

# **ITTO SECOND REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ITTO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL TROPICAL FORESTS**

Country Report-Liberia

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# Country Profile as relates to forestry

- The country possesses largest portion of the Upper Guinea Rain Forest with approx. 4.329 million Ha. representing 39% of total land area.
- There are three main categories of forests: mangrove swamps along the coast; wet wooded hills and semi-deciduous shrublands in the middle belt; and the dense tropical forests and plateaux belt in the interior.
- There are ten national forests, two national parks and two nature reserves.
- Permanent forest estate (PFE) comprise of 2.7 million Ha. of which 1.7 million Ha. is allocated to production.
- The deforestation rate is estimated at 0.35%-1.0%.

Sources (FAO 2010, FDA 2010/2011, GoL .2011, Blacket et. al 2009, J. Blaiser 2008 & ITTO 2006)

## **Policy and legal aspects and institutional arrangements**

- FDA has statutory regulatory mandate to implement Sustainable Forest Management in Liberia;
- Liberia has developed and evolved a National Forest Policy and Implementation Strategy 2006 , four key strategies are: Commercial, Conservation, Community and Cross-cutting (R&D, REDD+);
- A National Forestry Reform Law 2006 and other associated laws (Community Rights Law 2009 and National Wildlife and Protected Area Network Law 2016) have been enacted since 2006-2016 that will align with the Liberia Land Act 2016 (LLA) to address land tenure issues;
- Other implementing instruments (regulations, guidelines, codes & procedures) have been developed by the Board;

## **Policy and legal aspects and institutional arrangements cont'd.**

- FDA has a seven-member Board of Directors which exercises supervisory and guidance role over the activities of the entity;
- The Authority is run by a senior Management team headed by the Managing Director and two deputies appointed by the President by the Republic; and
- There are currently five Technical Departments and several Unit Managers and other Line Managers serving as forest technicians.

# **SFM experiences, lessons learnt and achievements**

- Voluntary SFM Guidelines and ATO-ITTO Principles
  - Ecological resilience- ongoing reforestation initiatives & REDD+ awareness.
  - Land use planning: logging is selective : three-year contract duration for TSC, 15-year for CFMA and 25-year for FMC;
  - Multipurpose use: natural tropical forests provide multiple goods and services- Liberia's forests provide revenue, range of social benefits and ecosystem services to affected communities as well as for national development.
  - Economic & social: land rental & cubic meter fees, infrastructural development NTFPs and bush meat (protein), as well as clean water & air, etc.

## **SFM experiences, lessons learnt and achievements**

- A comprehensive Management plan that ensures/safeguards compliance to EIA, social-cultural and technical (annual allowable cut and diameter cut limits) regime has been developed by each Contract Holder. Management plans in planted forests have included silvicultural measures. It is hoped these measures would be reviewed and where necessary revised consistent with changing conditions;
- Forest management should recognize and aim to meet social needs. Contract Holders have provided employment and contributed to social services (education, health, water/sanitation) through a Social Agreement and communities have received financial incentives (share of revenue accrued. Structures such as CFDCs, CFMBs & NBSTB have been established with assistance from the Authority and partners, to ensure transparency and equitable sharing of benefits and social amenities; and
- Funding from government or donors in terms of direct budgetary support or NGO executed projects is greatly contributing to improvement of SFM in the country.

# **SFM experiences, lessons learnt and achievements**

## Lessons learnt

- Increased interest and involvement of NGOs/communities participation in forest management in SFM;
- Increased advocacy and financial & technical support opportunities;
- forest governance and legality frameworks implementation is challenging but improved due to introduction of additional national and international instruments;
- Limited human capita continues to affect SFM; and
- Stakeholders understand and are sharing information and resources better.

# Principles Criteria and Indicators (PC&I) for SFM

**P-1)** Providing the enabling conditions for SFM : policy, laws, codes mgt. plans & guidelines for forest governance established.

**P-2)** Forest land use planning (extent and condition of forests): PFE is 2.7m ha.; 1.3m ha to conservation; and rest is multipurpose use.

**P-3)** Forest ecosystem health: Forest carbon program not well developed yet, REDD+ activities started and ongoing including reforestation initiatives & REDD+ awareness; deforestation rate 0.35-1.0 according to FAO

Forest production: 1.7m Ha in form of FMCs, TSCs, CFMAs.

**P-4)** multiple Use Reserves established and operational; forest biodiversity under threat owing to unsustainable harvest and use of forest resources incl. NTFPs, wildlife, etc.

**P-5)** Silvicultural management: an ESIA certificate accompanies the Management Plans & Annual Oper. Plan and are checked and monitored periodically to ensure compliance to soil and water protection, protection of cultural sites, etc.

**P-6 & 7)** Economic, social and cultural aspects: a Social Agreement and for CFMAs MoU takes into account the economic, social and cultural aspects of SFM at the national/sub-national/local levels.

The government may organize a National Stakeholder consultations to validate and adopt the harmonized version of the PCI prior to submission to the President.



# Broader forestry development issues:

- REDD readiness – Liberia acceded to the REDD+ in 2011 and REDD+ activities ongoing leading to implementation phase;
- forest governance with FLEGT-VPA entered into force in 2013: 5<sup>th</sup> JIC meeting held, Liberia is developing its TLAS and Libertrace system as; LVD been established.
- forest share in nationally determined contributions (NDCs); was 15% of NDC as at 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016.
- the global response to climate change- several initiatives are being promoted focusing on use of renewable energy (particularly tapping Liberia's hydropower potential) as well as other smaller initiatives such as use of energy efficient stoves and solar power in collaboration with other agencies and partners, aimed at adaptation & mitigation approach to addressing climate change

Source (LFSP 2014, FDA 2016/17 & SGS 2016)

# SFM-related multifaceted challenges

There are challenges at various levels of implementation of SFM:

- Non-compliance-lacking means or political support;
- Contesting land/resource claims - undermines forest resource harvesting and user rights;
- Land and resource conflicts-among and between communities, government and private sector, **(SNP-May 2, 2017 FPA post)**;
- Capacity development-especially of local community actors limited; and
- Poor quality of infrastructure (roads, bridges & processing - negatively impacts SFM in Liberia.

## **Current and future strategies and way forward**

- The Liberia Forest Sector Program (LFSP) is supporting several initiatives under the Community, Conservation, R&D, Commercial, the RIU and Strategic Planning (a 10-year Strategic Plan) Departments/units to strengthen and galvanize integrated development in the sector.
- Liberia has developed and made functional the LAS following installation of the LVD Department and is entering the implementation phase of the REDD+ among other key future envisaged interventions.
- Liberia will source support to validate and present the harmonized ITTO PC&I for approval by government.

# Conclusion

Liberia is on course to Improving forest governance through the ongoing SFM frameworks at the Authority.

- There is marked improvement in traceability and legality (Libertrace) leading to EU FLEGT/FSC certification;
- National efforts supporting SFM (new laws enacted, and agreements entered into) with government, civil society, community and private sector involvement, strongly impacting the development of the sector;
- There is ongoing process to review and upgrade Liberia's SPU at the FDA to further improve SFM; and
- The C&I has not been concluded hope to adapt the harmonized version from the ITTO.

# Acknowledgement

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Thank you  
for your kind  
attention