



MAINSTREAMING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO THE LIBERIAN NATIONAL FORESTRY REFORM PROCESS

A Strategic Environmental Assessment for Implementation of the 3Cs of the Forest Reform Law 2006



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CFDC	Community Forest Development Committee
CFWG	Community Forestry Working Group
COPAN	Consolidation of Protected Area Network (Project)
CRL	Community Rights Law with Respect to Forest Lands
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FMC	Forest Management Concession
GoL	Government of Liberia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LFI	Liberia Forest Initiative
MLME	Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy
NFRL	National Forestry Reform Law
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
REDD	Reduce Emission for Deforestation and Degradation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SDI	Sustainable Development Institute
SNP	SAPO National Park
TSC	Timber Sales Contract
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
3Cs	The conservation, commercial, and community components Liberia's 2007 forest strategy

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agroforestry: A dynamic, ecologically based natural resource management practice that, through the integration of trees and other tall woody plants with agricultural plants on farms and in agricultural landscape, diversifies production for increased social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Biodiversity: Defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1992, Art. 2) as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.”

Biofuel: Fuel produced from plants’ biomass, seen as replacement for fossil fuel for transportation, which is known to be a major contributor to climate change; also known as agrofuel.

Carbon Credit: Part of the cap and trade carbon pricing system whereby an overall carbon emission cap is set and tradable allowances that grant businesses the right to emit a set amount of carbon are issued. Those who can reduce emission cheaply can sell their tradable allowance (carbon credit).

Carbon Trade: Carbon trading is a market approach to mitigate global warming that is leading to climate change by trading carbon credits.

3Cs: The commercial, community, and conservation uses of forests within the sustainable management of forests in Liberia. The “3Cs” concept, developed by the Liberia Forest Reassessment project, was intended to focus on the integration of these three components.

Communal Forest: Refers to “an area set aside by statute or regulation for sustainable use of forest products by local communities or tribes on a non-commercial basis” (National Forestry Reform Law of 2006).

Community: A group of local residents who share a common interest in the use and management of forest resources, with traditional or formal rights to the land and the forest on it (National Forestry Reform Law of 2006).

Community Forestry: The governance and management of forest resources in designated areas or landscapes by communities for commercial and noncommercial purposes to further their own livelihoods and development. Community forestry incorporates the practice, arts, science, policies, institutions, and processes necessary to promote and support all aspects of sustainable community-based forest management.

Conservation: In its broadest sense, management of natural resources substantially as well as their protection and restoration (Fisher et al. 2005).

Environment: Includes the surrounding living and nonliving things and their interactions.

Livelihoods: The ways in which people make a living. Livelihoods contribute to human well-being, which includes spiritual and aesthetic values.

Poverty: Although often defined in absolute terms (people falling below a specific level of income, commonly US\$2 per day), poverty can also be seen as having multiple dimensions. A three-dimensional definition is powerlessness, vulnerability, and the lack of assets (World Bank 2001 as cited in Fisher et al. 2005).

Protected Area: The International Union of Conservation of Nature defines a protected area as “an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and/or natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means” (IUCN 1994).

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Bruntland 1987).

Traditional Knowledge: A concept that encompasses tangible and intangible creations, cultural manifestations, technologies, sciences, agricultural knowledge, designs, literatures, and visual and performance arts derived from oral and written traditions (Diaz 2005).

Wildlife: All flora, fauna, and microorganisms existing in their natural state within a forest ecosystem.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In postconflict Liberia, natural resources are viewed as an engine for kick-starting the economic development of the country. The forest sector—traditionally dominated by commercial forestry—played an important economic role in Liberia. More recently during the years of civil war, corruption in the forest sector—coupled with indiscriminate logging and widespread illegal trade of forest products, carried out under the protection of private armed militias—destroyed much of the country's forest resources. Between 1989 and 2003, most of the forest revenue was used to fund armed conflict, prompting the United Nations Security Council to impose three years of sanctions on Liberian timber exports starting in July 2003.

After the sanctions were imposed, the Liberian government used this period to reform forestry practices and pave the way for restoring the rule of law. The Forest Concession Review was carried out to assess the condition of the forest concessions, and it found that all concessionaires were not complying with logging regulations from the period 2000–03. The total arrears in forest charges amounted to US\$64 million. The reviews eventually led to the issuing of Executive Order #1 by the president in February 2006, declaring all existing contracts null and void and explicitly mandating a reform of the forestry sector.

Since then, Liberia has embarked on forest reform, which involved making a new forest policy, revising the forest legislation, and putting in place a chain-of-custody system governing all commercial log and wood exporting. Reforms in the sector recognized that the economic and environmental value of forests extends beyond commercial forestry. A new National Forest Reform Law was passed in 2006. On 20 October 2006, the UN Security Council commended the Liberian legislature for passing this legislation and concluded that there is no basis for reinstating the measures on timber.¹

In 2007 the Forest Development Authority (FDA), with assistance from partners in the Liberia Forestry Initiative (LFI),

developed the 2007 Forest Strategy. The strategy promotes a holistic approach to forestry. It integrates commercial, community, and conservation aspects (the “3Cs”) of forestry. The policy and associated regulations, while defined on commercial aspects (and to a certain extent on conservation elements), was lagging on community forestry. Moreover, the implementation of the policy into the integrated approach of the 3Cs was limited.

In 2007, through the Liberia Surplus Grant on Economic Management and Development of the Forestry Sector (P091984), the World Bank began engagement in Liberia. Using this engagement, the World Bank financed the implementation of an institution-centered strategic environmental assessment of the forest sector—first, to inform the Community Rights Law with respect to Forest Lands (CRL), and second, to assess capacity and institutional adjustments that may be needed in the implementation of the Liberian National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 (hereafter referred to as Forest Reform Law) improving governance and performance within the forest sector. This strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was also intended to inform an assessment of potential positive and negative environmental and social impacts of the World Bank project on the forest sector.

OBJECTIVE OF STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In October 2007, an institution-centered SEA of the forest policy was initiated.² The objective was to (i) identify key social and environmental considerations in the forest sector, (ii) examine key challenges facing the successful

¹ The lifting of the sanctions was conditional on the passing of a new Liberian forestry law.

² The SEA was financed by the Bank Netherlands Partnership Program (BNPP) with additional funding provided by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IUCN implemented the SEA in partnership with the Sustainable Development Institute Liberia and the ProAct Network. The implementing agencies worked in collaboration with LFI partners and government staff representing key agencies. The SEA was implemented over the period of 13 months from October 2007 to November 2008. The SEA report was developed in the subsequent eight months and was based on the various components of the SEA.

implementation of Liberia's 3Cs forest policy, (iii) examine how the forest policy and law are currently addressing key social and environmental considerations, (iv) identify institutional and capacity gaps for effectively addressing these key considerations, (v) develop an action plan for how the government and stakeholders in the sector can meet these challenges, and (vi) develop monitoring and evaluation criteria for the implementation of the action plan. The SEA aimed to inform the development of the community rights to forest lands law, assist in the mainstreaming of the key considerations in LFI activities intended to support implementation of the Forest Reform Law, and inform an assessment of possible negative environmental and social impacts of the World Bank project on the forest sector.

CONDUCT OF SEA

The SEA was conducted over a period of 13 months. It involved four main phases—scoping; identifying priority considerations; examining the situation in terms of the legal, economic, and institutional context within which these considerations were occurring; and proposing institutional and capacity recommendations (the recommendations were also to include monitoring approaches).

An international and national team composed of the IUCN, ProACT Network, and Sustainable Development Institute led the SEA. The SEA team included staff of the FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order to enhance buy-in and foster capacity development, and worked closely with the Community Forestry Working Group (CFWG). When necessary, the core members of the SEA team were supplemented by representatives from the Office of the Chairman; House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry; Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs; Ministry of Land, Mines, and Energy; Ministry of Internal Affairs; and the National Investment Commission.

The SEA had two main shortcomings: the analytical work conducted as a result of this SEA was limited (e.g., inadequate environmental analysis, lack of a capacity gap analysis), and accordingly it had limited utility in identifying potential environmental and social impacts of the World Bank project on the forest sector, plus several elements of the project were only taking shape as this SEA was being implemented.³ The second shortcoming resulted from the

consultations associated with this SEA being conducted in conjunction with the consultations associated with the CRL. The latter caused confusion to certain key staff members in the FDA regarding the objective of the SEA, reducing their confidence in the SEA and willingness to adopt recommendations. These shortcomings delayed the finalization of the SEA. The former shortcoming was minimized by referring to and drawing on the 2008 Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment conducted for USAID. Similarly, the difficulties caused by the delay were handled by sharing an interim brief on the findings of the SEA with FDA and LFI members, and updating information collected by the IUCN, ProACT Network, and SDI team where possible (e.g., regarding the CRL and more current studies).

LEGAL, ECONOMIC, AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

The government of Liberia has committed to optimal use of forest resources as articulated in the national forest strategy and the forest reform law. The 2006 National Forest Reform Law and National Forest Strategy call for a more balanced and integrated development of Liberia's forests for commercial, community, and conservation uses. This is a deviation from the traditional focus in the forest sector, which was largely limited to exploiting the forests' commercial potential. In 2008, at the time of launching of the SEA, community forestry was the least understood and least developed of the 3Cs, and its legal basis was ill defined and poorly protected, because the CRL had not been drafted. Different stakeholders, however, have different interpretations of the 3Cs as they are defined in the reform law.

The forest sector of Liberia is also informed by other policies, laws, and treaties, including the National Environmental Policy, which sets the policy framework for environmental management in Liberia; the 2003 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Act, which authorized the establishment of an overall institutional framework for sustainable management of the environment in Liberia; the Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy (which was in draft form in 2008); and international commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Ramsar convention on Wetlands. In addition, because the new forest law requires unprecedented transparency concerning forest revenues, Liberia has included forestry in its Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

³ To compensate for the limited analysis on environmental impacts, the team relied on the environmental threats and opportunities assessment conducted by USAID in 2008.

In addition, despite its fairly comprehensive legal context, the forest sector is impacted by the lack of clear laws or regulations on bush meat and by unclear land rights.

Contribution of forests to income generation

Estimates are that about 70 percent of Liberia's rural dwellers earn a living from forests and forest-related products, and rely on firewood and charcoal as the main source of energy generation for cooking and heating (Soloh 2005). Forests are viewed as important because they are a source of livelihood; they are important for cultural activities (for example, as a bush school for girls and boys); they offer land for farming; and they are a source of firewood and charcoal, bush meat, and water from rivers (Soloh 2005).

While the uses of forests are known, there is limited information on the contribution of forests to rural incomes or the national economy. In the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) it is predicted that forestry will contribute 14–15 percent of real GDP during the PRS period and will be one of the main components of rural economic growth in that period. This prediction is based on the assumption that there will be a progressive reintroduction of commercial logging in all regions.

The economic model adopted by the FDA focuses primarily on large commercial operations. Local people believe that the forests of Liberia and the forest products belong to them. They therefore state that they should benefit more from forest resources, and be consulted and involved in decision making regarding logging concessions. Forest-dependent households are concerned about the failure of logging companies to carry out value addition at the local level. The local perception is that jobs could be created and income-earning potential increased if logging companies processed timber and timber products at the local level.

Concerns regarding income generation underpin calls for the development and support of small and medium-size enterprises in the forest sector. Considering the potential role of forests in income generation, development partners to the government of Liberia have called for greater recognition and valuation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). The government, however, had limited appreciation of the economic value of these products at the local level. Many communities are also unaware of the economic potential of specific NTFPs. Forest communities consider commercial logging to be the sole forest activity with economic value. Accordingly, deriving economic benefit from the sector requires involvement in commercial logging.

Capacity of the FDA

The institutional context is one that points to weak capacity. The FDA is viewed as needing additional capacity to effectively implement the new forest policy and legislation. Throughout the reform process, the Forestry Development Authority has been assisted by partners in the Liberia Forest Initiative (LFI). The LFI is a partnership of government, NGOs, and donor agencies collaborating to support the rehabilitation and reform of Liberia's forestry sector and to enhance cooperation and coordination of activities for the promotion of sustainable forest management, improved conservation, and strengthened community forestry practices.

The FDA also seems to lack the infrastructural and logistical support to properly enforce and implement laws and regulation of community forest management, raising questions regarding the role the agency would play in community forest management. Another indicator of limited FDA capacity is in the area of revenue collection. FDA revenue collection has significant room for improvement, particularly in areas such as the collection of fines for noncompliance with forest regulations.

The need for coordination within and among government agencies

Coordination faces numerous challenges in the current institutional context. Intersectoral programs are a low priority in Liberia, with each sector ministry struggling to identify and deliver on its own mandate. There has been some interaction on a bilateral basis between ministries to address specific areas of concern, such as mining in protected areas (Mining and Forestry), timber exports (Ports and Forestry), and agricultural marketing (Agriculture and Roads). These, however, do not constitute a programmatic approach (Liberia RPIN 2008)

More systematic coordination among the FDA, the EPA of Liberia, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME) is also central to ensuring sustainable resource use and minimization of cumulative environmental impacts. Similarly, within the FDA there is a need for improved coordination among the three departments, to enable the agency to deliver on an integrated 3Cs approach in the forest sector.

Participation in forest management and unclear property rights

Forest communities are rejecting the old-style, top-down management approach and want to be involved in making

decisions affecting the management of forest reserves. They are concerned that decisions regarding forest management significantly affect them. Communities are interested not only in playing a role in decision making regarding logging activities in their community, but also in receiving tangible benefits from commercial forestry operations that take place in their areas.

The most pressing issue affecting all land use in Liberia is the lack of legal clarity on property ownership and use rights. Security of land tenure in today's Liberia is weak to non-existent. Rights of access to and use of natural resources, including land, minerals, forests, and water, are shrouded in a state of tenure insecurity, vague and ambiguous legislation, conflicting and competing tenure arrangements, and persistent clashes involving customary and statutory rights over the management, authority, and control of these resources.

PRIORITY ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The SEA identified priority social and environmental issues primarily through a consultative process and validated the results with secondary literature. This section includes a brief presentation of the key issues and measures proposed for addressing these issues.

The consultative and analytical process identified three key environmental issues.

Overlapping land uses

There is overlapping of mining areas (areas with mineral deposits) with large parts of the protected area/forest reserve network (DAI, 2008). The potential exploitation of these mineral deposits could significantly affect biodiversity and forest cover. The forest degradation could be locally extensive and permanent. The common impacts from mining stem from indiscriminant removal of vegetation, which in turn alters the regeneration potential of forests and the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. Other impacts of concern include habitat fragmentation and increased bush meat consumption, siltation of dams and rivers, degradation of lands from settlement patterns of miners, and ground and surface water pollution (e.g., acidic mine drainage and high metal concentrations in rivers, resulting in an impoverished aquatic environment (Miranda et al. 2003).

If these activities are occurring where there is also illegal or quasi-illegal extraction of timber, the environmental impact

is compounded, and the potential cumulative environmental impact can be significant.

Strategic action plan

- Increase the cooperation between the FDA and the MLME, and consider using the EPA as the conduit for this coordination.
- Increase training in and awareness of environmental impact assessments.
- Develop capacity within the EPA to handle cumulative impacts.

Limited reforestation/restoration of logged areas

The Forest Policy makes provisions for reforestation and plantation development. Reforestation can provide a new source of wood for the processing industry and other forest products (e.g., fuel, building poles, and non-wood forest products). In areas degraded by unsustainable logging, reforestation or forest restoration can reduce the pressure on natural forests and provide new opportunities for income generation by expanding the area of forest plantations. There has been limited reforestation and the success of public sector tree planting has been disappointing due to poor site-species selection and inadequate management, resulting in poor yields and low economic returns.

Strategic action plan

- Build partnership and capacity to: (i) identify potential areas for reforestation and forest restoration (for the latter it will be important to distinguish between areas best suited for mosaic-type versus broad-scale restoration); and (ii) examine the economics and technical dimensions of forest restoration in these areas.
- Put in place institutional mechanisms to provide economic incentives and technical assistance for restoration of degraded forest areas through appropriate tree species selection for different sites and tree planting.
- Provide capacity to train communities in proper management of planted trees.

Habitat destruction and species displacement, disturbance, or reduction

Liberia is home to two of the three remaining large blocks of Upper Guinean Rainforest in West Africa, an equivalent of 42–43 percent of this forest type. These biologically rich forests are home to approximately 240 timber species, 2,000 species of flowering plants, 125 mammal species, 590 bird

species, 74 reptiles and amphibians, and over 1,000 insect species.

While there are numerous threats to habitat and biodiversity, the threats related to forest activities include shifting cultivation, poaching and hunting of bush meat in association with unregulated timber extraction, firewood gathering, charcoal production, and human settlements. Currently, there also is a lack of data with which to fully assess the extent of the impact and there is no land use planning. The latter partly results from the unclear land tenure system and limited land use feasibility studies. Logging and road infrastructure also have contributed to forest fragmentation.

Strategic action plan

- Build institutional capacity to collect and manage data on what is happening to biodiversity and habitat in Liberia and fill the data gap.
- Dedicate resources to the FDA and work with partners to
 - Revisit land use feasibility studies.
 - Use data to develop guidance on reducing habitat destruction through integrated forest management (integrating conservation, community and commercial activities). Take traditional management techniques into account in the management of forest resources.

PRIORITY SOCIAL ISSUES

The analytical and consultative process identified three key social issues.

Corruption and lack of accountability associated with logging operations

Logging operations are meant to provide broader social and economic benefits than just revenue for timber. One of the core regulations associated with the commercial component of the Forest Reform Law is that regarding social agreements. Despite the regulatory provisions, community benefits from forest concessions are often captured by the elite or not transferred to communities when there is corruption among the logging operators and no mechanism to ensure accountability. Leadership also is often weak at the community level, limiting the effectiveness with which communities can negotiate with logging companies.

Strategic action plan

- Improve key stakeholder awareness and participation in negotiating social and economic benefits from logging operations.
- Ensure compliance by all stakeholders with legal instruments.
- Enforce implementation of social agreements and ensure that these agreements result in equitable benefit sharing.
- Modify the FDA's role from enforcer to partner.

Community forest ownership and entitlement

One of the main issues raised by local communities was their marginalization from forest management. Given the increased awareness of the debate surrounding land ownership and a growing political activism, forest communities are claiming rights and objecting to what they see as top-down approaches from the government and FDA. This social concern encompasses issues regarding meaningful participation in forest management, transfer of benefits to the community, and development of technical capacity at the local level to implement community forestry.

Strategic action plan

- Ensure effective implementation of the CRL passed by the Parliament on October 16, 2009. This should include the role of the Land Commission.
- Carry out specific community outreach activities explaining the actual benefits to communities under the forest management concessions (FMCs) and timber sales contracts (TSCs) already allocated.
- Develop a clearly articulated strategy on community forest management that outlines how this would relate to the other two of the 3Cs.
- Formulate and disseminate simple and appropriate guidelines on community forestry, as embedded in the 3Cs approach.
- Implement "partnership agreements" for the conservation and community forestry sectors in the same manner that has been contemplated between commercial and community forestry sectors.

Social impact of expanding the protected areas network

The government has committed to establishing a biologically representative network of protected areas covering at least 30 percent of the existing forest area. Depending on the process undertaken for the expansion of a protected area network, there is the potential for negative social impacts such as loss of access to forest land and livelihoods. This issue

emerges from the inadequate attention given to providing alternative livelihoods for the communities around protected areas.

Strategic action plan

- For the establishment of protected areas covering 30 percent of forest land, build capacity to implement provisions in the forestry laws concerning the creation of protected areas, including the necessary disclosure for public comment and consultation with local communities, countries, and other local authorities regarding regulations and prohibitions in protected areas.
- Provide mechanisms and incentives for community participation in discussions on new protected areas.
- Develop the capacity to identify and implement suitable alternative livelihoods for communities adversely affected by the establishment or maintenance of protected forest areas.
- Develop joint management plans with communities for protected areas and integrate, to the extent possible, community engagement in protected-area management.

NEXT STEPS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

A National SEA Workshop validated the priority issues identified in the process and provided the main input to the action plan that is presented in this report. Implementation of the action plan, for those tasks identified as coming directly within the operational mandate of the FDA, would now pass to the respective departments within the FDA.

The work associated with such workshop should be led by the Strategic Planning Unit in coordination with the 3Cs departments. The action plan also suggests points for implementation by non-FDA actors.

Chapter 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Liberia has undergone profound changes in the past two years. Long known for corruption and exploitation of the population by a minority, in the 1980s the country descended into civil and political strife noted for its brutality against civilians. The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (ACPA) of August 2003, UN Security Council Resolutions 1509 and 1521, the collaborative work between the transitional government and donors that followed, and the legislative and presidential elections of October–November 2005—generally considered peaceful, free, and fair—have created a spirit of hope after these decades of conflict. An elected government headed by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf assumed office on January 16, 2006. An ambitious 165-day reform program has been announced, which includes moving forward on long-delayed economic governance reforms. This provides a unique opportunity to work jointly with a reformist government in critical reform areas, including in the forest sector.

Liberia lies entirely within the Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem and contains two of the last three remaining large blocks of Upper Guinean Rainforest in West Africa, an equivalent of 42–43 percent of this forest type. These biologically rich forests are home to approximately 240 timber species, 2,000 flowering plants, 125 mammal species, 590 bird species, 74 reptiles and amphibians, and over 1,000 insect species. Forestry in Liberia has the potential to contribute 8–10 percent of GDP and contribute significantly to export revenue and fiscal receipts.⁹ In recent years, these forests have not been managed either to support biodiversity or to support the livelihoods of the poor.

Forests are clearly one of the most important natural resources in Liberia, yet they have never been managed to deliver anywhere near their full potential to contribute to the

long-term, sustainable economic growth of the nation; the livelihoods of local and rural communities; or the long-term conservation of the country's natural heritage.

On September 16, 2006, the government of Liberia approved the National Forestry Sector Reform Law of 2006. This law stipulates that forests should be managed for three purposes: for commercial, conservation, and community (the 3Cs). The use of forest resources to achieve the 3Cs implies a series of direct and indirect positive and negative economic, social, and environmental impacts. As the process advances toward implementation of the forest policy and law, there is a need to examine potential impacts of the policy specifically with regard to commercial use of forests. Moreover, there is a need to conduct such impact assessment in a manner that takes into account cross-sector impacts and tradeoffs.

TABLE 1: Liberia's Forest Resources

CLASS		AREA (ha)	%
1	Urban Area	46 047	0.5
2.1	Predominant rural agricultural domain	436 747	4.6
2.2	Agricultural area with small forest presence	3 042 091	31.7
2.3	Mixed agricultural and forest areas	1 317 873	13.7
3.1	Agricultural degraded forest	949 615	9.9
3.2	Open dense forest	1 013 993	10.6
3.3	Closed dense forest	2 424 078	25.3
5	Free water	7 649	0.1
6	Savannah or bare soil	13 312	0.1
7	Littoral ecosystem	161 390	1.7
8	Agro-industrial plantation	178 294	1.9
TOTAL		9 591 089	100.0

Source: Based on Blaser and Daghe (2008), citing Bayol and Chevalier (2004)

In 2007, the World Bank provided resources for conducting an institution-centered SEA of the forest sector, primarily to inform the development of the community rights to forest lands law. Another purpose was to assess capacity and

⁹ An UN Monitor report for the period January to May 2009 found that only one company had commenced logging and that the sector was unlikely to provide significant revenues in that fiscal year. The report also observed that the Forestry Development Authority has begun discussing the need to revise the National Forestry Reform Law (<http://www.illegal-logging.info/uploads/N0936238.pdf>).

FIGURE 1: Liberia's Forest and Land Cover (2003)

Source: 2003 Land Cover, Protected Area Network, FDA as illustrated in DAI (2008).

institutional adjustments that may be needed in the implementation of the Liberian National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 (hereafter referred to as Forest Reform Law) improving forest governance and performance within the forest sector. This SEA was also to inform an assessment of possible negative environmental and social impacts of the project on the forest sector.

LIBERIA'S FOREST RESOURCES

Liberia is situated within the tropical rainforest belt on the west coast of Africa. The country has a total land area of 9.6 million hectares, of which forest cover is about 4.4 million hectares or 46 percent of land area (ITTO 2008). Table 1 provides a summary of the overall estimated land-use cover, and Figure 1 shows as image of Liberia's forest and land cover based on 2003 satellite imagery.

An approximate area of 1 million ha has been subject to logging over the past 10 years. Another 1 million ha of forest has been subject to agricultural pressure (class 3.1: agricultural degraded forest), and another 1.3 million ha of forest land has been seriously affected by agricultural pressure and now consists only of forest patches (class 2.3, mixed agricultural

and forest areas). Although the annual rate of deforestation is estimated to be approximately 12,000 ha (0.3 percent), the recorded planting of new forests since 1971 to date is estimated to be only approximately 11,000 ha in total (FDA 2007).¹⁰

Historically, the forestry sector has been a strong contributor to Liberia's economy. For example, in 1980, the production of forest products accounted for approximately 5 percent of GDP, rising to 20 percent in the late 1990s. Forest products also accounted for 5–10 percent of export earnings in the 1980s, rising to over 50 percent in 2000. In 2002, it was estimated that 36 forest companies were operating in Liberia and producing timber exports valued at over US\$100 million

¹⁰ There have been varying estimates of rates of deforestation in Liberia. A study by FAO showed that between 1980 and 2005, forest area declined by 22 percent (FAO 2006), with an annual deforestation rate of 0.9 percent. A 2008 forest change analysis in Liberia performed by a partnership between the FDA, Conservation International, and South Dakota State University (SDSU) suggests the average deforestation rate increased from 0.2 percent between 1986 and 2000 (Christie et al. 2007) to 0.35 percent in 2000–06 (R-Pin 2008). These numbers are questioned because they are average rates.

(or 60 percent of Liberia's total export earnings) and employing up to 8,000 people (FDA 2007).

A review carried out by the Forest Concession Review Committee (FCRC) showed that between 1985 and 2003, 26 million acres of forest were allocated to concessionaires—even though less than 10 million acres of forest existed. Prior to the concession review, community forestry and conservation of forests in Liberia were almost nonexistent. Years of conflict resulted in the forests being filled with illegal miners, loggers, and hunters. Poaching and the bush meat trade flourished under Taylor, threatening the loss of endemic species (FCRC 2005).

The obvious links between Liberian timber export and the purchase of weapons for use in Liberia (and in other regional conflicts) led to the UN Security Council imposing sanctions on timber exports from Liberia in 2003. Once the war ended in 2003, the National Transitional Government of Liberia and other Liberian stakeholders worked with the UN Security Council to facilitate the reforms necessary to allow the lifting of the sanctions. In June 2006 the Security Council recognized the efforts made by Liberia and lifted the sanctions on timber exports.

Currently, forestry production is projected to grow substantially between 2008 and 2011 from 44,000 cubic meters (m³) to more than 1,400,000 m³. It is estimated that approximately 2.9 million ha of forest will be used for commercial and community forestry and 1.2 million ha will be set aside for conservation and tourism. Rural employment in this sector is targeted at 5,000 for these three years (IMF 2008).

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which views Liberia's rich natural resource base—in particular, the forest resources—as an engine of growth, predicts that log exports will rise to pre-2003 levels within a few years and will contribute 14–15 percent of real GDP by 2011. Timber sales are also expected to contribute significantly to rural economic growth.

In addition to commercial benefits, the forests provide a wide range of non-timber forest products, such as bush meat, materials for traditional and religious ceremonies, fruits, nuts, traditional medicines, and materials for construction and ecosystem services (such as pollination, flood protection, and water purification).

Postconflict reforms have not only reconstituted the commercial forestry sector but additionally sought to ensure that conservation and community forest management play equal roles in Liberia's future forest management. The 3Cs

(conservation, commercial, community) concept is now enshrined in the forest policy of Liberia and reflected in the Forestry Law of Liberia of 2006. The 3Cs formed the foundation of the Forest Managements Strategy being implemented by the FDA.

REFORMS IN THE FOREST SECTOR

Reforms undertaken since 2006 have included: organizational changes, financial reforms, and new governance measures. The new forestry regime in Liberia comprises the following key elements:

- The National Forest Reform Law (NFRL), passed in September 2006
- The 10 core regulations, covering Public Participation, Forest Land Use Planning, Prequalification, Public Tender of Contracts, Prefelling Requirements, Benefit Sharing, Forest Charges, Chain of Custody, Penalties, and Rights of Private Land Owners (approved by the Board of Directors of the FDA on September 11, 2007)
- Liberian Forestry Policy and Implementation Strategy (2006)
- National Forest Management Strategy (June 2007)
- Community Rights to Forest Lands Law (2009)
- Wildlife Law (Pending approval).

Under the new forest management regime the stated policy is one of an “integrated 3Cs” approach, and according to the National Forest Management Strategy of June 2007, it is aimed at ensuring that “commercial forestry, community forestry and forest conservation activities are integrated and balanced to optimize the economic, social and environmental benefits from the forest resource”.

Commercial forestry operations

The strongest developments in the new forest management regime have been in the commercial forestry sector, where two new contractual modalities have been established for commercial forestry operations: Timber Sales Contracts (TSCs) and Forest Management Concessions (FMCs).¹¹

¹¹ TSCs are short-term contracts, reserved for Liberian-owned companies, running for less than three years and covering relatively smaller areas (less than 5,000 ha); whereas FMCs are longer-term contracts for larger areas of up to 400,000 ha. Small FMCs (50,000–100,000 ha) are reserved for majority-owned (51 percent) Liberian companies—although they represent an opportunity for joint ventures between domestic and foreign partners.

The following principles underpin commercial forestry operations under the new forest management regime:

- Management decisions must be based on verifiable scientific principles.
- Affected communities must be consulted.
- Create a competitive bidding system for allocation of commercial concessions.
- Larger logging companies are required to have plans in place to achieve international certification for their timber and to ensure that their activities are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

Specific features introduced under the new management regime include:

- prequalification of companies wishing to log commercially,
- competitive bidding (competitive bidding is prohibited on areas ranging from 1-49,999 ha. Allocation of any other land area above this threshold is subject to competitive bidding),
- the lodging of performance bonds,

- revised labor, environmental, and social requirements for doing business,
- the adoption of forest management plans,
- improved auditing and a chain-of-custody system, and
- enforced freedom of information requirements.

Conservation forest management

In 2007, Liberia had two declared protected areas: Sapo National Park (180,000 ha) and Nimba Nature Reserve (13,500 ha), which together constitute 4 percent of the total forest area (or 2 percent of the landmass). Following the FDA's Forest Land Suitability Planning Study (2007), undertaken to identify preservation suitability across the country, 13 other areas were identified to be included in a proposed protected-areas network. In addition to the two existing protected areas, the following areas were identified as potentially part of an expanded Protected-Areas Network: Wologizi-Wonegizi and Foya in the north, Lofa in northeast, Kpo Mountains in the north central, East Nimba in the north-east, Lake Piso on the western coast, Bong Mountain in the center, the Margibi mangrove area in the central coast, Gbi in

TABLE 2: Liberia's Protected-Areas Network

NAME	DESIGNATION	ECOSYSTEM	AREA (ha)	MANAGEMENT
Sapo	National Park	Wet evergreen	150 482	FDA
Wonegizi	Proposed national park partially in North Lorma National Forest and partially not protected	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous, plus (sub)-montane	29 894	FDA
Gola	Proposed national park located largely in Gola National Forest	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous	97 975	FDA
Lake Piso	Proposed national park/Ramsar site and not part of an existing national forest	Coastal marine and wet evergreen	33 914	FDA/EPA
East Nimba	Nature reserve	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous, plus sub-montane	13 569	FDA
Kpo Mountains	Located partially within Kpelle National Forest	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous, plus sub-montane	83 709	FDA
Wologizi	Largely within North Lorma National Forest	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous, plus (sub)-montane	107 533	FDA
Grebo	Largely part of Grebo National Forest	Wet evergreen	97 136	FDA
Gbi	Largely part of Krahn Brassia National Forest	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous	88 409	FDA
Nimba West	Largely part of West Nimba National Forest	Mixed evergreen/semi-deciduous, plus montane	10 482	FDA
Gbedin Wetlands	Ramsar site	Freshwater	835	EPA
Marshall Wetlands	Ramsar site	Coastal/marine	12 168	EPA
Mesurado Wetlands	Ramsar site	Coastal/marine	6 760	EPA

Source: DAI (2008)

the east, and Cestos, Sapo Grebo, and Grand Kru-River Gee in the southeast. Table 2 provides a summary of Liberia's protected-areas network (DAI 2008).

Currently, with support from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, the FDA is creating three additional protected areas, namely, Lake Piso Basin, Gola, and Wonegizi national forests. The project for the development of the three new protected areas was officially launched in October 2008 under the designation Consolidation of Protected Area Network ("COPAN 1") (FDA 2008). Preparations have been made in accordance with the law for the gazettelement of these new protected areas.

Community forest management

Although the current forest policy and strategy includes a third C, focusing on community forest management, not much has been done on this aspect of the policy. A fundamental starting point in implementing community forest management in Liberia has, however, been the Community Rights Law with respect to Forest Lands (CRL). This law was mandated in the Forestry Reform Law of 2006, which required the drafting of "a comprehensive law governing community rights with respect to Forest Lands" (Section 10.1c). The recently approved and passed CRL provides clarity on the following issues:

- the rights of communities with respect to ownership, occupation, and use of customary forest lands and how those rights relate to the government—and specifically to the FDA
- how communities can manage forest land under clear rules and obligations
- how forest-related activities are to be undertaken so as not to jeopardize or interfere with community rights to forest land
- what conflict resolution mechanisms are available to resolve disputes on community rights to forest lands.

Chapter 2: **METHODS AND APPROACH**

The Liberian NFRL (passed in September 2006) states that the FDA will, within one year of the effective date of the law, present the Legislature for consideration and passage a comprehensive law governing community rights with respect to forest lands. The FDA of Liberia is to assist with community forestry in Liberia. The Bank, which at the time was engaged in the Liberia Surplus Grant on Economic Management and Development of the Forestry Sector (P091984), responded by extending the project SEA to an institution-centered SEA of the forest sector that would also inform the development of the community rights to forest lands law and assess capacity and institutional adjustments that may be needed in the implementation of the Liberian NFRL of 2006 (hereafter referred to as Forest Reform Law) to improve forest governance and performance within the forest sector.

The SEA combined analytical studies and extensive consultations with key stakeholders on (i) key environmental and social considerations and (ii) measures for addressing these key considerations. The SEA coordinated and built on prior and ongoing work, conducted by the Bank and other donor and nongovernmental organizations, on community forestry in Liberia and other postconflict work. Some key studies and ongoing activities that were closely coordinated included the various studies on land tenure (both in forest areas and outside) being conducted by donor agencies, research organizations, and nongovernmental organizations; and the ongoing activities of the Land Steering Committee.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The objective of the institution-centered SEA was to:

- (i) identify key social and environmental considerations in the forest sector,
- (ii) examine key challenges facing the successful implementation of Liberia's 3Cs forest policy,
- (iii) examine how the forest policy and law are currently addressing key social and environmental considerations,

- (iv) identify institutional and capacity gaps for effectively addressing these key considerations,
- (v) develop an action plan for how the government and stakeholders in the sector can meet these challenges, and
- (vi) develop monitoring and evaluation criteria for the implementation of the action plan.

The SEA aimed to inform the development of the community rights to forest lands law, assist in the mainstreaming of the key considerations in LFI activities intended to support implementation of the Forest Reform Law, and inform an assessment of possible negative environmental and social impacts of the World Bank project on the forest sector.

METHODOLOGY OF SEA

The SEA involved a number of steps that were carried out in parallel. The main sequence of the activities included three main phases that involved (i) scoping, (ii) situation assessment and identification of capacity gaps and institutional adjustments, and (iii) developing recommendations and drafting an action plan.

In an effort to maximize the input from the government of Liberia to the SEA process and to build capacity on the technical aspects of the SEA, a national SEA team was established. The team was composed of staff of the FDA and the EPA, with coordination and facilitation provided by the SDI. When necessary, the core members of the SEA were supplemented by representatives from the Office of the Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, MLME, MIA; and the National Investment Commission.

The SEA team met regularly during the SEA, participated in the field work for the regional consultation process and case studies, and played a key role in the prioritization of issues raised in the SEA.

Scoping

The scoping stage of the SEA involved a rapid assessment of the forest sector in Liberia and the stock taking of completed and ongoing activities and studies. It helped establish the proposed objective of the SEA and the context in which the SEA would be undertaken by setting out the relevant baseline information.

Work on the SEA began in September 2007, and an inception mission in early October introduced the concept of the SEA to key stakeholders in the Liberian government and civil society in a series of individual meetings followed by a joint concluding meeting with invited key stakeholders from the Liberian forest sector. During this mission, stakeholders were provided with a general overview of strategic environmental assessment as a decision-making tool, followed by the role of the SEA in the Liberian forest sector context more specifically, as well as a list of preliminary issues that had emerged during pre-mission screening and communications with Liberian stakeholders.

A follow-up mission spanning part of October and November 2007 continued stakeholder consultations and data gathering and culminated to a key stakeholder workshop at the end of the mission. Following inputs of stakeholders at this meeting, the terms of reference for the SEA were refined and finalized.

The refined SEA scope emphasized the need to identify key considerations associated with the forest sector and use this identification to assess the institutional and capacity adjustments that may be needed to effectively address them. The team was also asked to construct the SEA so that it could inform the development of the Community Rights Law with respect to forest lands. The second revision in the SEA was to merge the regional consultation process that had been envisaged as part of the SEA with the consultation process that was to be undertaken to inform the drafting process for the CRL.⁹

⁹ Both the SEA and community rights legislative drafting processes included a consultative and community participation element to canvass the views of and gather information from community-level stakeholders outside of Monrovia and thereby obtain a more representative sample of pertinent issues. Following discussions with the World Bank and the Community Forestry Working Group (responsible for the administering the studies necessary to inform the drafting of the CRL), the FDA, and EPA, it was decided to run a single consultation process that would be used to inform both areas of work.

Both the SEA and the CRL drafting process had additional elements apart from the combined consultation process, had different timelines and mandates, and ultimately are two separate

The purpose of the joint consultation process was to

- Validate or further clarify issues raised at national-level consultations (as had been identified through the SEA consultations at the national level and in the early draft outlines of the CRL).
- Identify issues that have not been raised at the national level for both the broader SEA and the CRL.
- Collect anecdotal evidence to substantiate the issues raised at the local and national levels. While in the field, try to confirm the qualitative information by collecting additional data and “triangulating” the information
- Examine the institutional capacity in the regions and at the local level to handle priority considerations with regard to the forest policy emerging from the consultations.

As part of the scoping exercise, the team conducted a stakeholder analysis and rapid political economy analysis. The purpose of the stakeholder analysis was to identify the key stakeholders that need to be engaged and consulted for the SEA, such as government, civil society, communities, academia, donors, and the private sector. The stakeholder analysis was done based on information from key informants and validated during the scoping workshop. The political economy analysis was to help understand the power dynamics among the stakeholders, so that the appropriate participation approaches would be used when engaging the various stakeholders. This analysis was also to inform the practical recommendations that were to be made, as the political economy analysis provides a basis for understanding who has the decision-making power.

The identification of key issues should have involved both a thorough analysis and consultation process. This SEA placed more emphasis on the consultation process, and the analysis done was confined to the situation assessments. The consultation done for this SEA was, as mentioned above, tied to the CRL consultations. For the purposes of the joint consultation process, the core SEA team was expanded to include not only representatives from the FDA and EPA, but also from the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, MLME,

processes. However, the benefits of combining the two regional consultation processes (for example, better coverage of more sites from which to gather information, more efficient use of logistics, and the opportunity to simultaneously examine the 3Cs of Liberian forest management) supported the merging of the two consultation processes.

M IA, and National Investment Commission. The lead drafter of the CRL also attended portions of the regional consultation process to interact directly with participants.

The methodology adopted for the consultation process was first piloted in Gbarpolu County by the expanded SEA team and thereafter rolled out to include consultations with seven other counties: Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Nimba, Rivercess, River Gee, and Sinoe counties. These counties and communities within them were selected for consultation based on factors that included: their proximity to forest lands; reasonable accessibility; sufficient population size or a range of population sizes; real, potential, and desired use of forest products, including timber and non-timber products (including bush meat), geographic representation of forest resources in Liberia; and, finally, areas where “multisectoral” activity would be taking place—in other words, a place not only where any of the 3Cs could interact with other Cs but also where other sectors, such as agriculture or mining, could influence forest management.

Consultation

The regional consultation was designed to gather information at the grassroots level as input to the process. The rural outreach used a combination of tools to gather the information presented in this report. These included regional workshops, informal meetings at the town level, focus group discussions, and meetings with key informants. Key informant meetings involved briefing with local authorities and others with a deeper understanding of the local context. Informal town hall–style meetings were used to present overviews of the SEA and facilitate the selection of grassroots representatives to the regional workshops. Focus group meetings—with women, youths, elders, civil society groups, and teachers—were organized to reach out to a broader segment of the population in each county. This was designed to ensure that the perspectives of the various groups were captured at the regional workshop. Issues raised in these informal meetings were documented to form part of the feedback from each region.

Each regional consultation culminated in a regional workshop. The regional workshops were convened in the following provisional capitals and population centers of eight counties: Buchanan (Grand Bassa and Rivercess counties), Greenville (Sinoe County), Zwedru (Grand Gedeh County), Fishtown (River Gee County), Bopolu (Gbarpolu County), Zorzor (Lofa County) and Sanniquellie (Nimba County). In total, seven regional workshops were conducted in Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Nimba, River Gee, and Sinoe counties.

The workshop in Buchanan also included participants from Rivercess County, soliciting input from eight counties overall.

On average, 30 persons were invited to each regional workshop; at least 10 persons came from outside the provincial capitals or population centers where the workshops were held. The selection process was based on segments of the local population including government official, gender, and membership in a social or interest group (youth, women, civil society, etc.). Population size, accessibility, and the degree of dependence on the forest were the main selection criteria for towns from which grassroots participants were identified. These grassroots-level participants were selected by their peers during the informal grassroots-level meetings that preceded the workshops. Each workshop concluded with the selection of two participants to attend the presentation of the outcomes of the rural outreach at a national workshop that was held as part of the SEA process.

At each regional workshop, the team gave a detailed presentation of the SEA to establish the context for the workshop. Following the presentation, participants were divided into groups based on gender and age to discuss various topics using semistructured questions. The questions presented were designed to be used as a guide for the group discussions and to help facilitators probe participants for more reflective inputs. The groups then returned to plenary and presented their works. Question-and-answer sessions after each presentation were aimed at seeking clarification on the points in the presentation, emphasizing particular issues, or challenging or presenting a different perspective on a particular issue.

In addition to the regional workshops and introductory sessions with local authorities, a total of 29 informal grassroots-level meetings were organized to facilitate the selection of group representatives to the regional workshops. These included 4 meetings (each) with women and youth groups, 16 town hall–style meetings and 5 meetings with teachers and civil society groups. A total of 606 people participated in the informal meetings, while 216 people participated in the workshops. In total, 242 (or approximately 40 percent) of the participants were women.

At each regional center, meetings and workshops were held attended by local government officials, paramount, clan and town chiefs, and district commissioners; various interest groups including women and youth groups, local NGOs, and teachers; as well as persons selected from two villages outside the population center or provincial capital where the workshops were convened. Overall, the selection processes

for participants was based on position (local government officials and chiefs), gender, age, and membership in a social or interest group (youth groups, women's groups, and CBOs). However, population size, accessibility and the degree of dependence on the forest were the main selection criteria for towns from which grassroots participants were invited. Participants from the grassroots meetings were identified through a self-selection process facilitated by the SEA team. The workshops themselves were conducted using a combination of approaches including focus group discussions, general assemblies, key informants, and semistructured interviews. At each of the regional workshops, the participants self-selected two representatives from their county to attend a national-level workshop that would be held during the assessment phase of the SEA.

The regional consultation process covered by the CRL and SEA resulted in a single report entitled Report on the Regional Consultations on the SEA and the Community Rights Law (refer to Annex 1). Once the joint regional consultation process was completed, the two processes were separated and continued on their own timeframes. The draft version of this report informed the CRL drafting process. Upon completion of the consultations the SEA process and CRL drafting process continued on their respective timeframes. It should be noted that the information collected in the Regional Consultation Report would ultimately be interpreted in two different contexts—first, that of the CRL; and second, that of the SEA process itself.

Following the regional consultations, the reports were compiled by the team. Each person on the team independently reviewed the draft report and submitted written comments on the draft. Those comments included additions to the text (where some issues were left out, clarifying the context, in which a particular comment was made, removing or modifying comments that do not reflect what was said by participants, etc.). Following the individual reviews, the team met in a working session to adopt the final draft report.

Prioritization of issues

A technical working session of the National Team and Situation Assessment authors was organized on June 2008 in Monrovia. The heads of the Community Forestry, Conservation, and other departments within the FDA were also invited, but none of those invited from the FDA were

able to attend.¹⁰ Two new FDA staff members attended in place of those who were unable to attend. The purpose of this working session was to review progress on the SEA, the list of issues that had been identified during the SEA inception phase, the field consultations, and key informant interviews. The FDA and EPA technicians along with the SEA facilitators from IUCN and SDI were to begin the process of ranking the issues identified thus far.

The prioritized considerations were then validated in a national workshop.

Situation Assessments

Situation assessments were carried out to understand the relevant environmental, social, economic, legal, and institutional context within which the key considerations associated with the forest sector were currently being handled. In aggregate, the situation assessments were to help identify the various factors that affect the forest sector as a whole, i.e., how the development of the forest sector is impacted by other sectors of Liberia's postconflict development, specifically—but not limited to—activities in the mining, agriculture, and planning sectors as well as policy responses such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan.

The assessments were all undertaken with a similar methodology that included individual interviews with key stakeholders and organizations and literature reviews. The terms of reference for the situation assessments were published in the draft scoping report for comment from stakeholders. The authors of the individual assessment reports also participated in the consultative meetings organized as part of the SEA, particularly the National SEA Workshop held in November 2007 in Monrovia. The four situation assessments are briefly summarized in the findings section of this report.

Recommendations and development of action plans

Use of case studies

Case studies were also conducted to further illuminate the context within which the key considerations were to be addressed, as well as to inform the recommendations. The case studies looked at the practical implications of possible alternatives identified during the SEA addressing the priority environmental and social considerations in the forest sector.

¹⁰ It should be noted that the workshop coincided with the visit of a delegation from the Ivorian Ministry of Forestry to discuss transboundary forestry-related issues; the SEA in-country facilitator had no prior knowledge of the visit

Six possible areas were identified by the SEA team to illustrate the practical application of forest policy in Liberia. In the course of several meetings a number of decision criteria were established that would allow the potential case study sites to be ranked, and case studies were undertaken at three locations. The entire field team visited the first location to test the methodology adopted. This was then refined before each case study. A table summarizing the discussions and ranking the six potential case study sites is presented in Annex 3 of this report.

The following sectors were used to select the three study sites: Forestry (Commercial—TSC, FMC, pit-sawing; Conservation—proposed, actual; Community); Mining (informal, industrial, exploration); and Agriculture (tree crops, shifting cultivation). Sites with potential interactions between the sectors were identified. The three sites with the highest number of interactions with the activities in the three sectors were chosen and confirmed with the FDA and the EPA for the case studies. These sites are Butter Hill, Grand Cape Mount County; Kpayaquelleh, Lofa County; and Dulay, Nimba County. These sites allowed the SEA team to examine the overall context in TSC and FMC areas as well as protected areas respectively.

The two-step approach adopted for the data collection was:

- (i) Perform interviews of the relevant government agencies in Monrovia to obtain policy perspectives and the official position on what should be happening on the ground at the three selected case study sites. The team also reviewed parts of the SEA scoping report that relate to the issues to be examined on the ground.
- (ii) Carry out key informant and group interviews to identify what was happening on the ground in the three selected case study sites, as compared to the information obtained in Monrovia in (i) above. To facilitate the interviews, guide questionnaires were prepared for the priority thematic areas that were identified during the SEA. After the introduction of the study concept and objectives to the group of representatives of the sites visited, they were divided into three groups as follows in consultation with them:
 - **Group 1:** The town chief, chiefs of satellite towns, Butter Hill Chief's Council, elders, tribal governors, and the Community Forest Development Committee (CFDC) members, collectively referred to as Elders in the report.

- **Group 2:** The youth, including hunters, miners, teachers/school administration—collectively referred to in the report as the Youth.
- **Group 3:** Women's co-op, midwives, petty traders, marketing association, farmers' association—the Women in the report.

Separate interviews were held by team members with key informants at the case study sites to cross-check the findings from the group discussions. The results of the respective group discussions were reviewed and compared by all members of a team and harmonized into one summary report. The summary report was subsequently validated with the representatives of the case study sites.

All three teams combined to undertake the assignment at the first site (Butter Hill) before separating to do the other two remaining sites (Kpayaquelleh and Dulay). This was meant to ensure consistency in the methods used for all three study sites.

National Stakeholders Workshop

A National Stakeholders Workshop on the SEA of the forest sector was held in November 2008. The workshop brought together a cross-section of stakeholders, including the FDA, EPA, other government agencies, NGOs, private sector, donor agencies and members of the Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI), as well as participants from civil society in eight counties. The participants from the counties came from Grand Bassa, River Cess, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Nimba, Lofa, and Gbarpolu counties. Participants from the counties included chiefs and elders, teachers, women, youths, and community-based organizations.

The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Identify strategic challenges facing the Liberian forest sector, thus validating the work done in the scoping phase and situation assessments of the SEA
- Determine elements of an action plan (including indicators for monitoring) for addressing the challenges
- Agree on next steps

A total of 59 participants attended the workshop. This included 15 participants from eight counties; 4 from three case study sites; and 40 from government, NGOs, INGOs, industry, and other stakeholders. The FDA was well represented by a mix of technicians and middle- and senior-level managers.

Chapter 3: SEA FINDINGS

The various components of the SEA generated findings based on the approach and purpose of the component. These findings, presented below, were then synthesized. The common elements emerging from these various components are highlighted.

FINDINGS FROM REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

The results of the rural outreach are presented in four broad thematic areas: environmental, social, economic, and legal/institutional.⁹ Issues presented under environmental, social, and economic themes are based mainly on local communities' past experiences with commercial (logging) and conservation activities. Other issues that were also considered included large-scale agricultural activities (plantations) and mining in forest regions. The legal and institutional theme focuses on suggestions obtained from the communities for the CRL. It should be noted that the conservation and protected-areas issues did not attract the same level of interest as commercial forestry. This reflects the perception in all the regions that forest management is more associated with commercial logging than any other forest land use.

An important note here is that the findings from the regional consultations reflect the situation at the time of the consultations (November 2007–January 2008).

Social issues

The local people had high expectations from concessionaires in their areas. Many of them expected benefits such as roads, clinics, school construction, employment of locals, and the provision of training to members of local communities. Unfortunately, the majority of companies did not provide any benefits to local peoples and the communities in the regions they operated. A study by IUCN (2005) found that in the past numerous concession holders deprived the

surrounding communities of much-needed financial and social assistance by failing to comply with their community obligations. Moreover, although certain expectations were created, communities had no access to real information about concession holder obligations, or their own rights. In all the regions in which the study was carried out, the participants complained that the FDA did not engage or advise them about the obligations the logging companies had to them under their agreements with the government. The FDA and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) failed to enforce legal requirements and to monitor and collect the required taxes from concession holders.

The lack of community benefits from the forests and false promises made by logging companies are the two key issues that emerged in many regions. Previously, logging companies routinely made promises to locals that were not kept. Even when informal agreements had been made between the logging companies and local communities, many times the logging companies failed to keep these promises. The local people no longer trust the FDA and logging companies. There is, therefore, a need to build better relationships among these parties.

This problem is compounded by the fact that the expectations at the community and regional levels are already high, partly because of the way that future community benefits are unrealistically projected in discussions surrounding forests.

Community development projects initiated by logging companies also define the relationships between loggers and communities. Throughout the regional consultations participants at the informal and formal meetings repeatedly raised the issue of "log bridges" (i.e., bridges built by logging companies). These bridges are usually of poor quality and deteriorate quickly, and thus do not provide lasting benefit to the communities. They were cited as an example of bad community development initiatives. While some discussed this issue in the context of wasting commercially valuable logs, others were concerned about their durability, as they rot quite easily.

⁹ Details regarding the approach used for the regional consultations and the outcomes can be found in Annex 1.

Participants in the regional consultations reported that the marginalization and exclusion of local people from decision making was a major issue. In the past there were no consultations with local people about logging in their communities. Participants from all regions tried to establish a scope for their future involvement in the forest sector. Since the local people feel that they own the forests and all the associated forest products, they argued that they should be involved in all the major decisions and negotiations regarding the forest resources.

The forest communities also complained about the negative impacts that they face due to uncontrolled logging activities. They asserted that this negatively affected the farmlands and crops (and therefore their livelihoods), but they were never compensated for the losses.¹⁰

Grand Bassa and Rivercess. The main issues raised were the secret burying of logging workers, lack of compensation to victims' families, and the taking of land by force or granting of concessions on private land. The local people complained that logging camps were usually established in remote areas, and when accidents or death occurred they were not reported by the logging companies. It is not uncommon for victims to be buried without notice or compensation to the victim's family members. The absence of a registrar of employees made it difficult for family members to pursue these issues, and local authorities could not verify reports because of lack of information.

Sinoe and Gbarpolu. Here political patronage was one of the main complaints raised by the local people. They claimed that many times logging companies have refused to fulfill their obligations as discussed and agreed upon in informal negotiations. When the local people complain, the logging companies claim that they have already consulted with government officials on the issue.

Nimba, Grand Gedeh, and River Gee. The main concerns here included sexual exploitation and abuse by logging companies.¹¹ This issue raised very heated discussions among the male participants in Nimba. Some of them argued that this problem was due to a breakdown of family values and social order and asserted that logging companies and their employees should not be blamed. In Grand Gedeh, the issue

was presented as follows: "Company staff spoiled our young girls with money and spoiled their school business; sometimes our children wear uniforms to go to school but they don't go to school; they go and spend the whole day in the camp with the men."

The key social issues raised are summarized as follows:

1. The need for communities to benefits from logging
2. The need to involve local people in forest management and forest-related decision making
3. The need for logging companies and FDA to keep the promises they make
4. The lack of compensation for damages to cash crops and private property by the logging companies

Region-specific social issues that were raised are discussed below.¹²

Economic issues

In addition to the social issues discussed above, the economic considerations raised will potentially pose the most serious challenges to forest management at the local level. In spite of the promises of the forest sector reform (especially with regard to revenue sharing), communities constantly reminded the team that benefits from the forestry sector were not shared in the past. This is particularly critical given the limited understanding of the variety of economic opportunities that exist in the forest sector and the heavy focus on the revenue that will be shared with communities from logging operations. During the consultations, the local communities did not bring up NTFPs, other than the fact that they wanted bush meat hunting and trade to be regulated. This could have been due to unawareness of the potential economic value of NTFPs.

Locals persistently raised concerns about the failure of logging companies to improve local livelihoods. The local people felt they could benefit from the logging companies' presence through employment or processing logged timber into sawn timber. There was also a general feeling that if logging companies diversify into processing at the local level, it would create more jobs and income opportunities for local people. Community concerns about obtaining maximum value out of commercial forest operations is also evidenced by their condemnation of the practice of not using all trees that had been felled or using valuable cut trees inappropriately. Sometimes logging companies abandon cut logs and use commercially

¹⁰ Most people in the local communities doubted that the government or FDA would take these suggestions and implement them, despite the SEA team's insisting that this was a new era; some of these issues are already addressed in the NFRL and will also be dealt with in greater detail in the Community Rights Law.

¹¹ This issue was not important in the other four regions.

¹² All the concerns raised in this section focus on the interaction between private logging companies and the local community.

valuable timber to construct bridges, which is considered wasteful.

Also, the diminishing commercial viability of the forest is a source of concern. In their words, “good logs are gone . . . big forest trees have been reduced due to repeated logging of the area.” Despite this concern, the local communities were quick to point out that there was still potential for logging and that logging would increase job opportunities for local people.

Another important issue that was raised was salary arrears for workers in the sector. In one instance, a (female) participant walked out of a meeting after the team suggested that former workers organize and present themselves to the FDA and the Ministries of Justice and Labor to seek formal clarification or redress on the issue.¹³ Some participants who raised this issue felt that the government should take responsibility for the salary arrears owed by logging concessions, since their concessions have been canceled and they will not be returning to operate.

The main economic issues that emerged included:

1. The need to improve employment in the forest sector
2. The need for logging companies and activities to improve local livelihoods
3. The wasteful use of forest timber products by logging companies
4. The diminishing commercial viability of the forest
5. The existence of salary arrears

Environmental issues

Locals are generally concerned about forest loss and forest degradation. They acknowledge that shifting cultivation has negative impacts on the forest and also blame logging operations for forest loss and forest degradation.

The pollution of rivers and streams, dryer conditions, and visibly decreasing water bodies were perceived to be directly associated with forest loss. Water pollution also occurs because logs are covered with earth, and when it rains the mud runs into the creeks and streams.

Other issues that were highlighted included the wasteful use of forest timber and the lack of reforestation/forest

restoration activities. They considered activities leading to forest loss to be “putting the community at risk.” The cumulative environmental effect of logging and mining in the same area was also raised. Locals recommended that logging and mining should not occur in the same area and agricultural activities (farming) in high forest (old growths) should be stopped.

The proposal to expand the protected-areas system received mixed reactions. Locals regard it as “beneficial for unborn generations because when they are born they will still see some of the forest and benefit from it,” but at the same time raised concerns that this restricts some of the villagers’ own activities, especially farming.

The environmental concerns were summarized as follows:

1. The cumulative impacts of logging and mining in the same area (in Bopolu there was a particular reference to some logging companies engaging in mining activities in their concessions area)
2. The pollution of streams that results from blocking sections during access road construction in the forest
3. The migration of wildlife as a result of heavy machinery used by logging companies
4. The reduction of wildlife population as a result of increase in hunting activities by the local people
5. Wasteful use of timber
6. Limited reforestation/forest restoration programs and, where they do exist, the use of exotic species

Legal and institutional issues

There is unanimity of perception or views among local people that they “own the forest, in their communities, and everything that is in it.”¹⁴ For example, participants in Gbarpolu stated that “forests are apportioned” based on township, clan, or chiefdom levels. This line of thought was also highlighted in Buchanan, when participants there concurred that “there are no open spaces” or empty land between towns. Therefore, local people felt that each town should be responsible for planning and managing their own forest along with the FDA, and should involve the Ministries of Agriculture and Internal Affairs.

As a result of the perceptions discussed above, participants made some proposals for consideration during the drafting of the CRL. These included the need for communities to

¹³ This was apparently to demonstrate her disappointment with the response she received, or express her anger at the decision to cancel the concessions, since it means they might not be able to collect arrears owed them by logging companies.

¹⁴ This was the direct wording from a group presentation in Bopolu. In all the other regions, the views were the same.

authorize the use of the forest and to play a role in negotiation for logging concessions. The proposal for a bottom-up approach to the negotiation of contracts or concessions was echoed in every region. The communities said that they wanted to be given an opportunity to sign agreements with logging companies for the exploitation of the forest, or for the logging companies to first hold discussions with the community before the government can get involved. They also demanded that the right of community members to participate in community decision-making processes and access to information relating to agreements and benefits should be guaranteed in the law. Participants suggested collaborating with the FDA on forest issues and for the FDA to provide technical support and guidance on forest planning and other issues. They reserved law enforcement responsibilities for the FDA. They also, however, envisage a monitoring role to check on the FDA and “to stop the FDA from making false promises.” Locals expect that the CRL will guarantee increased benefits from logging and other forest uses.

On community-level institutional and governance issues, participants proposed that the community retains key decision-making powers, including land use planning, concession allocation, and community projects. They proposed that each community establish a committee to transact business and receive and distribute benefits on behalf of their community—and also develop rules to govern these committees. Members of these committees should be identified through elections, but the composition should reflect a gender balance (men, women, and youths) and equal representation of the various towns and villages within a community. Civil servants or government employees should be barred from standing in these elections. Limits on duration of terms and on the number of terms for members of the committee should be established.

There was a general complaint that the importance of including anticorruption measures was underscored in the CRL. The current CRL, passed in 2009, addresses this issue and states that if there is any mismanagement or misappropriation of community forest funds, the executive committee, with the technical assistance of FDA, will carry out an investigation; and appropriate measures will be recommended—which could include prosecuting the responsible party. It is hoped that this will be implemented as stated in the CRL.

Throughout these sessions, participants linked their suggestions and recommendations to logging. This is a reflection of the importance of logging to the local communities. Introducing other concepts and approaches to forest

management will be challenged by this perception. It will be extremely useful to bear this in mind when dealing with land use planning in the CRL and in the implementation of an integrated 3Cs approach.

Legal and institutional issues were summarized as follows:

1. The need for recognition and respect of local people’s land rights
2. An expectation among forest communities that they should enjoy more power and authority under the new commercial forestry regime
3. The need for and expectation of community empowerment in a new commercial forestry regime
4. The need for capacity building at the local level to enable the local people to manage the forest resources
5. The high expectations among forest communities that they will have increased opportunities to participate democratically in forest management under the new forest management regime

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SITUATION ASSESSMENTS

The situation assessments generated a range of findings. This section highlights some of the key elements of these findings.

Potential challenges with implementation of the 3Cs

A review of the National Forest Management Strategy revealed that while there are minimal conflicts among the 3Cs at the policy level, there is the potential for conflicts to arise during implementation. The reasons for this include:

- The parameters of each of the Cs are not well defined. In 2008 only 10 core regulations had been drafted for the national forest reform law. These included Regulations on (i) public participation, (ii) forest land use planning, (iii) bidder qualification, (iv) tender award and administration of forest management concessions, timber sales contracts and major forest use permits, (v) major pre-felling operations under forest resource licenses, (vi) benefit sharing, (vii) certain forest fees (stumpage fees, land rental fee, and forest product fee), (viii) establishing chain of custody system, (ix) penalties, and (x) rights of private land holders. The lack of regulation of numerous other elements and the lack of specific and complete definitions on key issues are a source of confusion and conflicting interpretations.

- There are several activities under each of the Cs, some of which overlap. This can cause conflict if it is unclear which department(s) is (are) responsible and how the financial and human resources will be allocated to the various activities.

In 2008, within the FDA there was limited collaboration among the departments regarding the 3Cs. The departments are largely compartmentalized, with commercial forestry focusing on logging concessions, community forestry focusing on community forests, and the conservation department focusing on national parks. In the field, however, the lines of responsibility between departments become rather blurred. Wildlife occurs in all forests, not just national parks, and the boundary between Timber Management Contract Areas and the community forest is not that clear (DAI 2008). The lack of coordination and collaboration could become a major source of conflict within FDA and between FDA and stakeholder groups (e.g., communities). This would limit FDA's effectiveness in reducing poverty without compromising the safety of the environment or community livelihoods. An illustration from the regulatory standpoint are the regulations associated with conservation that list wildlife species (e.g. chimpanzee, forest buffalo) as protected species, while local communities consider them pests because they destroy crops, resulting in human-wildlife conflict. Another illustrative example is the fact that the current conservation model practiced in Liberia gives local communities limited access to protected areas and restricts them to the extraction of NTFP (especially bush meat) in some of these protected areas. This comes at a cost to communities. For example, it is estimated that prohibited or fully protected wildlife species account for about 35 percent of bush meat sales, and partially protected species account for a further 40–50 percent (DAI 2008). At the same time there are no provisions in place to compensate communities for the restrictions imposed on them. This contrasts with the regulations in place for commercial forestry.

The NFRL states that local communities should be granted user and management rights and that social, economic, and technical procedures for capacity building should be put in place to ensure that communities can equitably participate in and equitably benefit from sustainable management of the forests. Unfortunately, community involvement in conservation and commercial forestry is still very limited. The local communities feel that they are alienated from the management of the forest resources. Advancing on translating the CRL ratified in October 2009 into practice will provide an opportunity to rectify this.

Another area of potential conflict within the forest sector is between the objective of the 3Cs and the emerging “carbon agenda.” There is an increasing awareness of the importance of addressing climate change concerns in the management of Liberia's forests, and a number of initiatives have started. In September 2007, the Liberian government formed a National Carbon Working Group, which is the government's main advisory group on all issues connected with carbon; and in May 2009, Liberia was selected as a REDD country participant and received a grant for US\$200,000 to prepare its Readiness Preparation Plan (RPP). There are, however, several challenges that need to be addressed before REDD strategies are put in place, including the following:

- Minimizing intersectoral conflicts, particularly from mining and agriculture
- Building necessary capacity for forest inventory and systematic monitoring of the carbon stocks
- Determining the potential economic revenue from carbon credits and emission reductions and viable synergies between these and other forest land uses

There are also potential conflicts between the Forest Sector Reform Law and other laws. A law establishing the land commission was passed by the national legislature few days prior to the enactment of the CRL with respect to forest land. The two laws present differing approaches by the government of Liberia to the same issue, and CRL in a sense preempts work of the commission. The Land Commission may recommend the same or an amended approach to customary land tenure, which will presumably have to recognize any community lands that are documented. Such a situation would result in conflict within the 3Cs and at the intersectoral level.

The Environmental Protection and Management Law is the legal framework for the sustainable development, management, and protection of the environment by the Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with relevant ministries, autonomous agencies, and organizations. The law underscores intersectoral coordination and authorizes EPA—in consultation with the relevant line ministries, agencies, and/or authorities—to promulgate several procedures, measures, guidelines, plans, registries, criteria, licenses/permits, standards, and regulations to protect the environment (DAI 2008). These provisions can appear to conflict with the Forestry Law, which gives FDA primary authority for forest management and protection

There also are contradictions between the NFRL and the Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy. The latter states that sector objectives for forestry should include, inter alia,

an increased contribution of forestry to household food security and nutrition through the availability of safe and quality bush meat and by means of other approaches. The Policy and Strategy also calls for a holistic development of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries with special focus on conservation of forest resources, protection of the environment, and sustainable utilization and management of forest resources.

Capacity constraints

In 2008, when the SEA was being conducted, a general finding of the situation assessment was that the FDA, members of civil society and forest management committees have limited capacity in forest management.

FDA and nongovernmental organizations

Shortly after the concession review and reform of the timber sector, the FDA itself was reformed to become more efficient: staff was cut in half, salaries were dramatically increased, and the remaining positions were given clearly defined tasks. As a result, the FDA field staff capabilities are limited. A survey by Barnes (2005) showed that several key human resource functions do not exist in FDA, and there is a lack of infrastructure to support the FDA management objectives. The study also found that although Human Resources (HR) development should have been an important part of the broader FDA reform, and would have ensured that the staff

had the capacity to effectively fulfill their mandate, no effective training program exists on any HR theme. Furthermore, due to the conflict period in Liberia, FDA is staffed by senior staff, many of whom are due to retire, or by a junior cadre of government staff who need training in specific areas—for example, community consultations and community organizing, development of microenterprises, forest conservation, etc.

The institutional capacity to implement the new forest policy and legislation was identified as a key issue by stakeholders both within and outside the FDA. Concerns were associated largely with the FDA's "field capacity." Tables 3 and 4 provide an overview of staffing among departments and in the field (DAI 2008).

The FDA also has inadequate infrastructure. The conflict period decimated much of the country's infrastructure and government facilities. This has severely disrupted many government functions (DAI 2008). Electricity is not reliable, forcing FDA to rely on generators and spend financial resources on fuel. FDA also lacks adequate financial resources for enhancing its field presence.

Improved infrastructure and revenue generation will be critical, as will capacity to implement the new mandates, especially with regard to logistical support for law enforcement of commercial forest management. Law enforcement is currently weak. There are multiple reasons for this. Some experts feel that the high bar set by the policy requires a longer implementation time, given Liberia's initial conditions—e.g., limited community awareness and infrastructure that is in poor condition.

There are other key areas where FDA capacity will need to be strengthened. For example, the CRL and effective implementation of the NFRL will require a certain number of staff with specific skill sets that currently are not available or are limited in availability. For example, the National Forestry Reform Law has regulations regarding the process of awarding contracts for commercial timber concessions. The UN

TABLE 3: FDA Workforce Levels by Department

DEPARTMENT	WORKFORCE
Administration	74
Finance	7
Community Forest	21
Commercial Forestry	21
Conservation	82
Research and Development	31
TOTAL	301

Source: DAI (2008), 84.

FDA FIELD STAFFING BY ZONE

DEPARTMENT	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	TOTAL
Conservation	5	6	25	36	72
Commercial	8	13	9	18	48
Community	0	3	3	6	12
TOTAL	13	22	37	60	132

Source: BDAI (2008), 85.

Monitor report for Liberia for the last two quarter of 2008 found that the change made by the FDA to the payment terms for three forest management contracts after the conclusion of negotiations could lead to the loss of \$50 million in revenue for the government of Liberia over the course of the 25-year period of the contracts (United Nations Security Council 2008b).

FDA will also need to strengthen its capacity to manage forest revenues. In Liberia the MoF and FDA are the only government agencies involved in the collection of forest charges. Production monitoring, calculation of forest charges, and the generation of forest production statistics are the responsibility solely of the FDA. Both the FDA and MoF receive payments of forest charges (depending on the type of charge) (Doe 2004)

FDA revenue collection has been poor in the past. A review of total assessment and collection of forest revenue for the two years 1999 and 2000 revealed that actual revenue collection accounts for 30 percent of total assessed charges, while arrears in charge payments account for the remaining 70 percent (Doe 2004). This situation needs to be improved, especially in areas such as the collection of fines for noncompliance with forest regulations. This could require greater presence of FDA staff at logging operations, as well as effective mechanisms for conducting audits and verification.

There is a more general issue relating to the revenue base available to the FDA, and the extent to which the FDA is capturing the income available from forest goods and services. Currently, revenue collection focuses almost entirely on fines, penalties, royalties, and other user fees for timber concessionaires. It overlooks other values of forest areas.

During a 2005 workshop on community forestry (CIFOR 2006) discussions regarding capacity building revealed the need to for awareness raising among all sectors of society (government and nongovernment) concerning the government's policy on community forestry, reorientation of government staff to fit them for new roles as advisors and extensionists rather than as policing and concession licensing officials, and training of government staff and NGOs on procedures (tools and techniques) for implementing community forestry.

Building capacity in the aforementioned areas will requires some of the key training and higher-education institutions to revisit their curricula. Currently, for example, the curriculum for forestry that is taught at the University of Liberia dates back to 1978; it does not deal with the emerging issues in the forest sector. This continued focus on the skills required

for commercial forestry operations will jeopardize the "the other two Cs," community and conservation.

Development partners have begun investing in the area of capacity building through bilaterally funded projects and projects coordinated and implemented by international and national NGOs. There have been recent efforts in the University of Liberia to develop training for practitioners on elements of community-based forest management. Building capacity would benefit from improved donor coordination to ensure optimal benefits from the multiple donor initiatives.

Local communities

Local communities have limited capacity to efficiently participate in the implementation of the 3Cs component of the Forest Management Strategy due to widespread confusion and limited awareness about what community-based forest management might entail and how it might be encouraged. The local communities are aware of the NFRL but, more often than not, were unable to differentiate it from the CRL. Within communities, commonly marginalized groups such as elders, youth, and women are aware of the individual Cs. Few, however, had heard about the concept of integrating the 3Cs as articulated in the policy. There also is confusion regarding the "social obligations" of concessionaires (such as support to community clinics, primary schools, road building, or job provision) with the objective of community forestry.

There is no clear understanding of "benefits" from protected areas to communities, as evidenced by the situation of Sapo National Park (SNP). At SNP, some community members are employed by the park management, and some local and international NGOs are providing livelihood services to several local communities. The NFRL does not have provisions for compensating communities around protected areas in the same way that communities receive compensation from timber concessions. Instead, communities adjacent to protected areas are provided with alternative livelihood programs. These programs, unfortunately, often fall short of deterring illegal activities as they cannot compete with illicit/illegal livelihood opportunities (DAI 2008).

There also is no common understanding of "benefits" between local communities and logging concessionaires. A recent study carried out by the IUCN (2006) showed that none of the stakeholders had any knowledge or substantial information about issues, terms, legal obligations, and compliance of the logging companies. This resulted in the logging companies taking advantage of the local people. Even with the recent introduction of the social agreement between the

local community and the logging concessionaires, communities need to have a better understanding of the possible types of benefit they can derive from logging operations.

Wily (2007b) found that not many communities were aware that the law obliges government to share only one-third of the rent due on the lease of their lands to concessionaires, and that there was no legal obligation for the revenue to reach them directly—it could be given back to the communities in form of supported social services managed by county authorities. Moreover, no legal commitment was made to share the percentage of lucrative stumpage and export fees with the forestland owners and possessors. It is also taken for granted that the one-third of rent will be delivered automatically, whereas there are clear requirements for accessing the funds (such as community body needing to be incorporated and needing to apply to the authorized body to gain access to this funding). There is a need to clarify how communities can access benefits from forest concessions, specifically the steps and requirements that need to be fulfilled.

The local communities did not seem to appreciate the economic value of NTFPs or the possible restrictions to NTFP collection posed by protected areas or logging concessions. Forest communities viewed timber as the only product from the forest with economic value and, due to limited knowledge regarding NTFPs, felt that economic benefit from the sector would have to be largely derived from commercial logging.

Paucity of data resulting in undervaluation of forest resources

In its efforts to integrate commercial forestry, community forestry, and forest conservation, and to optimize the economic, social, and environmental benefits from the forest resources, a key challenge facing the forest sector will be to find ways of factoring all of the 3Cs into economic and financial planning.

Despite a stated policy of coherence between the 3Cs, currently there remains a severe paucity of economic data on the “community” and “conservation” aspects, and the data on commercial aspect is questioned. Lack of data makes it very difficult to plan future activities reliably. For example, the lack of community-based experiences is a major constraint when it comes to how community forestry will be implemented. Many decision makers don’t have sufficient information that would allow them to make informed decisions on future forest management policies that take into account community forest management strategies (Lebbie et al. 2009). The

implications of these findings are that, often, the economic decision making excludes the actual and potential benefits of forest management options, resulting in the undervaluation of forest resources. Generating this decision support information and making sure it is integrated into investment, land use, and development planning will be critical to clarifying and implementing the new national forest policy.

When land and other resource uses are weighed in economic terms (and their potential benefits and costs identified), and the gains from both community forestry and forest conservation are not, there is a danger of these resources being degraded or stakeholders losing interest in investing in their sustainable use. There is also the risk of the Liberian government and people failing to maximize or capture a major source of potential economic benefits.

Particular gaps in this respect, which have been noted in the SEA process and consultations, include:

- Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are of great importance in both urban and rural Liberia, yet there is limited appreciation of their economic value. Both economic planners and forest communities tend to view commercial logging as the sole forest product or economic activity with economic value and feel that to derive economic benefit from the sector, it must be through involvement in commercial logging. Government and local authorities need to provide sustained and consistent leadership to develop NTFP value chains. The economic model adopted by the FDA has been questioned. It is perceived to focus solely on large commercial operators, at the expense of the development of small and medium enterprises such as pit-sawyers, charcoal producers and artisanal miners. For example, although pit-sawing has the potential to alleviate poverty among forest communities, the industry has not received any formal recognition and is not regulated by the FDA. The lack of official regulation has meant that pit-sawyers work under unpredictable and financially insecure conditions (Colee 2009).
- The potential for environmental services, including water, carbon, and tourism, in Liberia is not fully understood. Shortly after the data collection for the SEA, there was increased interest in Liberia in tapping into potential carbon payments for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). When conducting the SEA, there was inadequate data or capacity to estimate the potential carbon stock in Liberia or a possible deforestation baseline. Development

partners have been investing in increasing capacity and estimating carbon potential for Liberia's forests as part of Liberia's engagement in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

Three particular issues can be drawn from these points (and from the preceding analysis in this document), all of which relate to undervaluation of forest economic benefits and financial opportunities.

First, undervaluation means that forest management decisions would be in favor of commercial forest logging operations and the stakeholder groups that stand to benefit most from these. While there are substantial revenues to be gained from commercial forestry, which is also likely to form a key strategy in future economic development for Liberia and of the forest sector, there are also opportunity costs in terms of broader environmental and livelihood benefits foregone. These broader values need to be factored into decision making. In particular, the trade-offs between short-term financial gains, which accrue to a relatively small sector of the population, need to be balanced against longer-term social and public benefits, which are spread throughout the population and economic sectors.

Second, undervaluation means that potential financing opportunities and mechanisms for capturing broader forest benefits may be missed. In addition to fines, penalties, royalties, stumpage fees, concession fees, land rent, and associated timber charges, there may be great potential to generate funds for the FDA (and for other forest managers) if there is a recognition of the broader benefits forests provide within and outside Liberia. Possible funding sources include payments for environmental services, carbon finance, biodiversity markets, and ecotourism. While these may not be competitive with commercial logging revenues in high-potential timber areas, they provide an untapped opportunity for the FDA to diversify their revenue base from forest conservation land uses. Better appreciation of the full range of forest benefits allows for a more comprehensive identification of the range of markets and enterprise opportunities associated with noncommercial logging and NTFP utilization.

Third, not only does undervaluation result in distorted economic and investment planning; it also means that the full gamut of forest values are weakly represented in the policy, market, and price instruments that have been set in place to regulate and influence economic activity in Liberia. Land and resource taxes and user fees do not, for example, account for these broader social and environmental values. A variety

of credit, tax, and investment incentives are targeted at activities in other sectors, while few are available for sustainable forest-based enterprises. In some cases, subsidies and other price controls may actually serve as perverse incentives that encourage people to use forest land and resources unsustainably.

Tackling these challenges requires better data on forest values as well as concerted efforts to ensure that the resulting information is actually factored into public and private-sector budget resource allocations, taxes, and pricing. There is also a need to make a strong economic and business case for the sustainable use and management of forest lands and resources—to government, the private sector, and local communities. The financial benefits of commercial forestry are relatively easy to quantify and incorporate into economic planning and decision making, because they are values which are expressed readily in the market. Nonmarket and noncommercial forest values are far harder to express in monetary terms. A range of methods has, however, been developed over recent years to better express the total economic value of forests, and in many countries it is beginning to be used in the context of economic, development, and business planning.

Diverging estimates regarding resource base and resource value

During the past year, a study suggested that forested area in Liberia may be overestimated. The FDA's Annual Report 2007 estimated the total forested area to cover 59.9 percent of the land, while the R-Pin study carried out in 2008 estimated the forested area to cover 45 percent of the land (GoL 2008a). Shearman (2009) asserts that these figures are misleading. In its assessment, the FDA included three forest classes (agricultural degraded forest, open dense forest, and closed dense forest) and forests contained in an agricultural class (i.e., mixed agricultural and forest areas), and yet this class encloses populated regions under continuous agricultural rotations. According to Shearman, the R-Pin and most documents and literature include three forest classes; this suggests that the country is 45 percent forested, but this is open to debate because this class often contains little forests and a lot of people. While neither report has been validated, if the figures indeed are questionable, there are several implications for forest management.

Forestry production is projected to grow substantially over the next six years from 30,000 cubic meters (m³) to more than 1,300,000 m³. These figures have been questioned

and are said to be overestimated. According to Shearman (2009), although the FDA has been predicting significant revenue from the export of logs for a number of years, the revenue has not been realized. This failure could be due to the fact that the estimates are based on inflated area and volume data. There is a need for estimates to be accurate given the fact that the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008) has used these projections to support 5–6 percent of activities between 2008 and 2009, and that this will rise to 9 percent between 2010 and 2011.

TABLE 5: Projected and Actual Revenue from Export of Logs and Timber from FMCs

SOURCE	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Poverty Reduction Strategy	526,000	24,283,000	36,686,000	46,110,000
FDA 2007 Annual Report	1,771,015	16,194,915	26,194,915	35,399,434
FDA 2008			11,352,886	
Actual	0	0	?	?

Source: Shearman (2009).

Inadequate intersectoral coordination

The board of FDA is made up of a mix of ministries, and there are several government agencies operating in the local communities—for example, the MLME, MIA, Liberia Marketing Agency (LMA), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), MoF, Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Ministry of Education (MoE), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Despite this structure, there does not seem to be any coordination amongst these organizations. As each sectoral ministry struggles to meet its own mandate, intersectoral coordination has been a low priority. In an attempt to increase coordination in different ministries, the FDA has set up several cross-sectoral working groups. These include the Protected Areas Working Group, the Community Forestry Working Group, and the Carbon Working Group. These working groups have created new partnerships to assist the FDA in achieving its mandate, but there is room for improvement.

Currently, there is virtually no land use planning. Accordingly, rural areas have numerous conflicting land use issues relating to agroindustrial plantations; mining concessions; location of mineral deposits; and lack of information on ancestral land, tribal lands, and other land claims (DAI 2008). These are all matters of concern. For example, the overlap between the location of mining deposits and protected areas and forest reserves suggests that potential exploitation of mineral deposits in these areas could significantly affect biodiversity and forest cover. Forest destruction in these areas would be

locally extensive and permanent (DAI 2008). The impacts would stem from siltation of dams and rivers, indiscriminate deforestation, additional degradation of lands from settlement patterns of miners, ground and surface water pollution, dust pollution, habitat fragmentation, and increased bush meat consumption.

Coordination with agriculture is also becoming increasingly important, given the growing government interest in promoting agroindustrial investments. Large-scale agroindustry is not new to Liberia. Liberia had large areas consisting of rubber plantations and 27,000 ha of industrial palm plantations owned by parastatals and the private sector (DAI 2008). Tree crops are an important component of the Liberian economy, accounting for 22 percent of GDP in 2005, with the rubber industry alone employing 18,500 workers and accounting for 90 percent of total exports (DAI 2008). In 2008 the MoA was negotiating new leases for the palm plantations. The government is also interested in the potential introduction of oil palm biofuels plantations. For example, Equatorial Biofuels has expressed interest in obtaining 500,000 ha of land in River Gee County for biofuels plantations. This area falls within the proposed protected area in Grebo National Forest (DAI 2008).

A number of proposals have been discussed with the MoA, but it is unclear how Liberia's forest policy and management would deal with these proposals. There also is limited clarity on how the MoA would coordinate with the FDA if plantation establishment were to involve the clearing of existing forest lands.

Another element of coordination that requires FDA involvement is the improved coordination among donors and development partners. Coordination between various donors and development agencies can be improved, a fact that has been recognized by the key donor coordination body within the forest sector: the Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI). LFI had discussions on reformulating its role after the lifting of the UN sanctions and on how to define new mechanism of cooperation and coordination. The need for improved coordination can be seen from the multiple demands made on FDA staff. The pace of reform has been high, and multiple new initiatives have been introduced since the elections.

Development partner engagement in the sector has introduced several new concepts to FDA. While each of them is important, they have created extraordinary demands on the technical staff within the FDA. New issues introduced include chain of custody, a new management and financial tracking system within the FDA, the new CRL, and discussions and

initiatives relating to carbon financing mechanisms including REDD. Technical staff within the FDA has noted that there needs to be more links between these initiatives and the overall strategic plan of the FDA, to allow them to more easily incorporate these initiatives in their daily work plans.

Community rights

Traditionally, forests in Liberia have been an integral part of community property with local communities owning them in both a territorial and mystical sense. The Forest Act of 2000, however, declared forests and land the property of the Republic. This forestry law removed the natural rights of jurisdiction and benefit from the forests by the local people and this become further entrenched in the NFRL. Although the NFRL proclaims its intention to protect and support community forest rights by granting them rights to forests, giving them ownership to unspecified forest resources, and consulting them in decision making, there is no legal obligation in the law that they must be involved.

Prior to the formulation of the CRL, the provisions in the NFRL do not genuinely give rights to forest resources to the local communities or empower them as far as forest management and planning is concerned. The NFRL is clear on the fact that people have no say as to whether or not their forest lands are logged. Their consent to the lease of their lands (for up to 35 years) for logging or salvage is not required, although they may protest and seek compensation if their crops and houses are damaged (Wily 2007b). Although the local people could benefit from these contracts, they have no control over who gets them or what they do. The communities may be consulted, but may not be heard, and may receive only one-third of the rent the government charges through leasing out their lands.

Prior to the drafting of the CRL, the resentment of land losses at the hands of government was growing, especially as many realized that the promised reforms mean only returning to communities one-third of the ground rent that the government earns by leasing out their lands to logging concessions. More and more communities are demanding to be included in decisions affecting the status of the area or its use by forest harvesters or miners. The absence of customary tenure security including respect for the natural rights of ownership is a major impediment to good governance of the sector (Wily 2007a).

Benefit sharing

The NFRL states that communities will receive ground rent to be paid by Permit Holders (s.14.2.e.ii). In Chapter 14 of the law, it is stated that government shall allocate and distribute fees collected annually as follows:

- (i) Ten percent of stumpage fees to support operational costs for the Protected Forest Areas Network established by Chapter 9 of this Law
- (ii) Thirty percent of land rental fees to communities entitled to benefit sharing under Forest Resources Licenses; 30 percent of land rental fees to Counties; and 40 percent of land rental fees to the Ministry of Finance to hold as part of the general revenues of the Republic in accordance with Section 7 of the Reform Tax Code
- (iii) Ten percent of Forest Product fees to support operational costs for the Protected Forest Areas Network established by Chapter 9 of this Law

The proposed allocations of the land rental to the communities and the delivery mechanism, however, are highly discretionary. In the context of fiscal revenues, land rental fees are likely to be small in comparison to the more profitable stumpage fees. It is therefore unlikely to contribute to meaningful social change (see Box 1).

FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The case studies provided information on the context in which key issues were currently being addressed and looked at the practical implication of possible alternatives identified during the SEA. This was done to help define specific actions needed for implementing the recommended approach while minimizing negative potential priority environmental and social concerns and impacts associated with the 3Cs. The following section presents the findings from the three case studies.¹⁵

CASE STUDY SITE 1: Butter Hill, Cape Mount County

Grand Cape Mount is a county in the northwestern portion of Liberia. It is one of the 15 counties that comprise the first level of administrative division in the nation. The county has five districts, with Robertsport serving as the capital of the county. The last census indicated that the population of the county is 129,055, making it the eighth most populous county in Liberia.

¹⁵ For more details regarding the case studies, see Annex 3.

BOX 1: ESTIMATES OF LAND RENTAL AND STUMPAGE

1. Land rental is set at an annual area fee of US\$1.25 for every hectare of land subject to a Timber Sales Contract and US\$2.50 for every hectare of land subject to a Forest Management Concession. Land rental would appear to apply to the whole area of a concession.
2. The total area available for Forest Management Contracts, as of 2011, is estimated in the present FDA strategy to be 2,300,000 ha, together with 36,000 ha for Timber Sales Contracts.
3. Stumpage is calculated on the basis of the volume and value of the individual tree being felled, and is set at 10 percent of the market FOB price for category A (high value) species, 5 percent for category B species, and 2.5 percent for category C species.
4. The projected economic performance of the sector indicates log production at 858,000 m³ per year, leading to annual tax revenue (land rental and stumpage), nationally, of \$2,902,000 and \$9,582,100, respectively. With a 40-year felling cycle, this suggests log production at approximately 15 m³ per hectare of coupe.
5. Assuming a concession area of 100,000 ha in the locality of a rural population, and an average harvest level of category A species of 15 m³ per hectare, at an average \$100 per m³, then the annual tax accruing would be:
 - a. Land rental = \$125,000 to \$250,000
 - b. Stumpage = \$475,000
6. Thus, if the riparian population receives only the land rental (as per the 2006 law), the sum received would be \$37,500 to \$75,000 per 100,000 ha (i.e., 30 percent of \$125,000 to 30 percent of \$250,000). If, however, the community share was 30 percent of both land rental and stumpage, the total annual community component from this single concession would be (\$37,500 + \$142,500 - \$75,000 + \$142,500) = \$180,000 to \$217,500
7. A lower harvest level is perhaps more realistic, given the variable productivity of the forest (say, one-third of the projected harvest, at 5 m³ per hectare). This would give annual taxes accruing to this 100,000 ha concession as:
 - a. Land rental = \$125,000 to \$250,000
 - b. Stumpage = \$125,000

Thus, in this hypothetical scenario, the community share of the land rental would be \$37,500 to \$75,000. If stumpage was also attributed at 30 percent, this would contribute a further \$37,500.

Source: Adapted by author from Brown (2008).

Butter Hill is situated next to Timber Sale Contract Areas A-9 (in Gola Konneh District, Kposo and Mannah Chiefdoms) and A-10 (in Porkpa District, Kposo Clan, Grand Cape Mount County). In the area, subsistence agriculture and shifting cultivation are common. The area also has high bush meat hunting activities close to the proposed Gola Nature Reserve and very high mining activity.¹⁶ There are local traditional by-laws that prohibit the hunting of some animal species. The protected animals include lions, chimpanzees, elephants, leopards, and crocodiles, as well as pregnant animals.

The economic activities that are undertaken in the community include gold mining (very intensive alluvial mining, involving citizens of neighboring countries including Sierra Leone,

Guinea, and Mali), hunting, petty trading, farming, fishing, firewood collection, and collection of building materials (e.g. poles and thatch). There are abandoned logs and pit-sawn lumber near Camp Israel, about nine hours' walk through the forest from Butter Hill. The distance limits utilization of these products by the community. However, some of the lumber is collected for domestic use, including the fabrication of doors and windows of houses.

Community engagement in forest management and community capacity

The case study revealed that the communities want to be involved in forest management. They complained that there were no consultations with the community regarding logging or gold mining that was undertaken in the area in the past. The stakeholders in the community were of the opinion that there should be full consultation of the community before the issuance of any mining or logging license or permit.

¹⁶ Anecdotal accounts from some members of the SEA team suggest there is mining in the area. However, it should be noted that this is not captured in the Justification Documents for TSC Areas A-9 and A-10.

Another complaint was the fact that the infrastructures built by the logging firms—such as bridges and culverts—were not durable and, hence, the benefits were not sustainable.

The general view was that conservation and commercial forestry can be undertaken with the involvement of the community. They feel that they should be involved in all decisions made about the forests in their community, including the determination of conservation areas and the setting up of a committee for mediation with timber firms that may be operating in the area.

All community members interviewed acknowledged that there have been changes in the weather pattern. Community members asserted that the rainy and dry seasons are no longer predictable. The community members believe that these changes in weather patterns are caused by deforestation, the world coming to an end, and “white people’s space exploration.” In general, the local people did not seem to understand carbon financing. They said that they would not accept payments not to use the forests, because they need to use the forests to support their livelihood.

Community Forest Development Committees (CFDCs)

A CFDC has been formed in the area in connection with the TSC in the locality. However, some dissatisfaction was expressed with the manner in which representatives for Butter Hill were selected. An FDA team was said to have been in the area to organize the election of the CFDC members. The latter team provided a list of five towns (three from Porkpa District, including Butter Hill, and two from Golakonneh District) that were expected to provide three representatives each for the election of the five executives of the CFDC on the following day at a nearby town (Benduma). Due to the short notice given by the FDA Team, some satellite towns of Butter Hill were not consulted. In haste, the three representatives were appointed at a meeting at Butter Hill. It was learned that the elders and chiefs present upheld the process despite dissent from some of community members present. Some members of the community are still dissatisfied with the disenfranchisement of Butter Hill’s satellite villages.

The FDA team indicated to the community that the town chiefs and elders were disqualified to stand for elections. As a result, the role of the chiefs and elders in the CFDC is unclear to the community. The community opposed the election of the CFDC chairman, whom they claimed is a government employee. It was eventually learned that the CFDC chairman is not a government employee.

A lesson that can be learnt from the above is that providing adequate time to the communities is important for the communities to understand, trust and engage in the process and subscribe to the outcome (i.e., election of their representatives).

Intersectoral coordination

With regards to mining, there are two teams that are regulating affairs on the ground. There is a management team that works on behalf of the community to ensure that the artisanal miners pay the agreed share of Butter Hill of the proceeds of the mining activities. The other is the authority team, which issues permits to prospective artisanal miners to facilitate the issuance of mining licenses by the MLME. There is no similar arrangement set up for logging.

The community indicated that the execution of mining and logging activities in the same place at the same time will create serious environmental impacts and conflicts. Hence, they will not tolerate such overlapping activities in their forests. They prefer that such activities be undertaken in different areas and times. The potential risks of carrying out these activities simultaneously are many and include the inability to farm in the mined areas, water pollution, and the creation of mining pits, which are dangerous for humans and vehicular traffic.

Land ownership

In the case study area, land can either be owned in the community by statutory (i.e., deeds) or traditional means. In the latter case, the community land has been divided among families and handed down from generation to generation within a given family. Natural features and or soap trees are used to mark the boundaries of the land. The control of access to forest land is through the town chief, elders, and occupants of the land in question.

Appropriate forest land use

There are different types of land designations in this village. For example, there is communal forest in the area.¹⁷ The actual size of communal forest, however, is not known. About half of the community forest is earmarked for farming, while the other half is set aside for hunting and the exploitation of NTFPs. In addition to communal forests, there is private land owned by individuals who have deeds or tribal certificates. In the past, land disputes were resolved using traditional dis-

¹⁷ In the NFRL, this is defined as an area set aside by statute or regulation for the sustainable use of forest products by local communities or tribes on a noncommercial basis.

pute resolution systems. Recently, there have been no land disputes.

There were diverging views within the community regarding the appropriateness of replacing forests with other crops. The youth and the women would not accept the clearing of large portions of the community forests for the purposes of establishing plantations of, say, rubber or firewood species. They wanted to protect the indigenous species for the current and future generations. In contrast, the elders were open to such a venture, not wanting to forestall development in the area stemming from the potential revenue and benefits. Their position and decision were dependent on negotiations with the interested party.

There are sacred bushes for both women and men in the community. No activities are allowed in these bushes. Although the youth and the women did not feel there was a need for the expansion of such bushes, the elders would prefer to expand the sacred bushes as the population of the community increases.

Economic activities and forest value

The major NTFPs used in the community include bush meat, fish, rattan, bitter root cane, bitter cola, thatch, poles, plant medicine, bamboo, honey, fruits, nuts, and water. All NTFPs are considered to be very important for the livelihoods of the members of the community. The monetary value of these uses, however, was not known. While this information is currently not available, it can readily be estimated. For example, in the community, rattan is mostly used instead of nails to hold roof rafters together. An equivalent market value of using rattan for a typical three-bedroom house in the community was about L\$1,500 or 30 packets of nails (in 2008).

The commercial forest activities that the community would like to be involved in include commercialization of NTFPs (e.g., rattan, medicinal plants, bitter root canes), commercial agriculture, chain sawing, and working with logging companies.

Knowledge of forestry laws

In general, the communities are not very well informed about the new laws. Although some members of the community are aware of the NFRL, they could not differentiate it from the CRL. The women are aware of the individual Cs, but not the concept of the 3Cs. The elders and youth, on the other hand, have not heard about this concept.

The community is aware of the 30 percent of land rental—US\$1/m³—benefits from logging and the responsibility for

the management of such funds by the community. In addition to this, the community's expectations from the mining and logging companies that may operate in their area include the provision of schools, health facilities, good roads, concrete bridges, recreation and training facilities, jobs, microcredits, water and sanitation, and market buildings. The community also hopes that forest harvesting activities will lead to mobile phone service in the area.

CASE STUDY SITE 2: Kpayaquelleh, Lofa County

Lofa County is found in the northern most portion of the country and is one of the counties that make up the administrative division of the country. It has six districts with Voinjama serving as its capital. The total area of the county is 9,928 km² and has a population of 270,114, making it the fourth most populous county in Liberia. In 2008, the government through FDA awarded three prequalified companies each a FMC; one of these falls in Lofa County.

Kpayaquelleh falls within Forest Management Contract Area A. Most of the people in the area are subsistence farmers practicing shifting cultivation. The most common crops grown are rice, cassava, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, pineapples, and peanuts. Several activities take place in the forests, including mining, pit-sawing, hunting, and worshipping in the sacred bushes. By law local people are not allowed to hunt leopards, elephants, bush cows, lions, baboons, hippos, and antelopes. This is because, once wounded, these animals can become a danger to the community. A few NGOs such as CRS (KDRO), Concern, the Red Cross, and DEN-L operate in the area and support farming activities by providing seeds and farm tools.

The land in the area is owned by the Gbarlin clan, which the Kpayaquelleh Town is part of. The access to the forest land is controlled by the Gbarlin Resources Development Committee (GRDC). Traditionally, land was divided among the families in the community and has been handed down from generation to generation within the families concerned. "New entrants" pass through the community landlord. The landlord in turn meets the chief, who subsequently consults with the community to confirm that the land in question is not occupied.

Community members, especially the women and elders, have had limited interaction with the FDA. The youth and elders, though not the women, are aware of the new NFRL and the 3Cs concept. While information sharing has taken place and documents have been shared with community

members, they have not had the opportunity to become fully informed.

Logging and mining

Five logging companies operated in the area in the past: Gateway, KLC, American Woods, Forest Hill Corporation, and Vanja. Only the chiefs were on the payroll of the logging companies, and the communities generally did not benefit from the logging activities. There were also few other benefits—for example, the bridges on the logging roads which were constructed from logs and did not last very long.

With regard to other extractive uses of resources, there has been no mining in the area in the past. Currently there is some prospecting for gold. The community proposed that before any prospecting or mining license is issued, a community committee must be consulted. Miners should also establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each community before mining, and prospecting should not last for more than three months.

The local people were very concerned about the effects of logging and mining activities in the same place. They asserted that they did not want this to happen in their community, since destruction of land and conflicts can result.

There are differing perspectives regarding the impact of logging and farming on forest resources. For example, the women in the communities held the view that farming and logging were causing a decline in forests and trees in their communities. They explained that while previously they would collect Niangon (*heritiera utilis*) seeds around the town compound, it was now difficult to find them and they had to walk longer distances to get them. The youth and elders, on the other hand, reported that there were plenty of Niangon in the forests.

There were also differing views about the length of time needed to fallow the land. While the women felt that using 8-year fallow periods for shifting cultivation would be appropriate, the youth suggested that tree crops such as rubber and cocoa should be planted and that the land should be fallowed for 10–15 years. Although the elders felt that fallowing was important, they did not specify how long the fallow period should be.

Institutional arrangements for land and forest management

There are multiple institutional arrangements for addressing land and resource issues, each working at different levels and having different degrees of effectiveness. For example,

there is a community forest for the town. Although the youth are aware of its extent and boundaries, the women and elders were not so sure about its extent. The private lands in the area are acquired either traditionally through inheritance or by obtaining tribal certificates. A person wanting to acquire land in the area has to go through a team responsible for apportioning land. This team is composed of landlords, chiefs, and elders.

Land disputes in the area are mostly settled traditionally. The youth gave several examples of disputes in the area and the stages at which they are as far as settlement is concerned. For example, while a dispute between two individuals from Kpetehyea and Kpayaquelleh was settled traditionally, a pit-sawing dispute between Kpayaquelleh and Ganglota has not been totally resolved because Kpayaquelleh has not yet received its part of the past benefits from pit-sawing. There is also an existing dispute between the Gbarlin clan and Gbarpolu County over part of the land around the Via River. This dispute has been taken to the Caucus of Lofa County, and a complaint has been lodged with the House of Representatives.

Involvement of the community in conservation and commercial forestry

All groups interviewed were of the opinion that conservation and commercial forestry should be undertaken with the involvement of the community. The community's understanding of the term "community forestry management" is the management of forests by local or traditional bylaws and their effective enforcement. In connection with the expected roles of the community in community forest management, the youth suggested the determination of conservation areas and the setting up of a committee for mediation with timber firms that may be operating in the area. The elders proposed the provision of guards for the protection of the forest as well as trained manpower for employment in the forestry activities. The women would participate by ensuring compliance with any agreement between the community and prospective timber firms.

Different uses of forest lands and forest products

It was acknowledged that there has been pit-sawing in the Kpayaquelleh area in the past. This has been stopped as a result of bad road conditions and no benefits to community. A previous District Commissioner did not give Kpayaquelleh their part of their share of the tolls that he collected. Currently pit-sawing is undertaken under community-controlled conditions for housing and community development projects. Fuel is supplied to those with pit-sawing skills in the community

to produce for the community or individuals. Pit-sawing is being done on private land with agreements between the pit-sawyers and the land owners.

There are NTFPs in the area which were ranked by the community in the following manner: (1) medicinal plants: Kojolobo (malaria), Water bark (malaria), ganagana (skin rashes), Bushia—Nauclea spp (bowel disorders, constipation), and tree parts (bark, leaves, roots); (2) food: walnuts, locusts, yams, bitter cola, palm, wild/bush pepper, bush meat, water, country spices, fish, rattan, palm wine, honey, bitter roots, water ropes, Aframomium (pepper), and bamboo worms; (3) minerals: gold and diamonds; and (4) construction material: poles, ropes, thatch, and bamboo. There was limited knowledge regarding the potential economic value of these products.

It was reported that there are many abandoned logs still lying in the forest. However, the community lacks the necessary capacity and resources to utilize them. The distance to the abandoned logs and the bad conditions of the roads and bridges leading to them are also hindrances.

The feedback from the community with regard to the replacement of forests with biofuels was mixed. The women were in favor, as it will open up job opportunities. The youth indicated that this will depend on the contents of the MoU signed with the interested firms concerned, while the elders were of the opinion that it will not be acceptable until negotiations with the government confirm that there will be positive benefits to the community.

The community members acknowledged that there have been changes in the local climate during the past few years. According to the women, the rainy and dry seasons have swapped places, and the cause was beyond their control. The youth and elders stated that the water sources are getting dry and the rain storms are heavier; the youth attributed the change to logging without replanting and the elders attributed it to the cutting of the big trees.

There were differing perspectives regarding obtaining payments for conserving part or all of their forest. Women and elders were not in favor of such activities, as they wanted future generations to have access to the forests for livelihoods. The elders felt that the government would stand behind them on this position. The youth were willing to consider a proposal for carbon financing, as it would help conserve forests and enable the government to enforce it.

Forest management contracts, protected areas, and benefits sharing

The elders and the youth in the community knew about the FMC in the area, but the women seemed unaware of its existence. Both the women and elders did not seem to know its boundaries. The elders indicated that the FDA team came and made some lines on ground, but they are not sure whether these are the boundaries of the FMC. Although the women and youth did not believe there was agricultural encroachment in the FMC area, the elders insisted that some farms fall within the boundaries of FMC.

The youth asserted that there are a number of timber species that are not harvested by farmers because of their size and potential economic value. These species can, however, be sold to timber merchants that are willing to pay enough to cover the costs involved in harvesting them, including the costs of crops destroyed in the process of felling.

The youth and elders are aware of revenue sharing due to them from logging concessions; the women, however, are not aware of exactly how much land rent they are supposed to get. In addition, the communities expect the logging activities to result in employment, building of roads, bridges, schools, and health facilities. The youth are skeptical about getting these benefits.

Community Forest Development Committees (CFDCs)

The FDA had passed on to the community a document justifying the need to form CFDCs, but the community had not yet formed this committee. The youth in the community were aware of the importance and roles of this committee, although they had not yet read the justification document. The elders had, however, accepted it as a guide to logging activities in the FMC in the area. The women in the community were not informed about the committee or the document justifying its formation.

CASE STUDY SITE 3: Dulay, Nimba County

Nimba County is found in the north-central portion of Liberia. It is one of the counties comprising the first level of administrative division in Liberia. The county has six districts, with Sanniquellie serving as its capital. The county is the largest county in Liberia, with an area of 11,551 square kilometers. The 2008 census estimated its population to be 468,088, making it the second most populous county in the nation.

Dulay is located in the eastern part of East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR). The people living in this community are small holder farmers of food and cash crops. They mainly

practice shifting cultivation of food crops such as rice, cassava, plantain, and pepper. There are also plantations of cocoa, coffee, oil palm, kola, and rubber. The majority of the land is owned through traditional inheritance of land allocated by the chief and elders to the families in the community. Although there are squatters in the community, checks have been put in place to ensure that they do not take land that is owned by the community. For example, although they can plant food crops on communal land, they cannot plant perennial cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm, and rubber.

The community owns the forest lands, with the elders and chief acting as their custodians on behalf of the community. The access to the forest lands is controlled by the chiefs, the elders, quarter chiefs, or family land owners. There is a community forest in the area, but no figure could be put on its extent. There are no private lands in the area. There is an ongoing land dispute with an adjacent village (Nyantuo) with regard to encroachments. The dispute has not yet been resolved, and it becomes tense when “brushing” time approaches for making new farms.

There is an area earmarked for protection (namely, the ENNR) whose boundary is yet to be demarcated. The community stopped the linecutting when they realized it was encroaching on their farming area. Farming activities did not occur beyond the proposed boundary of ENNR this year, as the boundary dispute with the FDA has not been resolved. There is no agreement with respect to the area earmarked for logging. The area in question falls within the Zor clan’s land, which Dulay and the adjacent towns share.

NTFPs in the Dulay area are palm wine, palm nuts, rattan, bitter cola, thatch, round poles, ropes, honey, bamboo, bush pepper, water, fish, meat, fruits, and raffia palm fronds. The community regards these as very valuable, as they provide construction materials, food, and medicine that support the livelihoods of the community. Artisanal diamond mining occurs in the area.

There are abandoned logs in the forests. Unfortunately, the community has failed to utilize them. Any attempt to collect and use the logs before the civil war was thwarted by the company (MGC), using the permit from the government as cover. During the war, no attempts were made to collect the logs.

It has been difficult to determine boundaries that will be necessary, not only for the allocation and operation of FMC and TSC concessions, but also for the proposed expanded Protected Areas Network. The area includes land earmarked

for inclusion in the ENNR, but both the Zor and the Gba communities use land in and around the Nimba Reserve. In February 2008, when an FDA team arrived to demarcate the border of the protected area, the communities stopped the linecutting when they realized it was encroaching on their farming area.

Benefit sharing

Although logging has been taking place in this community, it has not benefited the local people. Many logging companies have failed to meet the promises they made to the local people. Currently, there is no mining taking place in the community, although prospecting for minerals has been carried out in the area in the last few years. The local people feel they should be consulted about activities taking place in the forests in their communities. They would especially like to have representatives of the communities monitoring any mining activities that take place in the area. The expectations of the community from future mining activities in the area include the provision of social amenities and equitable sharing of revenue from the mining activities.

The community wants to benefit from logging activities taking place in their area. They expect the logging companies operating in their area to provide them with safe drinking water, good roads, health facilities, and schools.

As a result of the bad conditions of the roads in the area, there is no commercial pit-sawing. Pit-sawing is undertaken in the area for local use only, and access to trees for such purposes is regulated by the elders, the chief, and the affected landowners.

The community members would also like to be involved in commercial forest activities such as the development and marketing of NTFPs including rattans, raffia palm, cane for furniture making, pit-sawing to provide lumber for local use, and production of climbing rope for harvesting palm nuts.

Environmental impact of mining and logging activities

The community was against logging and mining activities taking place in the same place at the same time. They reasoned that it will create environmental problems, conflicts, and pose danger to life and property.

The communities reported a need to replant areas that have been cleared by logging companies. Suggestions for reforestation included allowing the bush to lie fallow to regenerate naturally, as well as replanting trees to replace those that had been cut. The community provided the local Mano name *koneh* for the only plant species that was confirmed

to be declining in numbers. This species was used to poison arrows in the past. The loss is attributed to deforestation through farming and logging activities.

There are sacred bushes for both men and women in the forest that the community uses. But surprisingly, there has been encroachment on these bushes in the recent past. They would like these bushes to be expanded and protected from activities such as mining, logging, hunting, and farming by establishing boundaries around them.

Knowledge of forestry laws and intersectoral cooperation

The FDA has gone to the community with the aim of increasing awareness of protected area management for the forests in the area. The FDA has informed the community about the forest law for the community. FDA also has talked to the local people about the need to respect forest boundaries and resist farming or hunting in the protected areas. Despite this, there is tension between the local people and the FDA because of some promises that the FDA failed to keep, such as building the headquarters of the ENNR in the area. The youth and the elders were aware of the NFRL and the 3Cs, but the women were not.

The government agencies that are operating in the Dulay area include the FDA, MoE, MoJ, MoA, MIA, and MoF. No meeting or coordination involving any group of these has been observed in the area. Nevertheless, no conflict has been noted between any of them.

Community engagement in forest activities

In general, the local people want to be involved in conservation and commercial forestry. They suggested that they could play a meaningful role in the monitoring and management of conservation and commercial forestry activities.

The community does not want any biofuel plantations to be established in the area because of inadequate land for farming in the area. They feel that once land is set aside for biofuel plantations, they will not have adequate land to plant needed food crops.

The community confirmed changes in the climate in the area during the recent past. The timing of the rainy and dry seasons has not been as predictable it used to be. They attribute such abnormality to deforestation as a result of logging and farming. The youths and elders said community would not agree to any payment to the community for not using part of its forest. The women, on the other hand, would prefer to

make their decision after the community's negotiations with the interested party.

Commonalities among case studies

There were some notable commonalities among the case studies that need to inform the institutional and capacity adjustments to mainstream the priority social and environmental considerations. First, the communities studied have already identified community forest areas. They also have arranged structures to deal with resource management issues (e.g., collection of alluvial mining "fees," prohibition of pit-sawing due to inequitable sharing of toll fees collected). Communities are skeptical about being paid not to use "their" forests (relevant, for example, to potential carbon projects). All communities rejected the idea of mining and forestry in the same area.

A common understanding still needs to be developed for interaction between government and community structures (such as allocation of adequate time for the selection of community representatives to be presented for election to the offices of the CFDCs, ensuring the "spread" of the information in the justification documents of the timber concessions to all sectors of the affected communities). Finally, communities will need to develop new skills in relation to the CRL and a better understanding of the 3C policy

PRIORITY SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The SEA process identified numerous social and environmental considerations that were then prioritized.¹⁸ The outcome was six key social and environmental considerations. It should be noted that many of the issues presented here cut across each of the 3Cs and would thus affect the implementation not only of a segment of the forest policy, but also the integration of the 3Cs themselves. This section provides a brief overview of these issues.

Priority environmental issues

The three key environmental issues that this SEA identified are as follows:

1. *Overlapping land uses:* There is an overlap between mining areas (areas with mineral deposits) and large parts of the protected area/forest reserve network (DAI 2008). The

¹⁸ For more details regarding the prioritization process and its outcomes please see Annex 2.

potential exploitation of these mineral deposits could significantly affect biodiversity and forest cover. The forest degradation could be locally extensive and permanent. The common impacts from mining stem from indiscriminant removal of vegetation, which in turn alters the regeneration potential of forests and the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. Other impacts of concern include habitat fragmentation and increased bush meat consumption, siltation of dams and rivers, degradation of lands from settlement patterns of miners, and ground and surface water pollution (e.g., acidic mine drainage and high metal concentrations in rivers, resulting in an impoverished aquatic environment (Miranda et al. 2003).

If these activities occur where there is also illegal or quasi-illegal extraction of timber, the environmental impact will be compounded, and the potential cumulative environmental impact can be significant. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of artisanal mining cannot be overlooked. Recent estimates suggest that there are 10,000 artisanal miners, of which 6,000 were in SAPO.

2. Limited reforestation/restoration of logged areas: The Forest Policy makes provisions for reforestation and plantation development. Reforestation can provide a new source of wood for the processing industry and other forest products (e.g., fuel, building poles, and non-wood forest products). In areas degraded by unsustainable logging, reforestation or forest restoration can reduce the pressure on natural forests and provide new opportunities for income generation by expanding the area of forest plantations. There has been limited reforestation, and the success of public sector tree planting has been limited due to poor site-species selection and inadequate management, resulting in poor yields and low economic returns.

3. Habitat destruction and species displacement, disturbance, or reduction: Liberia is home to two of the three remaining large blocks of Upper Guinean Rainforest in West Africa, equivalent to 42–43 percent of this forest type. These biologically rich forests are home to approximately 240 timber species, 2,000 species of flowering plants, 125 mammal species, 590 bird species, 74 reptile and amphibian species, and over 1,000 insect species.

There are numerous threats to habitat and biodiversity. The threats that are related to forest activities include shifting cultivation, poaching and hunting of bush meat, unregulated timber extraction (including from artisanal logging), firewood gathering, charcoal production, and human settlements. The latter is due partly to the unclear land tenure system and

limited land use feasibility studies. Logging and road infrastructure also have contributed to forest fragmentation.

Shifting cultivation methods in upland areas used for rice growing fields can also be a threat. Recently there have been large areas subject to capital investments, and associated with some of these is a mechanized approach to “slash and burn” (DAI 2008). Shifting to mechanized cultivation is of concern because it often results in the removal of parent trees, reducing the potential for regeneration. However, the low population density of Liberia and the fact that only 6 percent of the land is used for agriculture suggests that currently the problems related to shifting cultivation may not be severe.

In contrast, unregulated logging, primarily artisanal logging, is a serious cause of forest degradation. In Liberia, artisanal logging entails groups of timber harvesters with chainsaws operating in forests with easy road access. The sawn planks are moved to the roadside for collection by trucks owned or rented by timber merchants. In September 2007 a joint FDA-UNMIL forest patrol program set up around national forests in three counties found a total of 39 chainsaws and 114 operators producing on average about 400 planks per week. In addition to habitat loss and forest degradation, artisanal logging results in loss of volume and revenue.

Currently, data are lacking to fully estimate the extent of impact, and there is no land use planning.

Priority social issues

The three key social issues identified through this SEA are briefly described below:

1. Corruption and lack of accountability associated with logging operations: Logging operations are meant to provide social and economic benefits beyond just revenue for timber. One of the core regulations associated with the commercial component of the Forest Reform Law regards social agreements. Despite the regulatory provisions, community benefits from forest concessions are often captured by the elite or not transferred to communities when there is corruption among the logging operators and there is no mechanism to ensure accountability. Leadership also is often weak at the community level, limiting the effectiveness with which communities can negotiate with logging companies.

2. Community forest ownership and entitlement: One of the main issues raised by local communities is their marginalization from forest management. Given the increased awareness of the debate surrounding land ownership and

a growing political activism, forest communities are claiming rights and objecting to what they see as top-down approaches from the government and FDA. This social concern encompasses issues regarding meaningful participation in forest management, transfer of benefits to the community, and development of technical capacity at the local level to implement community forestry.

3. Social impact of expansion of the protected areas network: The government has committed to establishing a biologically representative network of protected areas covering at least 30 percent of the existing forest area. Depending on the process undertaken for the expansion of a protected-areas network, there is the potential for negative social impacts such as loss of access to forest land and livelihoods. This issue emerges from the inadequate attention given to providing alternative livelihoods for the communities around protected areas.

VALIDATION OF PRIORITY ISSUES THROUGH A NATIONAL SEA WORKSHOP

A national SEA workshop was organized to identify strategic challenges facing the Liberian forest sector (thus validating the work done in the scoping phase and situation assessments of the SEA), determine elements of an action plan for addressing the challenges (including indicators for monitoring), and agreeing on the next steps.

The key results and outcomes included:

Priority issues. Workshop participants were presented with the priority issues that had been identified during the earlier prioritization workshop and were invited to add, delete, or modify these issues. Participants felt that the identified issues were in line with how they saw the priorities, and did not see the need for changes. This allowed the earlier priority issues to be validated by a larger and more diverse set of stakeholders, who then developed action plans for each of the issues (presented below). A list of emerging issues was generated, but the participants felt they did not have enough information or knowledge of these issues to address them in a separate breakout group or to develop an action plan on them.

- Community benefits and community involvement. The need for a clear definition of community benefits and mechanisms for their distribution was articulated, not only for the forest sector, but also for the other natural-resource sectors. This would require not only a determination of the appropriate policies

and administrative mechanisms, but also a thorough dissemination of these new ideas to affected communities.

There was recognition of the good intentions behind the concepts of CFDCs and social agreements. It was noted, however, that implementation would be challenged by a variety of factors. This point was reinforced by the perspective of stakeholders in the workshop who stated that there was a need to “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk”—that is, to implement the existing legislation and policies.

- Continued dialogue on forest issues. Participants welcomed the platform provided by the national workshop as an opportunity for multiple stakeholder and intersectoral discussions. In particular, the community representatives welcomed the opportunity of stating their cases directly to the FDA (and other government agencies) and hearing their responses first hand.

On the basis that the SEA Team was a project-based concept, all stakeholders present at the workshop endorsed the idea that a platform be established along the same lines. The main focus of such a platform would be to create a space where the issues themselves could be discussed, as opposed to focusing on the positions adopted by different stakeholders on those issues. This would help ensure a free flow of information and exchange of views on forest sector processes.

POLICY ACTION MATRIX

The SEA examined key social and environmental considerations associated with the forest sector. The SEA also reviewed the policy, legal, and institutional contexts in which these issues are being addressed and made recommendations on how these issues may be more effectively mainstreamed through possible capacity and institutional adjustments. From the findings from different activities of the SEA, a policy action matrix was developed that will help move from recommendations into practice and enhance the uptake of the SEA findings among decision makers.

The matrix summarizes the key considerations identified in the SEA and clearly indicates the capacity and institutional adjustments and actions required to address the identified priorities in the context of ongoing forest sector reforms—and who should carry out these actions. Due to the complexity of the interrelatedness of the 3Cs of Liberian forest strategy, as well as of the relationship of the forest sector as a whole to other areas of development in Liberia, only key strategic actions and priorities are included in this document. It is important to note that the strategic actions were identified, prioritized, and endorsed by stakeholders at the two-day National SEA workshop. The matrix should be seen as a living matrix and considered a work in progress and should be reviewed and updated whenever necessary.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR IDENTIFIED PRIORITY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION 1: Overlapping Land Uses

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
Develop and implement a land use plan for the site in such a way that no two activities take place on same site at the same time Improve capacity of EPA to handle cumulative impacts when they occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Training • Enforcement of laws and regulations • Monitoring separate activities • Consultative meetings 	Immediately following the identification of the impact until the planning stage	EPA, FDA, MLME, MoA, MPW, MoJ, community, or local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of project-specific Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) noting other developments within the same project footprint • MoU between FDA and MLME (equivalent to that already signed between FDA and EPA) with EPA

LIMITED REFORESTATION/RESTORATION OF LOGGED AREAS

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
Build partnership and capacity to (i) identify potential areas for forest restoration, and (ii) examine economic and technical dimensions of forest restoration in specific areas Put in place institutional mechanisms to provide economic incentives and technical assistance for restoration Build community capacity in replanting of trees and proper management of planted trees	<p>FDA should partner with international entities with comparative advantage in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial mapping of forest areas based on tree cover, population data, and other relevant data layers • Determination of carbon potential • Site selection • Economic analysis to identify feasibility and incentives • Species identification • Provision of technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early March–October 2009 • Ongoing 	FDA, LFI, SDI, Fauna, and Flora International, MoA communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest cover restored • Positive change in forest function(s) noted

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION 3: Habitat Destruction and Species Displacement, Disturbance, or Reduction

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection on biodiversity and habitat extent to fill in data gaps • Dedicate resources in FDA and work with partners to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review land use feasibility assessments 2. Use data to conduct integrated management planning 3. Take into account traditional management techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners with comparative advantage in the areas indicated • Work with partners (e.g., conservation NGO in country) to train teams in <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data collection 2. Planning 3. Conducting outreach campaigns to discourage shifting cultivation and Promote sustainable traditional management practices (e.g., swamp farming) 	Throughout the year	FDA, Line ministries, communities, and relevant stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat restored • Species recovered

STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR IDENTIFIED PRIORITY SOCIAL ISSUES

KEY SOCIAL CONSIDERATION 1: Corruption and Lack of Accountability with Logging Concessions

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	STAKEHOLDERS?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve stakeholder awareness and participation in negotiating social and economic benefits from logging operations • Ensure compliance by all stakeholders with legal instruments • Assessment and analysis of lessons learned from interactions with affected communities after the first round of FMCs and TSCs that have been allocated • Lessons should inform an action plan integrating the 3Cs, with an emphasis on community participation and community outreach by FDA and other partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom to top, iterative approach • Sensitization through awareness raising and outreach • Community should elect a body based on balanced representation • Improve both community participation and community outreach and developing partnerships and modify FDA's role from enforcer to partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to intervention (two years) • Prior to and during implementation (every two years) • Prior to the start of any intervention 	<p>FDA, EPA, LME, NGOs</p> <p>FDA, EPA, LME, NGOs</p> <p>FDA, MIA, MoJ, MoF, Community, private sector, development partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased resources allocated to community forestry department • Achievable action plan prepared for improving community participation and community outreach • Outreach materials developed for the existing commercial operations (i.e., TSCs and FMCs—this would include information on benefit sharing), as well as the conservation areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the capacity of communities to manage the forest resources for themselves (community forests), and to participate in the commercial and conservation activities • Equitable benefit sharing—this could involve identification and formulation of community committees to equitably manage revenue, and formulation of policy and guidelines for distribution and management of revenue • Modify FDA's role from enforcer to partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional leaders inform towns/villages • Formation of committee • Formation of electoral college of representatives of towns/villages forming community • Committee established by consensus or head count • Discussion at village or town level • Opinions/suggestions from towns/villages sent to electoral college • Harmonization of opinions and suggestions from the towns or villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term (one to two years) • Short term (one to two years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional leaders • Village/community members, including representatives from marginalized groups • FDA • CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of electoral college at community level • Minutes of committee meetings • Interviews • Copies of policy or guidelines printed and distributed to affected communities • Evidence of use of policy and guidelines by selected committee (implementation of revenue management according to policy or guidelines established)

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION 3: Community Rights to Forest Land and Entitlement

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective implementation of the CRL passed by Parliament on October 16, 2009 • FDA reviews the CRL to ensure consistency with its policy and strategy, laws and regulations • Simple and appropriate guidelines should be formulated and disseminated on community forestry, as embedded in the 3Cs approach. • Regulation informed eventually by pilots and learning, not necessarily right away • Specific community outreach activities explaining the actual benefits expected to devolve to the communities under the FMCs and TSCs already allocated • FDA develops a clearly articulated strategy on community forest management that outlines how this would related to the other two Cs • The FDA should consider implementing “partnership agreements” for the conservation and community forestry sectors in the same manner as has been contemplated for the commercial C of the 3Cs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonize definition of community within the FDA policy and legislation to be in accordance with the CRL • Through consultation participation and disclosure for proper demarcation • Follow-up on regional consultations and regular forums for communication and exchanges between FDA, communities, and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before any intervention • At regular intervals of 6–12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and all stakeholders • FDA, MIA, MoJ, MoF, Communities, private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and locally acceptable demarcation of boundaries for commercial operations and for conservation activities have been established. • FDA works with stakeholders to develop and implement regulations that may be helpful for community forestry in accordance with its review of the CRL • Minimum level of land disputes • Guidelines and, if needed, regulations produced and disseminated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FDA should undertake an institutional and policy review now that the CRL has been passed. This should include reviews of the National Forest Policy and Implementation Strategy and the National Forest Management Strategy • Improve enforcement capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative meetings with communities and stakeholders • Undertake a legislative and policy review 	Routinely	FDA, LME, MoJ, GC/LC, MIA, SDI, Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRL implemented • Legal and policy review undertaken by FDA and recommendations from the review implemented • Community sensitized to implications of the CRL

ADDITIONAL INSTITUTIONAL AND CAPACITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE

CAPACITY ISSUES

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of forest management committees, FDA, and civil society in forest management, building on community management knowledge • Technical support to update the forestry curricula in Liberia • Technical support for FDA to improve its skills and awareness raising in relation to community participation, interaction, and liaison • Undertake an assessment of the skill set that the CRL and the new forestry regime require of communities • Develop a community outreach program based on the findings of the assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through short- and medium-term courses, workshops, and seminars • Provision of materials • Technical assistance from donors and development partners • Training for FDA staff and university students to include site visits, study tours, and secondment with development partners in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior and during intervention • Ongoing 	Development partners, FDA University of Liberia, the community, private sector NGO, MoE, development partners, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of trained FDA staff focused on community outreach • Improve performances in applying best practices • Improved monitoring and evaluation by community forest management committee in applying best practices • Assessment of needs at community level • Students taught with revised curriculum • Number of FDA secondments to field sites and student internship placements in the field

COORDINATION ACTIONS—AMONG GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoUs between the FDA and MLME and MoA should be entered into to foster a common approach • The FDA should consider establishing an inter-institutional/inter-ministerial structure committee should be set up to ensure effective coordination of forest law and other natural resource legislation. • Within the FDA, additional consideration should be given to the implementation capacities and mandates of each of the 3Cs' departments to avoid overlapping and improve integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular consultative meetings among stakeholders • The Board of the FDA and the Policy Council of the EPA could both report on a regular basis on progress in improving coordination across government in the forest sector 	Immediately and ongoing	GoL, relevant institutions, and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available MoU among stakeholders • Effective ongoing collaboration among relevant GoL stakeholders

COORDINATION AMONG 3Cs

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?	HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?	WHO DOES IT?	INDICATIONS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an awareness on the Liberian forest policy of the 3Cs • Identify various stakeholders of each of the 3Cs • Hold regular roundtable stakeholder meetings to discuss how each of the 3Cs affects or connects with the others • Undertake intersectoral coordination and information sharing. • Develop a comprehensive land use plan for Liberia • Formulation and dissemination of environmental guidelines for forest activities • Formulation of community access rights to forest resources and benefits in light of the CRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops, town hall meetings, radio talk show • Through stakeholders' analysis • Through workshop setting • Through meetings • Assessment of land use capability • Coordination of FDA, MLME, EPA, MoA, communities, and other relevant stakeholders to produce a land use plan assisted by the appropriate specialists • Undertake the EIA for timber and non-timber forest harvesting activities • Production of environmental guidelines for the harvesting of timber and nontimber forest products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly, quarterly or bi-annually for meetings, workshops, and shows • Land use assessment and plan should cover short (one to two years) and medium term (three to five years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDA, partners and community • FDA and partners • DA and partners • FDA and partners Consultant, FDA, MoA, MLME, EPA, CSOs, and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of workshops • Aired radio talk show • Listing of stakeholders meeting minutes • Land use capability maps and report • Copies of land use plan • Report on the EIA for timber and NTFP harvesting • Copies of environmental guidelines for timber and NTFP harvesting • Use of guidelines for timber and NTFP harvesting

NEXT STEPS

The National SEA Workshop validated the priority issues and the action matrix, and it also identified the activities necessary as next steps for completing the SEA process. These are highlighted below:

- **Capacity building programs for FDA, CSO, and communities:** There was a general recognition among participants of the need to increase capacity for all national stakeholders involved in the forest sector. The level of external experts' involvement in all matters suggests limited internal capacity. This underscores the need for capacity building to ensure that stakeholder outlook for the forest sector is an achievable target. This will ensure national ownership of sustainable forest management processes in Liberia and guarantee practicality of achieving this vision.
- **Initiating forest dialogue platform:** A general consensus also existed on the need to establish a platform for stakeholder interaction and information sharing. Participants were unanimous about continuing the forest sector multistakeholder and intersectoral dialogue. A proposal was forwarded to establish a platform that will provide the medium to sustain forest sector engagements and assist in filling the information gap between community-based and Monrovia stakeholders. This will reduce the tension between government agencies and some communities and encourage mutual cooperation for sustainable natural resource management approaches that promote "public participation."
- **Extend and continue stakeholder dialogue outside Monrovia:** The presentation on the SEA process to date highlighted how the process included regional consultations wherein community people from eight forest fringe communities of the country participated. The results of the regional consultations involving a cross-section of community residents is a key component of the scoping report, and issues identified during these processes are contained in the priority issues identified in the SEA process to date. These issues were confirmed by all participants at the SEA national workshop. Community representatives at the SEA workshop agreed that regular regional consultations would do more to raise awareness about forest sector initiatives as well as address early misconceptions in disseminating information about the sector at the local level.
- **Community benefits and community involvement:** The need to clarify "community benefits" was raised. Some participants also expressed concern that, to date, no mechanism has been developed between the FDA and the Ministry of Finance as to how "Affected Communities" will access their benefits under the law. Some participants, mainly representing NGOs, said they were baffled sometimes by the demands of communities in the name of benefits. They said their field staff is faced with the challenge of how to help communities that benefit from livelihood initiatives around the forest to recognize these as community benefits. There was a general consensus among NGO participants during this workshop of the need to quantify what constitutes community benefits and raise awareness among community dwellers about it.
- **Simplification and dissemination of laws and policies to communities:** During the workshop, it appeared that none of the community representatives present were aware of the Social Agreement Handbook that had been developed within the FDA. In most cases where social agreements have been signed with affected communities, the text of the agreement has been drafted well in advance of the formation of the CFDC, and communities are given less than 24 hours to read, comprehend, and sign. The case studies gathered that at least one social agreement has been signed the same day of the formation of the CFDC. This situation may leave communities to the consequences—good or bad—of these social agreements, which, for an FMC, may have a lifespan of 25 years. Against this background, there was a suggestion made that the FDA should be more

proactive in carrying out its work. During their group work on the forest outlook 2028, the FDA seemed to agree with this suggestion when they determined that public participation is Requirement #1 for achieving sustainable forest management. Key to this objective is disseminating forest sector information to communities in a simple, clear, and concise manner.

- **Expanded SEA team to address the remaining emerging issues:** This suggestion came about as a result of the desire of Monrovia participants to sustain the process beyond the SEA project end date. The details of how this will work out in practice could not be determined during the workshop, so the mechanisms for expansion were left to the current SEA team to figure out during their next meeting. From the plenary discussions, it was evident that the particular government agencies knowledgeable about the given issues will be invited to join the SEA team in carrying out these kinds of tasks.

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Annex 1 **REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE SEA AND THE COMMUNITY RIGHTS LAW**

This annex presents the results of the consultation process undertaken in eight counties in Liberia. This information forms the basis of the synthesis of issues that are common to all eight regions found in the main report.

METHODOLOGY

The inputs to the regional consultations were obtained from seven regional workshops conducted in Gbarpolu, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, and Grand Bassa counties. The workshop in Buchanan also included participants from Rivercess County; thus, input from eight counties was solicited overall. In addition to the regional workshops and introductory sessions with local authorities, a total of 29 informal grassroots level meetings were organized to facilitate the selection of group representatives to the regional workshops. These included four meetings (each) with women and youth groups, 16 town hall-style meetings, and 5 meetings with teachers and civil society groups. Six hundred and six persons participated in the informal meetings, while 216 persons participated in the workshops. In total, 242, or approximately 40 percent, of the participants were women. This was a direct result of the team's effort to strike a gender balance during the field consultations.

In addition to regional workshops, informal meetings at the town level, focus group discussions, and meetings with key informants were held. Key informant meetings involved briefings with local authorities and others with a deeper understanding of the local context. Informal town hall-style meetings were used to present overviews of the SEA and facilitate the selection of grassroots representatives to the regional workshops. Focus group meetings with women, youths, elders, civil society groups, and teachers were organized to reach out to a broader segment of the population in each county. This was designed to ensure that the perspectives of the various groups were captured at the regional workshop. Issues raised in these informal meetings were documented to form part of the feedback from each region.

These tools took into consideration the most pressing and critical issues in each sector. For example, in terms of community forestry, the focus was more on issues to be considered during the drafting of the CRL, while discussions on commercial forestry focused on the potential impacts of resuming logging and what these meant for local communities. Discussions on each of these issues informed the others.

At each regional workshop, the team gave a detailed presentation of the SEA to establish the context for the workshop. Following the presentation, participants were divided into groups based on gender and age to discuss various topics using semi-structured questions. The questions presented were designed to be used as guides for the group discussions and to help facilitators probe participants for more reflective inputs. The groups then returned to plenary and presented their works. Questions and answers after each presentation were aimed at seeking clarification on the points in the presentation, emphasizing particular issues, or challenging or presenting a different perspective on a particular issue.

On average, 30 persons were invited to each regional workshop; at least 10 persons came from outside the provincial capitals or population centers where the workshops were held. The selection process was based on segments of the local population (including government officials), on gender, and on membership in a social or interest group (youth, women, civil society, etc.). Population size, accessibility, and the degree of dependence on the forest were the main selection criteria for towns from which grassroots participants were identified. These grassroots-level participants were selected by their peers during the informal grassroots-level meetings that preceded the workshops. Each workshop concluded with the selection of two participants to attend the presentation of the outcomes of the rural outreach at a national workshop that will be held as part of the SEA process.

The methodology was field tested in Gbarpolu County by the entire team. Other members of the SEA national team, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME), also participated in the Gbarpolu field testing. The field testing by the entire team was intended to provide opportunities for the other agencies' representatives to comment on the proposed methodology, observe how the regional consultations would be facilitated, and to participate in some of the field activities of the SEA. Following the field testing, the SEA core team was further divided into two teams, each tasked to facilitate three regional consultations.

The program of the workshop

The approach to the regional consultations was based on the principles used in Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), employing the major data collection tools of focus group discussion, general assemblies, key informants, and semi-structured interviews.

The workshops were structured as follows:

- a. Preparatory activities (08:00 to 09:30): Registration starts at 08:00 and ends at 09:30—1 1/2 hrs.
- b. Presentation and setting the context of the workshop (09:45 to 10:45).
- c. Focus group discussions (11:00 to 13:45—2 hours with a 45-minute break for lunch).
- d. Presentation of group works followed by plenary discussions (14:00 to 15:30—1 1/2 hrs.).

Documentation of the process and the proceedings

Members of the teams took notes individually during the informal meetings and the workshops. These notes were used to prepare the report for each workshop. The documentation of each workshop included the following:

- a. Location and date of workshop
- b. Names and details of participants to each workshop (title/position, interest group, village, etc.)
- c. Presentations from group discussions
- d. Questions asked at various stages of the workshop and the responses to those questions
- e. The exact text of presentations as presented on flipcharts
- f. Photographs of participants, flipcharts, etc.

Following the regional consultations, the reports were compiled by the team. Each person on the team independently reviewed the draft report and submitted written comments on the draft. Those comments included additions to the text (where some issues were left out, clarifying the context in which a particular comment was made, removing or modifying comments that do not reflect what was said by participants, etc.). Following the individual reviews, the team met in a working session to adopt the final draft report.

Team Composition and Logistics

Each team comprised four persons. The members of the teams were Sam Koffa and Silas Siakor (SDI); James Kpadehyea, Samuel Weeks, and Garvoie Kardoh (FDA); Samuel Boakai and Eunice Dagbe (EPA); and Peterson Weah (Legislative Staff, Office of the Chairman on Forestry and Fisheries).

Thematic Areas

The following thematic areas are meant to guide the discussions within the focus groups during the workshop. Each thematic area is followed by a number of questions indicative of the types that should be asked in focus group discussions. Facilitators of the process are expected to ask as many probing questions as possible so that more—and more valuable—information is gathered. The facilitators are expected to probe participants using these questions for guidance and should therefore not limit themselves to these questions only.

The questions provided below were used by the facilitators as guidelines to prompt discussions.

COMMUNITY RIGHTS LAW (THEMATIC AREAS)

- a. Vision setting and defining objectives: What are people's expectations? What are the measurable and achievable targets for community forestry?
- b. Community identity: What are the elements to be considered in the definition of community? Should it be based on town, clan, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?
- c. Community powers and duties vs. role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for FDA?
- d. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? Who/at what levels/which institutions should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary?)
- e. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making—rules and permits)?
- f. Rights of individuals within the community: Rights of women, youths, families, strangers, etc.?
- g. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?
- h. Transferable vs. nontransferable community powers/duties and rights: Should a community be allowed to contract third parties to provide technical support in the fulfillment of its duties? Which duties can be outsourced and which shouldn't/can't?
- i. Conflicts: What should the roles of the justice system and alternative dispute resolution mechanism be?

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

A. Commercial forestry or logging

- a. Socioeconomic and livelihood: What is the general feeling of people about logging? Why do people feel that way? What needs to be done and by whom? General description of relationship with actors in the sector (FDA, loggers, etc.). Are forests important at all to the people? If so, how and why are forests important? What are the various activities in which individuals engage so as to earn a living? How do forests feature in livelihood strategies? Is there any relationship between food security and logging? Describe it. What are the impacts of logging on the food (at all levels) situation in the area? What are people's expectations from logging or what are their experiences?
- b. Environmental: Are there any changes in the natural environment, such as size of forest (reducing/increasing), quality (wildlife, loss of plants, including food and medicinal), temperature, or rainfall (patterns, intensity)? Are there any products and services that people previously acquired from the forest that are no longer there? Is there any change in the quality and quantity of water in rivers and creeks?

B. Conservation or protected areas

- a. Socioeconomic and livelihood issues: What is the general feeling of people in the area about protected areas? Why do people feel that way? What needs to be done to address these concerns, by whom, and how? General description of relationships with other actors: FDA, NGOs, INGOs. How can this situation be addressed? What are the direct effects of establishing protected areas in a given area (village, town, etc)?

C. Mining

- a. Socioeconomic and livelihood: How much of people's livelihoods does mining account for? What is the general feeling of people in the area about mining? Why do people feel that way? What needs to be done to address these concerns, by whom, and how? General description of relationships with other actors in mining (small-scale and large-scale). Is mining having any impact on people's relationships and their ability to feed themselves (availability and quality of farmlands)? What are the transboundary issues to be considered?
- b. Environmental: Has anyone noticed any changes within the area as a result of mining activities? Quantity and quality of forests? Quality and quantity of water in rivers and creeks?

D. Agriculture (rubber, palm and other plantations)

- a. Socioeconomic and livelihood: What, if any, is the impact of rubber and other plantations on people's land and livelihoods? What, if any, are the benefits people enjoy from established industrial tree plantations (rubber, palm, etc.)?
- b. Environmental: Can anyone tell us whether tree plantations have any effect on the land (farmland, others) and forests? How do these plantations exert and exact their impacts?

Feedback to communities

Results of the consultations will have to be fed back to the communities in a carefully drafted (user-friendly) document. This will be a two-way process: analysis of field data will be packaged, taken back to communities, and discussed with participants in the villages covered by the consultation; and participants will have the opportunity to criticize such a document and ascertain that their views are largely represented.

Constraints and Limitations of the Study

A variety of reasons underlie the combining of the two consultation processes into one field consultation. The reasons were repeated at various meetings with stakeholders during the inception and early stages of the SEA process. The key factors considered included:

- The two consultation processes were to be executed around the same time and in the same regions;
- This was an opportunity to further demonstrate the new "integrated" or 3Cs approach to forest management;
- Combining the two processes would considerably reduce costs;
- Concerns were voiced about too much information being "dumped" on communities; and
- The SDI and FDA were going to play a central role in the two consultative processes.

Little consideration was given to the logistical challenges that merging the two processes would pose—that is, bringing the two processes together meant expanding the field team to accommodate other technicians from different agencies and ministries. For example, the CRL consultation was to be handled by the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) and FDA, while the SEA consultation was to involve the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Lands (MoL), MLME, and other agencies.

As a result of the merger, the number of persons participating in the field consultation was doubled. This raised the question of whether to maintain one team or divide the team into two. For practical reasons it was decided that the team be divided into two—more confusion would be created with eight persons trying to facilitate one meeting. But dividing the team also meant the products would not be the same. Even though we were to work from the same page, the varying level of understanding and appreciation of the tools adopted for the work could lead to slightly different presentations and documentations of the meetings; and indeed it did.

In summary, the single challenge of managing a process became the challenge of managing both a process and a team. The feedback from the communities was mixed. Readers should reflect on the results presented, bearing in mind the fact that each localized context, though similar in some respect to other places, has its own peculiarities; therefore, issues that appear to be the same were not necessarily raised in the same context. Second, the results should be reflected upon in their entirety; subjective interpretation may lead to very erroneous conclusions. The common example that is readily noticed throughout the presentation is the persistent question about the resumption of logging. Taken alone, this could be interpreted as pressure from the communities to resume logging. However, upon reflecting on it in the context of the other issues that were raised in all the regions, including marginalization and lack of benefits from logging, the picture that emerges is one of a need to restart logging in an environment that is different from what existed before. Therefore, to get a proper understanding of the issues, readers are urged to reflect on the full range of issues presented, taking full account of the context in which specific issues were raised.

To ensure objectivity, this report and analysis is based on the factors described above, and the authors made considerable effort to exclude their own interpretations.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN GBARPOLU COUNTY

Introduction and Overview of the Process

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation for Gbarpolu County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in the region.

Gbarpolu County is situated in northwestern Liberia. It hosts parts of the Gola, Kpelle, and Lorma National Forests. The county hosts significant mining concessions and ongoing mining activities. This is mostly in the westernmost part of the county in the district of Kumgbor; however, mining is widespread throughout the county. Significant land use conflict exists in the county, as nearly the entire county is considered a mining zone by the MLME. The county is also targeted by the FDA as one of the counties where the first round of logging contracts will be issued.

The regional consultation in Gbarpolu County ran December, 6–12 2007.

The Informal Consultative and Preparatory Meetings

The team convened informal consultative meetings with local authorities, youth, women's groups, teachers, and elders in Bopolu City. Three grassroots-level meetings were organized in Sapplima, Totoquellie, and Fasu-ta. A total of 115 persons participated in the consultation meetings; 31 were females. The consultations in Gbarpolu culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Bopolu on December 10, 2007. A total of 36 persons, including a cross-section of citizens, residents, and local authorities, participated in the workshop. Ten women participated in the workshop.

The consultative meetings allowed community members to raise issues including concerns, questions, and suggestions gathered from the consultative meetings prior to the regional workshop.

THE BOPOLU REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The regional workshop was convened in Bopolu on December 10, 2007. Participants were selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women, youths, selected towns and villages, etc. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

Community Rights Law (CRL)

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, chiefs and elders, civil society and youths, and local government officials and teachers. All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussions under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed upon by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. The elements agreed upon included the vision and objectives of the CRL, factors to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties, the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, etc. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want in this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

The law should:

1. Guarantee that local people will benefit from logging and other forest uses
2. Guide the community today and tomorrow about how to manage the forest
3. Protect local people within the community
4. Provide for the protection and preservation (conservation) of the forest for the benefit and common good of all the people

5. Mainstream gender issues in forest governance and management
6. Incorporate a system of value added to the logging system and not only the exportation of round logs
7. Empower the community to negotiate with companies for natural resources in their area

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. Community should be identified by the forest communities of the district.

C. Community powers and duties versus role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for FDA?

The people own the forest and everything that is in it. Therefore, the community should have the powers and duties to:

2. Authorize the use of the forest
3. Negotiate for benefits with companies
4. Sign agreements with the company
5. Check on the FDA and to stop the FDA from making false promises
6. Consult and be consulted by logging companies before operating in our forest
7. Abide by what the law says
8. Undertake reforestation on deforested lands
9. Monitor logging projects and activities by companies
10. Establish a committee to transact business and receive and distribute benefits on behalf of the community
11. Collaborate with FDA on forest issues

The FDA must:

1. Ensure that any company that harvests logs and does not use them should pay for the logs
2. Be present at scaling sites in order to properly account for logs
3. Be effective at work
4. Have local offices in the community so that facilities may be used after logging operations have ceased
5. Stop forest farming (shifting cultivation)
6. Stop hunting by stopping the sale of bush meat in Monrovia

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary?)

Each community should establish a committee to transact business and receive and distribute benefits on behalf of the community. The composition, members, and duties of the committee shall be as follows:

1. The members of the committee should include men, women, and youths.
2. Members should be elected, with only adults taking part in the process.
3. After the election of the members of the committee, the committee should have an in-house election by committee members for its own officers.
4. No two leaders can come from the same town or village.
5. No government employee can sit on the committee.
6. The chairman of the committee must be accountable to the people and willing to clarify issues of individual concern.
7. The community should also establish a board of inquiry that is above the committee and should comprise of nine members (three from each clan).
8. Before the committee can carry out a project on behalf of the community, it should develop a project proposal and present it to the community.

9. The identification of projects must be open and everyone in the community should be involved.
10. The committee should be prosecuted if there is fraud.
11. The committee should also be responsible for natural resources development and management.
12. The committee should make periodic reports to the community people.
13. The committee members can be elected for a period of time or a specific term.

Institutions that the communities will work with are:

1. Forestry Development Authority (FDA);
2. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
3. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA);
4. Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy (LME);
5. Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); and
6. NGOs.

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. All powers of the community regarding forest resources management shall be vested in the community and the committee established by the community.
2. Committees must be set and members elected to carry out community forestry activities.
3. The community should set criteria to govern election of committee members and put them in place; these should include good character and property of value to be used as collateral.

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of women, youths, families, strangers?

Individuals (as members of the community) should have the right to:

1. be consulted before logging companies can operate in our forest
2. be present or represented at all meetings relating to forests within the community
3. get jobs with logging companies
4. take part (especially women and women's groups) in discussions relating to the forest, including the planning and implementation of forestry projects
5. be a part of signing important documents on behalf of the community (representation to ensure transparency)
6. compensation for damages to their properties as a result of companies' activities or work
7. carry on our own projects in the forest
8. stop strange people from coming from other parts of the country to hunt in our forest, especially the Gios
9. waive anyone's benefits if he/she does not want to contribute to community work
10. not sign agreements with other logging companies, as some of our citizens have done—this is bringing about confusion in our area

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. Forests are apportioned based on township level
2. Each township should be responsible to plan and manage their own forest resources along with FDA
3. The community will designate specific places for construction of infrastructures and will monitor the construction process of projects
4. Logging companies should build sawmills and minimize the exportation of round logs from the country
5. There should be no mining and logging in the same area at the same time in our forest
6. Members of the community must participate in forest and land use planning at all levels
7. Government should be actively involved, through the MoA, to reduce the misuse of the forest by shifting cultivation

8. There should be no farming in high forest, but only in fallow bushes and swamps

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties, or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

1. Communities shall not unilaterally contract third parties to provide technical support to carry out some of its duties. They should do this in consultation with the FDA.
2. Community power to authorize operation in the forest should not be transferred to third parties.
3. No individual or community has the right to sell or lease land to anyone in the Bopolu District.

I. Conflicts: How should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g., companies and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

Participants denounced bad leadership within the community and identified this as one of the key factors that lead to conflicts. The participants summarized their discussions as follows:

1. Committee members found cheating must be replaced and made to pay for the money or resources they misused
2. If they can't repay, the person's property should be seized
3. Before someone becomes a leader, he/she must be married and must have property
4. Transacted receipts must bear the signature of the concerned appointees
5. Conflicts between loggers and others and property owners or community, for example, failure to adhere to agreements and contracts, should be dealt with according to the law
6. Conflicts should be taken to appropriate authorities including the FDA for settlement

Issues relevant to the SEA

The session on the CRL was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation, protected areas, mining, agriculture, and so on in the context of their relationship to the forest sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social, and environmental implications of each of these activities, drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Logging creates and increases job opportunities for people.
2. Logging does not have negative impact on our food security. It helps to fertilize the bush.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Waste of logs: logs are extracted and abandoned by logging companies.
2. Value addition: logs are not manufactured into finished products, but are taken out as round logs.
3. Forest loss: the forest is diminishing because there is no reforestation after logging. We fear that if logs are continuously cut without replanting, the community is put at risk.
4. Benefits: benefits from the forestry sector are not shared.
5. Marginalization of local people: there are no consultations with local people.
6. Diminishing commercial viability: good logs are gone. Big forest trees have been reduced due to repeated logging of the area. We do not get the kind of wood to make canoes, it is very hard to find them.
7. Induces migration of wildlife: animals migrate as a result of heavy equipment movement.
8. Loss of animal species: animals disappear.
9. Pollution: water or creeks and rivers polluted as a result of logging.

10. Drying rivers/creeks: there is low water level in rivers due to logging. Also there is reduction of water in our water bodies due to increased sunshine and less rainfall.
11. Vulnerability to extreme weather: because of the logging, a heavy storm always infiltrates the community. The community experiences a lot of strong winds.
12. Loss of wild fruit trees and nuts: it is very hard these days to get nuts and fruits from the forest.

Recommendations:

1. The logging companies should do what the community wants them to do. This time there should be no false promises.
2. A contract should be made between each logging company and the citizens in the areas where they operate. This contract should be notarized.
3. Logging should come in the most positive and modernized way. No round logs should leave the area. All the logs should be processed in the area.
4. This time around, the FDA should enforce the law. The forest law is good, but good laws are made and sometimes not enforced by the agency responsible to do so.
5. When logging companies enter into agreements with the people, they should fulfill their obligations to the people. We sometimes made agreements with logging companies to provide some benefits to the community. However, whenever they reneged on such agreements, they used their connections with people high up in government to neutralize attempts to compel them to deliver on their side of the bargain.
6. Logging companies should not use their connections within government to suppress people in the rural areas. ("Our hopes and fears is that any agreement made when big hands are behind it the community cannot do anything to them").
7. The logging companies in the past stopped people from going in their concession area to hunt, fish, farm, etc., whenever they want to log there.

B. Conservation or protected areas

Socioeconomic and livelihood issues and impacts:

1. There are no protected areas in Bopolu.
2. The idea is good to have a protected area.
3. Community people should take care of the park when created.
4. Anything growing in the park will be seen by children yet unborn. People will pay to enter the park.

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. It is beneficial for unborn generations, because when they are born they will still see some of the forest and benefit from it.
2. It helps the community to generate funds when people come to the area to work or see the area.
3. It can be a tourist center for people to come and pay money to visit the area.
4. It helps to provide continuous resources—for example, forest products—for the community.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Reduces land areas for population. As population increases, the land will become smaller.
2. Protected animals or animals that are conserved can damage agriculture, especially rice farming. We always complain about this to the FDA.

C. Mining

Positive economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Mining can make people rich.
2. Mining improves our lives.

3. Mining creates and increases job opportunities for our children.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Landslides are associated with mining.
2. Mining destroys the farmland.
3. Mining is taking away farmland from us.
4. More people are involved in mining and not farming; this reduces food production.
5. Mining pollutes and destroys surface water.
6. Mining increases the prices of goods in the market.
7. Mining increases in the population because many miners come from outside of the community, and as a result criminal activities increase.
8. There are many illnesses, and incidences of illnesses are very high.
9. Mining destroys the forest and increases erosion, example, the Mano River landslide.
10. The relationship between miners and the community is not good due to unfairness and dishonesty. That is, miners have the tendency to cheat the community with regard to royalties they are supposed to pay to them, and because they communities don't have any legal authority over them they become vulnerable to the miners.
11. The miners don't refill the holes they dig when mining.
12. After mining in an area, it is hard for crops to grow there anymore.
13. Mining destroys the land and the miners receive the benefit, while the majority of our people suffer and can no longer make farms there.
14. Miners get their permits from the MLME without consulting the local people, and there is no benefit for local people in these arrangements.
15. Not all people benefit from mining in the community.

Recommendations:

1. The miners should refill the holes they dig by putting the red dirt or soil from beneath back into the holes and then putting the top soil back on top
2. Miners should consult with communities before mining and have mining permits from the government.
3. The existing laws should be enforced to regulate mining.
4. We want international investors to participate in the mining.
5. The government should put stop to illegal mining and petty mining.
6. 6. The community should make sure that miners reclaim their old mines before they leave the area.

D. Agriculture plantations (palm, rubber, etc.)

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. it provides job opportunities
2. plantation will reforest and keep the land intact

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Plantation can finish the original forest.
2. Plantation can finish our farming land.
3. We can't eat rubber, but rubber is being planted by many people. In the future, if there is a scarcity of rice, there will be a crisis. "The day rice finish in Monrovia rubber will not be cooked as rice."

Recommendations:

1. This entire situation must be changed. When logging starts, processing should be done and factories should be established here.
2. Factories should be built to create more jobs and reduce poverty in our community.

3. Every community should be represented at all meetings relating to forest activities.
4. If loggers cut our trees, they must replant.
5. The cutting of trees should be controlled.
6. Bridges should be made with culverts for the free flow of water.
7. Stop forest farming, especially by shifting cultivation in high forest areas.
8. Rights of individuals with deeds should be recognized and respected.
9. Suggestions made at this meeting should be in line with the constitution of the country.
10. No more log bridges; instead, there must be concrete ones
11. CRL should be locally owned (i.e. it should be printed in the vernacular).
12. Local supply of timber by companies to be ensured.
13. No company can get involved in any other activity other than what they are entitled to do.
14. Any company carrying out mining and logging in the forest at the same time should have their licenses cancelled.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION—LOFA COUNTY

This section summarizes the outcome of the regional consultation process of the ongoing SEA of the Liberian forest sector and the CRL drafting process for Lofa County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in the region.

Lofa County shares the Lofa-Mano proposed protected area with Gbarpolu County. The North Lorma and South Lorma National Forests are also situated within the county. The county also hosts the Wologizi and Wonegizi proposed protected areas. Meanwhile, BHP Billiton has been issued a permit to carry out exploration activities in the region. This conflicts with the FDA's categorization of the area, because no mining or exploration activities are allowed in proposed protected areas.

The regional consultation in Lofa took place December 14–18, 2007.

The Informal and Preparatory Meetings

The team convened informal consultative meetings with local authorities and a cross section of the residents, including youths, women, and elders in Zorzor. Two grassroots-level meetings were organized in Ziggida and Boi. A total of 73 persons participated in the consultation meetings; 24 were females. The consultations in Lofa culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Zorzor City, the provincial capital of Zorzor District, on December 17, 2008. A total of 30 persons, including a cross section of citizens, residents, and local authorities, participated in the workshop. Ten women participated in the workshop.

The Zorzor Regional Workshop

The regional workshop was convened in Zorzor on December 17, 2007. Participants were selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women, youths, selected towns and villages, etc. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

Community Rights Law

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, chiefs and elders, civil society and youths, and local government officials and teachers. All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussion under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. These included the vision and objectives of the CRL, elements to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties, the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, etc. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want in this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

1. Anything that belongs to our great-grandfathers belongs to us, including anything that is there (in the forest), under the ground, or over the ground.
2. Anyone that comes to do something on the land should negotiate with us and it should be mutually agreed upon.
3. Everybody should be equal before the law.
4. All violations should be treated in the same manner (when you spoil the law you pay).
5. The community forests will provide benefit for us.
6. The forest should be properly managed.
7. Local stakeholders should be involved in the management and protection of the forest.
8. Issues and problems facing the community should be discussed by all community members.
9. Community views must be taken into account by any interested party who wishes to undertake an activity in the community.
10. Leadership should be opened to all members of the community.
11. The community should have the right to accept or reject any concession for logging or mining.
12. Logging activities should be carried out in the community forest.
13. Reforestation should be carried out after logging.
14. Some of the forest should be conserved.
15. Logging companies should provide health, education, and other services to the community.
16. Every logging agreement should be decentralized (i.e. the community should be involved).

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. A community is defined as the surrounding villages where groups of people live—districts, clans, chiefdoms, and towns.
2. The existing community customary boundaries should identify the size of a community forest.
3. Participants at the meeting suggested that a committee should be set up by seven towns (Ziggida Community Forestry) and noted that further that:
 - a. Community can be defined by group of towns, district, or clans.
 - b. Community should be identified by the forest communities of the district.
 - c. Community should be based on large-scale farming
 - d. Community size should be twenty-five thousand hectares (25,000ha).
4. No forceful taking away of property; everybody should be involved in the decision-making process.
5. We want community defined on the district level.
6. The district will decide the size of the community forest.

Following the group's presentation, a question was raised about the security of family land plots that have been alienated by the community. The question was phrased as follows: "If a certain area is given to a family by a group (community) and this family is based there for a long time, if the head of the family dies, can anybody just come and do anything there without permission from the family?" The unanimous answer to the question was "No."

C. Community powers and duties vs. role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for the FDA?

The powers and duties of the community should include the power to:

1. decide who is or is not a member of their community based on existing norms
2. punish all violators of the community norms

3. monitor activities in the forest
4. protect forest boundaries from encroachment
5. establish a committee to guide the forest and/forest management team
6. The community should have the power to approve agreements
7. the power to stop any company from operating

The FDA should:

1. provide training for people in the community in conservation
2. allow community people to cut their own logs and make planks on their own
3. stop interfering with local people's production of logs or sawn timber and their sale or use
4. collaborate with the district to manage the forest
5. ensure transparency in the awarding of concession
6. ensure that there is an EIA before logging starts
7. work with the community (district) to develop the terms of reference before logging starts
8. make sure that logging is followed by reforestation projects: cut and plant

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

1. All agreed that the structure should be the democratic form, where people are elected for a given time.
2. Every community should establish a committee made up of trustworthy people.
3. Arrangements should be made with FDA to provide training.
4. Selection of committee members, by the community, should be based on the following: trustworthy, respectful, hardworking, responsible, and leadership experience.
5. The community should decide whether or not the members of the committee should be paid.
6. Arrangements should be made with the EPA to provide technical advice on the protection of the environment.
7. The community should establish a committee to manage whatever benefits they get from the forest(s).
8. The committee shall be comprised of:
 - the office of the superintendent,
 - the commission office,
 - a member of the legislature,
 - the chairman of the DDC,
 - the youth chairman,
 - the chairlady, and
 - the investor.

Members of the committee will receive the following benefits for motivation:

1. Salary, which will be determined on the general salary structure and the availability of funds
2. Exemption from community work
3. Members to get honorarium
4. Payment is the company's responsibility
5. Committee will decide the compensation of this entrusted group

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. Through the leadership of the committee or management team that has been democratically elected by the community.

2. Set up constitution and bylaws that have been democratically written.
3. The community should speak with one voice.
4. The committee should be established and will itself develop rules to govern its activities.
5. Decisions within the committee (and community) should be made with everyone's input (the democratic process should be used for reaching decisions).

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of individuals such as women, youths, families, and strangers?

Individuals (as members of the community) should have the following rights:

6. The right to participate in elections.
7. The right to offer suggestions during community meetings or decision making.
8. Women should have rights equal to those of men (e.g., right to survival, dignity, etc.).
9. Respect for women; there should be no gender violence.
10. Individual rights will be protected in keeping with our constitution and other statutes.

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. Portion of the forest to be set aside for conservation, logging and farming.
2. Farming should be avoided in the community forestry planning.
3. Leave the forest alone and go to alternative areas, such as swamps or other lowlands.
4. Ancestral area should be maintained properly.
5. FDA and other agencies of government regulation should be followed by forest classification.
6. FDA, GR, MLME, Public Work

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties, or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

Transferable powers and duties:

1. Powers or rights to punish offenders
2. Contracting of third parties
3. Requesting technical advice from others, such as preparing forest management plans
4. Community power to be transferred to a third party to provide technical support

Nontransferable powers and duties:

1. Law making powers to be left with the community, no government interference
2. Forest protection to be left with the community
3. The right to negotiate and review concession agreements

I. Conflicts: How should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g., company and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

1. Justice system should be traditional.
2. Use the law to interpret the agreement.
3. Any dispute(s) arising from the operation of any company will be resolved through the justice system.

Issues relevant to the SEA

The session on the Community Rights Law was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation, protected areas, mining, agriculture, and so on in the context of their relationship to the forest

sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social, and environmental implications of each of these activities, drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Logging companies provide jobs.
2. Some companies build roads, schools, and hospitals.
3. Logging is good because it provides jobs and incomes.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Depletion of forests: the forest is depleting; real forests are getting smaller.
2. Forest degradation: quality of forests reducing.
3. Habitat loss: wildlife habitat destroyed or reduced.
4. Loss of water resources: rivers are drying out together with creeks.
5. Transportation: logging trucks damage the road and make it difficult for small vehicles.
6. No or limited benefits: the companies take logs and give nothing in return to the communities.
7. Pollution of water: bridges built by logging companies (with logs and dirt) block creeks and cause them to not flow normally.
8. Loss of plants: many plants disappear.
9. Bridges previously built by logging companies were not durable.
10. Logging has caused irregular rainfall patterns.
11. Logging has caused rising temperatures.
12. Logging has caused a reduction of wildlife and loss of plants.

The participants also summarized their expectations about logging:

1. Logging companies will construct better roads and build good schools.
2. Logging will provide job opportunity for people in the community and some cash benefits to the communities.

Recommendations:

1. FDA needs to expedite the processes so that logging can start.
2. FDA should make sure that loggers adhere to all the regulations.
3. No round logs should leave from here; the logs should be processed before they are taken out.
4. After logging an area, there should be reforestation; when you cut the log, plant another.
5. If a company is involved in logging, it should just do that.
6. Logging companies should build good roads.
7. The government should empower FDA to implement all rights, as we have suffered too long and because we want to now benefit from our forests.
8. Ensure cordial relationship between the community, FDA, and company.

B. Mining

Positive economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Mining is good because it brings cash and employment.
2. Individuals within the community benefit from mining activities. They sell their minerals to earn money or get employment with mining companies.

3. Mining is the smallest money-making activity in the region.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. There is no better information on mining due to illicit mining and lack of national data available to us.
2. Mining is bad because it destroys habitats and farmland.
3. Mining reduces plants in the forest.
4. Water is polluted or dirty as a result of mining.
5. Water dries up as a result of mining.
6. Mining destroys the soil of farmland.

Recommendations:

1. Miners should fill the holes after mining.
2. There should be demarcation of mining.

C. Conservation or protected areas

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Parks make money and create employment.
2. Protected-area network is a fine idea.
3. Our children will learn tomorrow to keep our culture.
4. Government should empower FDA, Ministry of Information, Foreign Affairs, International NGOs, and NGOs to take care of the parks.
5. The communities and the FDA should have a mutual relationship.
6. Make strong laws and respect them.
7. Economic viability through foreign investment.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Poor perception for conservation activities or protected areas.
2. Conservation activities deprive communities of their livelihood and income.
3. Small land spaces to make farms (expanding conservation areas reduce the land available for farming).

Recommendations:

The government should provide livelihood through:

1. introducing fish ponds so that people can have an alternative to bush meat
2. introducing lowland farming in order to move away from shifting cultivation, which is destroying the forest
3. introducing microloans to help vulnerable groups engage in other commercial activities besides bush meat trade

D. Agriculture

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Tree plantations have no effect on the land. It is a good thing.
2. There is no plantation in our area.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Because plantations occupy most of the farming areas, farm lands are getting smaller.
2. Agriculture destroys the forest.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN NIMBA COUNTY

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation process of the ongoing SEA of the Liberian forest sector and the CRL drafting process for Nimba County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in the region.

Nimba County hosts the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) and the proposed West Nimba Reserve. These two areas are perhaps the last habitats for mountain gorillas in Liberia. The world's largest steelmaker is set to reopen the old iron ore mines adjacent to the reserve. Furthermore, the company has the right to extract timber in its concession for use in its own work; there is no clear limitation as to whether this right extends to the protected or proposed protected area that falls within the concession. In addition to these issues, over the years, the county has hosted numerous logging companies.

The regional consultation in Nimba took place December 14–18, 2007.

The Informal Consultative and Preparatory Meetings

The team convened informal consultative meetings with local authorities, youth, women's groups, and teachers in Sanniquellie. Two grassroots-level meetings were organized in the towns of Seihnkpa and Davoie. A total of 86 persons participated in the consultation meetings; 42 were women. The consultations in Nimba culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Sanniquellie on December 17, 2007. A total of 31 persons, including a cross section of citizens, residents, and local authorities, participated in the workshop. Eight women participated in the workshop.

3.0 THE SANNIQUELLIE REGIONAL

The regional workshop was convened in Sanniquellie on December 17, 2007. Participants were selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women, youths, and selected towns and villages. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

4.0 THE COMMUNITY RIGHTS LAW

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, chiefs and elders, civil society and youths, and local government officials and teachers. All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussions under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed upon by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. These included the vision and objectives of the CRL, elements to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties and the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, and so on. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want in this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

The CRL should:

1. serve as the legal basis for ownership and use of forest lands and tribal lands
2. provide that communities be consulted and contracts be signed between companies and communities
3. identify the town chief as the focal person for contacts with logging companies and the FDA
4. address the issue of infrastructural development to ensure that roads, bridges, health, schools, water, etc. are provided by logging companies as part of their social responsibility
5. address the issue of damages to individual or community property as a result of logging activities
6. provide benefits to communities from logging activities
7. set aside a portion of land to be used as community forests

8. establish that logging on private land should be agreed between the owner and the company
9. provide that FDA and community should monitor logging companies
10. ensure that benefits from any natural resources be used to address development needs of the community

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. A community may be a town with people having the same laws and values.
2. A community should be defined on a town basis.
3. Every community should identify its community land or forest area.

C. Community powers and duties vs. role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for the FDA?

Communities should have the following powers, rights, and duties:

1. To stop or reject logging companies if it observes its activities to have negative impact on the area, such as failure to carry out reforestation and other good forest management practices.
2. To be represented at the FDA level to participate in framing, development, or negotiation of logging contacts or agreements.
3. To check on logging companies to ensure that its logging practices are in line with the forest regulations set by the FDA.
4. To inspect road construction in its areas, and if it finds that the construction of roads and bridges are substandard, the community should have the right to stop the construction immediately.

The FDA should:

1. have the right to stop any community members or groups of people who may attempt to destroy reserves or protected forest areas
2. initiate community awareness programs to educate forest communities about its policies and activities
3. inform the community on a quarterly basis of the cubic meters of logs harvested during this period, as well as the financial benefits accrued from the logging activities
4. ensure that employment preference be given to skilled and unskilled workers from within forest communities around the concession

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

Two competing suggestions emerged during the Sanniquellie workshop. One view proposed establishing Community Development Committees (CDCs) as the local institution to handle forest-related issues, while another view proposed the use of the existing local government structure with some modification to include youths and women.

1. Community forest management at the district level should be handled by a committee including the following local government officials and representatives from the following groups:
 - a. district commissioner
 - b. paramount chiefs
 - c. clan chiefs
 - d. zonal chiefs
 - e. town chiefs
 - f. quarter chiefs

- g. community police
 - h. youth representatives
 - i. elders
2. The community should establish a committee. This committee should be constituted and operate as follows:
 - a. Members will be elected at all levels (town and clan levels), while local government elections will be organized for paramount chiefs and district commissioners.
 - b. They exercise their powers in their respective offices as granted by the local government authority of the Republic of Liberia.
 - c. Five percent of revenue generated from logging activities for communities will be used to compensate these officers (town chief, quarter chief, community police, youth chairman, and elders).
 3. Two subcommittees shall operate at the clan and town levels. Every clan shall establish a Community Development Committee (CDC). The CDCs shall have a General Chairman and officials at each level.
 4. Composition of these subcommittees at the clan and town level shall be as follows:
 - a. youth representatives
 - b. elder representatives
 - c. women representatives
 - d. concerned groups
 5. These sub-committees shall be constituted and shall operate as follows:
 - a. Through elections.
 - b. Tenure shall be five years with a maximum of one term.
 - c. Shall be qualified (not academic) but morally, have good standing with community members, honest, etc.
 - d. The members of the CDC shall be placed on salary.
 - e. Dismissal of officials shall be for cause or bad management practices.
 - f. Dismissal shall be through petition from majority of the people in the community.

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. All power of the community regarding forest resources management shall be vested in the following:
 - a. paramount chief
 - b. clan chief
 - c. town chief
 - d. zone chiefs
 - e. elders and opinion leaders, including youths and women
 - f. district commissioners shall serve as ex-officios
2. The duties of the local authorities shall be to:
 - a. protect or safeguard and regulate the use of the forest
 - b. be the key decision makers regarding any commercial exploitation of the forests
 - c. receive community benefits from those exploitations and report to the community within one week of receiving deposit in to a community account in a reputable bank in the Republic of Liberia
 - d. make monthly forest management report to the community at a mass meeting
 - e. advocate for compliance to forest management laws
 - f. have the right and power to arrest and report violators to the police
 - g. advocate for safe working conditions and proper forest management

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of women, youths, families, and strangers?

The rights of individuals within the community shall include the following:

1. Right to employment in forest industry.
2. Right to own land.
3. Families should have the right to own and sell land.
4. Families should have the right to protect their properties (i.e., crops, livestock, buildings).
5. Strangers shall have the right to lease or rent land but not to buy.
6. Leasing or renting of community land shall be for a period of not more than 15 years.
7. Strangers shall have the right to employment and security.

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. Land shall originally belong to the community and not transferable as such.
2. Every land use agreement must meet the full approval of the community.
3. The process of demarcating or apportioning land spaces for specific usages should be participatory.
4. The needed land spaces included:
 - a. agriculture land,
 - b. reserved forest,
 - c. inhabited land,
 - d. industrial site, airport,
 - e. recreational sites,
 - f. garbage disposal sites, and
 - g. public facilities sites.
5. The community shall lead and facilitate the selection and allocation of sites for specific purposes.
6. Government shall
 - a. enforce the protection of these sites, and
 - b. report any infringement upon any of such premises.

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties:

Communities shall not unilaterally contract third parties to provide technical support to carry out some of their duties.

I. Conflict resolution

1. Conflicts come about when the companies fail to carry out development in the community.
2. If the companies change, there will be no conflict.
3. All conflicts should be settled through the law.

5.0 Issues Relevant to the SEA

The session on the CRL was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation and protected areas, mining, agriculture, and so on, in the context of their relationship to the forest sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social, and environmental implications of each of these activities, drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Creation or availability of markets: loggers empower women through business

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Exploitation and abuse of local populations: the companies are coming to exploit us again.
2. Destruction of properties without compensation: loggers will destroy our crops and villages and nothing will be done about it.
3. Exclusion and marginalization: government officials will not consult with villagers or communities about logging companies, and they will make decisions on behalf of the entire community.
4. Threats to livelihood: we depend on the forest for food and medicine, but the loggers can destroy these livelihoods. We also depend on the forest for the future.
5. Forced migration of wildlife: noise from logging equipment can drive animals away.
6. Negative social impacts: girls are influenced by money; loggers abandon them with pregnancies and babies. Loggers (men) create confusion in families.
7. Extinction of animal species: as a result of increase in hunting activities.
8. Depletion of forest resources.
9. Aridity of land as a result of the loss of forests.
10. Increase in the rate of evaporation of water from creeks and streams.

B. Conservation and protected areas

1. Because of protected areas there can be limited farming land.
2. Conservation and protected areas lead to increases in animal and tree species.
3. Protected areas conserve trees and animals species for future generations to see.

Recommendations generated in plenary:

1. All logging roads should be built or constructed in conformity with government standards.
2. Each harvested log shall be replaced by five planted trees.
3. Companies should be fined according to forestry law for destroying young trees or abandoning cut logs.
4. Qualified local citizens should be given first preference for employment.
5. Instead of 30 percent, the host community should benefit 40 percent of the revenue from logging.
6. Farmers whose crops or properties are destroyed in the process of forest exploitation shall be duly compensated in accordance with the law.
7. Logging companies should contribute significantly to the development or rehabilitation of roads/infrastructure in the locality of their operation.
8. Communities should be compensated for unavoidable environmental degradation.

Logging companies should do the following:

1. build good roads with iron bridges, not log bridges
2. build good health centers
3. provide compensation to victims of accidents on the job, destruction of crops and properties, etc.
4. construct houses with durable materials so that the communities can use these facilities when they leave
5. provide training to local unskilled laborers
6. establish factories such as sawmills in rural areas to provide more jobs and other benefits to the communities in which they operate

C. Mining

1. Mining accounts for few people's livelihoods.
2. Mining destroys farmlands and drinking water because the miners use the streams and creeks to wash their gravel.
3. Mining only benefits a few members of the community.
4. The quantity of the forest is diminishing, and the quality is getting poorer.

5. Small miners are always over shadowed by large miners, and this is because of their financial strength.
6. Farmlands are destroyed by mining activities, which reduce farmers' profits.

D. Agriculture

1. When people plant cash crops on their land, it provides secure ownership to the land.
2. Cash crops provide sustainable income.
3. Plantations provide economic benefits to owners and enhance social status.
4. Land planted with rubber trees remains fertile after the period of cultivation, unlike land on which sugarcane or oil palm has been planted.

Following the group presentations, some additional issues and questions were raised in plenary. These included the following:

Should the community or individual owner decide that no one can enter their forest—what should the law say?

The voice of the people/community is final and must be respected as such; when this is done, this is good governance.

The government usually stays in Monrovia and writes the law, why are you coming now to ask us for input?

Is it good to have the government come to you to ask for your inputs?

Yes, because it helps us to better understand the law when it is passed and to respect the rights of the country people. But this was not done in past, so this is good.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN GRAND GEDEH COUNTY

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation process of the ongoing Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Liberian forest sector and the Community Rights Law drafting process for Grand Gedeh County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in Grand Gedeh County.

The forest in Grand Gedeh is largely a corridor between the Sapo and Tai national parks in Liberia and Ivory Coast, respectively. The county hosts the Grebo and Gbi National Forests and part of the Krahn Bassa National Forest; it has hosted numerous logging companies in the past. The county sits at the border with Ivory Coast, and significant cross border activities, including bush meat trade, affect the forest and conservation in the region.

The regional consultation in Grand Gedeh County ran February 22–28, 2008.

The team convened informal consultative meetings with local authorities, the Zwedru City Corporation, youths, the Grand Gedeh Women Association for Peace and Development, and teachers in Zwedru. Two grassroots-level meetings were organized in the towns of Jarbah and Gleplay. A total of 91 persons participated in the consultation meetings; 27 were females. The consultations in Grand Gedeh culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Zwedru on February 28, 2008. A total of 30 persons, including a cross section of citizens, residents, and local authorities, participated in the workshop. Ten women participated in the workshop.

The Zwedru Regional Workshop

The regional workshop was convened in Zwedru on February 28, 2008. Participants were individuals selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women, youths, selected towns and villages, etc. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

How will other pertinent issues not addressed in the thematic area, outlined in the presentation, be addressed?

Any outstanding issues can be discussed and documented.

FDA had previously held workshops addressing issues like these and recommendations were made; why are you again asking? What assurance is there that you would use the information gathered?

This workshop is intended to provide the necessary information to inform the drafting of the CRL and influence decision-making at the highest level.

What is the Community Rights Law and what does it say?

The National Forestry Reform Law 2006 contained just three paragraphs about community rights; it did not say much; but required the FDA to develop a comprehensive law within one year of the passage of that law; which is why we are here.

THE COMMUNITY RIGHTS LAW

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, chiefs and elders, civil society and youths, and local government officials and teachers. All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussion under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed upon by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. The elements agreed included the vision and objectives of the CRL, factors to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties and the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, and so on. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

1. The government should make laws to protect the community forest.
2. The government should honor community laws and penalize those who break the community laws.
3. The company should meet with the elders and youths of the area before starting operations.

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. Community members, including elders, should decide and determine the size of the community forest, depending on the total size of the community land.

C. Community powers and duties versus role of FDA: What should be the powers and duties of communities? What role do they envision for FDA?

The community powers and duties include the following:

1. We own the forest, therefore:
 - a. representatives from the community should form part of or have shares in the company
 - b. the community should monitor the activities of FDA and the companies
2. The community should cooperate with the logging companies and provide security for them
3. The community should tell the company where to build its camps

The role of the FDA should be to:

1. encourage employment within the community
2. implement all plans of the community
3. encourage swampland farming to avoid destruction of the forests and wildlife
4. give technical support to the community

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

The participants resolved that the community should establish a committee on a community basis to transact business on their behalf. The committee shall be arranged as follows:

1. Members of the committee and the leaders should be selected in a general meeting held by the members of the community.
2. The committee should exercise the powers and duties of the community to be granted to the community in the CRL on behalf of the community.
3. Committee members should serve on a voluntary basis.
4. Local officials should not be part of the community leadership committee.

Institutions that the communities will work with are:

1. Forestry Development Authority (FDA)
2. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)
3. Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy (MLME)
4. Ministry of Agriculture
5. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
6. NGOs

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. There should be equal representation of women, men, and youth.
2. The head of a community should be selected by all the people in that community.
3. Management duties and final decisions rest on the shoulders of the community members, not on the head alone.
4. The head has power to represent and not to make decision for the group.
5. The head should inform the community of all meetings or transactions with other partners in a transparent way.
6. To be a head of the community should be based upon the accepted rules and existing laws of the land.
7. Women should not only be represented, but should be heard and their views respected.

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of women, youths, families, and strangers?

Individuals (as members of the community):

1. Women should have the right to attend development meetings, have their voices heard in decision making, make their own farms, and be respected at all times.
2. Youth have the right to education (especially the girl child), opportunities, form associations, and have their voices heard.
3. Families and individuals have the right to organize and develop themselves (sporting activities), contribute to community development, and have the right to access community forest resources.
4. Strangers who live in the community for less than one month should not hold position or be a community leader; they cannot be a part of the management team except if they have spent a year or more in the area, attend community development meetings, contribute to the welfare of the community, and obey the rules of the community.
5. Strangers can enjoy other rights in the community like citizens—for example, the bush and other forest resources—and can establish a home.

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

The steps in the process should be:

1. identify the community land area including the forest
2. survey the community land
3. acquire deeds so that the community ownership of its land is secured

The FDA should identify the forest in conjunction with the community. FDA should survey and the community must obtain deeds.

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties, or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

1. If communities lack the expertise, it is better to contract third parties to carry out some technical duties but managerial duties should be maintained.

I. Conflicts: How should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g., companies and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

1. Bad leadership within the community must not be allowed, as this is one of the key factors that lead to conflicts.
2. Laws must be made, enforced, and consistent with the justice system.
3. Dispute resolution should also be done in line with positive traditional norms of the people in the area.

ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE SEA

The session on the CRL was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation, protected areas, mining, agriculture, and so on in the context of their relationship to the forest sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social and environmental implications of each of these activities; drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Commercial forestry provides mass employment, economic empowerment, and an improvement in livelihoods.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Local people were not consulted about logging in their area.
2. Logging companies did not pay attention to providing good roads, health care nor education facilities.
3. The forest is diminishing; the good logs have been cut and taken away.
4. Animals have moved far away due to heavy equipment movement in the forests.
5. Animals are disappearing.
6. Our rivers and creeks are polluted as a result of logging.
7. There is a low water level in rivers due to logging, also there is reduction of water in our water bodies due to blocking of the rivers.
8. The company staff spoiled our young girls with money and spoiled their school business; sometimes our children wear uniform to go to school but they don't go to school; they go and spend the whole day in the camp with the men.

Recommendations:

1. This time we would like to see concrete structures and good roads, concrete bridges, clinics, guest house, and payment of teachers by the company within the area of operation area.

2. Sawmills and logging camps should be built near the towns where the company operates so that the community can benefit.
3. The government should put a stop to all single-barrel shotguns and must specify period for hunting in the forest.
4. Community forest areas should be set aside for community use and have animal husbandry (piggery and fish pond, etc).

B. Conservation and protected areas

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Transforms the socioeconomic life and community
2. Creates job and business opportunities
3. Opens avenue to interact with people from foreign countries
4. Exposes the community to new ideas and cultures
5. Gives our future generations the opportunity to see those animals

Negative economic, social, and environmental issues

1. Deprives people of sources of livelihood
2. People are stopped from farming, hunting and fishing in the protected areas
3. Reduces the land available for farming

Recommendations:

1. Sensitize people living near the protected areas
2. Provide educational facilities
3. Empower local people (e.g., microcredits) and create jobs
4. Government, civil society, and international partners provide funding and resource materials and carry out capacity building and implementation of the process
5. Provide alternative livelihoods

C. Mining

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts

1. Income for local people
2. Creates and increases job opportunities for community members

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Men have left the towns and villages, focusing on mining and not farming.
2. There are food shortages
3. Lack of farm land.
4. Poor yield after farming.
5. There is no safe drinking water; it causes the streams to go dry.
6. After mining, the soil is turned over and becomes unproductive for planting crops. As a result no one plants anything there and it continues to lay bare.

D. Agriculture plantations (palm, rubber, etc.)

Positive economic, social, and environmental issues

1. Job opportunities
2. Economic empowerment
3. Red oil and palm kernel oil from palm plantation

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Affect the livelihood of the community members.
2. There will be no land for farming.
3. There will be food shortage.
4. Areas occupied by plantations cannot be used for rice farming or vegetable gardens.
5. Rubber, particularly, depletes the fertility of the soil.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN GRAND BASSA AND RIVERCESS COUNTIES

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation on the ongoing SEA of the Liberian forest sector and the CRL drafting process for Grand Bassa County. The regional consultation in Grand Bassa covered both Grand Bassa and Rivercess counties. This section covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in Grand Bassa County.

The forest in Grand Bassa County is one of the most logged in the country. The county hosted the single largest logging company in Liberian history from 1999 to 2003. When logging ceased in the mid-1990s, the logging company TIMCO continued to operate in the region. The Oriental Timber Company also logged over most of the regions that had also been logged by other companies before its arrival. In addition to being excessively logged, the port in Buchanan records more than half of the Liberia's log export. Actual logging and export activities combined provide a backdrop against which discussions about forest and logging often take place.

The regional consultation in Grand Bassa County took place March 5–11, 2008.

Five meetings were organized in Grand Bassa and Rivercess Counties to facilitate the selection of participants to the regional workshop in Buchanan. These included meetings with youths and women's groups, civil society actors in Buchanan, Bacconie Community in Grand Bassa, and Yarpah Town in Rivercess County. A total of 92 persons participated in these meetings, 49 males and 43 females. The regional consultation culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Buchanan on March 10, 2008.

The Buchanan regional Workshop

The workshop in Buchanan was convened on March 10, 2008. A total of 30 persons participated in the Buchanan workshop. Of this total, eight were women. After the introductory session, a detailed presentation was given on the SEA. This was followed by brief informal remarks from the SEA focal persons in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and the National Investment Commission. Hon. Quioh from the Ministry of Planning introduced and explained the concept of "fair-share" versus "equitable-share." This he said was necessary given the different levels of expectation about benefit sharing from forest sector. In his conclusion he urged communities to advocate for their fair share of benefits from the forest instead of equitable share. The NIC focal person urged participants to contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

Nora Gaye (Rivercess) and Bill Davis (Bassa) were chosen by their peers to attend the national workshop.

THE COMMUNITY RIGHTS LAW

Following the two speakers, the participants were divided into three groups comprised of youths, women and men (elders and participants from civil society). All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussions under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed upon by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. These included the vision and objectives of the CRL, elements to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties, the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, and so on. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want in this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

The law should provide that:

1. the communities get good roads and good hospitals as benefits from logging
2. communities get schools with proper management and trained teachers
3. the 30 percent for affected communities and counties be put into the bank pending its use
4. buildings for schools, clinics, and bridges be built with concrete
5. when logging companies come into our community, they build good road, bridges, schools, clinics, etc.
6. the FDA and the logging companies should manage the forest well
7. we get our fair share of benefits from logging, including employment for our community members
8. the rights of the people are made clear in the law
9. the community law be accepted and implemented by all the people

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. The community should be identified at the district level.
2. The local community should decide on the size of the community forest.

C. Community powers and duties versus the role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for the FDA?

The community should be law abiding. The community should have the power to:

1. negotiate with concession holders, companies, and the FDA
2. be the highest decision maker
3. put a stop to trespassing
4. monitor and manage roles of stakeholders
5. protect the forest from illegal activities and at the same time it has the duty to do so

The FDA should:

1. monitor and ensure compliance
2. work alongside the community
3. have local offices in the community
4. implement the forestry law
5. inform the people adequately on unfolding issues

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

1. The community should establish committees at the district level.
2. The committees should be set up by the community to manage community forest activities.
3. All relevant stakeholder (community), EPA, FDA, and Internal Affairs should work together in the committee.
4. Members of the committee should be paid honoraria.

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

The community should govern itself as follows:

1. one person should be selected to represent each town in the district or community on a committee.

2. decisions should be made in consultation with the community.
3. the members of the committee should brief the community they represent regularly.
4. the committee members should be voted by the town they represent.
5. the community should operate democratically.

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of women, youths, families, and strangers?

Rights of individuals within the community should include the following:

1. Rights to company social facilities
2. Rights to freedom of movement around the place where the logging is taking place to observe the company activities if they feel unhappy with activities
3. The right to report any illegal activities
4. Rights of women to be represented on the committee
5. Rights of women to equal representation on committee
6. Rights of women to air their view
7. Rights of youth to be represented on committee
8. Rights of youth to be heard
9. Rights of the family to community resources
10. Right to challenge decisions that will not benefit the community
11. Right of strangers to become community members after staying for a year and obeying the laws of the community can establish homes
12. Right of strangers to share in community benefits and to participate in community decision
13. Rights of individuals within the community based on our constitutional status and conventions that Liberia is a party of

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. Communities know their boundaries (for example, when they brush the road, the two towns stop their brushing at the boundary).
2. There are no open spaces (or no man's land) between towns or communities.
3. The community must make the decision about where logging and farming should take place.
4. Logging and mining should be done in different areas.
5. People should not farm in the forest. They should farm in the old farmland after the regular fallow period.
6. All the relevant stake holders should participate in all the processes.

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties and/ or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

1. The FDA, EPA, and MLME should serve as a supporting arm for the community in the technical aspect to fulfill their duties
2. Financial matters and decision making cannot be transferred, e.g. decision making about the land are not transferable
3. Communities should be allowed to contract third parties to provide technical support in the fulfillment of its duties
4. Third parties can be brought in to provide technical support to the communities
5. The community can hire people to help them with their accounting and reporting

I. Conflicts: how should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g., companies and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

1. The government and the community rights law should empower the FDA and the community committee to settle disputes.

2. The community and the company along with the FDA should sit and settle the problem first.
3. The justice system under our laws should be the sole means of settling dispute. However, social issues such as debt issue, social relationships, etc. shall be handles by a Grievances Committee.

5.0 ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE SEA

The session on the Community Rights Law was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation and protected areas, mining, agriculture, etc. in the context of their relationship to the forest sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social and environmental implications of each of these activities; drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. It will improve the economic sector.
2. There will be good roads with concrete bridges, good hospitals, and good schools.
3. The company should build the camp on the road and not in the bushes anymore.
4. The company should build factories so that the locals can be employed.
5. Provides employment and income for community.

Negative social, environmental, and other impacts

1. Logging reduces our land for farming; we cannot farm in the concession area.
2. In the past, logging companies destroyed our crops.
3. Diminishes the fertility of the land.
4. Where ever the logging machine passes, it destroys the vegetation.
5. Logging companies can damage the roads (bad roads).
6. The logging camps have poor housing facilities and are built far away from the town, which means that when the logging company leaves the facilities cannot be used by the community.
7. The bridges built by the logging companies are made of logs (poor bridge construction).
8. Logging companies were supposed to build clinics, but they did not do so, and as a result health facilities are lacking in the area.
9. Secret burial of employees in the bush camps by the logging companies.
10. The chieftom does not have the listing of all those employed by the company working in the area (they are unable to question the absence of workers even if they are feared dead and buried in forest).
11. No death benefits are paid by the logging companies to family members.
12. In the past they government took some land by force and give it to logging companies.
13. Commercial forestry causes a reduction in forest size.
14. Migration of animals.
15. More rain than ever before.
16. Logging companies did not provide benefits to the communities, including schools and clinics, even though they promised that they would provide those benefits.

Recommendations:

1. There should be good consultations and a consultative working relationship between the FDA, the loggers, and the community.

2. Properties destroyed by a logging company should be paid for by the company.
3. Women must be employed in unskilled jobs and jobs that they are knowledgeable of.
4. There should be separate land for farming and for logging.
5. We want to see logging activities going on now.
6. Should logging companies start logging, the concession agreement should be between the government (FDA), the company, and the community
7. People are willing and happy for logging to start, but companies should address environmental concerns and benefits.
8. Government (National Investment Commission (NIC), FDA, etc.) should bring investors to invest in the forest sector and ensure environmental protection and benefits.

B. Conservation and Protected Area

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. People in the area feel good about conservation.
2. Sometimes communities decide that certain areas should not be farmed, people should not hunt there, and certain animals should not be killed. Because of these traditional values or taboos, conservation of those areas is good.
3. The strength of the community is in its tradition. Conservation help keep the strength of the community by promoting respect for those traditions.

Recommendations:

1. The government should ensure that our traditional values (listed above) are respected.
2. The traditional laws of the protected areas should be respected and observed to the letter.

C. Mining

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Mining brings economic benefits to the area.
2. Mining brings empowerment (financial).

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. There is less availability of farmland.
2. The land loses its quality to produce, because of diminished fertility.
3. Pollution of our water.
4. Forced relocation due to the lack of safe drinking water.

D. Agriculture (Rubber, Palm, etc.)

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Employment opportunities
2. Increase in income for those employed
3. Health care for employees
4. Schools for employees' children
5. Recreation and entertainment

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN RIVER GEE COUNTY

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation process of the ongoing SEA of the Liberian forest sector and the CRL drafting process for River Gee County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in River Gee County.

River Gee, like Grand Gedeh County, is considered a critical corridor (on the southern side) between Tai-Sapo complex. The relatively small population and the bad road conditions have had positive outcomes for forest cover in the region; River Gee is the most forested county in Liberia. The bad road conditions particularly challenge logging companies and slow logging activities for most of the year. Very small portions of the forest have been converted to plantations.

The regional consultation in River Gee ran February 24–28, 2008.

A series of informal, grassroots-level meetings was organized in River Gee to facilitate the selection of participants to the regional workshop in Fishtown. These included meetings with youth's and women's groups, local government in Fishtown, and Pronoken and Jaytoken. A total of 128 persons participated in these meetings, 69 males and 59 females. The regional consultation culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Fishtown on February 28, 2008.

Issues including concerns, questions, and suggestions gathered from the consultative meetings prior to the regional workshop are consolidated and presented below. Procedural questions such as "How will local government be represented in the workshop?" are not presented.

The Fishtown Regional Workshop

The workshop in Fishtown was convened on February 28, 2008. Participants were individuals selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women, youths, selected towns and villages, etc. A total of 30 persons participated in the Fishtown workshop. Of this total, seven were women. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

Hon. Pah Sawee and Lucy Warner were selected to attend the National Workshop in Monrovia.

The Community Rights Law

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, chiefs and elders, civil society and youths, and local government officials and teachers. All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussion under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed and agreed by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. These included the vision and objectives of the CRL, elements to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties, the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, and so on. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

The law should:

1. Provide for sustainable activities in our forest
2. Enable us to gain benefits from our forests
3. Provide for lasting benefits to us
4. Provide us with a share of the benefits from the forest
5. Empower communities to be part of the decision making
6. Respect community rights (for example, culture)
7. Ensure that benefits are provided directly to the community and should not be passed through government
8. Ensure that the government respects rights without any infringement
9. Ensure that qualified community members are given first preference for jobs with companies (including the highest positions)

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. Communities are composed of towns, clans, and chiefdoms.
2. Our identity starts from the clan level and goes up to the district level.
3. Communities should have district forests.
4. Citizens should decide the on the size of the community forest.

C. Community powers and duties versus role of FDA: What should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for the FDA?

1. The community owns the forests.
2. The community should be consulted before any company can operate the forest.
3. The community should be responsible for making decisions about the forest.
4. The community should set up a committee, which should represent the community in exercising their powers and role in regard to use of the forest.
5. Communities should establish laws that the committee will use as a working tools.
6. These laws should cover credibility, accountability, transparency, penalty, etc.
7. The community has the right to manage the forest.
8. Negotiations for contractual agreements between logging companies and government should start from the local level with the people in the community.
9. The community should have the power to agree or disagree on the use of the forest.
10. The community should have concrete agreement with the logging companies before the logging companies can enter the forest.
11. Community should be empowered to monitor the activities of the company operations in the forest.
12. Community should manage their own forest.
13. Logging companies wishing to log should come and meet the community members before starting logging.

The role of FDA should include the following:

1. Provide training to community in the area of forest management
2. Enforce law and make sure that all logs cut by company should be used and not be abandoned
3. Give the average size of a log before it is cut (e.g., 65 to 70 cm diameter)
4. Replant trees
5. Provide and conduct regular awareness for the communities on their roles and responsibilities
6. Train CBOs to carry on awareness on the forest uses
7. Regularly confer with the community for the betterment of our community
8. Ensure that the following are put in place: Clinic, School, Better Road, Good Water, Bridges
9. Ensure that logging companies pay the community for damaged logs left behind

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

1. The community should set up a committee that will include women, elders, youth, and students.
2. The committee should be elected by the community.
3. The community should help the committee members with small salaries for their work.
4. The leadership of the community is nongovernmental (should not be part of the government).
5. The youths, elders, women, and CBOs should form part of the committee.
6. The committee should report to the community through the chairman monthly.

7. The committee should represent the community in signing any document on behalf of the community.

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. The community should sit among themselves and elect their own leaders comprising of women, elders, youth, and students.
2. Women, elders, youths should exercise their power in managing the forest resources.
3. Women should have the right to participate in the decision making of the forest sector.
4. Women, elders, and youths should come together in making decisions.

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of women, youths, families, and strangers?

1. Community members should have the right to employment, training, etc.
2. The rights of individuals should be in accordance with the constitution.

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. The new forestry law should be respected.
2. Stakeholders should make sound decisions on the use of forest land.
3. Forests should be classified based on district level.
4. The affected towns within the district should be most consulted,
5. In towns or areas where logging companies will operate, the companies should consult with the community's committee, established to work on behalf of the community to locate suitable areas for the company to establish its camp.
6. Any forest that is not permitted by the community to be used by any company should not be used.
7. Government should protect the communities' rights in the use of their forest and land.
8. No farming should be allowed in the national forest.

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

We agree that a third party should be allowed. However, we cannot outsource the contractor negotiation.

1. Community should involve FDA, EPA, and others to plan and implement decisions pertaining to the forests.
2. Technical duties relating to forest should be outsourced ,while the others should remain at the community level,
3. The community should contract technical support with FDA consultation
4. The community or individuals should not sell land to outsiders, but rather strangers should be allowed to use the community land when they live there.

I. Conflicts: how should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g. Companies and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

1. Both the community and company should set up a committee to probe into the conflicts when they arise.
2. A mediation committee should be set up comprised of women, elders, youths, companies, FDA, and others
3. Criminal cases should be handled by the courts.
4. Committee members found cheating should be removed and punished to serve as deterrents for other committee members.
5. The FDA should be called upon to investigate conflicts between the community and logging company.

Issues relevant to the SEA

The session on the CRL was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation, protected areas, mining, agriculture, and so on in the context of their relationship to the forest sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social, and environmental implications of each of these activities, drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Logging brings development and economic empowerment.
2. Our people will get employment and earn income.
3. Children will have schools, hospitals, etc.
4. Logging companies help to build feeder roads, schools, etc.
5. The roads will be maintained.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. It destroys farms and engages most of our productive farmers.
2. The size of the forest is diminishing.
3. The quality is lower, and some of the wildlife are no longer found.
4. Some of products we got from the forest are not found today.
5. Companies did not employ our children.
6. Did not build clinics, schools, water and sanitation systems, better camps.
7. Rivers are drying up and creeks were polluted by logging companies.
8. No direct economic benefit to the community.
9. Rainfall pattern and seasons are changing.
10. In the past, logging companies built bad roads.
11. Pollute the creeks, rivers and streams.
12. Destroy crops.
13. Teenage pregnancy.
14. Interfere with our culture rights such as zoe-bush.
15. Decrease our wildlife by hunting.
16. It also is increasing the hunting activities in the community.

Recommendations:

1. We want logging to start now.
2. Logging companies should fix our roads and bridges with concrete.
3. They should build concrete camp houses.
4. Citizens should have share in the logging.
5. Logging companies should build hospitals, schools, churches, and a good water and sanitation system.
6. Agreements that are signed between the community and logging company must be honored, because this will prevent conflict.

B. Conservation and protected areas

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts of protected areas:

1. Future generations will benefit from forests.
2. When the forest is protected, the way people can kill animals will be limited.
3. Community people support setting aside forest reserves for future generations.
4. Government and community should agree to set aside forest areas for future use.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts of protected areas:

1. Animals from the reserve will destroy farm crops and human lives.
2. Movement of people will be restricted in the reserve area.

Recommendations:

1. FDA should carry on awareness programs about protected areas and protected animals.
2. FDA, NGOs, and communities should have a strong law to protect the forests and wildlife.
3. We need to protect the areas and still be able to support the peoples' livelihoods.
4. We want the animal and plant species to increase and be protected.
5. FDA should find a way to protect the community from wildlife populations in the reserve.
6. Community people should take care of the resources from the forest for future development and improvement.

C. Mining

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts of mining:

1. Increased financial strength
2. Good jobs and increased self employment
3. Employment for the youths
4. Business can be good
5. Employees of companies will socialize with the community

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of mining:

1. Mining can spoil farmland and undermine food production.
2. Most people turn away from agriculture.
3. It reduces our farming areas by creating holes on the land.
4. It pollutes the water by dumping waste into streams and rivers.
5. It destroys the trees and reduces the quality of the forest.
6. It discourages our youths from going to school.
7. Only miners are benefiting from mining.
8. It destroys marriage between couples.
9. It transfers diseases from other countries (spread of STDs, STIs).
10. Small and often illicit miners evade government taxes, which leads to loss of revenue.
11. It increases the number of illegal foreigners entering the country.

Recommendations:

1. empowerment of people to engage in agriculture and stop illicit mining
2. a better mining policy be set up by the government
3. concerns from the communities should be addressed by government (FDA and MLME), communities, and NGOs
4. small and illicit miners do not recover most of the minerals, therefore contract should be given to an investor for improved mining
5. government should control mining to generate good revenue
6. The EPA should work with miners to see that our environment is protected

D. Agriculture (rubber, palm, etc.)

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Provides income for the private owner
2. Provides jobs for the community
3. Preserves the land from other usage that might destroy the land

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Rubber or palm plantations become private lands.
2. It decreases the land area.
3. It decreases natural vegetation.
4. It decreases forest land.

Recommendations:

1. There should be improved farming practices for sustainable land management.
2. Community should be cautious by apportioning land for plantation; people should not establish plantations anywhere they want.

THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN SINOE COUNTY

This section summarizes the outcomes of the regional consultation process of the ongoing Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Liberian forest sector and the Community Rights Law drafting process for Sinoe County. It covers activities undertaken by the consultation team and presents an overview of the process followed and the issues raised in Sinoe County.

Sinoe County hosts the Sapo National Park, the country's largest protected area. Over the last few years, miners and hunters have entered and occupied the park. The county also hosts several mining settlements; it shares the Gbukon Gedeh mining region with Grand Gedeh County. This region is said to hold the largest known gold deposit in Liberia. Mining and logging have occurred side-by-side in the county for about three decades now.

The regional consultation in Sinoe lasted from February 29 to March 6, 2008.

The Informal Consultative and Preparatory Meetings

Informal, grassroots-level meetings were organized in Sinoe to facilitate the selection of participants to the regional workshop in Greenville. These included meetings with youths and women's groups and local government officials in Greenville, as well as Bannah Wortah Township and Panama. A total of 64 persons participated in these meetings, 36 males and 28 females. The regional consultation culminated in a regional workshop that was convened in Greenville on March 5, 2008.

The Greenville Regional Workshop

The workshop in Greenville was convened on March 5, 2008. Participants were selected by their peers during the informal consultative meetings with the women and youth groups, selected towns and villages, and so on. A total of 30 persons participated in the Greenville workshop. Of this total, 12 were women. Following the opening formalities, including prayer and self-introduction, the team leader gave a brief presentation on the SEA to establish a context for the workshop. The presentation was followed by a period of questions and answers.

The Community Rights Law

Following the period of questions and answers, participants were divided into four focus groups including women, elders, youths, and others (local government officials, teachers, civil society). All the groups were given a set of questions designed to stimulate discussion under different thematic areas. These themes included elements of the CRL that had been discussed

and agreed upon by members of the Community Forestry Working Group. These elements included the vision and objectives of the CRL, elements to be considered when discussing community identity, community powers and duties, the role of FDA in the context of community-based forest management, and so on. Each group discussed these issues at length and returned to plenary to report. The presentations from the various groups were then consolidated and are presented below.

A. Vision and objectives: What do you expect to see in this law? What are the key things you want this law to address? What are your targets for community forestry?

The law should:

1. protect the community forest to benefit the community and future generation
2. provide that there should be incentives for the community when they allow logging companies into their area
3. provide that logging companies wishing to log in a community should meet with the community dwellers before going to the government
4. establish community rights to ensure protection of the forest
5. provide that logging will be accompanied by reforestation
6. provide for proper management of the forest resources
7. ensure that people should abide by the law by establishing string punishments for those who do not abide by it
8. for many years logging companies have been logging here and there is no tangible benefit to show for it; the development from logging revenue (schools, hospitals, roads, etc.) should reflect the value of logs extracted from our forest

B. Community identity: What is a community? How do you want us to define community? Should it be based on towns, clans, chiefdom, or district level? What should be the size of a community forest? Who should decide on the size?

1. Community is equal to a clan.
2. Community owns the forest and so should decide on the size of community forest.
3. The size of the community forest should be based on the size of the community. (community forest should be based on district)
4. Community forestry should be based on the size of the community.
5. The size of the community forest should be 50 percent of the forest within their area.
6. The size of community should be based on ownership (infrastructures, inheritance, towns).

C. Community powers and duties vs. role of FDA: what should the powers and duties of communities be? What role do they envision for the FDA?

1. The community owns the forest.
2. The community dwellers should decide on the size of their forest.
3. Power belongs to the community.
4. The community should be in charge of management and protection of the forest.
5. The community should decide how community forest should be controlled or maintained.
6. The community should ensure that locals are available at all times to take part in meetings.
7. The community should provide local resources/manpower as further contribution to community development projects.
8. Community should exercise their powers and duties for the benefit of the community people.

The FDA role should include:

1. formulating laws for the management and protection of the forest
2. holding consultations on forest usage
3. informing the community on any irregularity in the forestry sector

4. assist the community in securing the forest and proper management of the forest
5. help to educate the community members on forest management

D. Institutional arrangements: What kind of structures or layers of authority should be used by communities to exercise their powers and duties? How will these structures be formed or organized? Who should exercise these powers and duties? What will be their motivation (salary/honorarium/voluntary)?

1. The community should manage its forest at the clan level.
2. We should have incentive for the elected people (serving on committee).
3. We decide how much to pay them.
4. Members of the community should receive honoraria once there is money coming in from logging in their area.

E. Governance arrangements: How should communities exercise their powers and duties? What processes and principles should be applied (e.g., decision making rules and permits)?

1. Community must unite and work together to manage the forest.
2. A special committee on forest management should be set up and composed of chairman, co-chairman, etc., and include FDA.
3. The community must elect their own leaders to take care of forest-related activities.
4. We should have incentives for the elected people (honoraria).
5. We should decide how much to pay them.
6. A community committee, to be known as forest management committee, should be set up at the clan level.
7. Members shall be drawn from the clan, FDA, EPA, and conservation groups.
8. Established/elected committee must be respected.
9. People on the committee must be God-fearing.
10. They must be accountable.
11. The committee should be accountable to the community in that the community will make law that will govern the committee.
12. The committee should be established by vote.
13. The committee should use consultations, regular meetings and voting to make decisions.

F. Rights of individuals within the community: What are the rights of individuals such as women, youths, families, strangers?

1. Rights of individuals within the community shall be on the basis of the individuals' rights as enshrined in the constitution.
2. Women must have the right to attend meetings to decide on community issues.
3. Women's views should be respected.
4. All humans in the community should enjoy equal rights.
5. All should abide by the rules and regulations of the community.

G. Forest planning and land use: What processes and principles should be applied for forest classification? Who should do what?

1. Decision that will emulate from the Governance Commission should be the guiding principles.
2. Land use planning should involve stakeholder including the community, EPA, FDA, MLME, Agriculture, and Internal Affairs.
3. Women should participate in land use planning.
4. Land use planning should be based on district level.
5. Mining and logging should not be done on the same piece of land at the same time.
6. Community alone will not make decision that will affect the forest or environment.

7. Women must have the power to give go-ahead in forest operations just as the men.
8. The community should plan on what to be done with the community forest.
9. The community should survey their forest with FDA assistance.
10. The community should set aside forest to include portion for reforestation, tourism, farming, etc.

H. Transferable versus nontransferable community powers and duties: What powers, duties or responsibilities can the community outsource to third parties?

1. Communities should be allowed to contract third parties to help carry out some of their responsibilities.
2. Technical contract with specialized work can be outsourced, but ownership cannot be outsourced.
3. Lawyers or legal personnel should work with communities to draw up contractual agreements between the logging companies and the community.
4. The community should manage its share of the revenue for the benefit of the people.

I. Conflicts: How should disagreements or conflicts between different groups (e.g., companies and community, FDA and company, FDA and community, committees and their community members, etc.) be dealt with?

1. Any committee member that is found to be corrupt must be punished.
2. Pay fine or go to jail.
3. People with strong minds should be on the committee to settle conflict.
4. For minor cases involving the community and a company, the two groups should constitute a committee to handle them.
5. Enforce the laws and set up special conflict mediation committee in the community.

Recommendations: The law should be strong so that the communities get:

1. Better schools
2. Paved roads
3. Concrete camps (houses) so that the community can use them when the logging companies leave
4. Sawmills and plywood factories for more jobs
5. Concrete bridges instead of log bridges
6. Children's playgrounds
7. Church buildings

Issues relevant to the SEA

The session on the CRL was followed by group discussions on the elements of the SEA relating to commercial forestry, conservation and protected areas, mining, and agriculture in the context of their relationship to the forestry sector. The discussions focused primarily on economic, social and environmental implications of each of these activities; drawing on their past experiences. The reports from the various groups were consolidated and are presented below.

Participants were asked to discuss the SEA in the context of factors (social, economic, environment, etc.) that will likely change as a result of logging and the expansion of protected areas. They were further instructed to identify issues or concerns associated with these and present recommendations on how these issues or concerns could be addressed.

A. Commercial forestry

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts of logging:

1. It provides job opportunities (employment).
2. It helps in the national development drive (e.g., road construction).
3. It improves peoples' lives.
4. It empowers people.

5. It provides salaries that can be used for:
 - a. Buying sufficient/good food
 - b. Sending children to good schools
 - c. Sending families to good hospitals
6. It improves our socioeconomic and living conditions, or provide resources to improve our living conditions.

Negative economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Logging undermines food production.
2. Forest quality and value are reducing, there are less valuable trees and some forest products such as wild fruits and nuts are not easily accessible today.
3. Loss of wildlife.
4. Logging companies exploit the forest unsustainably.
5. Rainfall pattern is changing, erratic climate condition.
6. The quality and quantity of water in rivers and streams have dropped.
7. Logging can scare away animals.
8. The forest will be finished if there is no replanting.
9. In the past there was:
 - a. No consultations with the local communities
 - b. Whenever we asked, we were told that they the loggers have already spoken to the Big people
 - c. Very few of our people were employed
 - d. No good road infrastructure
 - e. No good health care
 - f. No better school system
 - g. No churches

Recommendations:

1. Logging companies should abide by the new forestry law.
2. Make law to address new issues.
3. FDA should buttress law enforcement more.
4. FDA should bring improvements to logging activities and create awareness within the community on the laws.

B. Conservation or Protected Areas

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Forest products—trees and animals will be protected
2. Very good business
3. Law will prevent hunting and farming in protected area
4. Conservation of our animals
5. Good water resources will be intact
6. Employment
7. Building of schools
8. High medicinal values

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Decrease in farmlands

Recommendations:

1. FDA should coordinate and monitor the activities of local and international NGOs in the conservation aspect.

2. FDA should set rules.
3. FDA and government need to enforce their powers, because there are illegal miners in the Sapo National Park.
4. FDA should help to protect the forest in consultation with the community.
5. There should be good working relationships between the community, FDA, international NGOs, and Liberian NGOs.
6. Government should reinforce FDA capacity.
7. Community people capacity should be built.
8. Community relationship with the FDA/INGOs is fair, but needs to be improved.
9. There is a need for a partnership between the community and FDA in protecting the park.
10. Discourage the illegal mining of the park and Butaw Oil Palm Company area.

C. Agriculture (Rubber, Palm, other plantations)

Positive economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Provides jobs and income opportunities.
2. Provision of more food (workers earn salaries and use that to buy food to feed their families).
3. It provides social services including schools and clinics.

Negative economic, social and environmental impacts:

1. Takes away more of forest lands
2. Makes farming difficult by its occupation of large areas of land
3. Suppresses local farming
4. Threatens food security
5. Depletes the land
6. Forest value lost as result of plantations

D. Mining

Positive economic, social, and environmental impacts:

1. Mining is a good thing because it brings self-employment and group employment.
2. People hire their own group to do mining for them.
3. Large miners provide social services.

Negative economic, environmental and social impacts:

1. It destroys the forest (trees are uprooted).
2. Soil is turned around.
3. Pollutes water.
4. Impedes farming and brings about hunger.
5. Unstable prices and increases in the prices of imported goods create hardship.
6. Spoils land (soil loses fertility).
7. Pits are dug and holes left behind.
8. Destroys forest.
9. Destroys animals as hunting increases.
10. Hunger in the area because few people are engaged in farming.
11. Turning soil around and blocking of water changes soil quality and quantity (e.g., pollution of surface water).
12. Use of chemicals pollutes ground water.
13. Destroys life forms in surface water.
14. Reduce quantity and quality of water in rivers and creeks.
15. Diseases and deaths due to poor sanitation.

Recommendations:

1. Mining should be mechanized and controlled.
2. The government should enforce the mining and conservation laws to deal with violators.
3. FDA, MLME, EPA, MOA, etc. should coordinate activities involving mining, whether small- or large-scale, in forest area.
4. The community must agree before mining.
5. There must be strong mining law.
6. MLME should ensure that mining laws are respected by all.
7. Laws should be implemented.
8. Statutory institutions including MIA, FDA, MLME should enforce mining laws.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The regional consultation process was meant to inform two interrelated processes, SEA and the drafting of the CRL. This section summarizes the key points that stakeholders should bear in mind in association with these processes.

As stated above, the feedback from the communities was mixed. It is important that those using the information presented in this report keep in mind that the local contexts, though similar in some respects, have their own peculiarities; therefore, issues that appear to be the same were not necessarily raised in the same context. Also, the results should be reflected upon from a broader perspective. Subjective interpretation may lead to erroneous conclusions. One example that stands out throughout the report is the persistent question about the resumption of logging. Taken alone, this could be interpreted as pressure from the communities to resume logging; however, if reflected upon in the context of the other issues that were raised in all the regions, especially marginalization and lack of benefits from logging, the picture that emerges is one of a need to restart logging in an environment that is different from what existed before. Therefore, to get a proper understanding of the issues, readers are urged to reflect on the issues presented while also taking full account of the associated issues that are presented.

The key issues—including benefit flow to the community level, lack of technical capacity at the local level, and the meaningful involvement of local populations—will have the greatest impact on the implementation of the forest policy and the national forest management strategy. All of these issues are critically important, considering that failure to address one will have serious consequences for the sector, even if the others are addressed. While communities strongly recommended a central role for themselves or a more meaningful involvement in the sector, they also acknowledged the capacity constraints they face. They see their involvement as the primary means through which their issues will be addressed and their interests protected. Therefore, their recommendations should not be neglected because of capacity constraints.

Concerns about bad leadership at the community level were raised. This was identified as one of the key factors that led to community-level conflicts in the past. Hence, strict rules on corruption should be adopted and high standards of accountability developed to safeguard community involvement in the sector. Proposals presented by the people themselves that are aimed at addressing these issues, including greater transparency, full and active democratic participation of the different segments of the population, adherence to the rule of law, are essential. They are a reflection of a new wave of thinking at the local level; this was summarized accurately by one participant: “I urge the women to take this workshop very seriously, because this time around there is no more ‘that the Monrovia people think’ or ‘when we say it what will happen?’ This time it is for everybody to participate and they will be heard.”

Because these are all linked to high expectations at the community level, they should be discussed with their long-term implications for forest governance and management borne in mind.

In summary, the key points relevant to the drafting of the CRL are as follows:

- Forest communities now have well-developed notions of ownership and control of their lands.

- The new law will have to accept or reject these notions in unambiguous terms. This is a critical and strategic choice that has to be made, and failure to do so could lead to conflicts driven by the uncertainties and the economic interest now associated with timber extraction on private lands.
- Communities have high expectations that the new law will protect their rights against commercial logging companies and preclude the negative impacts they associate with commercial forest operations.
- There is a need for the CRL to deliver on the objective of meaningful community involvement in the forest sector; participation, accountability, equity, and transparency are critical elements of this concept.

In summary, the key points relevant to the implementation of an integrated 3Cs forest policy and the SEA are:

- The issue of arrear salaries will likely reemerge as soon as commercial logging activities start, and unless clear policy decisions are made on this point and these are communicated to the affected communities, this could become a source of conflict.
- There is an overall lack of awareness among forest communities of the implications of the new forest management regime. This is evidenced, for example, by their lack of knowledge of the mechanics of benefit sharing as laid down in the new forest legislation.
- Although political and social interest in participating in forest management is high at a community level, there is little technical capacity. This could potentially create problems, not only when community interests are to be represented in negotiations between communities and logging companies on the social agreements to be entered into, but also in relation to the third C—community forest management.
- Forest communities view commercial logging as the sole indicator of economic value or activity in the forest sector and believe that to derive economic benefit from the sector they need to be involved in commercial logging. This focus on commercial logging at a community level is at odds with the stated policy of an integrated 3Cs approach to forest management, and it is clear that if a 3Cs policy is to be successfully implemented, additional awareness raising in terms of the new policy—as well as explanations of the practical implications of conservation and community forestry—are necessary.

Annex 2: **PRIORITIZATION OF ISSUES AND RESULTS OF RANKING WORKSHOP**

Adhering to principles of transparency and participation, this is a consolidated list of all of the issues raised in the SEA process to date. It has been drawn up and provided to the SEA team and key stakeholders from within the FDA, EPA, and other key agencies and ministries for deliberation and prioritization in line with the above-referenced objectives of the SEA. This prioritization will be the subject to an initial prioritization workshop on June 26, 2008, and subsequently published for comment in the scoping report. During the comment period members of the SEA team will interview key stakeholders to obtain their input on the initial set of prioritized issues. Prior to the finalization of the scoping report the full SEA team (i.e., the core members from the FDA and EPA as well as those from other key ministries) will reevaluate the prioritized issues in light of the survey results.

For ease of presentation the issues have divided into four thematic areas that correspond to the four situation assessments plus an area on emerging issues:

1. Social
2. Economic
3. Environmental
4. Legal and institutional
5. Emerging issues in the forest sector

For the current ranking of issues the stakeholders involved were given the following instructions:

1. Read the entire document first, as some issues may be captured under different headings from what you one might expect.
2. Review the complete list of issues and indicate in the columns on the right of the table whether or not a particular issue is strategic.
3. Add any issues that you feel are strategic, as defined above. Please include a brief explanation of why you feel the additional issues are strategic in nature.
4. After the initial review and the identification of issues you find to be strategic, return to the list and indicate the top three issues in each of the six groups that are most important from a strategic perspective. Include a brief rationale for your choice.
5. At the same time, indicate the three issues in each of the six groups that you feel are least important from a strategic perspective. Include a brief rationale for your choice.

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
SOCIAL ISSUES			
	<i>A combination of certain economic, institutional, and environmental issues are presented under this heading, as they have the potential to define how future interactions between these local populations, commercial forestry operators, government in general (and the FDA in particular), and nongovernmental organizations will occur; and those interactions could have either have negative or positive consequences for socially equitable forest management.</i>		
S1	<p>Communities reject lack of accountability from past logging companies</p> <p>Communities objected to the lack of accountability on the part of logging operators under the past compensation arrangements and expressed expectations that this would change. Examples provided included secret burials, lack of death benefits, taking land by force, granting concessions on private land, status of abandoned logs, unmet promises with regard to community benefits, and destruction of cash crops (damages to private property) without compensation. Many communities noted that in the past some commercial operators avoided their obligations to and agreements with communities by utilizing political connections.</p>		
S2	<p>Community awareness of the new integrated forest law, regulations and policy is very low</p> <p>Overall there is relatively little awareness of the details of the new forest legislation and policy (for example, the details surrounding the extent of community benefits available, and how those benefits will be delivered).</p> <p>At the community level there is an overall lack of awareness of the 3Cs approach to forest management.</p> <p>Overall lack of understanding of the rules and procedures regarding community decisions on allowing logging (confusion about how-to secure community land for logging; Texas International vs. Gbarzon District (Grand Gedeh)). Similarly there is no clarity on what actual decision-making powers communities have at a local level regarding forest management decisions. There is a lack of conceptual clarity on the concepts and definitions of "community," community forestry, and community forest management.</p>		
S3	<p>Community-level leadership, accountability, transparency</p> <p>Forest communities expressed concerns about poor leadership at the community level in previous dealings with logging companies. Under the new forest management regime, strict rules on corruption should be adopted and high standards of accountability developed to guide the local committees that would administer the community interactions with commercial logging interests and contracts.</p>		
S4	<p>Consultation and benefit sharing</p> <p>High expectations exist at the community level that they be consulted regarding future logging contracts, and that future agreements on providing community benefits and benefit sharing will be binding on the logging companies. Many stakeholders noted that the previous distribution of benefits from forest operations was not done equitably and stated that they hoped for an improvement under the new forest management policy.</p>		
S5	<p>Cultural impacts of developments in the forest sector</p> <p>These include impacts on the Sande and Poro.</p>		
S6	<p>Delays in logging</p> <p>Some stakeholders have felt that the delays in restarting logging operations is causing economic hardships due to lack of direct employment and lack of infrastructure development (specifically roads and bridges), which has increased the cost of transportation.</p> <p>Other community stakeholders said there is a perception that commercial logging will alleviate poverty in rural areas and thereby defuse discontent and cement political stability. It is clear that there is an overarching feel of a "need for forest revenue." While this has been acknowledged by virtually all stakeholders, a small number have queried whether or not some of this pressure is related to political patronage. Despite the reforms in the forest sector it is still said by some that "The big men mock and laugh at us."</p>		
S7	<p>Expectations concerning financial benefits from commercial logging</p> <p>There is keen anticipation for logging operations to commence; this is linked to the expectation of financial benefits logging operations could bring.</p>		
S8	<p>Focus in the community on commercial forestry</p> <p>There is an extremely strong bias, at the community level, in favor of logging as the preferred option for forest use. The notion of an integrated 3Cs approach to forest management is unknown at community levels. Conservation is recognized as a potential option for forest management, but the idea of community-based forest management as a policy or management system is unknown at community level.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
SOCIAL ISSUES (CONTINUED)			
S9	<p>Pressure on the commercial “C”</p> <p>There are strong political, economic, and social pressures for commercial forestry to restart, and these pressures are evident at all levels of government.</p>		
S10	<p>Ownership and entitlement</p> <p>Communities have felt marginalized and excluded under the previous forest management policies. The regional consultation showed evidence of an increasing claim of rights, summed up in this sentiment: “the people own the forest and everything in it.” This could indicate a growing local political rejection of continued marginalization once forestry operations begin under the new forest policies.</p> <p>Given the increased awareness of the debate surrounding land ownership and a growing political awareness, forest communities are claiming rights and objecting to what they see as top-down approaches from the government and FDA (examples of Sinoe and Nimba (park boundary) and Gbarpolu recent altercation with FDA).</p>		
S11	<p>Settlement of disputes arising out of logging contracts</p> <p>Community-level conflicts with logging companies, other interests, property owners, or community members should be dealt with according to the law. Conflicts directly related to the forest should be taken to appropriate authorities including the FDA for settlement.</p>		
S12	<p>Technical capacity</p> <p>Community members desire to be more involved in the decision-making process, although there is recognition of the need for increased technical capacity at a local level. Communities feel strongly felt that their interests should not be neglected because of capacity constraints.</p>		
S13	<p>Types of benefits shared between communities and logging companies</p> <p>Community benefits from logging contracts should include both direct benefits from employment as well as improved infrastructure (roads and bridges). Communities insist that any infrastructure should be better than that provided under previous contracts.</p>		
S14	<p>Unpaid salary arrears</p> <p>Forest communities expressed strong views that the unpaid arrears in salaries for forest workers should be met before additional logging contracts are issued in their areas. In some instances, communities felt that the government should play an active role in resolving this issue and even be responsible for payment of arrears.</p>		
SQ1	<p>Are there additional social issues that you feel are relevant from a strategic perspective to the successful implementation of Liberia’s integrated 3Cs forest policy?, If so please list them in the space below. Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
SQ2	<p>What are the top three strategic issues from a social perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
SQ3	<p>What are the least three important strategic issues, from a social perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are NOT strategic.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
ECONOMIC ISSUES			
Ec1	<p>Diminishing commercial viability of the forest</p> <p>Forest communities believe that the overall economic value of the forests has declined and that the commercial viability of forests is diminishing. This was summed up as “all the good logs are gone and big forest trees have been reduced due to repeated logging of the area.”</p>		
Ec2	<p>Economic expectations among forest communities</p> <p>Forest communities have high expectations regarding the amount and type of jobs that they would derive from the commercial logging industry.</p>		
Ec3	<p>Economic value of Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) not recognized</p> <p>At the community level there is little appreciation for the economic value of NTFPs or the possible restrictions to NTFP collection posed by protected areas and/or logging concessions. There was no explicit acknowledgement that NTFPs are also a source of economic benefits from the forest (e.g., purification, and pollination).</p> <p>In areas where issues related to hunting and/or the bush meat trade were raised, it was in the context of negative practices that needed to be curtailed and not positive economic opportunities that could or should be properly regulated.</p> <p>Forest communities view commercial logging as the sole forest economic activity with economic value, and feel that any economic benefit from the sector must be derived through involvement in commercial logging.</p> <p>At an institutional and policy level, there has been relatively little work done on NTFPs, and there are no estimates of the importance of NTFPs to the household, local, or national economy—or whether there is a regional trade in NTFPs. There has been relatively little development of markets nationally or internationally for NTFPs, although they are important (but economically not quantified) in local markets.</p> <p>Some stakeholders have noted that the current valuation of the forests focuses only on timber, and a more holistic economic value provided by Liberia’s forests would include not only timber but also NTFPs (including bush meat), as well as ecosystem services (for example, water</p>		
Ec4	<p>Economic policy issues</p> <p>The distribution of benefits to communities is different in forestry sector from that undertaken in the mining sector.</p>		
Ec5	<p>Employment in the forest sector:</p> <p>There is a high expectation from forest communities that commercial forestry operations will bring employment (and thus income) to the rural areas. This expectation is also present among stakeholders in Monrovia, many of whom feel that the forest sector will lead to the revitalization of the rural economy. Additional employment-related issues identified include dealing with the large number of former logging workers that are still unemployed and who pose a potential source of discontent and conflict. Employment opportunities for ex-combatants are also an issue that should be addressed in the SEA.</p>		
Ec6	<p>Forest Policy issues</p> <p>Little recognition at community or institutional levels of the nature or extent of benefits that could or should be enjoyed by the communities from the “other two Cs”— conservation and community forestry.</p>		
Ec7	<p>Local value addition</p> <p>Strong calls exist for there to be local value addition of cut timber; communities see this as a key element to ensuring that additional local economic benefits from commercial forestry.</p> <p>There are two complimentary perspectives. On the one hand, local value addition has the potential to create more jobs, and on the other hand local people will benefit from finished products such as sawn timber. The general perception is that if logging companies diversify into processing at the local level, it will create more jobs increase their income earning potential.</p> <p>The issue of value addition was brought up during the regional consultations and by stakeholders in Monrovia. There is thus a strong consensus to see value addition both local and national levels as an alternative to the exportation of round logs.</p>		
Ec8	<p>Management of forest revenues</p> <p>Some stakeholders noted that FDA revenue collection has been poor previously and needs to be improved especially in areas such as the collection of fines for noncompliance with forest regulations. Some community stakeholders have called for a permanent presence of FDA staff at all logging operations.</p> <p>Additional audit and verification measures needed to put in place to ensure that noncompliance or poor performance by the FDA itself should also be addressed.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
ECONOMIC ISSUES (CONTINUED)			
Ec9	<p>Ownership of forest resources</p> <p>Community feelings of ownership of “the forest and everything in it” are the underlying motivation for the expectations regarding the increase in benefits that should be passed on to the community under the new forest policies.</p>		
Ec10	<p>Practicalities of benefit sharing</p> <p>Forest communities have little understanding of the practicalities of how the 30 percent of land rental fees under the NFRL would be distributed to them. In some cases, the communities indicated that they did not want the government involved in the benefit distribution process.</p> <p>The mechanics of benefit distribution are currently still under development, and there are concerns from some stakeholders that benefits will not “trickle down” to people in the community.</p> <p>Questions have been raised about the economic value of the 30 percent land rental fees and whether or not this percentage ought to be increased.</p>		
Ec11	<p>Small and medium enterprises</p> <p>Some stakeholders queried the FDA’s economic model, which claims that the focus is solely on large commercial operators, and have asked to what extent the national forest policy and its implementation can assist the development of small and medium enterprises. In the forest sector these include chainsaw operators, pit-sawyers, charcoal producers, and artisanal miners.</p>		
EcQ1	<p>Are there additional economic issues that you feel are relevant from a strategic perspective to the successful implementation of Liberia’s integrated 3Cs forest policy?, If so please list them in the space below. Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
EcQ2	<p>What are the top three strategic issues from an economic perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
EcQ3	<p>What are the least three important economic issues, from a strategic perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are NOT strategic.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES			
	<p><i>A defining characteristic of the legal and institutional issues that have been noted in the Scoping process is that many relate to the drafting of the legislation governing community rights to forest lands. In part this is a reflection of the importance of this piece of legislation in its own right, and in part it is a reflection of the decision to consolidate the regional consultation processes for both the SEA and the CRL. The full list of issues relating to the community rights law can be found in the separate report on the regional consultation process.</i></p>		
LI1	<p>Capacity issues</p> <p>Some stakeholders questioned whether or not the FDA had the “field capacity” to implement and enforce the new forest laws and regulations.</p> <p>Some stakeholders felt that FDA capacity still needed to be built for it to be able to implement its new mandates, especially with regard to logistical support in law enforcement and in the area of community forest management.</p> <p>With regard to the FDA’s new mandate, some stakeholders noted that more work needed to be done to distinguish between a managerial function that the FDA could have over logging on private land and a law enforcement function.</p> <p>Some stakeholders within the FDA and conservation sector have noted that there is a need for additional donor coordination to ensure that the limited technical capacity available within the FDA can be accessed across multiple donor initiatives.</p> <p>Stakeholders within the FDA have noted that there is an ongoing need for capacity building within the FDA and a need to fund such activities. There has, however, been little done thus far on the strategic identification of capacity gaps, and it has been suggested that this ought to be one of the goals of the SEA: to identify what type of capacity building needs to take place and where it should be done.</p>		
LI2	<p>Community Rights Law and Land Tenure</p> <p>The key points arising from the regional consultation process in relation to the community rights law include the belief among rural communities that they “own the forest and everything in it,” and that the CRL needs to recognize this and respect local people and their land rights. Forest communities believe that they should be involved in decisions affecting the management of forest reserves, have a say in commercial forest operations, and have tangible benefits from commercial forestry operations in their areas. There is a strong movement toward the democratization of decision-making process and a rejection of an old-style top-down management approach. The final outcome of both the CRL and the work currently being undertaken by the Governance Reform Commission in relation to land tenure will have major implications for the relationship between the FDA and the forest communities and the way that forests are managed; these issues will be addressed in the assessment report of the SEA.</p>		
LI3	<p>Coordination across government</p> <p>It is clearly articulated by virtually all stakeholders that there needs to increased coordination between FDA, EPA, the MoA, and the MLME. What is less clear at this point is what the appropriate mechanism or mechanisms for this improved coordination would be. This is an area that will require receive more attention in the balance of the SEA. Examples that illustrate the need for increased government coordination include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logging and mining on the same tract of land • Separation of mining claims holders from that of forest concessions holders • Competing land uses being considered by different government agencies for land proposed as protected areas • The issuance of tax clearance certificates as part of the prequalification process was • another area in which additional increased coordination and cooperation were needed between the FDA and the Ministry of Finance • Multiple examples of MLME and FDA needing a mechanism to avoid conflicts on differing land use options—including Wologizi, Lake Piso, Putu mountains in Sinoe • Forest land use conflicts—for example, Wologizi mountain range designated for protection while LME has granted exploration license for BHP Billiton to conduct exploration in the area • Example of different treatment by different government departments: MoA deems certain animals to be pests, whereas the FDA classifies the same animals as protected • Granting agricultural concession without (or with limited) reference to FDA for guidance (Equatorial Biofuels expressed interests in securing a 500,000 ha land area in River Gee for plantations—area falls within proposed Grebo National Forest) • Concurrent and possibly competing land uses and permit processes for the same area of land • Mining and Forestry share many of the same strategic challenges in the same geographic areas and the absence of a common land use policy between MLME and the FDA creates problems. As noted by a stakeholder: “You cannot divorce mining from forestry in terms of impacts on the community and in terms of impact on development.” 		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL (CONTINUED)			
	<p>An additional area of concurrent and possibly competing mandates and jurisdictions in the forest sector was the involvement of agricultural businesses (such as Firestone and LAC) undertaking (rubber) wood processing, an activity that some stakeholders feel falls within the ambit of logging and thus within the FDA's jurisdiction. The question at stake here was whether nonlogging entities should be allowed to conduct logging operations. This is not currently clear in the draft National Forest Management Strategy.</p> <p>A lack of coordination between the Ministry of Finance and the FDA was highlighted in connection with the issuance of tax clearance certificates as part of the prequalification process. Some stakeholders have suggested that there ought to be a mechanism for coordination between Ministry of Finance and FDA, and also at an intra-agency level—for example, within the Ministry of Finance between the Bureau of Concessions and the Tax Collectorates in relation to the taxation of forest-related revenues.</p>		
LI4	<p>Integration of the 3Cs</p> <p>The commercial forestry sector has received by far the most attention among the 3Cs by government and donors both. The conservation aspect of forest management has been receiving an increasing amount of attention, but lags far behind the commercial sector not only in terms of applied resources but also possibly in terms of the conceptual models adopted. The least developed of the 3Cs is community forest management; in comparison with the two other Cs it is by far the least developed in terms of available resources, conceptual frameworks, and practical implementation. The formal government position as reflected in the policy documents aims for balance between the 3Cs, both in terms of resources and application across the country, but recent submissions made by the FDA in the process concerning the new CRL have offered the suggestion that a split be made across the country in a ratio of 30 percent, 30 percent, and 40 percent between Conservation, Commercial, and Community forest management. The implication of this suggestion, as well as of the overall balance and emphasis between the different Cs, is a key aspect that will be addressed in the assessment report of the SEA.</p>		
LI5	<p>Poor law enforcement and governance of existing legislation and policy</p> <p>A number of stakeholders stated one of the key challenges facing sustainable forest management in Liberia was a lack of enforcement of the existing laws. Some stated that the FDA did not have a strong history of enforcing its laws and regulations and that this had been a contributing factor to the corruption and mismanagement within the forest sector.</p>		
LI6	<p>Outstanding legal issues</p> <p>At this point it is still unclear how different permitting processes for potentially competing land uses fit together and which permit process should take priority. This lack of clarity affects strategic decision making in the forest sector. Specifically, which takes precedence in a particular area, mining or forestry (including all 3Cs of Commercial, Community, and Conservation)? How is this decision made, on what criteria, by whom, and within what participatory process?</p> <p>The differences in undertaking commercial forestry operations on private or deeded land: A problematic point of the current forest legislation was that no bidding process is necessary for privately deeded land—merely the consent of the land owner is needed for a valid logging contract, assuming the logging company is prequalified. However, deeded lands with concessions must also follow all rules and regulations in and under the forest law.</p> <p>The recognition of rights of private or deeded land granted during the Tolbert and Doe regimes.</p> <p>Confusion about allocation of concession on private or deeded land as a result of conflicting interpretations.</p> <p>The legalities and formalities governing negotiations of timber contracts between the private sector and private land owners have not been fully clarified.</p> <p>Conceptual clarity on what is meant by community forestry.</p> <p>What level of decision-making powers vest at which level of government for local forest resource allocation?</p> <p>Community expectations with regard to the content of the community rights law and the benefits accruing to them from logging and other forest uses.</p> <p>Institutional capacity in the field, particularly with regard to community forestry.</p> <p>Need to develop legal guidance on intersectoral decision making covering issues affecting the forest sector.</p> <p>Consequences of there being no land-use planning legislation.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES (CONTINUED)			
LIQ1	Are there additional legal and institutional issues that you feel are relevant from a strategic perspective to the successful implementation of Liberia's integrated 3Cs forest policy? If so, please list them in the space below. Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.		
LIQ2	What are the top three strategic issues from a legal and institutional perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.		
LIQ3	What are the least three important legal and institutional issues, from a strategic perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are NOT strategic.		

EMERGING ISSUES			
Em1	<p>Biofuels and other agroforestry connections to forest management</p> <p>There has been an increase in interest in the potential introduction of biofuel plantations (for example, in River Gee, where a proposed plantation project fell within the area for the proposed Grebo National Forest), and a number of proposals have been discussed with the MoA; but it is unclear how Liberia's forest policy and management would deal with these proposals, particularly if they were to involve the clearing of existing forest lands for plantation purposes.</p> <p>A separate example of the need for increased policy links between the FDA and the MoA relates to the timber derived from old rubber plantations. Whose jurisdiction (the FDA's or the MoA) are these trees under?</p>		
Em2	<p>Climate change/carbon financing mechanisms</p> <p>Despite not receiving much attention in formal forest policy documents to date, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of addressing climate change concerns in the management of Liberia's forests, and a number of initiatives have started: For example, there was a delegation of Liberian government members to the COP in Bali where a side event on Liberia was held; a proposal for "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation" (REDD) has been prepared by Conservation International and the GoL. At present, however, there is little actual information available on the possible impacts that climate change could have on the Liberian forest, or on the vulnerabilities Liberia's forest systems could have to possible changes in climate; and the government has not adopted a formal policy in relation to the role that Liberia's forests could or should play in accessing potential funding under the various carbon financing mechanisms.</p>		
Em3	<p>Coordination among donors and development agencies</p> <p>Coordination between various donors and development agencies can be improved—a fact that has been recognized by the key donor coordination body within the forest sector: the Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI). The LFI should reformulate its role after the lifting of the UN sanctions and define new mechanisms of cooperation and coordination. The need for improved coordination can be seen from the multiple demands made on FDA staff. The pace of reform has been high, and multiple new initiatives have been introduced since the elections. Some stakeholders from within the FDA have voiced concerns over the number of new concepts that have been introduced—each of them valid, but which, when taken together, have created extraordinary demands on the technical staff within the FDA. New issues introduced include chain of custody, a new management and financial tracking system within the FDA, the new CRL, and discussions and initiatives relating to carbon financing mechanisms (including REDD). Technical staff members within the FDA have noted that there need to be more links between these initiatives and the overall strategic plan of the FDA, to allow them to more easily incorporate these initiatives in their daily work plans.</p>		

BANKING QUESTIONNAIRE

NO.	ISSUE	STRATEGIC V	STRATEGIC X
EMERGING ISSUES (CONTINUED)			
Em4	<p>Forest curricula</p> <p>The technical skills required for a successful integration of the 3Cs in Liberia are perhaps different from those traditionally required in Liberian forest management. For example, some stakeholders have noted that the current curriculum for forestry (dated 1978) that is taught at the University of Liberia does not deal with the emerging issues in the forest sector. They argue that a continued focus on the skills required for commercial forestry operations will jeopardize “the other two Cs of community and conservation.”</p>		
Em5	<p>Nationwide strategic decision making</p> <p>Currently there appears to be no national strategic policy decisions on how to deal with emerging issues in the forests sector (e.g., carbon funding and bio fuels).</p> <p>Stakeholders commenting on these developments noted that there was strong political support for these initiatives, but limited understanding of the environmental and social consequences attached to such decisions. It was suggested that the SEA address these issues, as they would directly affect how the government chose to administer the forestry sector.</p>		
Em6	<p>Pit-sawing</p> <p>Currently pit-sawing activity provides all timber used in the construction industry, yet formally it is illegal. Timber produced through pit sawing provides some revenue to the FDA, and anecdotal evidence suggests that communities are self-regulating the access of pit-sawyers to the areas that they control. What remains clear is that pit-sawing, defined by some as “a necessary evil,” is an area that requires intervention. Not only is the government losing revenue, but the industry is not currently regulated and poses significant environmental risks in the long term.</p>		
EmQ1	<p>Are there additional emerging issues that you feel are relevant from a strategic perspective to the successful implementation of Liberia’s integrated 3Cs forest policy? If so, please list them in the space below. Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
EmQ2	<p>What are the top three strategic issues that are emerging in the forest sector? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
EmQ3	<p>What are the least three important emerging issues, from a strategic perspective? Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are NOT strategic.</p>		
SEAQ1	<p>Are there additional issues that you feel should be included in the SEA? If so, please list them in the space below. Be sure to include a motivation why you feel these issues are strategic.</p>		
SEAQ2	<p>Of all the issues raised in the above lists, including any that you have added, what, in your opinion, are the top three strategic issues that should be included in the SEA? Be sure to include a motivation.</p>		
SEAQ3	<p>Of all the issues listed above, what three issues fit least in the definition of strategic, and should thus be excluded from SEA?</p>		

RESULTS OF THE RANKING WORKSHOP

The ranking questionnaire presented above was deliberated by the SEA team, comprising staff from the FDA and EPA. As part of this prioritization process, the group of national experts discussed the ranking questionnaire and then split into two groups, each of whom proceeded to rank the issues on the basis of selecting the three most important and three least important in each area. The top three issues from each group in each thematic area form the basis of the prioritized issues.

As a result of the suggestions made during this process, certain issues that were originally split out into separate points were combined. The presentation of issues in Section 4 of this report, as well as the prioritized issues noted in Section 5 of the report, reflect these suggestions. For example, the issues that were presented as Social issue 1 “Communities reject previous lack of accountability from logging companies,” and Social Issue 3 “Community leadership,” have been combined into Section 4.1.1 of the scoping report, which has attempted to capture these points under the heading of “Forest communities have rejected “business as usual.””

It should be noted that during the prioritization process the following reduction and consolidation of issues took place.

		ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE RANKING QUESTIONNAIRE	PRESENTATION OF ISSUES IN THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT ON THE SUGGESTION OF COMBINING CERTAIN ISSUES	ISSUES RANKED BY BOTH GROUPS IN THE PRIORITIZATION PROCESS
1	Social issues	14	10	2
2	Economic issues	12	10	4
3	Environmental issues	9	8	4
4	Legal and institutional issues	16	6	4
5	Emerging issues	6	6	5

From the above table, it seems clear that there is general agreement among the members of the SEA team on the priority issues in the first four areas. There is less agreement on what constitutes the priority emerging issues that need to be addressed in the forest sector. The ranking process by the SEA team did not, for example, highlight carbon and climate change related issues as a priority. However, given the interest that is currently being shown in this area, IUCN, SDI, and ProAct felt that this should be identified as a priority emerging issue of equal significance and, consequently, the scoping report outlines all six issues identified as issues emerging strategic significance.

The results of the ranking process undertaken by the two groups of the SEA Team are presented in the tables on the following pages.

NO.	SOCIAL ISSUES: STRATEGIC V	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
S1	Communities reject previous lack of accountability from logging companies	Priority 1. Addresses accountability and benefit sharing	Priority 2. To avoid recurrence of the conflicts between communities and companies because of commercial operator avoiding obligations
S3	Community leadership	Priority 2. proper management of resources	Priority 3. Safeguard benefits and ensure community
S10	Ownership and entitlement	Priority 3. land tenure is a very important issue	Priority 1. ownership issues are unlikely to be completely resolved in the years to come

NOTE: Issues S1 and S3 were, on the suggestion of the ranking team, combined and have been presented in the draft scoping report as Section 4.1.1 Forest Communities have rejected “business as usual”

NO.	ECONOMIC ISSUES: STRATEGIC VT	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
Ec3	Economic value of Non-amber Forest Products (NTFPs) not recognized	Priority 1: Availability of jobs	Priority 3: Undermines or overshadows the need for proper management of NTFPs
Ec8	Management of forest revenues	Priority 2: Proper management	
Ec1 1	Small and medium enterprises	Priority 3: Deals with poverty reduction and job creation	Priority 2. will bring about community empowerment and reduction in the level of poverty
Ec9	Ownership	<i>Captured in S10 but considered important by G1</i>	Priority 1. Potential for conflict b/w communities and government and communities and loggers will lead to insecurity of investments

NO.	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: STRATEGIC VT	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
Env1	Cumulative environmental impacts	Priority 1: Intersectoral collaboration in NRM is weak	Priority 2: because this exacerbates the threats this poses to human and environmental health; considering the harms to forests
Env4	Expansion of the protected areas network	Priority 2. Enhanced conservation activities protect endangered flora and fauna. Potential area for conflict if proper conservation is not done. And if alternative livelihoods are not provided	Priority 3: forest management or conservation plans should address rural livelihoods, focus on poverty reduction and the exclusion of communities
Env6	Reforestation issues	Priority 3: mitigation of habitat loss and protection of species	
Env8	Species loss and habitat destruction		Priority 1: poses the greatest threat to the environment

NO.	LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: STRATEGIC VT	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
L11	Capacity issues	Priority 1: The need for capacity building for effective implementation of policies	
L12	Community Rights Law and Land Tenure	Priority 2: Provide community responsibility	Priority 1: the CRL and Land Tenure if not properly addressed have the [[AU: have the what?]]
L13	Coordination across government	Priority 3: Inter-sectoral collaboration and minimize environmental degradation	Priority 2: this poses major challenges to proper land use planning and prioritization of development or economic activities. It also poses long-term problems for forest management
L14	Integration of the 3Cs		Priority 3: this is the foundation or pillar of the forest policy

NO.	EMERGING ISSUES: STRATEGIC VT	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
Em6	Pit-sawing	Priority 1: This is the only means of getting timber on the local market; however the issue will be addressed when full-scale logging begins with the establishment of sawmills	
Em5	Nationwide strategic decision making	Priority 2: the involvement of people in rural areas in the decision-making process	
Em3	Coordination among donors and development agencies	Priority 3: the involvement of the donors will help provide funding for the other 2Cs; conservation and community	Priority 2: this has direct implications for the application of scarce resources
Em1	Biofuels and other agroforestry connections to forest management		Priority 3: it hampers food security, has complex environmental and social implications; but there is little recognition of these issues by government
Em4	Forest curricula		Priority 1: it is the key underlying factor for the current mindset within the FDA; limited understanding of social and development issues in the forest sector

NO.	ISSUE	GROUP 1	GROUP 2
SEA10	The SEA should be used to fill in the conceptual gaps in community forestry.		X
UNRANKED ISSUES		GROUP 1	GROUP 2
SEA4	The SEA should be used as an early warning mechanism for potential environmental problems	X	
SEA7	The SEA should include an assessment of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), consider how environmental issues are covered in the PRSP, and consider the implications of land tenure on poverty reduction.	X	
SEA8	The SEA should be used to increase government coordination.	X	
SEA10	The SEA should be used to fill in the conceptual gaps in community forestry.	X	

Annex 3: **CASE STUDIES OF THREE SELECTED SITES: BUTTER HILL, KPAYAQUELLEH, AND DULAY**

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the case studies is to help inform policy discussions by providing practical examples of how the 3Cs are working in actual field contexts. The study looks at the practical implication of possible alternatives identified during the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) so as to help define specific actions needed for implementing the recommended approach to minimize negative potential priority environmental and social concerns/impacts associated with the 3Cs.

METHODOLOGY

Site Selection

Six possible areas were identified by the SEA team to illustrate the practical application of forest policy in Liberia. In the course of several meetings, a number of decision criteria were established that would allow the potential case study sites to be ranked against each other. Although the terms of reference for the SEA required that two case study sites be chosen, the team felt that a similar approach to that which had been adopted for the regional consultation process would be beneficial. Consequently it was decided to undertake case studies at three locations. The entire field team would visit the first location to test the methodology adopted and would then refine this before undertaking a separate case study in another location.

Case Study Selection Criteria

The case studies are meant to illustrate the 3Cs policy implementation in practice. Locations would be chosen to illustrate some of the key points raised in the SEA. The information from the case studies would complement that obtained during consultations in the SEA and from the four situation assessments covering the social, environmental, legal, and economic aspects of the 3Cs policy.

Possible Case Study Topics and Locations

The SEA team reviewed the issues that had been raised in the scoping process and identified six possible areas that would illustrate the practical application of forest policy in Liberia. In the course of several meetings, a number of decision criteria were established that would allow the potential case study sites to be ranked against each other. Although the Terms of Reference for the SEA required that two case study sites be chosen, the team felt that a similar approach to the one that had been adopted for the regional consultation process would be beneficial. Consequently, it was decided to undertake case studies at three locations. The entire field team would visit the first location to test the methodology adopted and refine the methodology as needed. The team would then undertake a separate case study in another location.

Table 1 summarizes these discussions and presents the six potential case study locations, as well as the decision criteria used to choose among them.

TABLE 1: Proposed Decision Making Matrix for Case Study Site Selection for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Liberian Forest Sector

	COMMERCIAL			CONSERVATION (PROTECTED AREAS)		COMMUNITY	MINING			AGRICULTURE		TOTAL	REMARKS
	TSC area	FMC area	Pit-sawing	Proposed	Protected	(formal community structures present)	Informal	Industrial	Explo.	Tree crops (plantations)	Shifting cultivation		
Morweh	x	x	x	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	x	5	
Putu Hills	x	x	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	x	4	
E. Nimba	-	-	x	-	x	X	x	-	-	x	x	6	A
Kumgbor	-	x	x	x	-	-	x	-	x	x	x	7	A&B
Salayea	-	x	x	-	-	-	x	-	-	x	x	5	B
Kanwheaken	x	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	x	3	

The following sectors were used to select the three study sites: Forestry (commercial—timber sales contracts [TSCs], forest management concessions [FMCs], pit-sawing); conservation—proposed, actual; community); Mining (informal, industrial, exploration); and Agriculture (tree crops, shifting cultivation). Sites with potential interactions between the sectors were identified. The three sites with the highest number of interactions with the activities in the three sectors were chosen and confirmed with the Forest Development Authority (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the case studies. These sites are Butter Hill, Grand Cape Mount County; Kpayaquelleh, Lofa County; and Dulay, Nimba County (see maps of these locations at the end of this report).

The ranking exercise resulted in the following sites being selected for the case studies:

- East Nimba
- Kumgbor area of the Gola National Forest
- Salayea

These sites allow the SEA team to examine the application of an integrated 3Cs policy in TSC and FMC areas, as well as protected areas. This was meant to assess how local communities and other stakeholders understand the community and conservation aspects of the forest policy and how these relate to commercial activities. Aspects considered for a TSC/FMC site are the processes that informed the selection of these areas for commercial activities, the manner in which these activities were implemented as well as the manner with which communities responded. Potential conflicts between sectors as identified in the SEA were also assessed.

Subsequent to the ranking of the sites by the SEA team, the FDA team members maintained that the Kumgbor area falls within Gbapolu County, where there had earlier been difficulty getting the TSCs accepted by citizens. It was felt that the risk of being rejected by another community of that county would be high. It was therefore felt not to be prudent to go to Kumgbor and, if rejected, return to the drawing board to select a new site; hence, the team selected Butter Hill, which is within a TSC. There is high bush meat hunting activity close to the proposed Gola Nature Reserve (one of three proposed protected-area networks [PANs]), and it is an area with very high mining activity. There is also shifting cultivation in the area, making it to fit the selection criteria.

Field work

The two-step approach that was adopted for the data collection is as follows:

1. Interviews of the relevant government agencies in Monrovia to obtain policy perspectives and the official position on what should be happening on the ground at the three selected case study sites. The team also reviewed parts of the SEA scoping report that relate to the issues to be examined on the ground.
2. Key informant and group interviews to identify what the practical reality is at the three selected case study sites as compared to the information obtained in Monrovia in (i) above. To facilitate the interviews, guide questionnaires were prepared for the priority thematic areas that were identified during the SEA. After the introduction of the study concept and objectives to the group of representatives of the sites visited, they were divided into three groups as follows in consultation with them:
 - Group 1: The town chief, chiefs of satellite towns, Butter Hill Chief’s Council, elders, tribal governors, the Community Forest Development Committee (CFDC) members, and church leaders, collectively referred to as “elders” in the report.
 - Group 2: The youth, including hunters, miners, and teachers/school administration—referred to in the report as “the youth.”
 - Group 3: Women’s co-op, midwives, petty traders, Marketing Association, and Farmers’ Association—“the women” in the report.

Separate interviews were held by team members with key informants at the case study sites when appropriate as to cross-check the findings from the above group discussions. The results of the respective group discussions were reviewed and compared by all members of a team and harmonized into one summary report. The summary report was subsequently validated with the representatives of the case study sites. The results for the three study sites are presented in Sections 2–4 below.

All three teams combined to undertake the assignment at the first site (Butter Hill) before subsequently separating to do the other two remaining sites (Kpayaquelleh and Dulay). This was meant to ensure consistency in the methods used for all three study sites.

CASE STUDY SITE 1: BUTTER HILL, CAPE MOUNT COUNTY

Social Issues

Logging and mining

There were no consultations with the community with regards to logging or gold mining that was undertaken in the area in the past. The infrastructures constructed by the logging firms—such as bridges and culverts—were not durable, and hence the benefits in this respect were not sustainable.

The stakeholders in the community were of the opinion that there should be full consultation of the community before the issuance of any mining or logging license or permit.

With regard to mining, there are two teams that are regulating affairs on the ground. There is a management team that works on behalf of the community to ensure that the artisanal miners pay Butter Hill the agreed share of the proceeds of the mining activities. The other is the authority team, which issues permits to prospective artisanal miners to facilitate the issuance of mining licenses by the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME).

The suggested procedure by the community with regard to mining is for an applicant to indicate his or her intention to the town chief. The town chief thereafter consults the occupant of the land concerned before the case is processed through the mining chairman to the mining agent, who in turn should refer the applicant to the MLME in connection with the issuance of the mining license or permit.

The community’s expectations from the mining and logging companies that may operate in their area include the provision of schools, health facilities, good roads and concrete bridges, recreation and training facilities, jobs, microcredits, water and sanitation, and market buildings.

Land ownership and access to forest land

Land can either be owned in the community by statutory (i.e., deeds) or traditional means. In the latter case, the community land has been divided among families and handed down from generation to generation within a given family. Natural features and soap trees are used to mark the boundaries of the lands. The control of access to forest land is through the town chief, elders, and occupants of the land in question.

Economic Issues

Major NTFPs from the forest and their value

The indicated major NTFPs used in the community include bush meat, fish, rattan, bitter root cane, bitter cola, thatch, poles, plant medicine, bamboo, honey, fruits, nuts and water. All NTFPs are considered to be very important for the livelihoods of the members of the community. Value could not be placed on them.

However an example was given with respect to rattan that is mostly used, instead of nails, in holding roof rafters together. The opportunity cost of using rattan for a typical three-bedroom house in the community was about L\$1,500 or 30 packets of nails.

Economic activities and abandoned logs

The economic activities that are undertaken in the community include gold mining (very intensive alluvial mining involving citizens of neighboring countries, including Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Mali), hunting, petty trading, farming, fishing, firewood collection, and collection of building materials (e.g., poles and thatch).

There are abandoned logs and pit-sawn lumber near Camp Israel, about nine hours' walk through the forest from Butter Hill. The distance limits utilization of these products by the community. However, some of the logs are collected for domestic use, including the fabrication of doors and windows of houses.

Benefits sharing

The community is aware of the 30 percent of land rental, US\$1/m³ benefits from logging and the responsibility for the management of such funds by the community. The benefits expected by the community were reiterated here. These include such social services as water health, road and bridges and job creation. There is no mobile phone service in the area. Hence the community hopes that advent of forest harvesting activities will lead to the installation of such services in the area.

When asked which commercial forest activities the community would like to be involved in, the responses were: commercialization of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (e.g., rattan, medicinal plants, bitter root canes), commercial agriculture, chain sawing, working with logging companies.

Environmental Issues

Mining and logging activities in the same area

The community indicated that the execution of mining and logging activities at the same place at the same time will create serious conflicts. Hence, they stated that they will not tolerate such overlapping activities in their forests and that they must be undertaken in separate areas. The risks mentioned include water pollution, mining pits as dangerous (for humans and vehicular traffic), and the fact that farming would be impossible after mining.

Extension of traditional protected forest areas

There are sacred bushes for both women and men in the area where no activities are allowed. The youth and the women stated that there is no need for the expansion of such bushes. The elders, on the other hand, would like the sacred bush areas expanded as the population of the community increases.

Suggestions for forest management

The suggestions given by the community as to how the forest may be made to grow after harvesting include allowing the bush to fallow; replanting of trees; the retention of fire-resistant trees on farms; and the retention of those big trees—which require a great deal of time and effort to cut—as mother (seed) trees.

In the opinion of the community, there are no specific tree species whose numbers are decreasing in the area.

Legal and Institutional Issues

Knowledge of forestry laws and intersector cooperation

The community has seen some FDA staff at work during boundary line cutting and socioeconomic surveys. Assessment was that the quality of work was generally good.

The community is aware of the National Forest Reform Law (NFRL 2006). They could not, however, differentiate between the CRL and the NFRL. The elders and youth have not heard about the 3Cs. Women are aware of the individual Cs.

The government agencies that are operating in the area are the MLME, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Liberia Marketing Agency (LMA), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Ministry of Education (MoE), and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The community has never seen any group of them working together in their area, and no conflicts have been observed between any of them.

Involvement of the community in conservation and commercial forestry

The community acknowledged that it is possible for conservation and commercial forestry to be undertaken with their involvement. However, they were more interested in obtaining control over their own forests than in only being consulted.)

Emerging Issues

Replacement of forests with biofuels

The youth and the women would not accept the clearance of large portions of the community forests for the purposes of establishing plantations of, say, rubber or firewood species. They would like to protect the indigenous species for themselves and the future generations. The elders, however, were open to such a venture so as not to forestall developments in the area. Their decision would be dependent on negotiations with the interested party.

Climate change

All community members interviewed acknowledged that there have been changes in the weather pattern. The dry season and rainy seasons are mixed up and not predictable. The reasons given include deforestation, the world coming to an end, and “white people’s” space exploration.

Carbon financing

The community would not accept payment to set aside part of their forest without using it as this would have adverse effects on their livelihoods.

Pit-sawing

There are no pit-sawing activities in the area with the exception of those done to produce lumber for domestic use. It was reported that pit-sawing goes on in the surrounding communities. It can therefore be deduced that the generally bad condition of the access road to Butter Hill may have prevented commercial pit-sawing in the area.

Other Issues

Community forests and private lands

There is communal forest in the area. The size could not be indicated. About half of the community forest is earmarked for farming, while the other half is meant for hunting and the exploitation of NTFPs.

There is private land that is covered with deeds and tribal certificates.

There have been no land disputes in recent times. Past disputes were resolved through traditional means.

Community Forest Development Committees

A Community Forest Development Committee (CFDC) has been formed in the area in connection with the TSC in the locality. However, some dissatisfaction was expressed about the manner in which representatives for Butter Hill were selected. An FDA team was said to have been in the area to organize the election of the CFDC members. The latter team provided a list of five towns (three from Porkpa District, including Butter Hill; two from Golakoneh District) that were expected to provide three representatives each for the election of the five executives of the CFDC on the following day at a nearby town, Benduma. Due to time limitations given by the FDA team, some satellite towns of Butter Hill were not consulted. In haste, the three representatives were appointed at a meeting at Butter Hill. It was learned that the elders and chiefs present upheld the process despite dissent from some of the community members present. Some members of the community are still dissatisfied with the disenfranchisement of Butter Hill's satellite towns and villages.

The FDA team indicated to the community that the town chiefs and elders were not qualified to stand for elections. The status of the chiefs and elders in this regard appears not to be well understood by the community. The community is opposed to the election of the CFDC chairman, whom they claimed is a government employee. It was eventually learned that the CFDC chairman is not a government employee.

The lesson that can be learned from the above is that the FDA should allow adequate time for the communities to elect their representatives.

TSCs/PAs

Other than a TSC, there are no protected areas (PAs). Apart from the hunters, the community is not aware of the TSC boundary. It was indicated that there are no farming activities within the TSC boundary.

The community has received a copy of the Justification Document with regard to the establishment of the TSC in the area.

Agriculture

Some of the community members engage in small-scale farming and requested support with extension services.

Hunting

Hunting is done in part of the community forest. There are local traditional bylaws that prohibit the hunting of certain animal species. The protected animals include lions, chimpanzees, elephants, leopards, and crocodiles, as well as pregnant animals. Other than the latter, the reason given for the protection of such animals is the fact that they are very dangerous to the whole community if they are wounded and don't die.

CASE STUDY SITE 2—KPAYAQUELLEH, LOFA COUNTY

Social Issues

Logging and mining

Five logging companies operated in the area in the past. These were Gateway, KLC, American Woods, Forest Hill Corporation, and Vanja. Only the chiefs were on the payroll of the logging companies, and the communities generally did not benefit from the logging activities. The bridges on the logging roads, which were constructed from logs, did not last.

There has been no mining in the area in the past. Only prospecting for gold is currently going on. The community proposes that before any prospecting or mining license is issued, a community committee must be consulted. Miners should also establish Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the communities before mining, and prospecting should not last for more than three months. (It has been learned that this is in fact the case for alluvial/artisanal mining.)

Land ownership and access to forest land

Traditionally, land was divided among the families in the community and has been handed down from generation to generation within the families concerned. "New entrants" pass through the community landlord. The landlord in turn meets the chief, who subsequently consults with the community to confirm that the land in question is not occupied.

The Gbarlin clan owns the land in the area, of which the town of Kpayaquelleh is part. The access to the forest land is controlled by the Gbarlin Resources Development Committee (GRDC).

Economic Issues

Major NTFPs from the forest and their value

The NTFPs in the area are as follows in accordance with the ranking by the community: (1) medicinal plants: Kojolobo (malaria), water bark (malaria), ganagana (skin rashes), Bushia/Nauclea spp. (bowel disorders, constipation), tree parts (bark, leaves, roots); (2) Food: walnuts, locusts, yam, bitter cola, palm, wild bush pepper, bush meat, water, country spices, fish, rattan, palm wine, honey, bitter roots, water ropes, Aframomium (pepper), bamboo worms; (3) minerals: gold and diamonds; and (4) construction material: poles, ropes, thatch, bamboo.

Economic activities and abandoned logs

The community is principally one of farming, with the principal crop being rice.

It was reported that there are many abandoned logs still lying in the forest. However, the community lacks the necessary capacity and resources to utilize them. The distance to the abandoned logs coupled with the bad conditions of the roads and bridges leading to them are also hindrances.

Benefits sharing

The youth and elders are aware of the expected benefits of 30 percent land rental and of US\$1/m³. The women, on the other hand, are ignorant of them. The elders and the youth appear happy with the expected benefit to the community. The youth are, however, skeptical about the effectiveness of its implementation. The expectations are that the pending logging activities will lead to the building of roads and bridges, employment, and the provision of school and health facilities.

If the community had the choice of being involved in commercial forest activities, their preferences would be pit-sawing and commercial logging.

Environmental Issues

Mining and logging activities in the same area

Logging and mining in the same place at the same time is not acceptable to the community, as they indicated that it will result in conflict and destruction of the land.

Extension of traditional protected forest areas

There are sacred bushes in the community. These include the Poro, Sande, Morlee, and Horn bushes. The women are indifferent to their expansion, while the youth do not favor it. The elders, on the other hand, are of the opinion that they should be expanded as the population grows.

Suggestions for forest management

With regard to suggestions in connection with how the forest can be regenerated after timber harvesting, the women proposed an eight-year fallow period. The three interventions suggested by the youth are planting after felling; letting land lie fallow 10–15 years in the case of shifting cultivation; and planting tree crops (e.g., rubber, cocoa). The elders suggested a fallow period, but were not specific on its length.

The women indicated that they used to collect Niangon seeds around the compound of the town to roast. But they can now be found far from town, indicating that the presence of Niangon may be declining. According to the women, farming and logging may be the cause of this decline. The youth and elders, on the other hand, were of the opinion that there is still plenty of Niangon in the forest.

Legal and Institutional Issues

Knowledge of forestry laws and intersector cooperation

All groups have seen FDA staff at work in the area in connection with socioeconomic surveys, forest inventory, and FMC boundary cutting, in addition to the sensitization about the expected benefits from the forests. The community's assessment of the work performance was positive.

The FDA has informed the community about the forest law for the community. They are happy for the involvement of the community this time around. The elders especially were appreciative of the bottom-up approach.

The government agencies operating in the area include MoE, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoH), MoA, FDA, MIA, and MoJ. The women and elders have never seen any group of them in a meeting in the area. The youth indicated that they have seen the teachers (representing MoE) meet with the town chiefs (representing the MIA). No one has seen any conflicts between the government agencies in the area.

The youth and the elders (though not the women) were aware of the NFRL and the 3Cs. The managing director of the FDA and an FDA team have been to the community to talk about them. The youth have a copy of the NFRL but have yet to read it.

Involvement of the community in conservation and commercial forestry

All groups interviewed were of the opinion that conservation and commercial forestry can be undertaken with the involvement of the community. The community's understanding of the term "community forestry management" is the management of the forest by local or traditional bylaws and their effective enforcement. In connection with the expected roles of the community in forest management, the youth suggested the determination of conservation areas and the setting up of a group or committee for mediation with timber firm that may be operating in the area. The elders proposed the provision of guards for the protection of the forest, as well as trained manpower for employment in the forestry activities. The women would participate by ensuring compliance with any agreement between the community and prospective timber firms.

Emerging Issues

Replacement of forests with biofuels

The feedback from the community with regard to the replacement of forests with biofuels was mixed. The women were in favor, as it will open up job opportunities. The youth indicated that this will depend on the contents of the MoU signed with the interested firms concerned, while the elders were of the opinion that it will not be acceptable until negotiations with the government confirm that there will be positive benefits to the community.

Climate change

The community members confirmed that there have been changes in the climate in the area during the past few years. According to the women, the rainy and dry seasons have swapped places and this is “the work of God.” The youth and elders stated that the water sources are getting dry, and the rain storms are heavier. This situation was attributed to logging without replanting by the youth, and the cutting of the big trees by the elders.

Carbon financing

With regards to payment for the community to conserve part of their forest, the women and the elders would not accept this, as they would like the future generations to have access to the forests for livelihoods. The elders are of the opinion that the Government of Liberia (GoL) will support them on this stand. The youth, on the other hand, would give this proposal consideration, as they believe it will help conservation of the forests and that the GoL can enforce it for the same reason.

Pit-sawing

It was acknowledged that there has been pit-sawing in the Kpayaquelleh area in the past. This has been stopped because of bad road conditions and no benefits to community. The former district commissioner did not give Kpayaquelleh its share of the tolls that he collected.

Currently, pit-sawing is undertaken under community-controlled conditions for housing and community development projects. Fuel is supplied to those with pit-sawing skills in the community to produce for the community or individuals.

Pit-sawing is being done on private land with agreements between the pit-sawyers and the landowners.

Other Issues

Community forests and private lands

There is a community forest for the town. The women have no idea about its extent. The elders knew but were not definite and indicated that it is very large. The youth were more specific and gave the towns on the boundaries as Gbonyea, Kpetehyea, New Town, Ganglota, Kpowasanyea, Gpaquata, Golu, and St. Paul.

There are private lands in the area. They are acquired traditionally through inheritance, as well as by tribal certificates. In the case of “new entrants,” a team composed of landlords, chiefs, and elders are responsible for apportioning land.

Generally, land disputes in the area are settled traditionally. The youth gave three examples of disputes in the area and how they were settled or are being settled as follows: (i) a dispute between two individuals from Kpetehyea and Kpayaquelleh was settled traditionally; (ii) the pit-sawing dispute between Kpayaquelleh and Ganglota has not been totally resolved because Kpayaquelleh has not yet received its part of the past benefits from pit-sawing; and (iii) there is an existing dispute between the Gbarlin clan and Gbarpolu County over part of the land around the Via River. According to the youth, the issue has been taken over by the Legislative Caucus of Lofa County. The elders confirmed the latter case, stating that it is pending and a complaint has been lodged with the House of Representatives.

Community Forest Development Committees (CFDCs)

A CFDC has yet to be formed in the community, but the youth are aware of the committee’s roles and responsibilities. A copy of the Justification Document with regard to the FMC in the area has been received, but the women are not aware of this. The youth have yet to study the document, while the elders indicated that the document has been accepted and will be used to guide logging in the FMC in the area.

FMCs/PAs

The elders and youth (though not the women) are aware of the FMC in the area. No FDA protection area was reported. The women are consequently unaware of the boundaries of the FMC. It was learned from the elders that they are aware of line cutting by an FDA team recently, but they do not know whether such lines form the boundaries of the FMC.

The women and youth have no idea about any farms within the boundary of the FMC. The elders, on the other hand, stated that some farms fall within the FMC in the area. According to the youth, there are a good number of timber species that are retained on farms; their size and the farmers' knowledge of their economic value make it difficult to cut them. It was learned that these are available for sale to timber merchants. This, while offering the potential for reasonable income for the farmers, would require the institution of an equitable compensation mechanism for the destruction of crops by felled trees.

Agricultural Issues

The crops that are farmed through upland and lowland, shifting cultivation in the Kpayaquelleh area, include rice, cassava, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, pineapple, and peanuts.

The elders and youth are unaware of any outside support for the farming activities in the area. Such support was confirmed by the women, who indicated that there has been the provision of seed rice and farm tools by such NGOs as CRS (KDRO), Concern, Red Cross, and DEN-L. No support from the MoA was reported.

Hunting

Hunting is done mostly in the forest with some done in the bushes in the area. The women are unaware of where hunting is done. There are local bylaws that prohibit the hunting of the following animals: leopards, elephants, bush cows, lions, baboons, hippos, and antelopes. The latter are protected because they are very dangerous to the whole community when they are wounded and not killed during hunting. In case any such animals are wounded, the offender will be made to pay for the cost of other hunters to stalk and eliminate the wounded animal.

CASE STUDY SITE 3: DULAY, NIMBA COUNTY

Social Issues

Logging and mining

There has been logging in the past—by ITC (before the civil crisis) and MGC (during the Taylor regime)—but it did not benefit the people. The companies made promises to the community but failed to honor them.

There is no mining currently taking place in the area. Only prospecting for minerals has been carried out in the area in the last few years. In the opinion of the community, the issue of mining licensing in the area should be done in a participatory manner through consultations with them. The expectations of the community from future mining activities in the area include the provision of social amenities and equitable sharing of revenue from the mining activities. They would like the activities of the mining companies in the area to be monitored by representatives of the community.

Land ownership and access to forest land

Land is owned through traditional inheritance of land allocated by the chief and elders to the families in the community.

Squatters are not allowed to plant perennial cash crops (cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber), but may plant food crops. This is meant to prevent the squatters from perpetuating their presence on land that is collectively owned by the community.

The community owns the forest lands with the elders and chief as their custodians. The access to the forest lands is controlled by the chiefs, elders, quarter chiefs, or family landowners.

Economic Issues

Major NTFPs from the forest and their value

The major NTFPs in the Dulay area are palm wine, palm nuts, rattan, thatch, round poles, ropes, bitter cola, ropes, honey, bamboo, bush pepper, water, fish and meat, fruits, and raffia palm fronds. The community regard these as very valuable, as they provide construction materials, food, and medicine that support the livelihoods of the community members.

Economic activities and abandoned logs

There are abandoned logs in the forests. The community did not take any action on them during the civil war. Any attempted action before the war was thwarted by the company (MGC) using the permit from the government as cover.

Benefits sharing

There is only an awareness of expectations from logging companies, which include the provision of safe drinking water, good roads, health facilities, and schools.

The community members would like to be involved in such commercial forest activities as the development and marketing of NTFPs, including rattans, raffia palm, cane for making furniture, pit-sawing to provide lumber for local use, and production of climbing rope for harvesting palm nuts.

Environmental Issues

Mining and logging activities in the same area

The community is against the implementation of logging and mining activities in the same place at the same time. They reasoned that it will create environmental problems and conflicts and pose danger to life and property.

Extension of traditional protected forest areas

There are sacred bushes in the forest for both men and women. But surprisingly, there have been encroachments on such bushes in the recent past. The community would like such bushes to be expanded through the cutting of new boundaries and for their effective protection to exclude activities like mining, logging, hunting, and farming.

Suggestions for forest management

Suggestions for growing forests after timber harvesting include allowing the bush to lie fallow to regenerate naturally in addition to the replanting of trees to replace those that had been cut.

The only plant species that was confirmed to be declining in numbers is koneh (Mano name) that was used to poison arrows in the past. The loss is attributed to deforestation through farming and logging activities.

Legal and Institutional Issues

Knowledge of forestry laws and intersector cooperation

The FDA has undertaken awareness creation with regard to protected area management, including the necessity for the community not to farm and hunt in the protected areas. The FDA's promise to build the headquarters of East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) in Dulay was not fulfilled, and the headquarters has been relocated to another town. The community is unhappy with this change, as they had incurred significant costs in feeding and paying workers to clear the land that was earmarked for headquarters in the town.

Unlike the women, the elders and youth were not aware of any forest law for the community.

The women could not express any opinion about the law, but they would like the law to be reviewed to facilitate the readjustment of the protected area boundary. The current proposed boundary line is considered too close to the town's farming area.

The government agencies that are operating in the Dulay area include the FDA, MoE, MoJ, MoA, MIA, and MoF. No meeting or coordination involving any group of these has been observed in the area. Nevertheless, no conflict has been noted between any of them.

There appears to be awareness about what the individual terms commercial, conservation, and community represent, but the 3Cs as a concept is not understood by the community.

Involvement of the community in conservation and commercial forestry

In contrast to the women, the elders and the youth indicated that conservation and commercial forestry can be implemented with the involvement of the community.

The suggested role of the community was to participate in the management and the monitoring of all conservation and commercial forestry activities.

Emerging Issues

Replacement of forests with biofuels

As a result of inadequate land for farming in the area, the community was unanimous in their disapproval of any proposal for the establishment of biofuel plantations in the area.

Climate change

The community confirmed changes in the climate in the area during the recent past. The timing of the rainy and dry seasons has not been as predictable as before. They attribute such abnormality to deforestation as a result of logging and farming.

Carbon financing

The youth and elders said the community would not agree to being paid for not using part of its forest. The women, on the other hand, would prefer to make a decision after the community negotiates with the interested party.

Pit-sawing

As a result of the bad condition of the roads in the area, there is no commercial pit-sawing. Pit-sawing is undertaken in the area for local purposes only, and access to trees for such purposes is regulated by the elders, the chief, and the affected landowners.

Other Issues

Community forests and private lands

There is a community forest in the area, but no estimate could be put on its extent. There are no private lands in the area. There is an ongoing land dispute with an adjacent village (Nyantuo) with regard to encroachments. The dispute has not yet been resolved and becomes tense when "brushing" time approaches for making new farms.

Community Forest Development Committees

There is no TSC or FMC in the area. Hence, no CFDC has been formed.

TSCs/FMCs/PAs

There is an area earmarked for protection (the ENNR), whose boundary is yet to be demarcated. The community stopped the line cutting when they realized the line was encroaching on their farming area. Farming activities did not occur beyond the proposed boundary of the ENNR this year, as the boundary dispute with the government (FDA) has not been resolved.

There is no agreement with respect to the areas earmarked for logging. The areas in question fall within the Zor clan's land, which Dulay and the adjacent towns share.

Agriculture

The farming activities in the area mainly involve shifting cultivation of such food crops as rice, cassava, plantain, and pepper. There are also plantations of cocoa, coffee, oil palm, kola, and rubber.

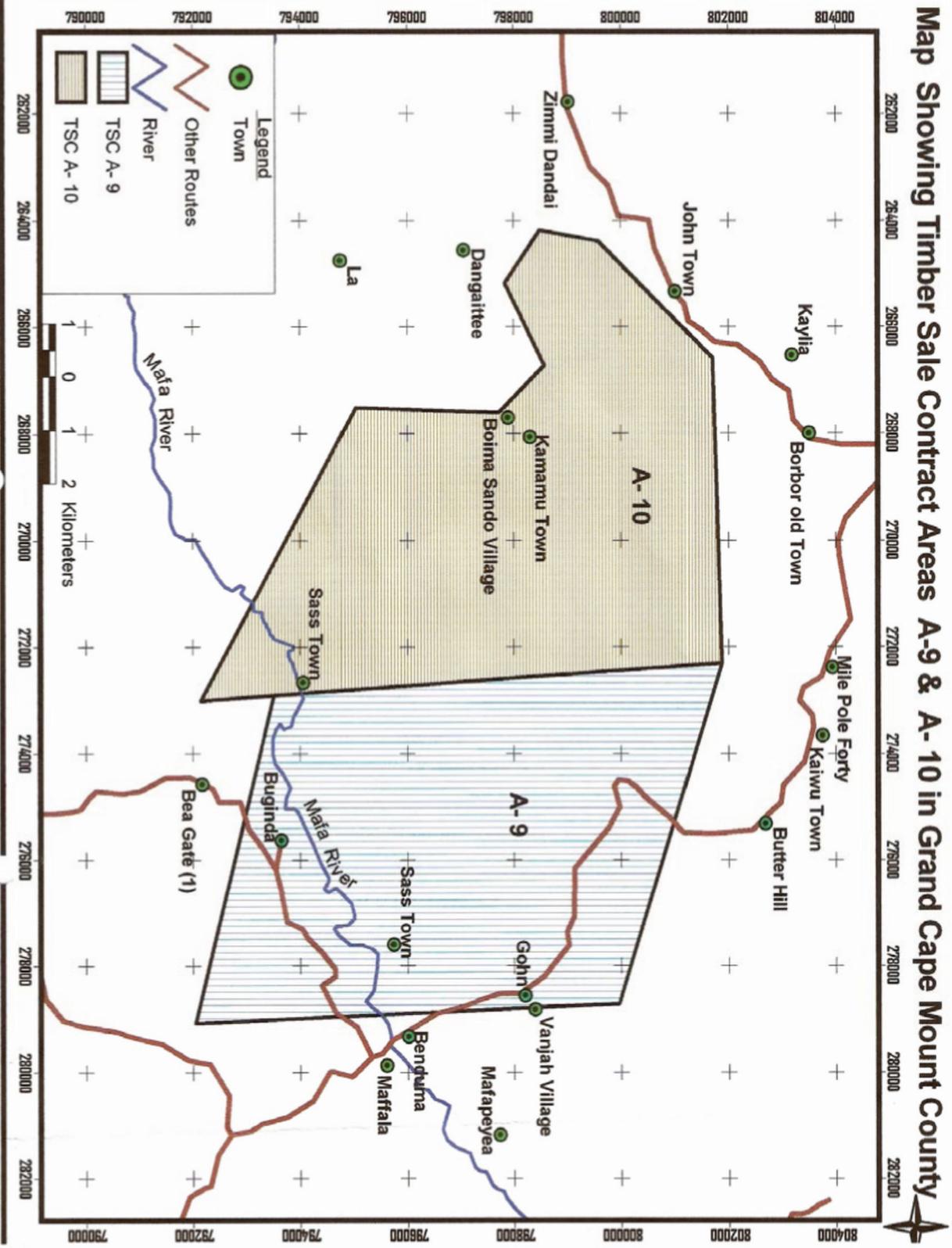
Hunting

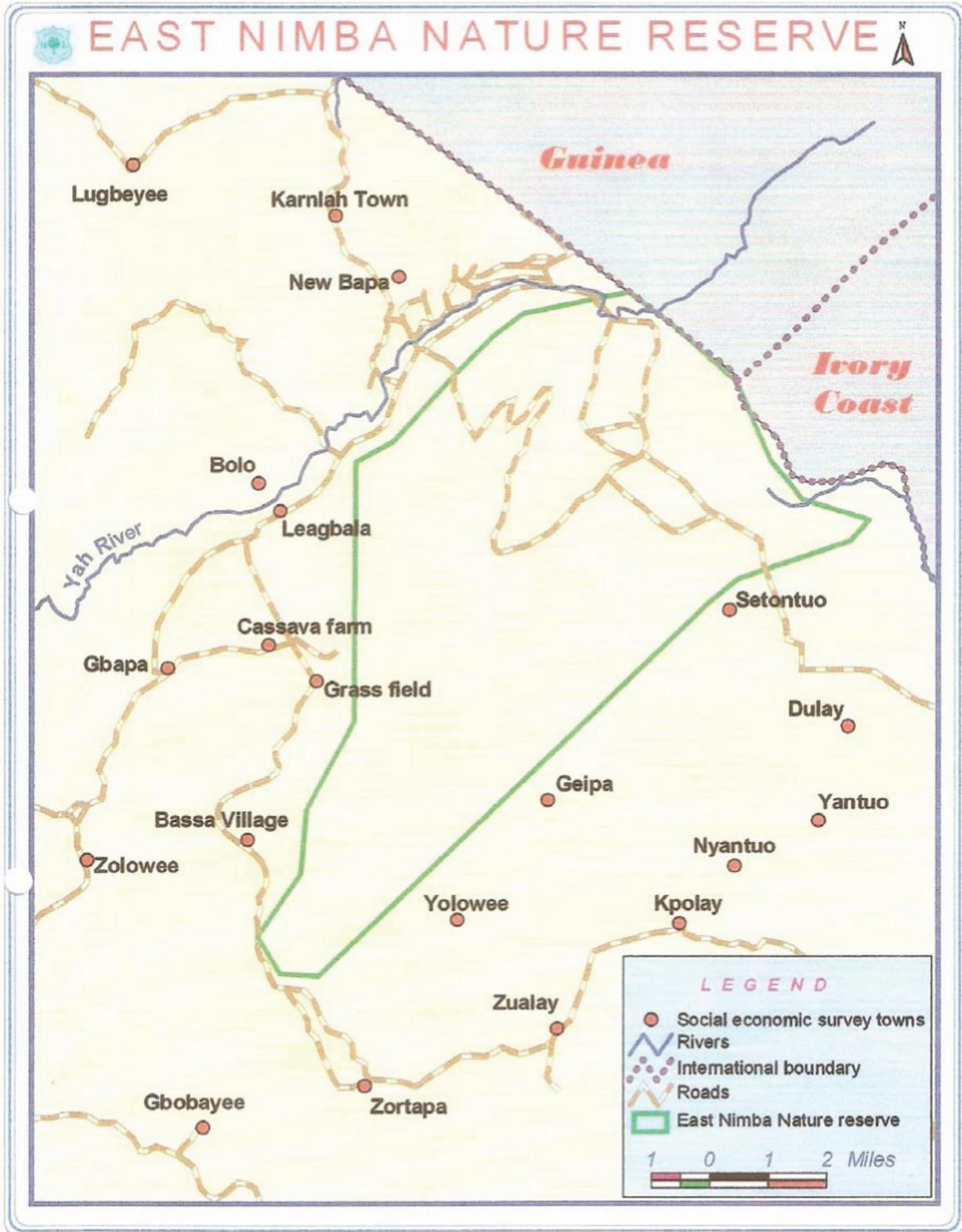
Hunting takes place on farms and within community forest lands. There are local bylaws that prohibit the hunting of chimpanzees, leopards, bush cows, monkeys, elephants, and hippopotamuses.

- Due to the limited time available to carry out the case studies, only the FDA and the MLME could be visited before the field work.
- The majority of the inhabitants at Butter Hill are from the neighboring countries (e.g., Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Mali). They engage mostly in intensive artisanal/alluvial mining. For fear of antagonizing the locals, they were generally tight-lipped. Hence, the study may not have captured all the necessary information on artisanal mining in the area. Similarly, the antagonism of the community at Dulay toward the FDA may have affected the results there.
- Many of the prospective mining and forest harvesting activities have yet to go into the operational phases. It was mainly preparatory tasks such as forest inventory, boundary demarcation, and mining prospecting that were taking place at the time of the study. Even most of this preliminary work is far from the location of the communities. Hence, such activities have yet to have any concrete or measurable impact on the communities concerned.
- The lack of telephone communication links between the teams at Kpayaquelleh and Dulay prevented any exchange of information while in the field.

LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- The communities studied have already identified community forest areas (i.e., the CRL does not create something new).
- Communities have arranged structures to deal with resource management issues (e.g., collection of alluvial mining “fees,” prohibition of pit-sawing due to inequitable sharing of toll fees collected).
- Communities are at best skeptical about being paid not to use “their” forests (relevant, for example, to potential carbon projects), but for the most part appear to reject the possibility.
- A common understanding still needs to be developed for interaction between government and community structures (e.g., allocation of adequate time for the selection of community representatives to be presented for election to the offices of the CFDCs, ensuring the “spread” of the information in the justification documents of the timber concessions to all sectors of the affected communities).
- All communities rejected the idea of mining and forestry in the same area.
- Communities will need to develop new skills in relation to the CRL and a better understanding of the 3Cs policy.





Annex 4: **NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 17–18, 2008, MONROVIA**

A National Stakeholders Workshop on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the forest sector was held on November 17–18, 2008. The workshop brought together a cross section of stakeholders including the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Environment Protection Agency (EPA), other government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private sector donor agencies, members of the Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI), as well as participants from civil society in eight counties. The participants from the counties came from Grand Bassa, River Cess, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Nimba, Lofa, and Gbarpolu counties. Participants from the counties included chiefs, elders, teachers, women, youths, and community-based organizations.

The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Identify strategic challenges facing the Liberian forest sector, validating the work done in the scoping phase and situation assessments of the SEA
- Determine elements of an action plan (including indicators for monitoring) for addressing the challenges
- Agree on next steps

The key results and outcomes of the included:

- Continued dialogue on forest issues. Participants welcomed the platform provided by the national workshop as an opportunity for multistakeholder and intersectoral discussions. In particular, the community representatives welcomed the opportunity to state their cases directly to the FDA (and other government agencies) and hearing their responses firsthand. Participants felt that the principles that had underpinned the establishment and operation of the SEA team and national workshop (intersectoral, interagency, joint field work, participatory involvement with forest communities, etc.) were sufficiently useful to be continued. On the basis that the SEA team was a project-based concept, all stakeholders present at the workshop endorsed the idea of a platform to be established along the same lines. The main focus of such a platform would be to create a space where the issues themselves could be discussed, as opposed to focusing on the positions adopted by different stakeholders on those issues. This would help ensure a free flow of information and exchange of views on forest sector processes, and extend to the management of other natural resources, particularly the mining sector.
- Community benefits and community involvement. The need for a clear definition and mechanism for the distribution of those benefits was articulated, not only for the forest sector, but also for the other natural resource sectors. This would require not only a determination of the appropriate policies and administrative mechanisms but also a thorough dissemination of these new ideas to affected communities.
- Community Forestry Development Committees (CFDCs) and social agreement. There was recognition of good intentions, but proper implementation was challenged by a variety of factors.
- Bridging the gap between policy and practice. There was a need to “walk the walk” and not only “talk the talk,” that is, to implement the good policies that exist.
- Appreciation of the approach to the SEA. Participants expressed their perceived usefulness of the principles that underpinned the creation of an SEA team.
- Priority issues. Workshop participants were presented with the priority issues that had been identified during the earlier prioritization workshop and were invited to add, delete, or modify issues. After discussion, participants felt

that the issues identified previously were in line with how they saw the priorities as well, and did not see the need for changes. This allowed the earlier priority issues to be validated by a larger and more diverse set of stakeholders, who then developed action plans for each of the issues (as reported in the main report). A list of emerging issues was generated, but the participants felt they did not have enough information or knowledge of these to treat them in a separate breakout group or to develop an action plan on these. The emerging issues have been summarized in the main report.

A total of 59 participants attended the workshop. This group included 15 participants from eight counties; 4 from three case study sites; and 40 from government, NGOs, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), industry, and other stakeholders. The FDA was well represented by a mix of technicians and middle- and senior-level managers.

KEY POINTS RAISED DURING THE NATIONAL SEA WORKSHOP

The workshop started with a session on expectations. This concluded with participants developing a list of their expectations for the workshop. The following is a summary of the expectations:

1. To get an update of the entire SEA process;
2. To acquire tools to carry out awareness in counties;
3. Representatives from leeward counties to understand from national participation in reform processes;
4. Coherent interpretation of forestry laws and policies as well as the challenges in doing so; and
5. Moderate language to be in simple Liberian English.

Participants commented on the SEA process so far and whether the issues identified are indeed issues that attest to the findings of these processes. The comments generated (in plenary) are as follows:

- Forest fringe communities are not given the chance to fully participate in issues affecting the community
- No equity in benefits derived from the forest for the community
- Lack of awareness on forest issues
- Tribal people not really benefiting from their forest
- FDA needs to be more proactive when it comes to conducting social contract between communities and companies
- FDA has been given a warning not to engage in or conduct any social contract without communities' full participation.

Participants also commented and made suggestions regarding the situation assessments and case study information they received. The comments included:

- Prepare communities to be part of the forest sector reform—new commercial process
- Adopt standards
- Suitable land use policy
- Forest value
- Revenue sharing
- Land tenure
- Time frame for benefits
- Community management capacity
- Strategy for channeling community benefits still has to be worked out with Ministry of Finance (MoF) and awareness raised with communities in accordance with national constitution
- Reform processes not understood at community level
- Issue of capacity should start with FDA building network of stakeholders in the sector in order to build local community capacity
- Challenging species loss: question of language or hasty conclusion
- How to prevent environmental impacts (deforestation, climate change)

Community management

- Potential for dispute
- Human wildlife conflicts—proposals do exist to mitigate
- Livelihoods
- Ecotourism
- Employment

The below listed issues were the “recurring emerging issues” during the plenary discussions summarized above.

- Benefits
- Community ownership and land tenure
- Information sharing
- Mechanism platform
- Technical capacity building
- FDA needs to be more proactive in its work
- Issues of boundaries
- Mass public education through consultative meetings

Participants further discussed these recurring emerging issues to ensure that all participants had a common understanding of the context in which they were being raised. The discussions aimed to raise questions for reflection by participants and suggestions for moving forward.

1. Community participation: What does it mean practically?
2. Stakeholders: Who are they? What partnerships should be built?
3. Community ownership and land tenure: What exactly does this mean?
4. Benefit sharing: What is the common understanding?
5. Improve mechanism and process platform to share information
6. What is needed to integrate 3Cs (conceptual understanding): What is required?
7. CFDCs: Were they democratically selected? Are they technically (equipped) community representatives?
8. FDA working hard, but gaps exist and must work harder
9. Definition of “community” needed before talking about boundaries
10. Benefits over time
11. FDA must brief representatives so they understand the situation
12. Public education through consultation meetings
13. Stakeholders—FDA, different levels of community, private sector, civil society

Participants discussed definition of and clarity on community and reviewed the list of stakeholders. A summary of the main points discussed follows.

1. Community Groups/Types

- Youth groups
- Women’s groups
- Elders, chiefs, and traditional leaders (Zoes)
- Disabled groups
- Clans/chiefdoms
- Handicrafters (weavers)
- Palm wine tappers
- Charcoal producers
- Hunters and trappers

- Farmers
- Palm cutters

2. Stakeholders

- Forestry Development Authority
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Development partners (Flora and Fauna International, Conservation International)
- Civil society organizations
- Governance commission
- Communities
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Finance
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Ministry of Public Works
- Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy
- Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
- Miners
- National Legislature

Action Planning

The plenary discussion was followed by group discussions. The breakout groups were mixed, comprising community-level participants and participants from Monrovia. The breakout groups, five in total, were instructed to discuss elements of a possible action plan for the SEA. Each group was asked to identify how to address the issues identified by the SEA based on their expertise, objectives for the forest sector, and information from the SEA.

The main proposed actions are summarized in an action matrix in the main report.

Participants were invited to identify key next steps beyond the SEA. The primary suggestions are summarized next.

- **Capacity building programs for FDA, CSO, and communities.** There was a general recognition among participants of the need to increase capacity, targeting all national stakeholders involved in forest sector. The level of external experts' involvement in all matters suggests limited internal capacity. This underscored the need for capacity building to ensure that forest outlook 2028 is an achievable target. This will ensure national ownership of sustainable forest management processes in Liberia and guarantee the practicality of achieving this vision.
- **Initiating forest dialogue platform.** There was also general agreement on the need to establish a platform for stakeholder interaction and information sharing. Participants were unanimous about continuing the forest sector multi-stakeholder and intersectoral dialogue. A proposal was made to establish a platform that will provide the medium to sustain forest sector engagements and assist in filling the information gap between community-based and Monrovia stakeholders. This will reduce the tension between government agencies and some communities and will encourage mutual cooperation for sustainable natural resource management approaches that promote "public participation."
- **Expanded SEA team to address the remaining emerging issues.** This suggestion came about as a result of the desire of Monrovia participants to sustain the process beyond the SEA project end date. The details of how this will work out in practice could not be determined during the workshop, as participants had earlier agreed to close each day's session at 4:30 pm. In this case, the mechanism for such expansion was left to the current SEA team to figure out when they meet. From the plenary discussions, it was evident that the particular government agencies knowledgeable about the given issues will be engaged to join the SEA team to carry out such task or activity.
- **Extend and continue stakeholder dialogue outside Monrovia.** The presentation on the SEA process to date highlighted how the process included regional consultations in which community people from eight forest fringe

communities of the country participated. The results of the regional consultations, involving a cross-section of community residents, is a key component of the scoping report. Issues identified during these processes are contained in the priority issues identified in the SEA process to date. These issues were confirmed by all participants at the SEA national workshop. Community representatives at the SEA workshop agreed that regular regional consultations would do more to raise awareness about forest sector initiatives as well as address early inaccuracies in disseminating information about the sector at the local level.

- **Community benefits and community involvement:** The need to clarify “community benefits” was urged. Some participants also expressed concern that, to date, no mechanism had been developed between the FDA and the Ministry of Finance as to how “affected communities” will access their benefits under the law. Some participants, most representing INGOs, said they were baffled at times by the seemingly endless demands made by communities in the name of benefits. They said their field staff are faced with the challenge of how to get communities, which benefit from livelihood initiatives around the forest, to recognize these as community benefits. There was a general consensus amongst NGO participants during this workshop on the need to quantify elements constituting community benefits and raise awareness among community dwellers about it.
- **Simplification and dissemination of laws and policies to communities.** During the workshop it appeared that none of the community representatives present were aware of the Social Agreement Handbook that had been developed within the FDA. In most cases where social agreements have been signed with affected communities the text of the agreement has been drafted well in advance of the formation of the CFDC, and communities are given less than 24 hours to read, comprehend, and sign it. The case studies indicated that a Social Agreement has been signed the same day of the formation of the CFDC. This situation may leave communities open to the consequences, good or bad, of these social agreements, which for an FMC may encompass 25 years. Against this background there was a suggestion that FDA be more proactive in carrying out its work. During group work on the forest outlook 2028, the FDA seemed to agree with this suggestion when they stated that public participation is requirement number 1 for achieving sustainable forest management. Key to this objective is disseminating forest sector information to communities in a simple, clear, and concise manner.
- **Emerging issues.** In addition to the priority issues raised during the SEA process, workshop participants identified the following as “emerging issues” in the forest and related sectors: biofuels and other agroforestry connections to forest management; climate change/carbon financing mechanisms; coordination among donors and development agencies; forest curricula and training; and nationwide strategic decision making.

While working groups developed action plans for the identified issues during the SEA, they felt that they did not have enough information or awareness of detail about the emerging issues identified. Given this feedback and the lack of time during the action planning segment of the workshop, an action plan on emerging issues was not developed. These have been summarized by the SEA team and are included in the assessment report.

