

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species Annual Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	13/008
Project Title	Establishing community-based forest biodiversity management around Sapo Park, Liberia
Country	<i>Liberia</i>
UK Contractor	Fauna & Flora International
Partner Organisation(s)	<i>The Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Liberian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)</i>
Darwin Grant Value	Total grant: £126,080
Start/End dates	1 April 2004 – 30 March 2007
Reporting period and report number	1 Apr 2005 to 31 Mar 2006 Annual Report 2
Project website	None
Author(s), date	Stephen van der Mark, 30 th April 2005

2. Project Background

Liberia contains the largest remaining areas of forest in the highly threatened Upper Guinean Forest ecosystem: the Lofa-Gola-Mano block in the north-west, and the south-east forest block contiguous with the Taï forest massif in south-western Côte d'Ivoire. These areas were identified as highest priority areas for conservation of biological diversity in 1999 and subsequent action is underway through various international initiatives to address the conservation challenges in this region.

In Liberia, economic dependency on these forest ecosystems is extremely high: the population is extremely dependent on forests for jobs, revenue/foreign exchange, food, Non-Timber-Forest-Products (NTFPs) like medicines, building materials, cultural practices, local climate regulation, clean water and much more.

Forest management decisions have historically been dominated by commercial interests at the expense of community needs and conservation. Since 1980, and especially since civil war started in 1990, Liberia has emphasised commercial timber production at the expense of ecosystem goods & services provided by forests, biodiversity conservation, and non-commercial or small-scale commercial uses of forests. Timber (round-log) export became worth two-thirds of official foreign exchange receipts and 26% of GDP by 2002. Furthermore forests became coveted as a prize of political office under the Taylor Administration where they were used to fund warfare in Liberia and in neighbouring countries from 2000 onwards. This in turn led to the UN Security Council imposing world-wide sanctions on the international trade of timber products originating in Liberia since July 2003.

This imbalance of pushing commercial interests at the expense of community and conservation issues is supposed to be rectified during the current phase of forest sector reform, which was prompted by the imposition of UN Security Council sanctions against the importation of timber products originating in Liberia. The Liberian Forestry Initiative (a platform where EU, WB, INGOs and Liberian governmental and non-governmental partners take part) addresses these issues and has been making significant process in reforming the Liberian forestry sector. A suspension of the UN sanctions or even a lifting is foreseen in June 2006 provided that a legislative and regulatory framework is in place that takes into account both commercial, community and conservation interests.

Reform of the forest sector in Liberia is central to restoring economic prosperity and political stability to Liberia, over and above Liberia's forests' international biological importance and their

importance it has to ensuring subsistence and cultural identity to rural Liberians. All this was recognised in December 2003 when the National Transitional Government of Liberia officially adopted a policy of “balancing the three Cs” of forest management: **C**ommercial use, **C**ommunity use and **C**onservation (see attachment 1 & 2). The current Government took office in January 23rd 2006 with the inauguration of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and has actively supported the policy of integrating the three C’s.

This Darwin-funded project attempts to pilot one of the never-before-tested legal categories of protected forest: Communal Forest. The Protected Forest Area Network Act of 2003 states that a ‘Communal Forest’ means an area set aside legally or temporarily by regulation for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products by local communities on a non-commercial basis” (Section 1.3). Section 9.10 continues “Acts prohibited in **Communal Forests** shall include: No prospecting, mining, farming or commercial timber extraction. Other uses are to be regulated by the designated local community with assistance from local authorities and declared by Regulations of the [Forestry Development] Authority.” Although the legal texts are not completely clear (e.g. what constitutes commercial?) they do provide a basis for discussion and inclusion of “communal” type forestry in the national level land-use planning that is taking place now. FFI with support from the Darwin Initiative, and other partners are now pushing the agenda for communal forestry also taking into account conservation and especially commercial interests as this is the only sustainable way forward.

If successful in establishing a replicable model for this protected forest type, this project will help set legal precedent for empowering rural Liberians to control the forest resources they depend on for their livelihood, as well as provide a practical model for supporting sustainable forest-based livelihoods in Liberia. It will also contribute to establishing a balance between the three Cs of forest use and remove one of the driving forces of political instability in the country.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

The project purpose is to ensure conservation of threatened Upper Guinean rainforest biodiversity and promote sustainable rural livelihoods in forested areas of Liberia based on a legally grounded, working model of community empowerment and forest resource use. This will be pursued through piloting communal forests in 3-4 sites with up to 40 villages around Sapo National Park, securing in perpetuity a forested buffer zone around the Park. To do this, project partners will implement and establish operational links between four activity themes:

- (1) refining and testing the legal/regulatory framework for CFs,
- (2) building the community-based, NGO and governmental institutions to implement CFs,
- (3) ensuring sound management of environmental/ biological resources in the forest, and
- (4) assisting local communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods and common property resources management.

The model developed at Sapo Park will be validated, adapted to other localities and then replicated across Liberia in the following years. The specific outputs listed in the project logical framework, as well as the objectively verifiable indicators, are as follows:

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Objectively verifiable indicators</i>
1. Regulatory framework and legal amendments for CFs adopted 2. 3-4 communal forests/ tribal reserves in Sapo Park buffer zone established 3. Model for sustainable natural resources & common property-based livelihoods developed 4. Capacity of FDA, MIA, Liberian NGOs and communities strengthened to create and manage CFs/TRs 5. Model developed for replication of sustainable forest livelihood integrated with biodiversity conservation, supported by written materials (guidelines, evaluations, recommendations, training materials)	1. FDA promulgates regulations through a communal forest manual, resolving any incongruencies/issues between MIA and FDA policy 2a. At least 3 CFs/TRs legally established around SNP, covering 70,000-80,000 ha 2b. Each communal forest has a mgt. plan under implementation 3. Sustainable forest resource-based livelihood programmes underway for 3 communities with CFs, possibly incl. agro-forestry, rattan furniture, others tbd. 4. Efficient, effective monitoring and management of CFs, including formalising and implementing the mechanism within FDA to support recurrent costs of CFs, i.e. allocating certain forestry fees to CFs 5. Report with clear lessons learned, procedures, recommendations for future CFs

Output 1: Some progress has been made towards this output, although no legal or regulatory framework has been formally adopted since this act must be part of broader forests sector reform efforts underway. These efforts are headed through the Liberian Forestry Initiative but have been faced with significant delays. This is mostly attributable to security issues in 2004-2005 and a new Liberian Government that came into office in January 2006. At the time of writing Most Liberian Government Ministries and Departments dealing with forestry issues are in a state of disarray due to intensive reorganization of the governmental apparatus. The expectation is that the UN Security Council will either suspend or lift the timber sanctions in June 2006, provided that regulatory frameworks and legal amendments are in place.

Output 2: Some progress has been made towards this output. Three communal forest areas have been selected – one in each of the three management zones of Sapo National Park – the selection being based on a set of selection criteria defined for the purpose in a participatory manner. Three communal forests associations formed by local households in the three communal forest areas have been set up; **Gbaybo Chiefdom** Community Forest Association, **Lower Jeadepo** Community Forest Development Association and the **Upper Wedjah** Community Forest Association, in total these three associations cover approximately 23 villages. The FFI-Community Forestry team has been working with selected officials of these associations and first drafts of their constitutions and by-laws are currently being drafted. Organizational analysis has been the major thrust of FFIs work as it is extremely important to firstly understand how traditional organizational structures and norms and values can support project interventions. A report has been produced on these issues and now the project is underway to start piloting the CF initiative.

Output 3: Some progress has been made towards this objective. After an intensive assessment phase to identify sustainable forest – resource-based programmes (a report has been produced), the project will now start to implement small pilot projects focussing on improved backyard gardening, nurseries and tree crop gardening in the three management zones of the Park. Specific emphasis will be given to the involvement of women in these initiatives as it became clear that there are strong gender imbalances when it concerns community based development.

Output 4: Some progress has been made towards this objective. The FFI Communal Forestry team that is based in the Sapo region always works with Liberian government counterparts. Although the Liberian Government is in a state of reorganization, FDA and MIA counterparts have been working intensively on CF issues with the FFI project team. The international team leader, Dr. Sam Kofa has intensively worked with government counterparts addressing a variety of issues such as participatory approaches, community organization, agro-forestry and home-gardening. Although no formal training was undertaken, the close collaboration between the FFI-CF team and government/NGO counterparts could be characterized as an on-the-job training process resulting in improved capacity of FDA/MIA and NGO counterparts to deal with

communal forestry issues. However, efficient and effective monitoring and management of CFs is not in place. Local structures are in place and communities monitor their CFs themselves. National level CF activities have not been formalized and this is mainly attributable to government reform. As long as legal frameworks pertaining to communal forestry at the national level are not formalized, the CF initiative on the ground level will face delays.

Output 5: Limited progress has been made towards this objective. A draft Communal Forestry manual has been designed and awaits further adaptations and amendments in the light of a review of ongoing communal forestry initiatives around Sapo National Park and developments in the national level policy debates pertaining to forestry issues.

Overall, project fieldwork has been severely delayed by persistent security concerns that were not foreseen at the time of project submission. Soon after civil war ended in August 2003, rebels in south-east Liberia entered Sapo Park to pursue alluvial gold mining. Guided by a few local residents, they set up camps. In the absence of any resistance, the camps grew and grew. Locals began importing goods like food, palm wine and other consumables and non-consumables into the camps. Local authorities, government officials and even Monrovia-based officials from the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) got involved, accepting kick-backs in return for not stopping the mining. Professional hunters arrived, feeding the miners and exporting ivory to buyers, allegedly from the UN forces. Government collusion at many levels has made it extremely difficult to pressure Government into taking action against the illegal invasion of the Park. As of early 2005, the number of inhabitants inside the Park was estimated at several thousand, consisting mostly of former combatants and entrepreneurs from around the country with relatively few local villagers. At the national level, starting in August 2003, West African and later UN peace-keepers focused on establishing peace and stability in more populated areas which almost by definition are the non-forested areas in Liberia. Forested areas were left for last in the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) process. Not until late 2004, over a year after the peace-keepers arrived in Liberia, was any effort paid to disarming the Sapo Park area, and even then an wholly insufficient job was done. Reports of heavy weaponry persisted through March 2005. FFI had good reason to believe that the lack of serious effort to disarm and demobilise fighters in and around the Park, coupled with the collusion of Government officials, represented serious security risks and for this reason refused to deploy the Project Manager (PM) and other project personnel and equipment to the Park as originally planned for November 2004. Starting in January 2005, a concerted effort by environmental NGOs (FFI, Conservation International and several Liberian NGOs), the US Embassy in Monrovia, the US Forest Service, UNEP, UNOPS and outraged staff within the FDA finally succeeded in pressuring top officials of Government and the UN peace-keepers to take action. This ultimately resulted in a concerted effort by FFI, UNMIL and other agencies to relocate squatters and miners in July-August 2005. Due to these developments the originally planned project activities were faced by enormous delays. Only by October 2006 FFI staff could safely start work in the Sapo National Park region.

The other major development that has forced FFI to alter its work programme is the dramatic shift in short-term priorities of communities surrounding the Park. Prior to the war of 2003, these villages were outraged at their lack of control over the surrounding forests that they used and managed according to traditional practices. Logging companies, professional hunters and gold miners would arrive with a permit issued in Monrovia and demand that communities move aside for them to extract whatever they wished, leaving few if any benefits locally. Demands for local consultations, benefit-sharing or employment were brushed aside irreverently. Local communities clearly realize the necessity of having some form of ownership over these forests. They express a clear need for either having the deeds to the communal forests or having clear resource ownership rights. Although local constitutions and by-laws have been drafted to address the above issues, they need to be formalised and recognized by national level governmental structures and given the current state of reorganization of the government this may take substantial time.

4. Progress

One-paragraph summary: At the national level, the policy work of the project has proceeded well with the development of and public training in a (draft) manual to establish communal

forests in Liberia. The policy development and review process has been extremely timely as it is an integral component of a much broader reform effort of Liberia's forest sector that is seriously delayed by Liberian Governmental reforms that are taking place. Due to security concerns (see above), the fieldwork has been slow in getting underway. On the bright side though, all the preparatory studies have been finalized (assessment phase, community organization, etc.) The fieldwork will start in May 2006 in three selected communal forest areas around Sapo NP.

Sapo National Park has become increasingly popular with donors and NGO's, and this has led to confusion on the part of local stakeholders as well as donors. FFI undertook a review in April 2005 of all development and conservation interventions around the Park since 1997 and of all available information on affected communities. This work is currently being reviewed and adapted and on the basis of this FFI will be able to engage communities in as knowledgeable a manner as possible.

Project achievement/developments: Since this project began in April 2004, FFI has focused heavily on establishing the appropriate policy framework for piloting communal forests. This has included finalising, training in and presenting for public comment, through numerous discussions, informal consultations and workshops.

Another principal focus has been on advocating for community concerns as national-level forest sector reform proceeds. This initiative is occurring within the broad context of Liberia's forest sector reform whose overarching goals are

- (1) to balance the three Cs of forest management in Liberia,
- (2) to reform and strengthen the FDA, and
- (3) to reform management of forest sector revenues in line with macro-level financial management reform.

When this project started it was the only funded intervention in support of the Community 'C' of the three Cs. As such it is playing an important role in advising the reform efforts led by the Liberia Forest Initiative (LFI), a collaborative effort whereby several donors and technical agencies – the US Forest Service, the US State Department, the US Embassy in Liberia, the US Treasury, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the FAO, IUCN, FFI, Conservation International, ICRAF, CIFOR, the Environmental Law Institute, Forest Partners International and several Liberian environmental NGOs – share information and collaborate within an agreed framework to achieve the common goals above. The LFI did not exist when the project proposal for this grant was submitted and approved, thus it was not mentioned in the proposal. However the LFI is proving to be invaluable for ensuring co-ordination, for effective strategic lobbying and for comprehensive reform of the forest sector.

Thanks to this Darwin project, FFI is providing strategic input into forest sector reform through participation in regular Liberia-based and international forums like steering group meetings, workshops (on restructuring the Department for Conservation and Community Services of the FDA, and on the emerging land-use planning process for Liberia) and informal consultations. The Liberian Government now actively supports the inclusion of Community and Conservation issues in the overall Forestry reform and the international community is also actively endorsing the concept. FFI has been successful in obtaining funding from the 1) EU to support the Liberian Forestry Reform with specific emphasis on communal forestry, 2) GEF to support Park management, public awareness and monitoring and 3) DGIS to support the communal forestry initiative.

As mentioned earlier, Sapo National Park has become increasingly popular with donors and NGOs. At the local level no operating coordination mechanism is in place to coordinate the interventions of the various donors and stakeholders in the area. Duplication of efforts and lack of synergetic action are the result. In response, in July 2005 FFI conducted a review of all information available on what has happened at the Park (since about 1997), who is doing what now, what information is (and is not) available, the quality of this information, the degree to which interventions at the Park have been truly participatory, and what plans exist for future interventions. The report was shared with all actors at the Park in the hope of improving everyone's performance and co-ordination. It was also used to plan and improve FFI's

interventions at the Park. The report is currently being revised in the light of the influx of new projects in the Sapo region.

The following table reviews specific milestones for FY05-06 set out in the revised project proposal (correspondence with DI dated October 24th 2005).

<i>Project implementation timetable</i>			
Date	Financial year:	Key milestones	Progress towards achieving milestones
Aug 05	FY 05-06	All squatters evacuated out of Sapo National Park	All squatters were evacuated in July/Aug 2005 with the help of UNMIL.
Dec 05	FY 05-06	Assessments completed of agricultural, agro-forestry and forest management systems to improve upon and that could serve as supports to piloting CFs.	One report published : "Opportunities for Agroforestry and Conservation around Sapo National Park". Various on-site assessments conducted by the FFI-CF team.
Dec 05	FY 05-06	Assessments completed of traditional authorities and decision-making structures to work with in development aid delivery and CF piloting.	One report published: " Preliminary Assessment of Grassroots Structures of Governance in Communities Around Sapo National Park".
Dec 05	FY 05-06	Initial information/awareness campaigns completed for all pilot Sapo Park communities on the possibility to establish, process to create + requirements for TRs/CFs; identification of three pilot communities for establishing CFs.	Awareness raising campaigns conducted for 23 villages around the Sapo National Park. Communities aware of CF and the process to create communal forests. Three pilot sites selected around Sapo NP. Three community forestry associations setup. Communities have drafted their constitution and by-laws.
Jan 06	FY 05/06	First technical feasibility and market study underway on sustainable forest based income generating activities.	No technical feasibility study was conducted although the report above " opportunities for agroforestry....." covers some important elements. At this point in time it is almost impossible to conduct a market analyses when the legislative framework pertaining to CFs is not in place and does not clarify certain issues such as " commercial use" (see sections above).
Feb 06	FY 05-06	Sustainable livelihood initiatives begun for at least one site targeting low-impact agriculture around and sustainable forest-based activities within pilot CF community	With the drafting of local constitutions and by-laws pertaining to CFs, the process of establishing CFs has started in earnest. Activities have now (April 2006) started focussing on sustainable livelihood startegies such as improved backyard gardening systems, intrduction of fruit trees, etc.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

Although the project manager in Liberia has spent significant time on policy work this is now bearing fruit. The international community is now pushing the agenda for communal forestry and this is creating significant funding opportunities. Continuity of the Communal Forestry Initiative in Liberia is now guaranteed with FFI successful application for funds to the EU for support to forestry reform and communal forestry in Liberia. DGIS will support communal forestry fieldwork from April-June 2006 after which the French GEF (FFEM) will hopefully take over. The project manager spent significant time on community organization around Sapo NP, specifically building on traditional organizational structures (chiefdoms, etc.). The communities have organized themselves in three Community Forest Associations and have drafted their constitutions and by-laws, a first important step in the recognition of community rights to communal forests. FFI has seriously taken into account the reviewers remark regarding participatory approaches, a remark also made during a DGIS review of the Liberia programme. Throughout the process of community organization this has been taken account and this has led to a high degree of self-reliance and ownership by local communities of the communal forestry initiative.

6. Partnerships

Mr. John Woods has been appointed as Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority. Mr. Woods has been closely involved in the Liberian Forestry Initiative and has a strong will to take communal forests seriously. The FDA has accepted that communities have a significant role to play in forest management, and that they have rights to forest resources. This is witnessed in the recent re-organisation of the FDA into three overall departments, one of which is entitled 'the Department for Conservation and Community Services' which has three divisions including one for 'Community-based Forest Resource Management'. FDA's understanding of how to address community needs and rights has increased significantly and this is mainly due to teaming up FFI-CF staff with FDA personnel in the field.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) has not received significant attention by Government or donors recently and thus it has been unable to start rebuilding itself like the FDA. Furthermore it suffers tremendously from at least 15 years of institutional neglect where its staff had few operating resources. The concepts of enhancing rural Liberian's rights and integrating traditional authority systems with national Government and Law, which are the MIA's mandate, went counter to the interests of the national Government or rebel factions. Thus MIA was starved and intimidated into not functioning. The Ministry is now in a reorganization which hampers the partnership.

The Liberian Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to function disorderly. There is clear confusion on the part of EPA staff regarding their roles and responsibilities in relation to the forestry sector. The EPA has shown little initiative, despite the efforts made by FFI and now the FDA, to participate in this initiative in the limited ways it is foreseen.

Relations with the Liberia Forest Initiative partners have been fruitful and allowed FFI to both learn and hone its thinking on communal forests, as well as to help present community voices in the broad debates and action on forest sector reform. New partnerships will be developed with International NGOs in the future.

7. Impact and Sustainability

The project has started on-ground implementation of the communal forestry initiative through community organization and the formulation of local stakeholder constitutions and by-laws. Comprehensive policy reform is taking place but needs to be formalized by the Liberian Government. This is scheduled to take place in 2006, including the recognition of community

user rights of communal forests. Once one or more CFs are functional, then FFI plans to promote it to the general public. The project is, however, being used to convince villagers around Sapu Park that they will receive benefits from respecting the Park

The exit strategy for this project is largely building on the proposal submitted to the French GEF (FFEM) and a final decision is scheduled to take place in July 2006. In the meantime the EU funded project is underway and this project supports the national level forestry reform.

8. Post-Project Follow up Activities

See remarks above.

9. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

Formal dissemination activities in the host country were limited to (1) working groups and small training/information sessions targeting the key project partners like the FDA, MIA (when possible) and EPA (when possible), (2) a workshop in July 2005 to inventory all past and present donor interventions in the region, 3) various informal community consultations and workshops to address communal forestry issues.

Table 1. Project Outputs (in accordance with revised project outputs)

Code No.	Unit	Description
6A, 6B	Nr. People trained	10 Liberians (FDA,MIA,NGOs) received on-the-job training in community consultation, awareness raising techniques, and facilitation techniques. This process is ongoing. TA dedicated at least 2weeks x 10 people = 20 weeks.
8	J. Suter	J. Suter dedicated 15% time for 8 months.
	Anyaa Vohiri	Anyaa Vohiri dedicated 20% time for 8 months.
14A	Nr. workshops	Up till now a high number of seminars/workshops conducted. Some formal, some informal village meetings.
14B		CF findings and policies were presented and debated at the Liberian National Forestry Policy workshop (June 2005) and Community Forestry in Liberia Workshop (December 2005). The proceedings of the last meeting were officially presented during a workshop in January 2006.
23	Total = £56,076.82	100% of Dr Samuel Koffa's time for 12 months 15% of J Suter's time for 8 months 20% of A Vohiri's time for 8 months 100% of Richard Sambola time for 6 months + September 2005 (seconded within FFI) FDA-Monrovia staff stipends (6 months) 30% of driver for 3 months (Jan-March 2006) Emmeh Freeman (NAEAL), consultant June 2005 Moses Poson, temporary driver 2 months 2005 Jonathan Yiah (SDI), consultant June/July 2005 MacArthur Pay-Bayee (Africare) consultant June/July 2005

Dixon Wlehbo (NAEAL) consultant July 2005
 Sekou Conneh (independent) consultant July 2005
 Stanley Nyoni (independent) consultant June/July 2005
 Sarah Nyanquoi (FDA), 2 weeks in July 2005
 Associated rents, heating, lighting, cleaning (Monrovia, Cambridge)
 Associated postage, telephone, stationery (Monrovia, Cambridge)
 Travel and subsistence
 Printing
 Conferences and seminars
 Capital items
 Others (additional staff costs)

Table 2: Publications

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. contact address, website)	Cost £
Report	"Defining an Implementation Strategy for Development around Sapo National Park"	FFI report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Free
Report	" Preliminary Assessment of Grassroots Structures of Governance in Communities Around Sapo National Park"	FFI report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Free
Report	" Review of Conservation and Development Interventions in Communities around Sapo National Park"	FFI-report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Free
Report	"Opportunities for Agroforestry and Conservation around Sapo National Park"	FFI-Report	FFI-Cambridge	Free

All other materials produced were not publicly published.

10. Project Expenditure

Please note that the expenditure related below refers only to expenditure of the Darwin grant, not to co-financing which is listed in Table 1 above.

Table 3: Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 01 April 2004 to 31 March 2005)

Item	Active Budget for FY05/06 in £ (note that on two occasions minor reallocations to the budget were approved by the Darwin Secretariat)	Expenditure in FY05/06 in £	Balance £

Significant underspending occurred, especially on the conferences/seminar budget line as most training was conducted on the ground level which involves low costs. In earlier correspondence with the Darwin Secretariat it was in principle agreed that the salary of Richard Sambolah could be covered through reallocating some budget from the above mentioned budget line as Richard Sambolah has been elemental in pushing the CF initiative..

Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons

At the end of year 1 the project was significantly restructured as from having a shift in focus in the first 1-2 years from establishing communal forests themselves to strengthening community-based committees and promoting sustainable forest-based livelihoods. This has been pushed significantly in the past year. Mr. Jamison Suter travelled extensively to Liberia to monitor progress and has successor, Mr. Stephen van der Mark, travelled to Liberia in the second half of April to monitor progress of, amongst others, the Darwin funded project. The project has now reached a phase of on-the-ground implementation of the CF initiative through the establishment of three pilot CF sites. Local communities have been organized and have finalized local constitutions and by-laws pertaining to CFs. The main worry though is that these initiatives need to be formalized and that provisions/amendments need to be made in the legislative framework to cater and support the CF initiative in National land-use planning. The international community is pushing this initiative, mainly through the Liberian Forestry Initiative, and the hope is that the legislative framework will be formalized and in place by June 2006.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2005/2006

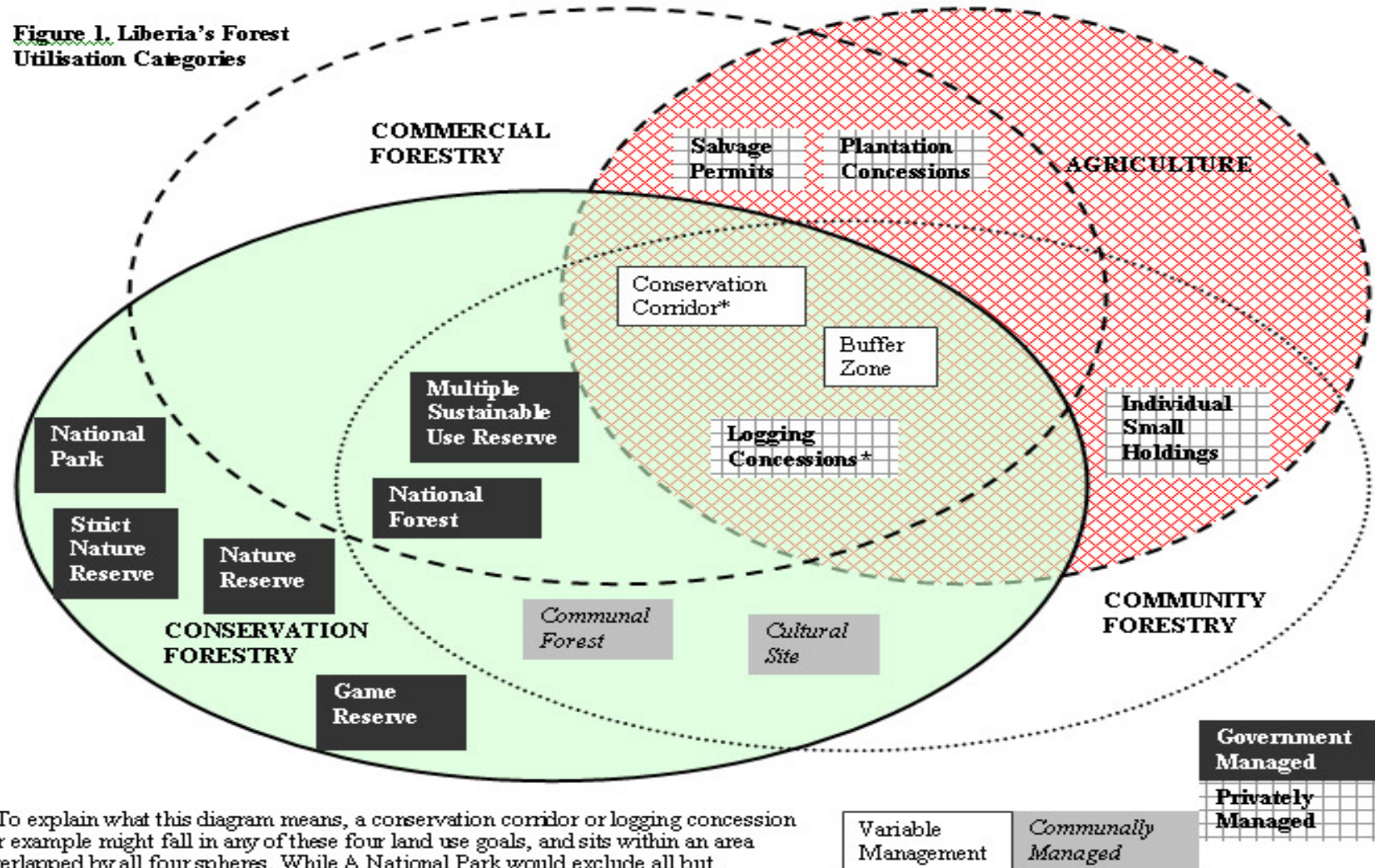
Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2005-Mar 2006	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation of biological diversity, • The sustainable use of its components, and • The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources 			
<p>Purpose To ensure forest biodiversity conservation and sustainable rural livelihoods in Liberia based on a legally grounded, working model of forest community empowerment and forest resource use</p>	<p>Forest cover & wildlife populations maintained in pilot communal forest areas and Sapu Park</p> <p>Absence of non-seasonal or critical shortage of forest resources to appropriate communities</p> <p>Absence of community complaints of external expropriation of natural resources for CFs/TRs</p> <p>Requests from other forest-dwelling communities and INGOs to replicate the model, and donor interest to support this as required</p>	<p>GEF has granted substantial funding to support Sapu NP management, environmental education and research. Several initiatives are underway in this project to start monitoring of wildlife populations.</p> <p>Law enforcement training underway under the GEF grant; this will setup basic enforcement procedures so that park staff is able to monitor external/illegal natural resource use for CFs/TRs.</p> <p>Assessment of forest use by local communities finalized.</p> <p>The European Commission is currently funding a project to reform the Liberian forestry sector. This project focuses to a large extent on</p>	<p>Partnership development with academic research institutes to set up long term monitoring programs of wildlife populations and forest cover. This will mainly be done through PhD. And MSc. Level studies in the Sapu NP region.</p>

		<p>the inclusion of CFs in the forestry sector</p> <p>FFI has submitted a proposal to the French GEF (FFEM) to support the Sapo NP Programme. FFI was successful in making it through the first round and final project presentation is planned in July 2006. If successful, this project will focus on the establishment of communal forests around Sapo NP. This project will also focus on the biomonitoring component that has been initiated under the GEF grant to Sapo National Park.</p>	
<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. . Regulatory framework and legal amendments for CFs adopted</p>	<p>1. . FDA promulgates regulations through a communal forest manual, resolving any incongruencies/issues between MIA and FDA policy</p>	<p>Finalisation of the manual has not happened because it is now part of a larger process of forest sector policy reform, which gives the manual and CF policy a sounder context. Final agreement will take years, however provisional agreement has been reached so the CF initiative to move forward.</p>	<p>Plans include continue to promote communities' perspectives and voices in the forest sector reform process, and to bring communities into the process much more directly than before, especially after field work begins and FFI can draw on specific individuals.</p>
<p>2. 3 to 4 communal forests/ tribal reserves in Sapo Park buffer zone established</p>	<p>2a. At least 3 CFs/TRs legally established around SNP, covering 70,000-80,000 ha</p> <p>2b. Each communal forest has a mgt. plan under implementation</p>	<p>Three communities for piloting CFs have been identified. Local communities have formulated a local constitution and by-laws pertaining to CFs. This is the first, and most important step, in getting national level recognition to</p>	<p>After Liberian Government recognizes local communities rights to CFs and formalizes this in the form of a deed or ownership rights, demarcation of the CFs on the ground needs to take place. This is tentatively planned in the second</p>

		establish CFs in Liberia.	half of 2006.
3. Model for sustainable natural resources & common property-based livelihoods developed	3. Sustainable forest resource-based livelihood programmes underway for 3 communities with CFs, possibly incl. agro-forestry, rattan furniture, others tbd.	Project is about to start implementing pilot CF projects; focussing on improved backyard farming systems and introducing a variety of fruit trees..	All interventions take place within the broader context of the GEF and EC funded projects. FFI is also closely collaborating with UNOPS, UNMIL, WB, CI, and a wide range of Liberian NGOs to better target donor interventions and avoid duplication of efforts.
4. Capacity of FDA, MIA, Liberian NGOs and communities strengthened to create and manage CFs/TRs	4. Efficient, effective monitoring and management of CFs, including formalising and implementing the mechanism within FDA to support recurrent costs of CFs, i.e. allocating certain forestry fees to CFs	Various initiatives are underway to support the FDA in setting up mechanisms to support recurrent costs of CFs. Price&Waterhouse Coopers (through a WB grant) has been contracted to set up a financial management system in the FDA. Various other donors are assisting the FDA in setting up efficient and effective M&E systems. WB is also supporting restructuring of the Chain of Custody.	Plans: continued lobbying of the financial management reform process so that a portion of forestry revenues is allocated towards communal forest management in the process of forest sector financial reform (underway).
5. Model developed for replication of sustainable forest livelihood integrated with biodiversity conservation, supported by written materials (guidelines, evaluations, recommendations, training materials)	5. Report with clear lessons learned, procedures, recommendations for future CFs	No progress yet.	

Attachment 1: Figure 1 is a Venn diagram of major land-use classifications relevant to Liberia showing overlapping (complementary) versus exclusive objective. This should be borne in mind in the process of land-use planning and revision of policy, rule and regulations related to forest use.

Figure 1. Liberia's Forest Utilisation Categories



* To explain what this diagram means, a conservation corridor or logging concession for example might fall in any of these four land use goals, and sits within an area overlapped by all four spheres. While a National Park would exclude all but Conservation activity and thus sits only within the Conservation Forestry sphere.

Attachment 2. Clarifications of Communal Forests and their intended and permitted uses

A discussion paper by FFI – 17th April, 2005

Introduction:

Attempts to establish *Communal Forests* in Liberia have led to questioning of the current definition of *Communal Forests* in Liberian law, as well as what constitutes appropriate community forestry, one of the three C's of Liberian forest management, the others being Commercial and Conservation.

This debate is further complicated as initial efforts to establish *Communal Forests* are being undertaken near a strictly protected area and are intended to constitute, in part, the protected area's buffer zone. Thus concerns about sustainable community management of forest resources are overlaid with forest protection concerns in an environmentally sensitive area.

There are a number of questions which if answered might clarify the debate about the definition of a *Communal Forest*¹:

- Will the exclusion of “commercial use” from *Communal Forest* allow viable community forestry, either within environmentally sensitive areas or in all areas?
- Should there be different classifications of *Communal Forest*, defined legally or by regulation, depending on whether commercial or non-commercial use is appropriate and/or depending on the environmental sensitivity of an area?
- Under different circumstances, what influence does *Buffer Zone* allow the FDA to determine how forest resources are used? How might this influence the establishment of *Communal Forests* around Sapo NP?
- How do the various legally defined classes of forest use support the three C's as well as the intersection of agricultural and forest – eg. agro-forestry, forest gardens, etc. - and other non-consumptive uses of forest?

Confusion has arisen about two terms used in relation to *Communal Forest* whose definitions many presume to understand but which are not universally agreed:

- In the context of Communal Forests, *commercial use* is frequently assumed to mean exclusively use by non-local actors who receive concessionary rights awarded elsewhere (Monrovia), or who even could extract resources illegally – without concessionary rights – for export and commercial sale. Given the historical context when the law was drafted and passed – the end of the Taylor administration when commercial timber interests are known to have received extraordinary political protection and led to abuses of human rights, good governance and the environment – this is the likely legislative intent.

However *commercial use* could refer also to local community members extracting resources for sale rather than for subsistence. Exactly where ‘subsistence’ resource use stops and where ‘commercial’ use begins is debatable. A possible way to distinguish between *communal use* and *commercial use* is to ask if the proceeds or profits from sale of a forest resource remain local and benefit the community (as a whole or individuals within it), or whether they are exported. The former would be *communal*, the latter would be *commercial*.

¹ The Protected Forest Area Network Act of 2003 states that a “ ‘Communal Forest’ means an area set aside legally or temporarily by regulation for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products by local communities on a non-commercial basis” (Section 1.3). Section 9.10 continues “Acts prohibited in **Communal Forests** shall include: No prospecting, mining, farming or commercial timber extraction. Other uses are to be regulated by the designated local community with assistance from local authorities and declared by Regulations of the [Forestry Development] Authority.”

It has been argued that a restrictive interpretation of *commercial use* in the definition of *Communal Forests* is likely to undermine their viability since communities will likely be attracted to the protected forest type only if it provides them tangible benefits including revenues. Flexible interpretation of *commercial use* is required while *Communal Forests* are piloted to learn if they are useful and how they can be made viable.

- A *buffer zone* is defined legally in the context of Protected Forest Areas as “a transitional zone (such as Communal Forest, Game Reserve, Multiple Sustainable Use Reserve) surrounding a more strictly protected zone, intended for low-impact sustained human use to reduce the impact of outside human disturbance, to protect the boundaries from encroachment, and to preserve the natural state of the more strictly protected zone it surrounds.” However it is not itself a protected forest type but exists only in practice where an area surrounding a more strictly protected zone is managed in the manner described in the definition above, either as a legally recognised protected forest type or as unclassified but managed forest.

Analysis:

As a first step to answer these questions the FFI-Liberia team brainstormed the likely appropriate activities within *Communal Forest*. The pro’s and con’s associated with likely uses were compared under different management objectives as defined by proximity to a strictly protected area or location in an area of lower environmental sensitivity.

The results shown in Table 1 suggested that some commercial uses, however these are defined, would be sensible in both situations. However some commercial and subsistence activities in environmentally sensitive areas raised serious concerns that would warrant management through regulations.

The team then reviewed the pro’s and con’s for different models of Communal Forest classification. These results are shown in Table 2.

To understand the application of the 8 legally defined protected area types as well as some other relevant land use categories to the three C’s of Liberian forest management, tables 3 and 4 show the various types and their application. This draws heavily on the *Guidelines for protected forest area creation (and expansion) in Liberia* (Magin & Freeman 2003).

Finally Figure 1 uses a Venn Diagram to show how some of these categories may be useful for the overlapping goals of Conservation, Commercial and Community Forestry as well as agricultural production. This figure provides a visual reference as to how each category might be managed.

Summary of Conclusions:

1. If the current definition of *Communal Forest* excludes commercial use and defines it restrictively to prohibit any sale of resources from the forest in question, the CF cannot meet the full range of uses that communities will justifiably wish to pursue within these areas, especially around environmentally sensitive areas. *Communal Forest* should allow commercial use within limits that need to be agreed according to a clear, unambiguous definition of *commercial use*.
2. A single definition of *Communal Forest* is simpler but applying multiple definitions of *Communal Forest* based on key objectives/allowable activities may ease the application process.
3. Further support to the FDA is needed to develop workable regulations for use with *Communal Forests*. From the rough analysis here there are strong arguments for allowing hunting for sale and export (henceforth termed ‘commercial hunting’) in *Communal Forests* which serve as *Buffer Zone* to a more strictly protected area, but serious risks are attached. Strong arguments were found against allowing timber extraction for export outside the community (henceforth termed ‘commercial timber extraction’). Surprisingly there are some strong arguments against allowing tree cropping in these areas, too.

4. Confusion exists as to how a buffer zone around Sapó NP should be established, with opinions on the ground differing from the guidelines proposed by Marin & Freeman (2003) and the Protected Forests Network Act of 2003. The principle is not understood by staff at Sapó Park that a buffer zone is not a legal category in its own right but is established via legally recognised protected forest types or via voluntary agreements with communities or other forest users.