p>

Grievance Mechanism	<p>Does the project already have a Grievance Mechanism, or is this still to be established? Please describe.</p>	<p>The VDC has an established Grievance Mechanism, but this will be monitored and elaborated if necessary.</p>
	<p>For projects with a GRM, is this accessible to project affected people? Please describe.</p>	<p>In principle, due to the structure and representatives of the Grievance Mechanism, everyone in the village is represented and therefore it is an accessible mechanism to project affected people. The Grievance Mechanism will be monitored and elaborated if necessary.</p>

¹

Project workers include project coordinator staff, staff of other project partners, third party groups fulfilling core functions of the project, and community volunteers or contracted workers.

²

As per the IUCN Environmental and Social Management System, Indigenous Peoples include: "(i) peoples who identify themselves as "indigenous" in strict sense; (ii) tribal peoples whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations; and (iii) traditional peoples not necessarily called indigenous or tribal but who share the same characteristics of social, cultural, and economic conditions that distinguish them from other sections of the national community, whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions, and whose livelihoods are closely connected to ecosystems and their goods and services" (IUCN 2016).

Annex 5 – Notification of Relevant Authorities

Correspondence addressed to the authorities with overall responsibility for land management and greenhouse gas emissions assessment within the project region informing them of the project: A copy of the project agreement signatures including the signature of the VDC members, SYDA, and the Regional Forest Officer.

The entire project agreement can be found below:



**Association for Coastal
Ecosystem Services**

Project agreement

between

The Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services (ACES)

and

the Sankandi Youth Development Association (SYDA)

Date (29/01/2024)

ACES x SYDA

1. Preamble

1.1 Sankandi Youth Development Association

Sankandi Youth Development Association, hereinafter referred to as "SYDA", is a legally registered community-based organisation, based in Sankandi village of the Kiang West area of the Lower River Region of The Gambia, run by and for local people and registered under the Company Act of 1955 as a Community Based Organization (CBO) under the office of Bajul (ref. no356/2005).

1.2 The Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services

The Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services, "ACES", is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO. REG SC043978) registered under the laws of the Scottish Government.

1.3 Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier University, "ENU", is a charitable body registered in Scotland (Charity Number SC018373) and incorporated under the Universities (Scotland) Acts.

1.4 This agreement

This agreement concerns the initial development of a carbon-based forest management project, involving forest restoration and protection measures for the regeneration of mangrove forest(s), and facilitating the instigation of long-term sequestration of carbon through community-based restoration and protection, implemented through a partnership between SYDA and ACES.

The aim of this project is to develop a Plan Vivo Foundation-certified project that will secure long-term and sustainable funding to implement social and environmental improvements for the people of the village of Sankandi of the Lower River Region of The Gambia.

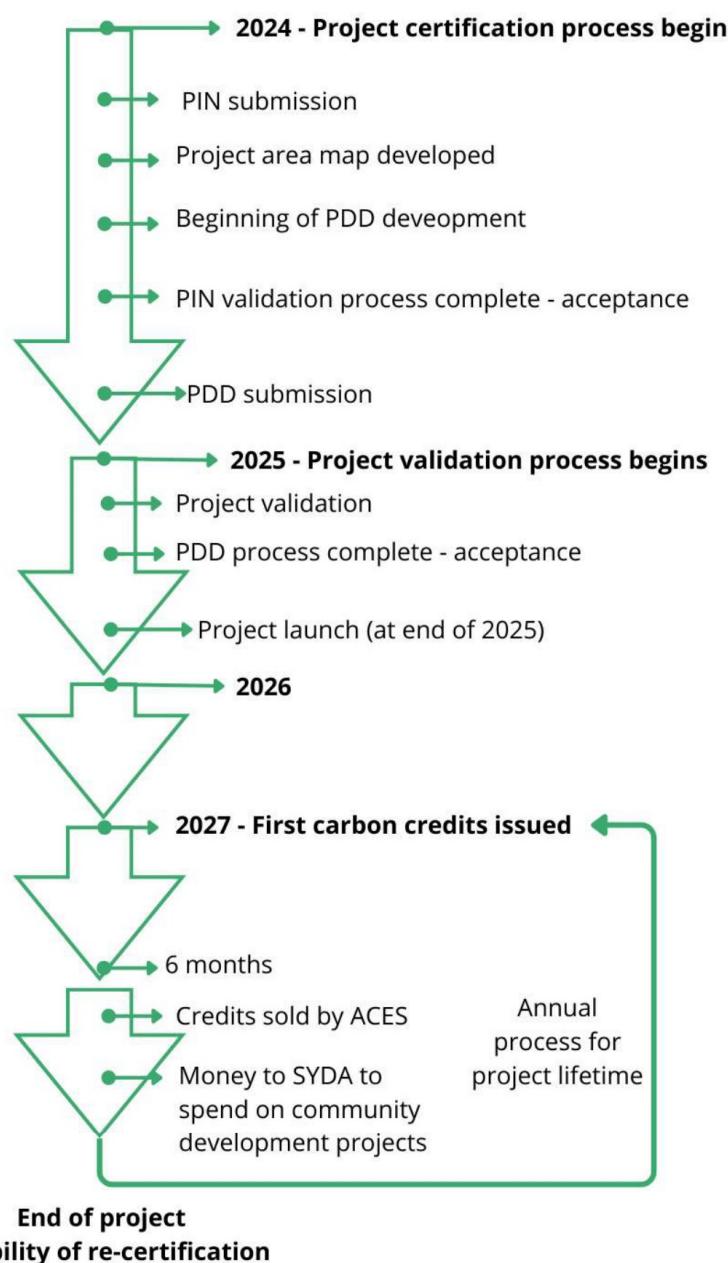
This agreement is for the first steps in the development of such a project and its registration and subsequent certification with a Plan Vivo standard, as detailed below - we anticipate this initial phase to take one calendar year:

ACES x SYDA

Table 1. Activities required to be completed by end of 2024

Activities	Details of process involved	Estimated date of completion
Project Idea Note (PIN)	1. Development 2. Submission to Plan Vivo 3. Negotiation and validation 4. Acceptance	1. Q4 2023 2. Q1 2024 3. Q1/Q2 2024 4. Q2 2024
Production of Project Design Document (PDD)	1. Development 2. Submission to Plan Vivo	1. Q1 - Q4 2024 2. Q4 2024
150 ha restored mangrove area fully mapped	1. Mapping of the different areas: Restored area; Restoration areas: Anticipated Rhizophora planting area, anticipated Avicennia planting area	1. Q1 2024
20 ha new area planted	Rhizophora planting	Q4
Establishment of local Avicennia nursery		Q2

These initial steps fit within the process illustrated in the figure below:

ACES x SYDA


ACES x SYDA

2. Objectives and Roles

2.1 The overall objectives of this agreement are as follows:

- a) To develop a Project Idea Note (PIN) informed by the best of knowledge of both SYDA and ACES to be submitted to Plan Vivo and begin the project registration process.
- b) To create a map of the intended project area; detailing the zones already planted with seedlings and those that will be planted in the intended project.
- c) To develop a Project Design Document (PDD) informed by the best of knowledge of both SYDA and ACES to be submitted to Plan Vivo and begin the project certification process; including all necessary components of the PDD including but not limited to social baseline studies and designing a benefits sharing structure.
- d) To work with Plan Vivo to make the necessary edits to both the PIN and PDD required to successfully register and certify the project within a timely manner.
- e) To establish a local nursery for seedlings necessary for the planting efforts.
- f) To plant at least 20ha of Rhizophora seedlings and an additional 10ha of planting within the three (3) years of this agreement.

2.2 Mutual and general responsibilities

- a) All parties shall adhere to the The Gambia Forest Act of 2018 and subsequent acts relating to forest protection and management in The Gambia and conduct all activities according to the laws of the Republic of The Gambia.
- b) All parties agree to develop an organisational structure for the certified project governance that will include all relevant interest holders and work closely with a relevant governmental organisation that will help to play an oversight role and ensure all activities outlined in this and any further agreements are implemented with a participatory approach and in a sustainable manner in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of The Gambia.

ACES x SYDA

2.3 The responsibilities of ACES

ACES shall hereby:

- a) Manage payments to SYDA, in line with funding budgets, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the project.
- b) Lead on the development of the PIN and PDD to achieve Plan Vivo Foundation certification.
- c) Work with local partners to help provide expert services, training and support to SYDA as necessary to meet the objectives as listed in 1.2, including mapping, habitat assessment, and other processes required by SYDA to meet their aims of mangrove forest restoration.
- d) Secure appropriate funds necessary for the project development processes and the objectives listed in 1.2 and develop an appropriate project budget.
- e) Work with SYDA to maximise the impact of the project budget and report back to the funders on the undertaken activities and project budget.
- f) To be aware of the relevant legislation and involve relevant partners within and outside of The Gambia to ensure the ethical and sustainable development of this project.
- g) ACES shall ensure that any information provided to SYDA under this agreement is truthful and accurate, and inform SYDA of any changes to their ability to fulfill this agreement.

2.4 The responsibilities of SYDA

SYDA shall hereby:

- a) Work with ACES in the development of the PIN and PDD and associated maps and ensure all information is to the best of knowledge or most recent data.
- b) Diligently partner in the development of the forest restoration project through activities such as mapping, planting, and community engagement activities.
- c) Take steps to ensure that village members understand and know their responsibilities in relation to this project and are provided with the opportunity to participate.
- d) Inform ACES of any other local, national, and international partnerships that SYDA enters or intends to enter, especially those that offer funding for any activities involving the community.
- e) SYDA, in collaboration with other project partners, shall commit to assessing how much carbon is stored in the project area and accumulated through project activities.

ACES x SYDA

- f) SYDA shall commit to assessing the socioeconomic baseline of the community.
- g) SYDA shall partner faithfully in the project by meeting all requirements including the creation of any committee required by law for the purposes of managing the project area and managing budget allocations including keeping and reporting on financial records.
- h) SYDA agrees to undertake all necessary processes to gain appropriate land tenure of the intended project area as required by the Forest Act 2018.
- i) SYDA shall ensure that any information provided to ACES under this agreement is truthful and accurate, and SYDA shall inform ACES of any valid changes resulting in reports that are no longer truthful or accurate.

2. Terms of agreement

2.1 Funds for project

ACES has secured funds for the project development, these funds are secured for the first year of the project but funds for a further two (2) years are contingent on the project meeting certain project objectives as detailed in this agreement.

2.1 Agreement Validity

- a) This agreement shall initially only cover a period of one (1) year from the date of the signing of this agreement and the further two (2) years are contingent on the objectives listed in 1.1 to secure the necessary funding.
- b) The parties may renegotiate or amend this agreement at any time upon agreement by all parties for the purposes of extending or reducing the agreement's expiry date. However any valid amendment or renegotiation shall be effected in writing and through all parties appending their signatures.

2.2 Opting out or breaking the agreement

Should either party fail to meet their obligations as described in this agreement, the agreement shall be considered invalid.

ACES x SYDA

2.3 Amendments

This agreement can only be amended or improved in writing as shall be mutually agreed and through appending the signatures of all parties, ACES and SYDA.

2.4 Issues beyond normal human control / force majeure

None of the parties to this agreement shall be liable for any failure to perform its obligations where such failure is as a result of acts of nature including fire, flood, earthquake, storm, hurricane or other natural disaster, pandemic, war, invasion, act of foreign enemies, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), civil war, rebellion, revolution, insurrection, military or usurped power or confiscation, terrorist activities, nationalisation, government sanction, blockage, embargo, labour dispute, strike, lockout or interruption or failure of electricity.

The party, SYDA or ACES, asserting force majeure as an excuse shall have the burden of proving that reasonable steps were taken (under the circumstances) to minimise delay or damages caused by the foreseeable events, that all non-excused obligations were substantially fulfilled, and that the other party was timely notified of the likelihood or actual occurrence which would justify such an assertion, so that other prudent precautions could be contemplated.

4. Sign Off

This agreement is hereunder signed by all parties of this agreement and so witnessed this 29th day in the month of January in the year 2024 and has been concluded in person in Sankandi.

A: On behalf of ACES

Name Robyn Shilland

Position Director



Signature

ACES x SYDA

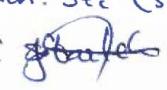
B. On behalf of

1) Name..... **BAKARY DARBOE**

Position..... **VILLAGE ALKAFO**

Signature..... 

G. ON BEHALF OF

NAME: **Omae Jobartec**
Position: **Admin. Sec (SYDA)**
SIGNATURE: 

C. On behalf of

1) Name..... **SUTAYRING K DARBOE**

Position..... **V.D.C CHAIR PERSON**

Signature..... 

D. On behalf of

1) Name..... **KALILU CEESAY**

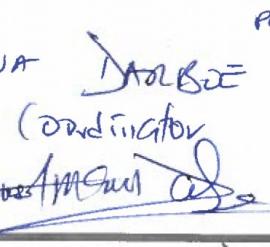
Position..... **V.D.C SECRETARY / YOUTH LEADER**

Signature..... 

E. On behalf of

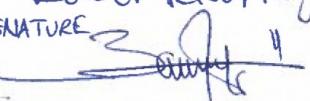
1) Name..... **DARBOENDINGI DARBOE**

Position..... **V.D.C VILÉ CHAIR PERSON / WOMEN LEADER**

Signature..... 

H. ON BEHALF OF

NAME: **Lamin Baye**
POSITION: **Regional forestry officer**
Lower River Region

SIGNATURE: 

F. ON BEHALF OF

NAME: **ANSUMANA DARBOE**

POSITION: **Project Coordinator**

SIGNATURE: 