



LIBERIA

Mapping REDD+ Finance Flows 2009–2014

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Skills and Agricultural Development Services

Acknowledgements

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Implementing Organizations

Skills and Agricultural Development Services (SADS) is an environmental organization pioneering programs to provide for the payment of ecosystems services in Liberia. Since 2004, its activities have been directed towards environmental education, scientific research, and facilitation of conservation, social justice and respect for human rights. SADS has a strong focus on local empowerment, using participatory approaches to engage rural populations in identifying assets and needs, and ultimately promote sustainable community development.

The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is a Liberian state corporation established by an act of the Legislature in 1976 with the mandate to sustainably manage and conserve all forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations. This mandate was further strengthened through the National Resource Law of 1979. The 2006 Forestry Reform Law of Liberia is the current legal instrument that guides the management of forest resources in Liberia.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is an autonomous regulatory agency, mandated to ensure the broad integration of environmental concerns into national planning, ensuring environmental protection and conservation of the Republic of Liberia.

Executive Summary

Despite abundant natural resources, governance issues and social inequality have engendered poverty, conflicts, and low human development in Liberia. Liberia contains approximately 4.3 million hectares (Mha) of lowland tropical forest that comprises 43 percent of the remaining Upper Guinea forests of West Africa, which extend from Guinea to Togo. The forests' biological diversity encompasses the last long-term viable populations of several endemic species, provides irreplaceable ecosystem services, and has significant potential to contribute to the country's development goals. Liberia is listed as one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots.¹ Most of Liberia's rural population is dependent on forests and their various products and ecosystem services, which play an important role as safety nets for vulnerable and marginalized forest dependent communities.

Liberia's forest land continues to be threatened due to loss of forest cover and degradation as a result of large scale agriculture and mining activities at both subsistence and industrial levels. During the 15-year civil conflict, deforestation and forest degradation activities were significantly reduced, but the post-conflict scenario has represented a change in this trend. Currently, Liberia's forest resources are under severe pressure by the government and poor citizens as sources for revenue generation. Uncontrolled and illegal logging, overall poor management, and weak oversight of the forest sector remain as major challenges.

Liberia is currently in the process of developing a national strategy and enhancing its capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forest loss and degradation, through support from the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and other donors. Designing and implementing an effective REDD+ strategy which will directly contribute to long-term sustainable economic growth requires both consistent long-term financial commitments and a transparent financial tracking system to show all funds and activities supported to date.

Forest Trends, Skills and Agricultural Development Services (SADS), and the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been compiling information on the flows of finance for REDD+ activities as part of the international REDD+ Expenditures Tracking Initiative (REDDX). Based on detailed surveys and interviews with key stakeholders including donors, implementing organizations, beneficiaries, and government agencies, REDDX provides a transparent and publicly available account of financial flows for REDD+ in Liberia.

Over the six year period from 2009–2014, donors have committed a total of US\$47.2 million to support REDD+ readiness and development in Liberia. REDDX tracking has begun to reveal information on how much of the committed funding is actually being disbursed, the types of REDD+ activities being supported, and the organizations managing REDD+ implementation on the ground; however, continuing research will clarify this picture even more in the coming years.

A large portion of initial institutions or 'first recipients' receiving funding for REDD+ activities in Liberia are based in-country. The government of Liberia is scheduled to receive around 68.2% (US\$32.2 million) of the total commitments to Liberia, and local Liberian NGOs are scheduled to receive 2.8% (US\$1.3 million) of the total commitments. International NGOs are scheduled to receive 22.1% (US\$10.4 million) of all funding committed.

The finances are currently flowing to 46 projects aimed at the following activities:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Rights and Tenure

¹ Christie T. et al, 2007. Fragmentation and clearance of Liberia's forests during 1986–2000. *Oryx* Vol. 4., pp. 539–543.

- MRV and Reference Levels
- REDD+ Safeguards
- Policy and Law Analysis & Development, REDD+ Strategy Development and Advocacy
- Institutional Strengthening
- Forest Carbon Project design
- Improved Forest and Land Management to Reduce Deforestation and Degradation (Implementation)
- Carbon Offsets and Performance-Based Payments

The following are key challenges identified during this second round of REDDX tracking which will need to be addressed in order for the implementation of REDD+ in Liberia to move forward successfully:

- **Insufficient long-term financing for REDD+.** Results show that a significant gap exists between the total finances committed and the amount required for sustainable national REDD+ implementation. Even though the Liberian Government is in the process of sourcing long-term financial support through bilateral means, the impacts of these finances remain unclear to local people.
- **Low capacity of national staff and in-country actors to fully execute and implement a REDD+ program.** The concepts and systems needed for REDD+ still remain new to many stakeholders. This lack of knowledge and capacity is hindering stakeholder involvement in the development of Liberia's National REDD+ strategy, including national civil society organizations, private sector actors and community-based organizations.
- **Limited private sector engagement.** Many private sector actors—especially agribusiness, forest concessioners, financial institutions, and investors—see REDD+ activities as potentially restricting their investments by keeping forest cover intact. Against this backdrop, very few are interested and involved in the on-going national REDD+ processes. While the national REDD+ Implementation Team has made tremendous efforts to better involve the private sector, policy makers have not adequately and effectively presented REDD+ to the private sector as an opportunity for sustainable forest management and future revenue generation.
- **Lack of transparent information on REDD+ finance and activities, leading to duplication of efforts.** Very few REDD+ activities or donors are known by the national government and other important REDD+ stakeholders. This has led to several organizations either duplicating activities or failing to focus on national priorities in reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

It is important to include all relevant stakeholders in the overall development of the national REDD+ strategy, especially since there have been increasing REDD+ finance commitments in recent years. A particular consideration should be given to greater engagement and partnership with the private sector.

The government of Liberia should take ownership and put in place mechanisms that help to coordinate REDD+ finance, and prioritize the implementation of concrete activities and facilitate dialogue amongst all stakeholders including forest communities. The REDD+ executing agency, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), should be strengthened and specialized capacity building initiatives should be carried out to ensure that there is a national in-country team to address emerging issues in developing national carbon policies and regulations to support the REDD+ process.

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Acronyms

AF	Acacia Foundation
AML	Arcelor Mittal - Liberia
AVJCF	A. V. Jensen Charity Foundation
BLI	BirdLife International
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CDREAM	Center for Disaster Risks, Environment Advocacy, Management & Research
CESP	Community Empowerment and Sustainable Program
CFF	County Forest Forum
CI	Conservation International
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERADRO	Environmental Relief and Development Organization
EU	European Union
FACE	Farmers Associated to Conserved the Environment
FCL	Forest Cry Liberia
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership facility
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FLY	Federation of Liberia Youth
FIDA	Finish International Development Aid
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
FT	Forest Trends
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HGBF	Howard G. Buffett Foundation
HU	Humanity United
LACE	Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment
LC	Land Commission
LMI	Liberia Media Initiatives
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
JSF	John Swift Foundation
MMF	McCall MacBain Foundation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NACUL	National Charcoal Union of Liberia
NBC	National Bureau of Concession
NCRC	Nature Conservation Research Center
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
RAAP	Rapid Action Against Poverty
REDD	Reducing Emission for Deforestation and Degradation
R-PP	REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal
RTWG	REDD+ Technical Working Group
RUWASD	Rural Women in Action for Sustainable Development

SADS	Skills and Agricultural Development Services
SAMFU	Save My Future Foundation
SEC	Society for Environmental Conservation
SEEDO	Social Economic Empowerment Development Organization
SCNL	Society for the Conservation of Nature
SEC	Society for Environmental Conservation
SURIDO	Sustainable Urban and Rural Integrated Development Organization
WB	World Bank
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOSIEDA	Volunteers to Support International Efforts in Developing Africa
WCP	Wonegizi Conservation Promoters
ZOWOCA	Zorzor Women Care Inc.

Glossary of Terms

During the survey design process, the REDDX initiative found there was a need to define commonly-used REDD+ and finance terminology in order to promote greater understanding and overall consistency across in-country partners and between collaborators, including national governments, donors, and recipients. The definitions below are commonly used definitions used by the REDD+ policy community except where noted.

General and Financial Terms

REDD+: REDD+ is a global effort to create a value on the carbon stored in forests, and provide incentives to compensate countries for policies that result in reduced emissions and forest conservation. It is defined by the UNFCCC as “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.” REDD+ countries have the flexibility to determine what exact activities they will implement in their countries based on national circumstances and development/conservation priorities.

REDD+ Finance: A working definition of “REDD+ finance” remains heavily debated within the international policy context. For the sake of this project and to promote consistency with other REDD+ tracking initiatives and broader international approaches to REDD+, it was agreed that REDD+ finance will include:

1. **International REDD+ Finance:** Any international financial transfers earmarked to support REDD+ mechanisms or initiatives, as currently defined by the UNFCCC, that are developed with the aim of reducing net GHG emissions from the forestry sector.
2. **National REDD+ Finance:** Monies earmarked and spent for any activities or actions that fall within the scope of the REDD+ definition found within an individual country’s approved REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal or other existing country REDD+ strategy.

Public Finance: Revenue generated through mechanisms (e.g., taxes, carbon markets, etc.) controlled by a public entity such as a national government. Public finance can be international or national in nature, and generally supports REDD+ readiness, policy development and results-based payments.

Private Finance: In the context of REDD+, private finance constitutes funds provided by a private sector entity or business, which tend to support forest management and carbon project development, and can include PES-triggered investments or investments that address drivers of deforestation.

Public-Private Finance: Instances where a REDD+ project or business venture is funded through a partnership between a public sector authority, and one or more private sector companies.

Pledge: Pledges of REDD+ finance are often made as announcements of support from donor governments with no legal or formal indication that this funding will be released, no terms for how this might be spent, and whether this will be fully spent on REDD+ activities. Some donors pledge an amount and actually end up committing less. The REDDX initiative does not specifically track pledges, but if any are known, they are recorded to compare with amounts actually committed.

Commitment: REDDX defines “commitment” as a formal indication from a donor that they will fund REDD+ activities in a country. This “commitment” will be backed up by a legal or formal agreement specifying the total amount of funding for the recipient, a timeline for activities and a schedule for when finance will be spent. (“Commitment” is not to be confused with a “pledge”).

Disbursement: In the context of the REDDX initiative, it is the transfer of funds from a donor to a recipient or from a recipient to an additional recipient further down the funding chain.

Expenditure: In the context of the REDDX initiative, it is when REDD+ finance is actually spent or expended on REDD+ activities on the ground.

Institutions

International Donor Governments: Federal agencies or ministries in the donor country. NORAD (Norway), GIZ (Germany), KfW (Germany), USAID (USA), JICA (Japan), DEFRA (UK), and FORMIN (Finland) are some of the biggest international government donor agencies supporting REDD+ globally. The arrangements that international donors utilize can include traditional bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms, in-kind technical assistance, or direct financing of civil society or private sector consulting firms.

REDD+ Country Governments: National governments which are receiving international financial support to implement REDD+ to conserve their country's forest resources. REDD+ countries are increasingly allocating funds for REDD+ activities in their own country, either through self-financing out of central domestic budgets, or as required co-financing of multilateral institutional grants.

Multilateral Financing Institutions and Programs: International organizations that are comprised of members from many countries. Examples include the World Bank, UN-REDD, IDB, ADB, IFAD and ITTO. These multilateral organizations often manage large REDD+ programs such as the UN-REDD Programme, the FCPF, and the Green Climate Fund.

Multilateral Implementing Agents: International organizations which carry-out the directives and work plans of international decision-making bodies and programs. For example, the UN-REDD Programme builds on the convening role and technical expertise of its three participating UN organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These organizations act as multilateral implementing agents when implementing the decisions and work plans of the UN-REDD Programme.

Supranational Institution: An organization that is entirely composed of representatives from member states, but which acts as a collection of the member states. The most common supranational institution providing REDD+ funding globally is the European Union, represented by the European Commission.

Private Foundation: A charity that receives the majority of its support from individual and corporate donations, (not public funds) and whose funds and programs are managed by its own trustees or board of directors.

International NGOs and Academic Institutions: International NGOs or academia includes international, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as environmental organizations, or independent academic institutions with headquarters outside the recipient country. Many international NGOs or academic institutions receive donor funding for REDD+ activities to be implemented at the international, regional and/or national level. Their finance is typically spent in the following ways:

- At headquarters on their own staff and operations supportive of donor and/or recipient country objectives;
- At regional or national offices on their own staff and operations supportive of donor and/or recipient country objectives;

- Passed on to other international or domestic organizations through sub-grants or consultancies to implement activities (these may, in turn, pass funding on to additional organizations);
- Passed on directly to local communities or households as payments for environmental services.

National (REDD+ Country) NGOs and Academic Institutions: Civil society organizations and academic institutions based in the REDD+ implementing country.

Firms/Consultancies: This includes both private sector corporations (firms) which occasionally contribute funding or expertise to support REDD+, and consultancies, which are private sector businesses made up of a group of experts (i.e. consultants) that provide professional project management services and implementation for a fee. Firms and consultancies contributing to REDD+ processes and implementation can be based internationally and/or within REDD+ implementing countries.

Consortia: An association of various types of organizations, partnering together to fund or implement REDD+ activities. This designation is given to donors or recipients when REDD+ finance allocated to the consortium cannot be disaggregated to the level of specific participating organizations. A consortium is deemed ‘international’ if one or more of its members is based outside of the REDD+ country, while a consortium in which all participating members are based within the REDD+ country is designated as ‘national.’

REDD+ Activities and Projects

Stakeholder Engagement: Funding aimed at improving participation of non-governmental stakeholders through the design, implementation, and/or monitoring phases of REDD+, and/or funding that promotes media outreach.

Rights and Tenure: Funding directed at addressing issues of rights and tenure – including clarifying land, property, and carbon rights.

MRV and Reference levels: Funding aimed at improving the monitoring, reporting, and/or verification of REDD+, including changes in forest cover, forest degradation, biodiversity, or social and governance levels. Funding to define or implement reference levels to measure emissions, co-benefits and governance in-country.

Safeguards: Funding aimed at identifying barriers to forest conservation and enabling social and environmental benefits.

Policy and Law Development: Funding aimed at promoting research, advocacy and outreach to policymakers including policy and law analysis, policy development, REDD+ strategy development & advocacy.

Institutional Strengthening: Funding aimed at developing in-country public institutions, ministries, staffing capacity, and resources for REDD+.

Forest Carbon Project Design: Funding aimed at developing project design documents (PDDs) and validation activities. This includes credited projects that go to the market and those that want REDD+ payments through an eventual UNFCCC mechanism.

Improved Forest and Land Management: Funding supporting protected areas, sustainable forest management, and reforestation management activities – including enforcement and compliance.

Carbon Offsets or Performance-Based Payments: Funding aimed at carbon offsets, direct payments, or actual benefits sharing such as incentive- or performance-based payments.

Introduction

Over the five year period from 2009–2014, donors committed a total of US\$47.2 million to support REDD+ readiness and development in Liberia. Prior to the work of REDDX, information on the scale of finance for national REDD+ activities, the types of REDD+ activities the funding supported, and the organizations managing REDD+ implementation on the ground were still limited.

In an effort to address the above gaps, Forest Trends developed REDDX, a REDD+ Expenditures Tracking initiative, in 2011 to follow REDD+ finance from donors to in-country recipients and ultimately REDD+ projects and activities on the ground to determine:

- Commitments and disbursements of REDD+ finance;
- Timelines between when funds are committed and actually disbursed;
- The types of organizations receiving and implementing REDD+ activities; and
- The range of activities supported by the current financial commitments.

As a result of this REDDX initiative, Forest Trends and Skills and Agricultural Development Services is able to provide information that the Liberian government, donors and development partners can use to improve transparency around REDD+ financing mechanisms. Furthermore, the information provides stakeholders with better understanding of the gaps and challenges facing national REDD+ strategies and the implementation of its enabling activities.

Liberia is one of thirteen tropical forest countries participating in REDDX (the other REDDX countries currently include Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru in Latin and South America; the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania in Africa; and Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam in Asia-Pacific). Emerging results and trends across the fourteen countries demonstrate that REDD+ financial commitments have slowly yet steadily increased since 2009.

Most REDD+ commitments to Liberia are multi-year grants with long disbursement schedules. At the end of 2014, 31% of committed REDD+ funds tracked had been released to first recipients/implementing organizations. The majority of REDD+ finance continues to be committed by donor country governments and multilateral financing institutions, but private foundations have also played a significant role, particularly during the initial commencement of Liberia's REDD+ process.

Stakeholders and interested partners can access the REDD+ finance tracking results of Liberia published through Forest Trends' REDDX website and report series available at www.reddx.forest-trends.org.

This report is the second of its series compiled by Skills and Agricultural Development Services in close collaboration with Liberia's Forestry Development Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency. This report presents information on REDD+ finance tracked in Liberia from 2009–2014, in the context of on-going REDD+ strategy development and piloting processes in Liberia.

Methodology

The process of tracking REDD+ finance in Liberia started in February 2013 and focused on collecting data through three main methods: 1) Direct face-to-face interviews; 2) Phone interviews; and 3) Desk research and online literature reviews. The target groups for this tracking initiative were organizations/institutions implementing or responsible for REDD+ and its enabling activities in Liberia.

Data collection was based on:

A standardized survey format common to all participating REDDX countries and global partners, and guidance provided by Forest Trends. Key data fields collected and tracked include:

- **Key actors in the REDD+ process** including donors, the full chain of recipients, implementing agents, and co-financiers.
- **REDD+ financial arrangements** including total commitments, commitment types (grants, loans, performance-based payments, or in-kind technical assistance), the schedule for disbursing funds, and total disbursements to date.
- **REDD+ projects and activities** including the start and end date for projects, the REDD+ activities supported, and the extent to which activities fit within the national definition of REDD+.

Interviews with key representatives from institutions providing or receiving REDD+ finance to collect more information not available in the public domain. A structured questionnaire template was used, and responses were written electronically and verified with the respondent. This also helped tease out points of confusion or discrepancy.

Follow-up communication via email, phone calls, and in-person visits to clarify and supplement data from relevant staff for each institution/organization. This also served to validate the collected data.

Due to the deadly Ebola virus outbreak and the safety restrictions imposed by the government, holding of a national stakeholder's workshop in 2014 was impossible. However, three stakeholders' expert meetings were organized in three government institutions (FDA, EPA, and MoA) in August 2014 which provided an opportunity to review, discuss, and solicit comments concerning the data collected.

A national stakeholder's review and discussion workshop was held on July 21, 2015 in the conference hall of the Environmental Protection Agency annex in Liberia's capitol city, Monrovia. The purpose of this workshop was to provide relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to reflect on the data collection process, results, challenges, and methods, and to validate the financial data. Thirty-three participants from civil society, community organizations, the media, international NGOs, the private sector, and government agencies attended (see Annex I for participants list). This workshop was chaired by Mr. Z. Elijah Whapoe, Research and Policies Manager of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the full range of REDD+ stakeholders in Liberia to come to a common understanding of the state of REDD+ finance in the country. In addition to reviewing and validating the REDDX data, the National Coordinators for two Global Environment Facility (GEF) climate change projects

implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. Roland Lepol) and the Ministry of Transport (Mr. Assaf S. Kumeh) made individual presentations. The two projects are Early Warning System Project linkages to REDD+, and a Climate Change Adaptation Agriculture Project. These two presentations focused on outlining and discussing the linkages of these non-REDD+ project activities and expenditures to the National REDD+ process and strategies.

National Context

Forestry and Land Use

Despite abundant natural resources, governance issues and social inequality have engendered poverty, conflicts, and low human development in Liberia. Liberia contains approximately 4.3 million hectares (Mha) of lowland tropical forest that comprises 43 percent of the remaining Upper Guinea forests of West Africa, which extend from Guinea to Togo.² The forests' biological diversity encompasses the last long-term viable populations of several endemic species, provides critical ecosystem services, and has significant potential to contribute to the country's development goals.³ Most of Liberia's rural population is dependent on forests and their various products and ecosystem services, which play an important role as a safety net for vulnerable and marginalized people living near forested areas.

Challenges in Reducing Deforestation

Liberia's forest land continues to be threatened due to loss of forest cover and degradation as a result of large scale agriculture and mining activities at both subsistence and industrial levels. During the 15-year civil conflict, deforestation and forest degradation activities were significantly reduced, but the post-conflict scenario has represented a change in this trend. Currently, Liberia's forest resources are under severe pressure by the government and poor citizens as sources for revenue generation. Uncontrolled and illegal logging, overall poor management, and weak oversight of the forest sector remain as major challenges.

Progress Towards REDD+

In 2006, the newly elected government started to follow the Forest Concession Review Committee (FCRC) recommendations and established the National Forest Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006 (followed by the National Forest Sector Strategy in 2007) that provided the framework for the sector's legal, participatory, and transparent operation. In 2006, the United Nations Security Council voted to lift existing timber sanctions. Finally, in 2009 the Community Rights Law (CRL) with Respect to Forest Lands was passed to recognize local community rights to own forest resources on community forest lands. Liberia's forestry reform laws are based on the "Three C's (3Cs)" approach that aims to balance and integrate community, commercial, and conservation uses of Liberia's forests.

A. Liberia REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP)

In 2012 Liberia obtained US\$3.8 million in financial support from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in order to finance some of the key activities included in the R-PP and geared towards achieving readiness for REDD+. Additional funding of US\$5.2 million⁴ was approved in 2014 at the FCPF Participants Committee meeting in Tanzania after Liberia submitted a request for additional funding and a readiness mid-term progress report. This brings the total financial support from the FCPF to US\$9 million. This funding will specifically focus on consultative and quantitative analysis of the different land use options for development of the national REDD+ strategy for Liberia. The following are expected outcomes from the R-PP readiness processes:

² Bayol N. and Chevalier JF, 2004. Current State of the Forest Cover in Liberia. Forest Resources Management.

³ Christie T. et al, 2007. Fragmentation and clearance of Liberia's forests during 1986–2000. Oryx Vol. 4, pp. 539–543.

⁴ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCFP) <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/liberia>

- a. National, county, and local capacity sufficient to understand and engage in the R-PP implementation process;
- b. Key REDD+ knowledge gained and shared among stakeholders, including the legal context, carbon (biomass) and socio-economic baselines, and reference emission levels (REL);
- c. Key systems for REDD+ explored and developed (e.g. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV); FPIC; tenure arrangements and benefit distribution systems);
- d. All stakeholders fully aware of and participating in REDD+ / the R-PP and consulted on each component, activity and phase during planning and implementation.

B. Liberia Revenue Authority

In September 2013 the government of Liberia ordered the creation of the Liberia Revenue Authority, the detachment of the Revenue Department from the Ministry of Finance, and the merger of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs with the Finance Ministry to create the Ministry of Finance for Economic Development. These changes have been a vital step towards more integrated and sustainable development for Liberia. In general, the single ministry is expected to reduce costs, promote efficiency, and facilitate more holistic planning. For REDD+ in particular, having a single entity will bring down transaction costs, and likely simplify future REDD+ operations, including land use planning, through the promotion of inter-ministerial coordination, and commodity and financial management, taxation, and benefit distribution.⁵

C. Local Piloting of REDD+

One particular project of note is “Bridging the Divide: Empowering grassroots institutions to inform national REDD+ strategy development in Liberia through REDD demonstration projects” (2011–2014). The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) provided funding to Fauna and Flora International (FFI) to design and implement this pioneering REDD+ readiness project in Liberia. The project served to pilot a REDD+ forest carbon initiative at the local scale, developing and testing REDD+ components that will be used to inform national level planning and policy development. Lessons learned from this project will be incorporated into the emerging national REDD+ strategy document.

D. Tropical Forest Alliance

Liberia has recently accepted the invitation to join the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA), a public-private partnership in which partners take voluntary actions, individually and in combination, to reduce the tropical deforestation associated with the sourcing of commodities such as palm oil, soy, beef, paper, and pulp. The TFA 2020 Action Plan on Oil Palm Development in Africa is a Signature Initiative of TFA 2020. Its vision is a prosperous palm oil industry which brings jobs and wealth to local communities in a way that is environmentally and socially sustainable and protects the rich tropical forests of the region. Six palm oil producing countries (Cameroon, Cote D’Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria) are currently engaged in the Initiative. The goal of the Initiative is to develop and support the implementation of a set of regional principles for responsible oil palm development that take account of the ambitious development plans of countries in Africa, while addressing both environmental targets for reduced deforestation, land use, and greenhouse gases, and also social indicators on issues such as land tenure and the rights of indigenous peoples.

⁵ Government of Liberia. 2014. National REDD+ R-PP Implementation Mid-Term Report and request for Additional Funding. Submitted to the FCPF by the REDD+ Implementation Unit (RIU): Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) August, 2014.

Liberia has established a TFA 2020 Country Team comprising representatives from the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia, Golden Veroleum, Proforest, Conservation International, and the Africa Governance Initiative. This Team initiated the national stakeholders' workshop in Monrovia from 26–28th of May 2015, and brought together 66 participants including government representatives, private companies (national and international), and NGOs working to promote sustainable palm oil development in Liberia.

E. Liberia REDD+ Investment Program

The Liberia REDD+ Investment Program is aligned closely with the partnership established between the government of Liberia and the government of Norway. On September 23, 2014, a letter of intent was signed between the two governments at the United Nations Climate Change conference in New York with the following purposes:

- a. Supporting the development and implementation of Liberia's REDD+ strategy to ensure significant net reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
- b. Contributing to sustainable development in Liberia through protecting natural forests, restoring degraded lands, and developing Liberia's agricultural sector; and,
- c. Working together to support progress on global efforts regarding climate change, sustainable development, and REDD+.

The signed letter of intent expresses the intent of Norway to support Liberia with up to US\$150 million, with disbursements divided into three phases (see below). As of the writing of this report, only the initial US\$15 million was firmly committed, and therefore included in this round of REDDX finance tracking, while the remaining US\$135 million was still in the form of provisional pledges. As these pledges turn into commitments, this funding will be included in REDDX data for Liberia in the coming years.

I. Preparation phase (US\$15 million):

This initial phase will focus on finalizing remaining readiness preparation deliverables not currently budgeted under the R-PP grant.

II. Transformation Phase (US\$55 million):

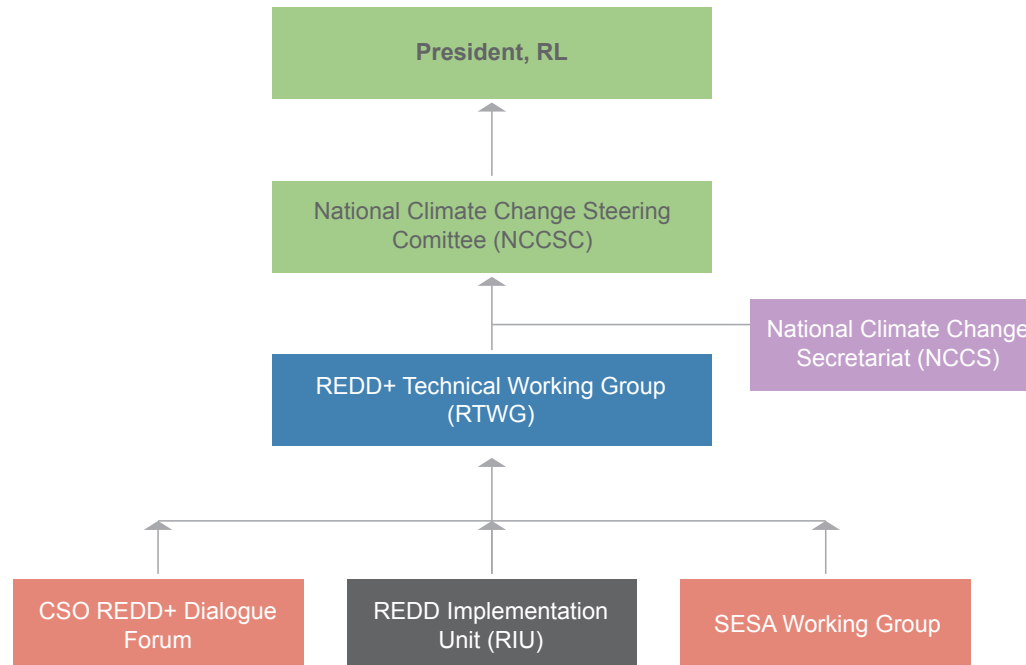
- a. Strategic development and multi-stakeholder participation;
- b. Capacity building in key institutions, civil society, and communities;
- c. Legal reform and law enforcement; monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), and reference level development;
- d. Social and environmental safeguards development;
- e. Protected areas expansion and strengthening;
- f. Land-use planning and analysis;
- g. Sustainable agriculture development; and
- h. Testing incentives for participating landowners.

III. Contributions for Verified Emissions Reduction phase (US\$80 million):

Payments for measured, reported and verified emissions reductions.

REDD+ in Liberia is being developed in an open and participatory fashion, with transparency and accountability as key principles. At every level of REDD+ preparation and the implementation of the readiness activities, civil society organizations sit alongside government ministries, other agencies, donors, and the private sector.

Figure 1: National REDD+ Implementation Management Arrangement Levels⁶



The RIU is the operational arm responsible for managing the implementation of REDD+ projects in Liberia, and currently manages the FCPF funds for REDD+ readiness activities. Above the RIU, the RTWG and NCCSC (and its operational arm, the NCCS) provide technical and policy advice to the RIU on readiness activities.

⁶ Liberia's R-PP Mid- term report 2014.

Findings

Overview

Over the five year period from 2009–2014, donors committed a total of US\$47.2 million to support REDD+ readiness and development in Liberia. Direct support from international multilateral development institutions accounted for more than 27% (US\$12.7 million) of this finance. The majority of multilateral funding has been channeled through the Liberian Ministry of Finance. The largest donor government agency commitments have been made by the governments of Norway, Germany, Denmark, and the United States.

Since 2008, Liberia has benefited from a World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) REDD+ readiness preparation grant. The FCPF constitutes 71% of total committed funding from international multilateral sources to Liberia. This financial commitment was made in 2009 with an additional extension grant in 2014 to cover the period of 2009 through 2018. A total of US\$9 million has been committed for Liberia's Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) development and implementation. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia is the executing government institution responsible for overseeing the implementation of all national REDD+ activities. The current FCPF readiness grant directed to the FDA aims to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of the government and local stakeholders and to develop a national REDD+ strategy.

Through political commitments and national efforts in executing this readiness grant, Liberia has demonstrated strong national commitment towards REDD+, as well as outstanding needs identified in part through lessons learned in piloting REDD+ at the community level. These efforts have improved the country's REDD+ profile, thus facilitating the signing of a letter of intent in late 2014 between the governments of Liberia and Norway for US\$150 million aimed at supporting the implementation of Liberia's Forest Investment Program. Liberia has also presented a formal expression of interest to become a participating country of the UN-REDD Programme.

Levels of REDD+ Finance

Multilateral commitments to the government of Liberia accounted for 27% of all REDD+ financing flowing to Liberia between 2009 and 2014. Donor government agencies have exclusively supported the Liberian government and international NGOs, and have not committed any funds directly to Liberian NGOs. The government of Liberia has received funding support through multilateral organizations and bilateral agreements with donor governments.

As shown in Figure 3, cumulative commitments increased substantially over the period 2009–2014, reaching US\$14.4 million by the end of 2013 and US\$47.2 million by the end of 2014. Donors have been relatively quick at disbursing funding to date.

In 2013, 72% of committed funding had been released by donors, while this amount decreased drastically to 31% in 2014. With a number of multi-year commitments recently signed, it is expected that the disbursement rate will increase over the next few years.

Figure 2: Flows of REDD+ Finance from Donors to First Recipients in Liberia, 2009–2014

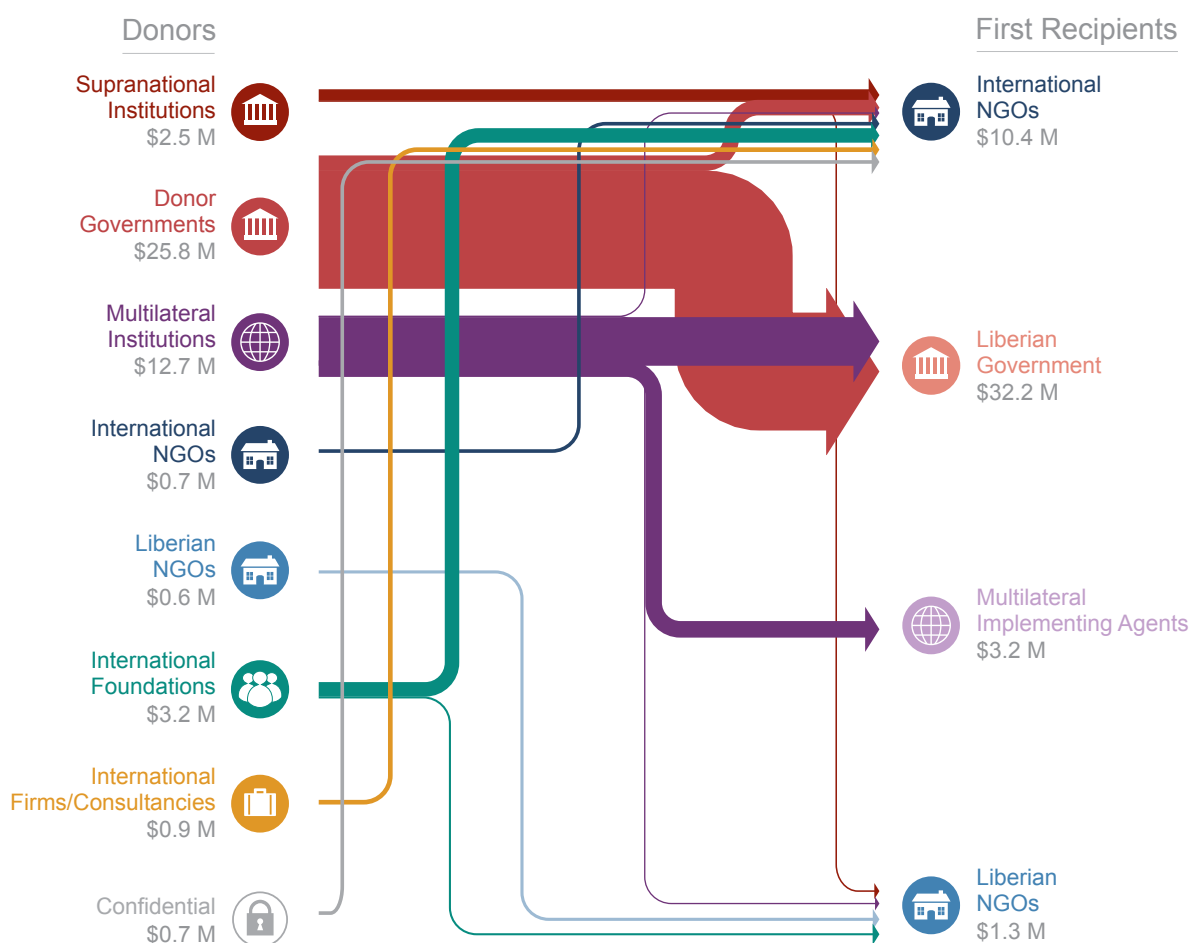


Figure 3: Cumulative Commitments and Disbursements of REDD+ Funds to Liberia, 2009–2014



Donors

For Liberia the majority of funding is coming from the United States, Norway, Germany, the United Kingdom, and international multilaterals (Figure 4). Together, the government of Norway, the World Bank's FCPF, the government of Germany, the GEF, the European Commission, and the Buffett Foundation account for 88% of all REDD+ financial commitments to Liberia between 2009 and 2014.

Figure 4: Donor Commitments and Disbursements by Country and Continent, 2009–2014

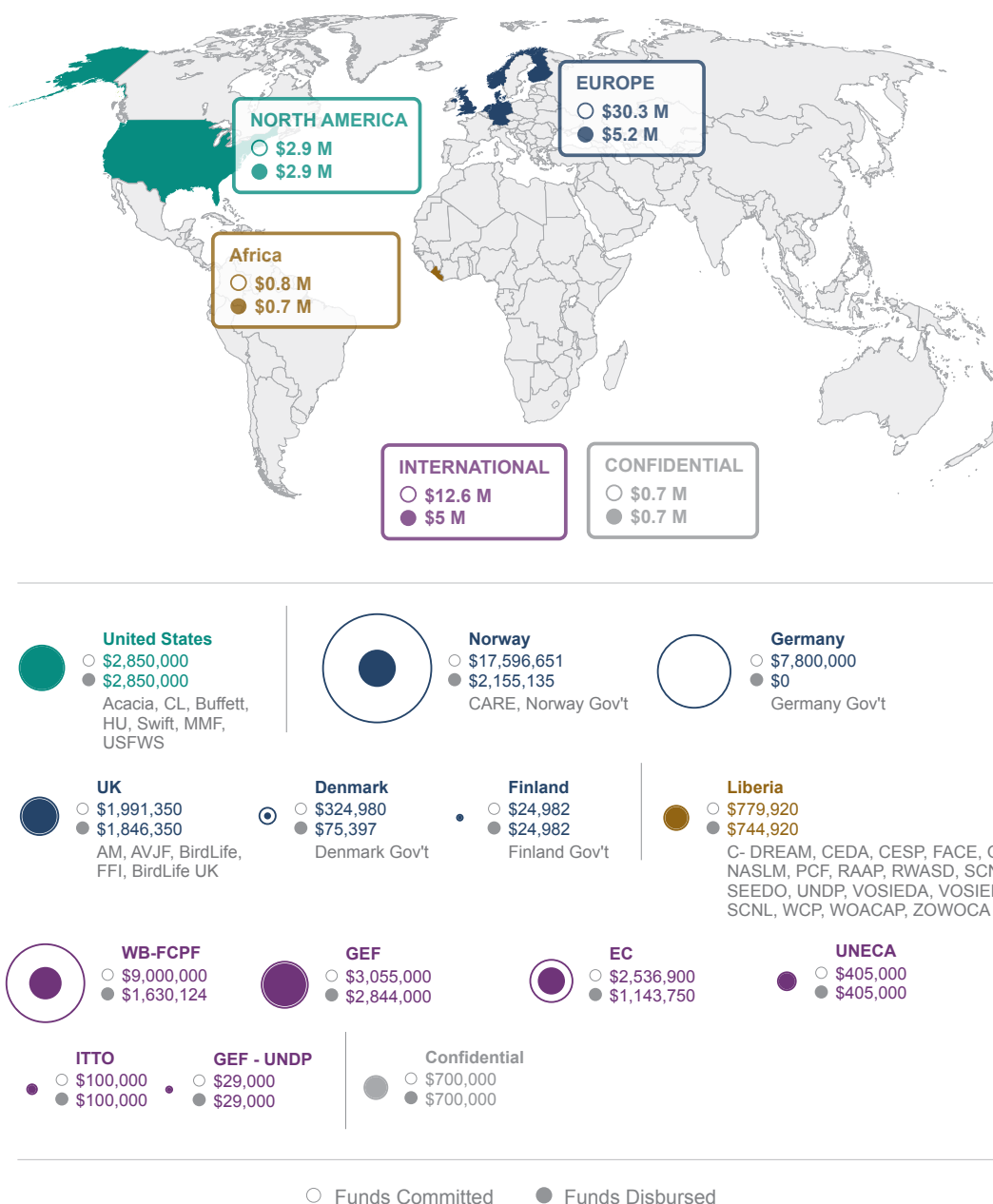
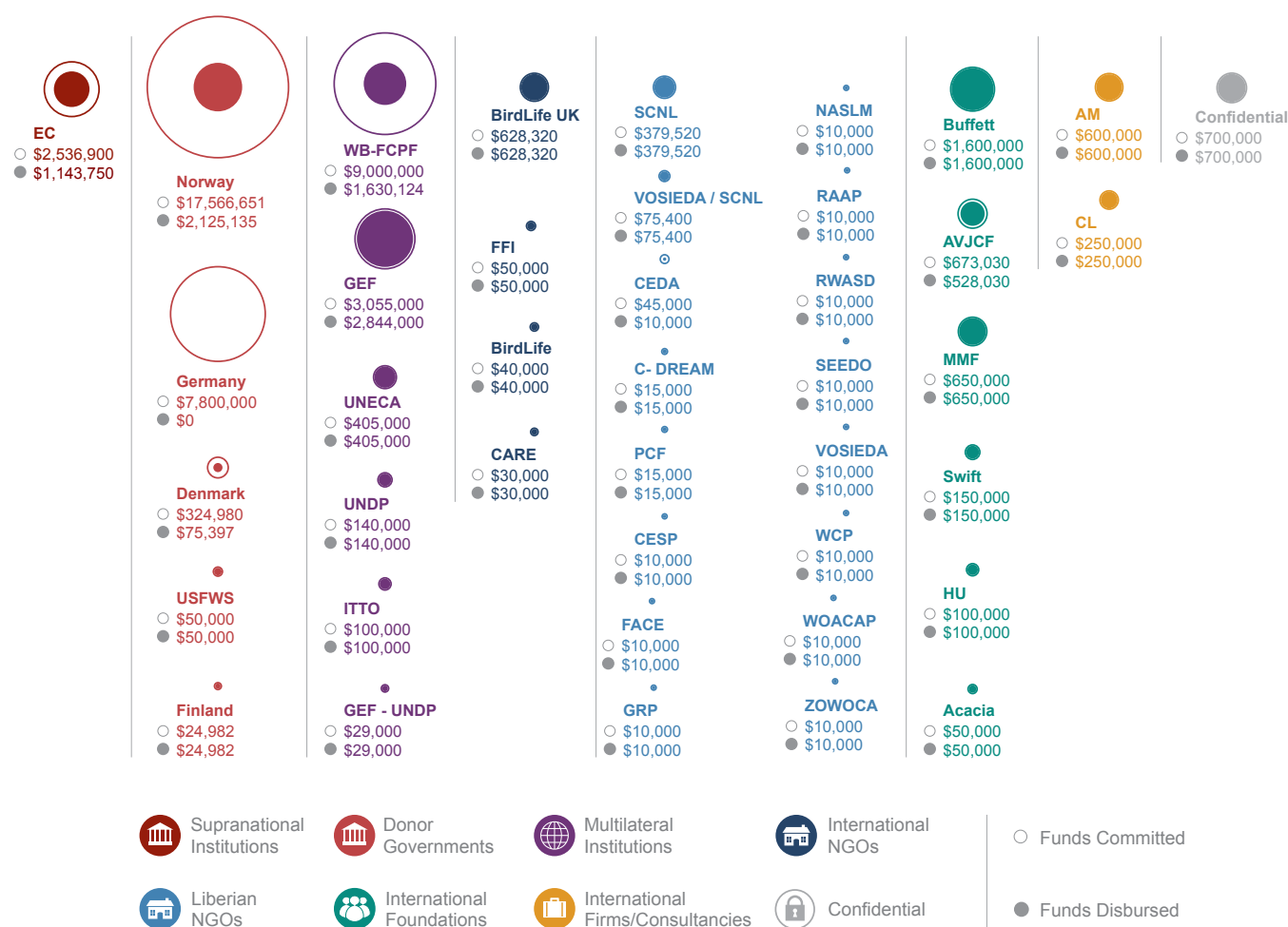


Figure 5 shows the relative levels of funding donors have committed as well as the proportion disbursed to their recipients through 2014. The percentage of committed funding that has been disbursed by donors varies from 100% to 0%. However, the vast majority of listed donors have a disbursement percentage between 30% and 100%, with fully four-fifths of donors having already disbursed the full amount of their commitments.

Among major donors, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is the largest, committing 37% of the total funding flowing to support REDD+ in Liberia. All NORAD funding has been committed to the government of Liberia to support the national forestry budget allocation, and to international NGOs, most of which are focusing on pro-poor REDD+ development and empowering grassroots institutions to inform national REDD+ strategy development through REDD+ demonstration projects.

The World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) ranks as the second largest donor, accounting for 19% of all committed funding, while the German Development Bank (KfW) is the third largest donor accounting for approximately 17% of the total funds committed to Liberia. The Global Environment Facility is the fourth largest donor accounting for approximately 6.5% of the total funds committed to Liberia, with funding flowing primarily to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and national Liberian non-governmental organizations.

Figure 5: Commitments and Disbursement by Sectors and Individual Donors, 2009–2014



Nearly all of the private foundations that have provided REDD+ financing, including the Howard G. Buffett Foundation (HGBF), the McCall MacBain Foundation (MMF), the John Swift Foundation, Humanity United (HU), and the Acacia Foundation, have already disbursed all committed funding to their intended recipients. The Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation (AVJF) has disbursed nearly 80% of its committed funding.

International NGOs (Fauna and Flora International, Birdlife UK and International, CARE International) have together committed and disbursed a total of US\$748,000 for REDD+ activities in Liberia. All of this funding was either passed to in-country offices of these same NGOs as first recipients, or passed on to other international NGOs. In general, international NGOs tend to be recipients of REDD+ funding rather than donors; however, in some instances they mobilize funding through direct public donations to be spent on activities. International NGOs are listed as donors when finance cannot be tracked back to another donor organization.

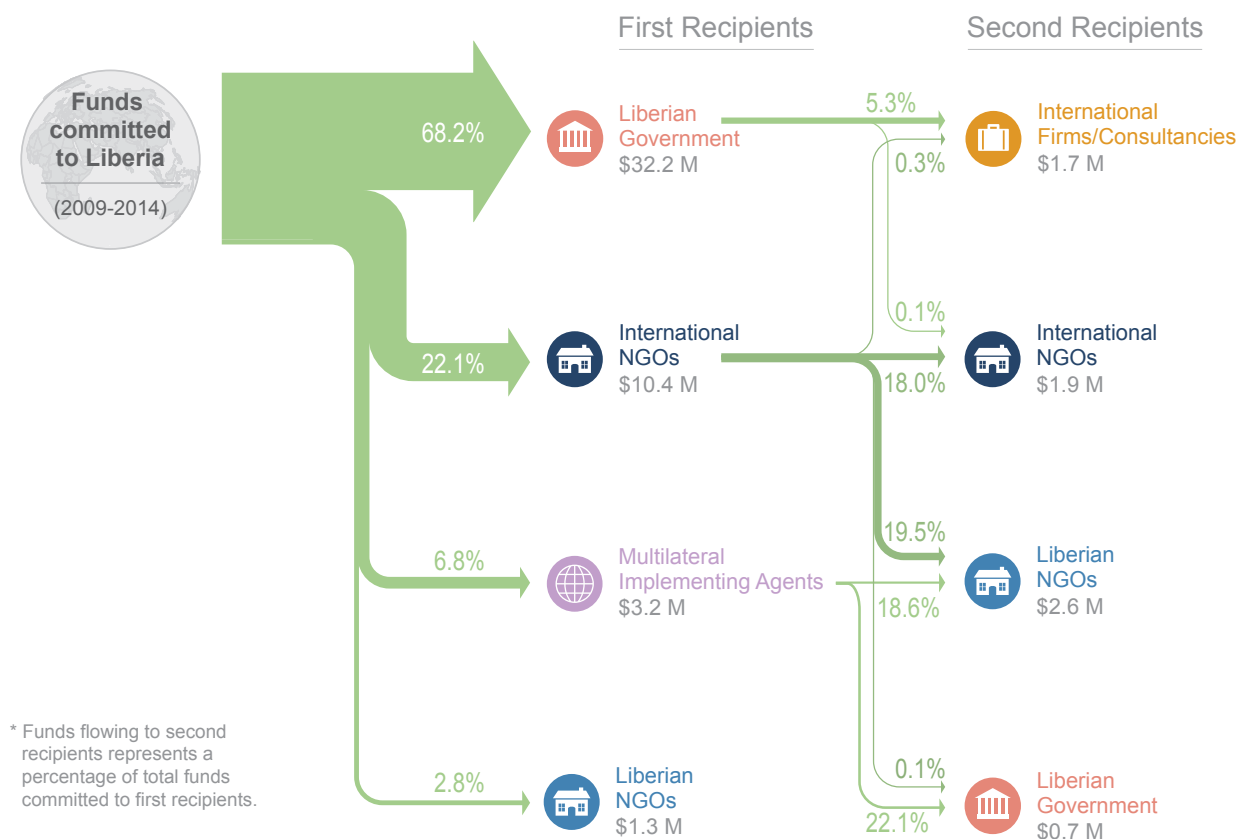
Private sector companies, including Arcelor Mittal-Liberia and Chevron Limited, have together committed and disbursed a total of US\$850,000 to support REDD+ in Liberia.

Recipients

A large portion of first recipients are Liberian government ministries receiving funding for REDD+ activities in Liberia. REDD+ data shows that the government of Liberia received US\$32.2 million, or 68% of total commitments, from 2009 through 2014. International NGOs are scheduled to receive US\$10.4 million (22% of total commitments), while Liberian NGOs are slated to receive 3% of total commitments (US\$1.3 million). Multilateral Implementing Agents are scheduled to receive 7% of REDD+ finance committed in the period between 2009 and 2014, or roughly US\$3.2 million.

The second recipients of REDD+ finance are also displayed in Figure 6. In Liberia, of the US\$10.4 million committed to international NGOs as first recipients, 19.5% (US\$2 million) was subsequently passed on to Liberian NGOs, 18% (US\$1.9 million) to other international NGOs, 0.3% (US\$30,000) to an international consultancy to implement activities, and a very small portion (US\$6,000) to the government of Liberia.

Figure 6: Percentage of Funding Committed to First and Second Tier In-Country Recipients by Sector

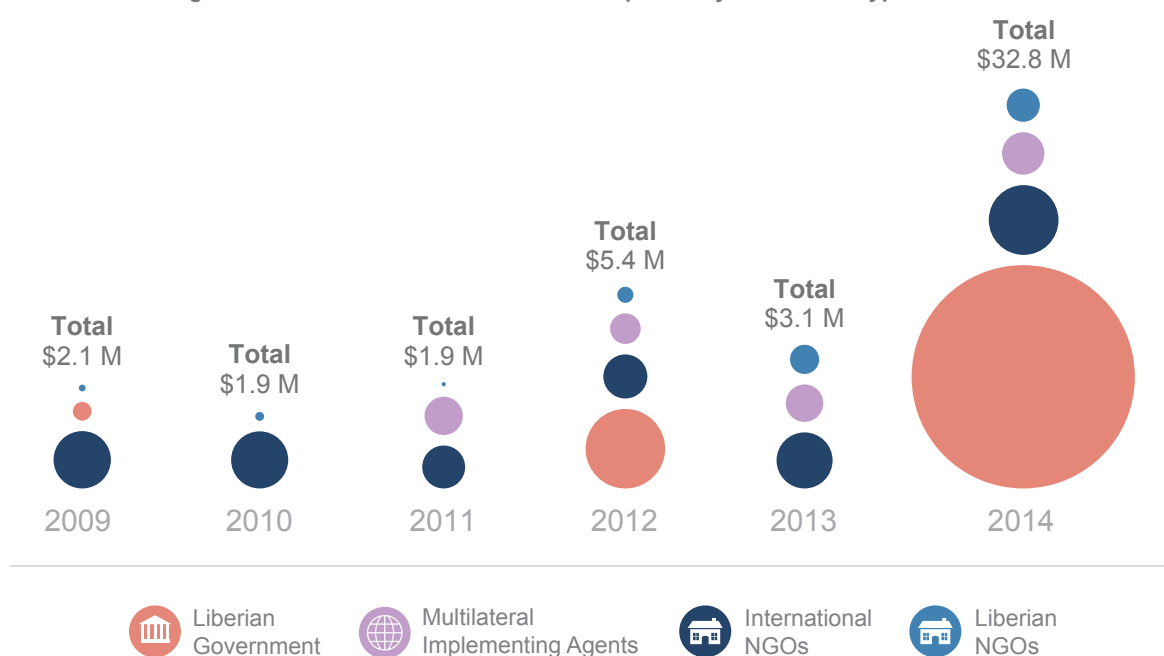


In many cases, first recipients do not pass money on to second recipients, but implement activities themselves. For example, Fauna and Flora International in most instances carried out direct implementation of activities with the funding they received, without the involvement of local NGOs or intermediaries.

An annual breakdown of new funding commitments to first recipients shows that Liberian NGOs account for only 2.8% (US\$1.3 million) of the total funds committed over the period 2009 to 2014. Data collected shows that the majority of the funding given to Liberian NGOs targeted implementation of stakeholder engagement activities and local capacity building.

However, approximately US\$10.4 million (22.1%) of commitments flowed to or through international NGOs by the end of 2014. Most of these funds largely originated from Germany, Norway, and the USA. Finally, 68.2% (US\$32.2 million) of the total funding committed flowed to or through the government of Liberia. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is a key government agency receiving most of the funds flowing to the government for the execution of forestry and REDD+ activities. As Figure 7 shows below, the Forestry Development Authority received large commitments in 2014, including from the FCPF (US\$5.2 million), the government of Germany (US\$7.8 million), and the government of Norway (US\$15 million, the first component of the US\$150 million bilateral REDD+ program with Norway).

Figure 7: New Commitments to First Recipients by Institution Type and Year



REDD+ Activities Receiving Donor Support

Figure 8 illustrates the range of REDD+ activities supported by the different donor institution types. The list of activities and definitions was drawn from broad agreement among REDD+ experts, including the civil society national partners collecting data across the thirteen REDD+ initiative countries. The activities supported by the widest range of donor types are stakeholder engagement, REDD+ safeguards development, policy and law analysis & development, institutional strengthening, improved forest and land management to reduce deforestation and degradation, clarification of rights and tenure, and the development of MRV systems and reference levels. Fewer donor types are supporting forest carbon project design and carbon offsets. Figure 8 further illustrates that international private foundations (MMF, JSF, HGBF) and donor governments

(KfW, NORAD, DANIDA, FIDA) provide funding for the implementation of a wide range of activities, while International NGOs (FFI, CI, CARE, BLI) provide support to the most narrow range of activities.

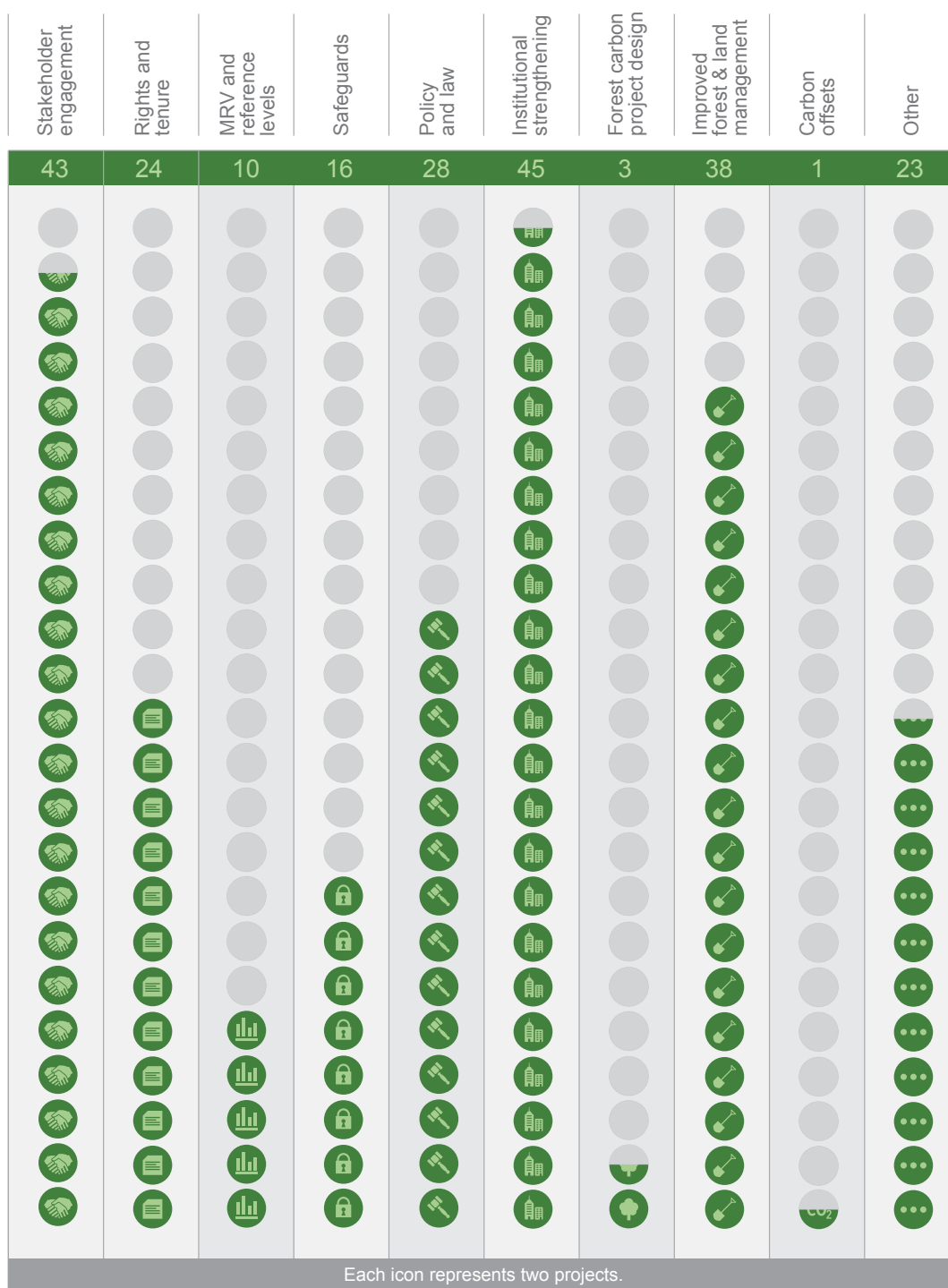
Figure 8: REDD+ Activities Supported by the Various Donor Types

	Stakeholder engagement	Rights and tenure	MRV and reference levels	Safeguards	Policy and law	Institutional strengthening	Forest carbon project design	Improved forest & land management	Carbon offsets	Other
 Supranational Institutions	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
 Donor Governments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Multilateral Institutions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
 International NGOs	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
 Liberian NGOs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
 International Foundations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
 International Firms/Consultancies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

Figure 9 below illustrates the number of donor initiatives at least partially supporting REDD+ activities. In total, REDDX identified and collected information concerning 46 distinct REDD+ donor initiatives in Liberia from 2009–2014. Among these, institutional strengthening of Liberia’s government and public agencies was the REDD+ activity that received the most funding support, with 45 of the total 46 projects reporting some engagement with this activity. Stakeholder engagement received the next most support, with 43 projects claiming funding aimed at this goal. Improved forest and land management to reduce deforestation and degradation was the third most popular activity, reported in a total of 38 projects. Several projects also engaged in activities concerning rights and tenure, and policy and law analysis & development. A limited number of projects implemented activities that focused on carbon offsets, forest carbon designs, safeguards, and MRV and reference levels initiatives.

The absence of a national climate change policy and REDD+ strategy as key policy instruments are the main reason for the fact that relatively few donor initiatives supported forest carbon project design and carbon offsets. These activities are associated with the end of Phase II and the beginning of Phase III of REDD+, but to date most donors to Liberia have targeted funding toward Phase I and the beginning stages of Phase II. However, it is envisaged that the Liberia-Norway financing agreement will accelerate the design of national safeguard and MRV systems prior to the commencement of the results-based payment stage of REDD+.

Figure 9: Proportion of Donor Initiatives Supporting Various REDD+ Activities in Liberia



Tracking Domestic Contributions for REDD+

While the primary focus of this report has been to analyze international REDD+ finance, the Liberian government has also contributed its own resources in the form of domestic support for REDD+. Tracking domestic contributions from the Liberian government in support of REDD+ activities remains a major challenge, considering the limited availability of consistent national data. Between the periods 2012 to 2014, the Liberian government contributed an estimated US\$12.1 million to support National REDD+ processes and enabling activities. The Forestry Development Authority made the highest estimated contribution of US\$8.6 million (71%), while the Ministry of Agriculture contributed the second largest amount at US\$1.7 million (14%). The Environmental Protection Agency contributed an estimated US\$1 million (8.2%), which ranked them as the third largest domestic contributor, followed by the Forestry Training Institute in the amount of US\$0.87 million (7.1%).

All of the funds tracked come from annual national budget allocations by the Liberian national government to various institutions, and the above estimates were calculated based upon the amount expended from these budgets on REDD+, sustainable forest management, and avoided deforestation programs. The key activities in which these tracked domestic funds were expended include staff remunerations, institutional operational costs, law enforcement training & capacity building, policy development, and public relations.

These findings show that the Liberian government has contributed significant financing to support REDD+—an amount equal to an estimated one-quarter of all international REDD+ funding commitments tracked. This is a demonstration of the Liberian government's interest and political will in ensuring that funds are allocated from national fiscal budgets for the purposes of supporting REDD+ and its enabling activities. As such, national instruments have been put in place by the government as a means of tracking REDD+ readiness and preparation processes.

Conclusion, Challenges, and Recommendations

Conclusion

In Liberia, over US\$47.2 million has been committed for REDD+ activities, with US\$14.5 million disbursed between 2009 and 2014. Together, the government of Norway, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), and the government of Germany account for approximately 73% of all REDD+ financial commitments.

The vast majority of initial institutions or 'first recipients' receiving funding for REDD+ activities in Liberia are based in-country. The government of Liberia is scheduled to receive around 68% (US\$32.2 million) of the total commitments to Liberia, and local Liberian NGOs are scheduled to receive only 2.8% (US\$1.3 million) of the total commitments.

The finances are currently flowing to 46 projects aimed at the following activities:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Rights and Tenure
- MRV and reference levels
- REDD+ Safeguards
- Policy and Law Analysis & Development, REDD Strategy Development and Advocacy
- Institutional Strengthening
- Forest Carbon Project design
- Improved Forest and Land Management to Reduce Deforestation and Degradation (Implementation)
- Carbon Offsets and Performance-Based Payments for Improved Forest and Land Management

Challenges and Recommendations

The following are key challenges identified through the REDD+ expenditures tracking (REDDX) initiative that are significant to the successful implementation of REDD+ in Liberia:

- *Insufficient long-term financing for REDD+.* Results show that a significant gap exists between the total funding committed and the amount required for sustainable national REDD+ implementation. Even though the Liberian government has secured a degree of long-term financial support through bilateral means from the Government of Norway to fund activities up to 2020, possibilities for exploiting further funding sources by the government are available. Particular efforts should focus on stimulating private sector investment in more sustainable forest management, especially from mining, logging, and palm oil concessionaires.
- *Low capacity of national staff and in-country actors to fully execute and implement a REDD+ program.* The concepts and systems needed for REDD+ still remain new to many stakeholders. This lack of knowledge and capacity is hindering stakeholder involvement in the development of Liberia's National REDD+ strategy, including national civil society organizations, private sector actors, and community-based

organizations. The sustainability of REDD+ and the achievement of positive outcomes relies on Liberia taking the leadership and chief technical role in all activities. This means that REDD+ funding should target a robust training and education program for Liberians in areas such as carbon accounting, MRV, and others.

- *Limited private sector engagement.* Many private sector actors—especially agribusiness, forest concessionaires, financial institutions, and investors—see REDD+ activities as potentially restricting their investments by keeping forest cover intact. Against this backdrop, very few are interested and involved in the ongoing national REDD+ processes. While the national REDD+ Implementation Team has made tremendous efforts to better involve the private sector, policy makers have not adequately and effectively presented REDD+ to the private sector as an opportunity for sustainable forest management and future revenue generation. To move this forward, Liberia needs to develop an integrated REDD+ information and communication strategy that will consider building essential outreach tools based on the interests of different stakeholders and interest groups. The design of these tools should build upon similar tools developed by other private and governmental organizations outside of Liberia.
- *Lack of transparent information on REDD+ finance and activities, leading to duplication of efforts.* Very few REDD+ activities or donors are known by the national government and other important REDD+ stakeholders. This has led to several organizations either duplicating activities or failing to focus on national priorities in reducing deforestation and forest degradation. In order to minimize the duplication and increase transparency, the government should establish a repository of all current REDD+ projects in the country. This will help the government exercise oversight responsibility, provide areas of policy alignment and have an understanding of what is happening throughout the country. The government should make disclosure of REDD+ project information mandatory for everyone desiring to implement REDD+ activities in Liberia.

ANNEX I

Participants list: Liberia's REDD+ Finance Tracking Initiative National Stakeholders Workshop

July 2015, Monrovia, Liberia

#	Name	Institution/Organization
1	Sampson K. P. Chea	University of Liberia
2	Johansen T. Voker	Environmental Protection Agency
3	Michael F. Garbo	Society for the Conservation of Nature- Liberia
4	Jerry C. Garteh	Society for the Conservation of Nature- Liberia
5	Harris S. Weah	Environmental Protection Agency
6	Evelyn K. Fassibu	Civil Society Network
7	Z. Elijah Whapoe	Environmental Protection Agency
8	Anthony Teayah	Skills and Agricultural Development Services
9	Kumeh S. Assaf	Ministry of Transport
10	Henry O. William	Environmental Protection Agency
11	J. S. Cammue	Environmental Protection Agency
12	James Z. Aquoi	Environmental Protection Agency
13	Charlene V. Tarlery	Liberian Girls Guard Association
14	Spencer T. Darbney	Skills and Agricultural Development Services
15	Augustine K. Koffa	Environmental Protection Agency
16	Hawa K. Walker	Environmental Protection Agency
17	Henry B. Smith	Society for Environmental Conservation
18	Mark K. Gontor	Forestry Development Authority
19	Konikay A. Nimely	Forestry Development Authority
20	Borwen Sayon	National Environmental Consultancy
21	Isaac T. Charleson	Mano River Youth parliament
22	Jonathan W. Davies	Environmental Protection Agency
23	Dickson J. Chowolo	Forest Cry Liberia
24	Roland J. Lepol	Ministry of Agriculture
25	Blamah S. Goll	Forestry Development Authority
26	Benjamin S. Karmorh	Environmental Protection Agency
27	Harris Nyah	Forestry Development Authority
28	Jonathan W. Yiah	Sustainable Development Institute
29	Sonpon D. Freeman	Liberia Business and Planning Association
30	D. Gayflor Kpadeh	Wonegizi Conservation Promoters
31	K. Amos Karmah	Acord-Liberia
32	Palin A. Dralley, Jr	YOLLEDA
33	Peter G. Mulbah	Lead REDDX Data Collector, SADS



The Family of Forest Trends Initiatives

Ecosystem Marketplace

A global platform for transparent information on ecosystem service payments and markets

Water Initiative

Protecting watershed services through markets and incentives that complement conventional management

Forest Trade & Finance

Bringing sustainability to trade and financial investments in the global market for forest products



Business and Biodiversity Offsets Program, developing, testing and supporting best practice in biodiversity offsets



Building capacity for local communities and governments to engage in emerging environmental markets

Communities and Markets

Supporting local communities to make informed decisions regarding their participation in environmental markets, strengthening their territorial rights



Using innovative financing to promote the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystem services

Public-Private Co-Finance Initiative

Creating innovative, integrated, and efficient financing to support the transition to low emissions and zero deforestation land use

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