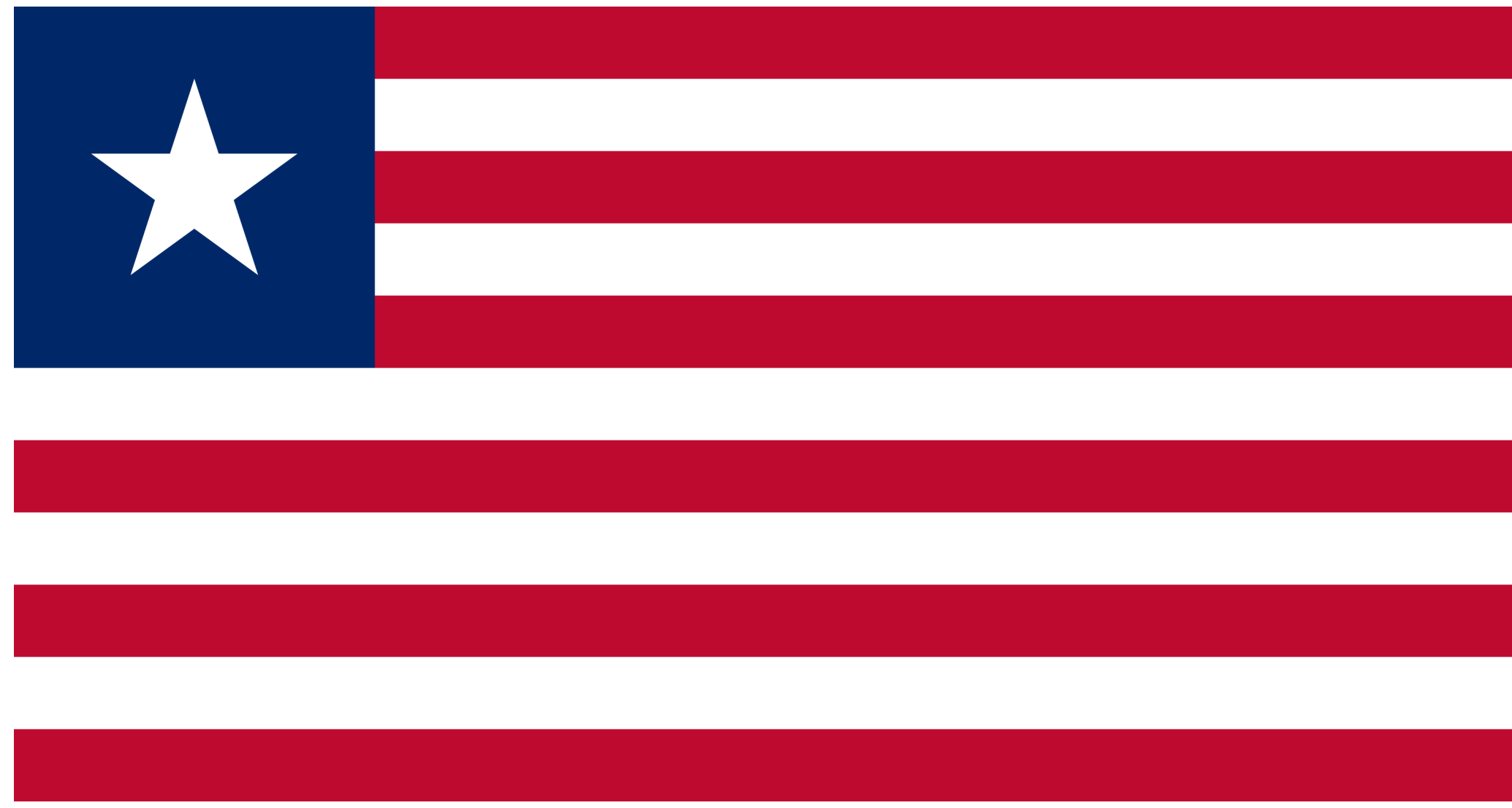


# LIBERIA



## A sector-level regulation and guideline for the management of TSF in Liberia

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## THE CHANGE PROJECT

Liberia is a country with a growing mining industry ranging from artisanal and small scale mining (ASM) to larger scale mining. As part of larger scale mining, mining companies must design, monitor and rehabilitate the material left after the mining and processing in so called Tailings Storage Facilities (TSF). A well planned and maintained TSF is vital for the environment and humans living around the mine, but may also affect the people working at the mine.

There are numerous cases of TSF dam failures in the world where hundreds of people have lost their lives and the surrounding environment have become polluted. Liberia is one of the countries with a difficult past when it comes to TSF failure with the No Way Camp catastrophe by the Mano river in 1982 ranking as the country's worst mining disaster. The tragedy involved a dam failure and the perishing of at least 200 people.

Today, there are still no national regulations on how to manage TSFs in Liberia despite four recorded incidents of TSF failures between 2017 and 2023, which, have had a detrimental impact on natural aquatic systems from the release of toxic chemicals and substances. The number of TSFs in the pipeline are climbing and the need for national regulations are apparent.

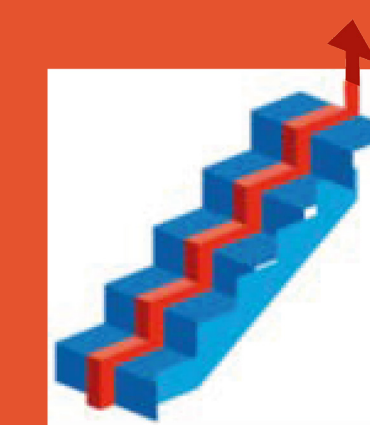
To mitigate the current TSF challenge in Liberia, ITP 308 participants from the Liberian EPA and MME have come together and commenced the work to prepare for a national regulatory document. It is a vast project, that will take a lot of time and involve a lot of stakeholders, but the change project is considered a starting point and an opportunity to do baseline studies to minimize the adverse impacts of pollutants generated from the mining process on the environment.



## SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The commencement of a TSF management regulation in Liberia is something that can help prevent future dam failures and associated pollution and loss of lives. It may also ensure livelihoods (e.g. agriculture, fishing, tourism) for generations going forward by protecting the natural environment.

For the government authorities, MME and EPA, the finalised policy will provide them legal legs to stand on when working with mining companies and TSF management. It can also help building stronger bonds with local communities by showing that the government take the pollution and dangers of TSFs seriously and that they will hold mining companies accountable for their mining activities.



## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The ITP 308 group seven change project, is a start to a larger effort by the EPA and the MME to collaborate with other organisations, both private and public, to improve the legal TSF management framework in Liberia.

To start off the project the group achieved four main results that will be used to inform the design of Liberia's integrated regulation on TSF management.

- 1) **Obtained organisational approval and commitment to start working on the legal framework.**
- 2) **Assessed the status of the TSFs currently in Liberia through secondary data sources.**

There are currently two TSFs and one sedimentation pond active in Libiera. The TSFs are associated with gold mining and the sedimentation pond with iron ore processing.

- 3) **Engaged numerous stakeholders to gather input and insight on tailing storage management.**

Carried out a web based survey aimed at gathering insight for developing regulations and guidelines for managing TSFs in Liberia.

Connected with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) sharing the project concept.

- 4) **Assessed international best practices on management of tailings.**



## THE WAY FORWARD

There is not one, specific clause within both the Mineral and Mining Law of Liberia and the Environmental Protection and Management of Liberia that deals with tailings management, but opportunities are there to prepare national regulations and guidelines to further achieve the objectives of both laws.

Thus, this change project is only an initiation of a much larger possibility to regulate the TSF management in Liberia and will have to be associated with other projects and partner organisations and numerous national stakeholders in addition to be continued by other ITP groups.

One considered organisation is the GIZ, which, is currently assisting the Liberian government with the amendment of the 2000 Mineral and Mining Law. Under a multi-stakeholder approach, GIZ provides advice on improving frameworks for efficient and sustainable mining. Focus lies on strengthening state regulatory authorities such as the MME. The advisory services build on the Africa Mining Vision established by the African Union. With support from the policymakers it is the groups' hope that GIZ resources, or similar, could prove pivotal in moving the project forward.

Another, equally important priority, is to actively and continuously call for input and support from civil society and to demand accountability from companies and the state.

Finally, there is also hope that the government will constitute the National Environment Policy Council which has the mandate to approve regulations of the kind that the TSF management represents, without having to go through a lengthy, bureaucratic legislative process.

### Field inspection in Liberia.

