

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY BASED-INDEPENDENT FOREST MONITORING **- THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES -**



Independent Forest Monitors conducting IFM activity during a field visit in Gbarpolu County, western Liberia

FAO - EU FLEGT PROGRAMME



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Sweden
Sverige



FOREWORD

This Community Forest Monitoring Guide is designed with inputs from the National Union of Community Forestry Development Committees (NUCFDC) and the National Union of Community Forestry Management Bodies (NUCFMB). It is intended for use by community based-independent forest monitors as a guide in order for them to conduct local independent forest monitoring activities. It provides tips on how to gather information and, why and how to present findings from local level independent forest monitoring. It is important that the larger public understand the concept of Community Based-Independent Forest Monitoring (CB-IFM) so that sustainable solutions for reducing illegalities in the forestry sector are provided.

Additionally this guide is designed to help community-based independent forest monitors on how to ensure that economic and other forms of benefits from forests are accessed and managed in a sustainable way by communities themselves.

This guide seeks to address the ‘jump down running’ obligations of a community-based forest monitor as well as the need for periodic follow-ups in the form of trainings, mentoring and quality-control. Thus it is important to ensure community-based forest monitors have adequate understanding of their roles and responsibilities and thereby enhancing their capacities to monitor and report effectively.

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	I
Acronyms.....	IV
Introduction.....	1
The Purpose of Independent Forest Monitoring.....	2
Community Based IFM.....	3
The Roles and Responsibilities of Community-Based Independent Forest Monitor.....	3
Table 1: Tips to guide the CB-IFM on his/her behaviour/attitude.....	4
Take your own safety seriously.....	4
Some Tips on How To ensure your own safety.....	5
Key Forestry Laws and Regulations.....	5
Important Forestry Actors: Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
The NUCFDC.....	6
Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
The CFDC.....	6
Composition.....	6
Roles and Responsibilities of the CFDC.....	7
TheNUCFMB.....	7
Composition.....	7
Its Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
The Community Forest Management.....	8
Definition.....	8
Structures and Composition.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities of a CA, EC and CFMB.....	8
The CA.....	8
Composition.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
The EC.....	9
Its Composition.....	9
Roles and Responsibilities of the EC.....	9
The CFMB.....	9
Its Composition.....	9
Roles and Responsibilities of the CFMB.....	9
Civil Society Organizations.....	10
CSOs and Platforms communities can contact.....	10
The NGO Coalition of Liberia.....	10
The Community Forestry Working Group.....	10
The National Multi Stakeholder Monitoring Committee.....	10
Forestry Development Authority.....	10
The Voluntary Partnership Agreement Support Unit.....	11

The Logging Company.....	11
Types of Logging Contracts.....	11
Types of Forestry Agreements between Logging Companies and Communities.....	11
The Social Agreement.....	12
The Commercial Use Contract.....	12
Key Principles of Community-based Independent Forest Monitoring.....	12
Step 1: Plan Your Investigation.....	13
Table 1: Simple Checklist for Planning the Activities of a CB-IFM.....	13
Step 2: Gather Your Information.....	13
List of Materials/gadgets for Community Forest Monitoring.....	14
Table 2: An example of template developed by the NUCFDC as a monitoring tool for SA implementation.....	16
Table 3: An example of a letter of request submitted to FDA- this is how a letter of request should look.....	16
Step 2.1: Interview.....	17
Step 2.2: Getting Documents.....	17
Step 2.3: Documents to look for.....	17
Step 2.4: information to look in the document.....	19
Step 3: Draft your report.....	19
Step 3.1: Structure of a Community Monitoring Report.....	19
Table 4: Reporting Template.....	20
Step 3.2: Present only the facts for which you have evidence.....	20
Step 3.3: Make Realistic and Clear Recommendations.....	21
Step 4: Engage people in a respectful manner.....	21
Step 5: Get your findings to wide audience.....	22
Step 6: Follow-up to make sure the recommendations you make are acted on.....	22
Step 7: Logs Scaling and log volume calculation.....	22
Step 7.1: Calculating the volume of a log.....	22
Table 5: An illustration for calculating the volume of a log.....	23
Step 7.2: A simple Practical step on how to calculate to get the volume of a log.....	23

Acronyms

ACORD	Association of Community Rights Defenders
CB-IFM	Community Based-Independent Forest Monitoring
CFDC	Community Forest Development Committee
CFMA	Community Forestry Management Agreement
CFMB	Community Forest Management Body
CFWG	Community Forestry Working Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CS-IFM	Civil Society-Independent Forest Monitoring
CUC	Commercial Use Contract
EU	European Union
FAC	Forestry Advisory Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
HPA	Heritage Partners and Associates
IFM	Independent Forest Monitoring
LTA	Liberia Timber Association
LWG	Legal Working Group
NUCFDC	National Union of Community Forestry Development Committees
NUCFMB	National Union of Community Forestry Management Bodies
NMSMC	National Multi Stakeholder Monitoring Committee
SA	Social Agreement
VOSIEDA	Volunteers to Support International Efforts in Developing Africa
VPA-SU	Voluntary Partnership Agreement-Support Unit

Introduction

Rainforests have continued to degrade and disappear for decades despite numerous efforts to protect them. Communities that are affected by forestry activities continue to suffer huge loss of benefits from these forest resources. Forests do not contribute as much as some had hoped to national revenue generation, often because logging companies are not being forced to pay the required taxes correctly. This means that there is less in the government budget for things like health, education and roads.

Forest monitoring improves transparency and accountability in the forest sector, and therefore helps to make sure that forests are being managed sustainably and that society is benefiting from any revenues generated. Community members are ideal for carrying out forest monitoring activities as they always have their ears to the ground in the local area and are often the first to know about any issues.

It's therefore important to provide training on independent forest monitoring to community members so that they are able to carry out independent forest monitoring in their areas. This will help enhance local development by reporting on any problems or issues as soon as they come up. Addressing these problems and ensuring that forests are managed sustainably and in accordance with the law is essential to protecting Liberia's remaining forests from destruction.

In line with the Ten Core Regulations 108-07 section 71 part 7 of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) it provides the rights for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), communities and other third party involvement in monitoring and reporting on the forestry sector. Since March 2012, the Civil Society-Independent Forest Monitoring (CS-IFM) Team, have been conducting Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) activities.

As a result of this, the Association of Community Rights Defenders (ACORD) with funding from the FAO EU FLEGT Programme, has developed this Community Guide for use by community forestry committees as a guide to enhance their capabilities to carry out Community-Based Independent Forest Monitoring (CB-IFM).

This guide has been enlightened by contributions from community forestry committee members during trainings on general independent forest monitoring, log scaling and also a result of findings from the performance assessments of community-based independent forest monitors for Community Forest Development Committee (CFDC) and Community Forest Management Body (CFMB) members in Rivercess and Nimba Counties. Also in 2018, trainings in CB-IFM for CFDC and CFMB members were held in Gbarpolu, Lofa and Sinoe Counties which contributed to this guide.

ACORD is grateful for the support and input from the NGO Coalition of Liberia, VOSIEDA, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the National Union of Community Forestry Development Committees (NUCFDCs), the National Union of Community Forest Management Bodies (NUCFMBs), Louise Riley and the above mentioned counties' CFDCs and CFMBs for their support and input to this guide.

The Purpose of Independent Forest Monitoring

The purpose of Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) is to ensure illegal forestry activities and those that ignore the rights of local communities are documented and mitigated.

IFM uses the existing legal framework as the basis for exploring whether or not logging concessionaires and other forest users are abiding by the forestry laws and regulations. It is an investigatory practice that involves asking open questions and making careful observations to uncover whether illegal practices have been taking place. The main job of a forest monitor is to carry out field investigations, involving interviews with different community members (including women, youth, leaders and ordinary citizens) and other sources that may be able to provide accurate information, as well as gathering relevant documents. The information collected is then compared to the relevant sections of the legal framework, and the results published into a short briefing and made widely available to government, industry and civil society.

In this way, independent forest monitors are able to improve transparency by shedding light on illegal activity and corruption, making this information available to stakeholders so that swift action can be taken. Independent forest monitors help to protect forests by quickly identifying and reporting illegal activities. Their knowledge and insights into the mechanisms of how illegal activity occurs are also useful for making continuous improvements to the legal and regulatory frameworks.

Community-based IFM

Community-based independent forest monitoring (CB-IFM) makes sense on a number of levels. Communities surrounding logging concessions have greater access to information and are quickly able to carry out field visits and investigate reports of any illegal or unwanted activity. They have a wider network of local contacts, allowing them to find out about local issues quicker than independent forest monitors who are not based locally.



ACORD Programme Manager facilitating an IFM training for community-based-forest monitors

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Community-based Independent Forest Monitor

The role of the community-based forest monitor is to gather information about forestry activities going on in their area and report this information to the right people. They must gather information by interviewing people who could give them valuable information, visiting the log field regularly, frequent engagement with logging company as well as with other stakeholders such as the FDA and civil society groups.

The community forest monitor has an important responsibility to gather factual and credible information, and to share this information with CSOs and the wider public in an orderly fashion.

Table 1: Tips to guide the CB-IFM on his/her behavior or attitude

Dos	Don'ts
1. Use the Freedom of information Act to request needed information or documents from relevant institutions concern	1. You are not to enforce laws because you are not a law enforcement officer.
2. Develop questionnaire based on the situation or the issue you wish to address	2. Do not incite violence in any way
3. Administer interview to people of interest	3. Don't use your work or position to intimidate or influence others including concession holders or workers of the logging company
4. Conduct regular field visits	4. You are not to collect fees or receive bribe and do not accept offers. It could be an inducement.
5. Properly document records from research, investigations and other IFM activities	5. Do not allow your documents or your reports to accessible to the public without it being published. Others could use it to tell a lie about your work or to destroy your findings and facts
6. Report ONLY facts	6. Don't be bias
7. Be objective	7. Don't act on rumors or speculations
8. Use the forestry laws and its regulations to investigate illegalities	8. Do not use your own imagination or perception to hold people accountable
9. Always maintained confidentiality	9. Don't mention people's or individual's names in direct reference to whatever they may have told you during an interview.
10. Dialogue and negotiate with people of interest	10. Do not take the photo or video of people or a concession area without their consent

Take your own safety seriously

Being a community forest monitor is not easy, you are monitoring the activities of logging companies who may be trying to make a fast profit. You are also monitoring the activities of your fellow community members in the forest who may have quite different ideas from you about the short-term gain versus the long-term sustainable management of the forest. It may be that they would rather that you were not there. There will be people in your community who are employed by the logging company or connected to them somehow who won't like the work you are doing. And there may be others engaged in, or profiting from illegal activities in the forest themselves.

Some tips on how to ensure your own safety

- a. Make sure you have properly introduced yourself to the leadership/management of the logging operation before you carry on your activities through telephone calls, introduction visits, letters etc.;
- b. Make yourself visible at all times during your monitoring activities;
- c. Always work in areas with many people/company workers around – never work alone;
- d. Carry your ID Card and mobile phone at all times during performing your duty;
- e. Always inform a person you trust beforehand where you are going and for how long and make sure the person can reach you if needed;
- f. Do not accept offers (cash or kind) from anyone of a logging camp or concession as this can be seen to interfere with your role as a monitor;
- g. Make sure to maintain a friendly relationship with other people at all time (e.g. logging company workers, chain saw operators etc.);
- h. Do not get into the internal affairs (administrative issues) of a logging company during and after the performance of your daily operations;
- i. Be very careful with how you engage with people (e.g. Logging company workers, chain-saw operators, etc.);
- j. Ensure that you are wearing ALL of your safety gears at ALL times

You need to decide what is the best way to protect your own safety and how best to carry out your operations. In situations where there are serious risks would it be better to collect information and pass it on to a CSO who can investigate further? If they are not living in the community or near the logging company operations it may be safer for them to publicly release the information. The CS-IFM team, other CSOs, and perhaps community leaders could be able to give you advice on a case-by-case basis. Take safety seriously and go with your gut instincts. Discuss with others on the best ways to keep safe before going out. Does the way in which you plan to work need to change in any way?

Key Forestry Laws and Regulations

It's very important to refer to the relevant sections of the law in any report you present. Framing your information in terms of laws that may have been broken is very persuasive when trying to get government agencies such as the FDA to take action.

As a community forest monitor it's a good idea to get to know all the relevant laws and regulations, so that you can easily know which law is being broken, or know where you need to look to find out. Here are some of the key forestry laws and regulations that you may find useful, but also familiarise yourself with the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006, the FDA Ten Core Regulations of 2007, the Community Rights Law (CRL) of 2009, the Amended Community Rights Law Regulations (2017) and the 2018 overview of the legal framework related to forests. Heritage Partners and Associates (HPA) and ClientEarth have developed and grouped all of the legal references together and made them available with FDA, CSOs, Secretariats of NUCFDC and NUCFMB and the Chairmen and Chief Officers of CFDCs and CFMBs.

Important Forestry Actors and Stakeholders: Roles and Responsibilities

The NUCFDC – its Composition, Roles and Responsibilities

The leadership of the NUCFDC is headed by a President with a board of advisors, Executive Officials, a Secretariat, Regional Coordinators, County Contact person and CFDC Chairpersons. The Secretariat is headed by a National Facilitator.

Roles and Responsibilities of the NUCFDC include:

- a. Ensures that forestry issues and other concerns of forestry matters raised by communities are addressed through national multi-stakeholder dialogue and in a timely and appropriate manner;
- b. Ensures that all forestry related issues are presented at national or international discussion tables;
- c. Ensures that benefits accrued from the forest and its resources are used and managed sustainably in the interest of the affected communities;
- d. Solicit capacity building opportunities for all CFDC members;
- e. Seek funding opportunities with partners including CSOs and other donor organizations to enhance transparency and accountability for development initiatives undertaken by CFDCs;
- f. Maintain regular consultation with individual CFDC;
- g. Strengthens the CFDCs especially for engaging the logging company (i.e. during and after negotiation of Social Agreement with a company or investor);
- h. Provide back stopping support for CFDCs to regularly engage with their individual larger communities;
- i. Ensure that CFDCs are accountable to their individual communities;
- j. Provide guidance, monitor and report on community development projects to ensure they are successfully implemented;
- k. Serves as a platform for addressing forestry issues by multi-stakeholders;
- l. Ensures the existence of good relationship between logging companies and communities thereby mitigating misunderstanding between the community and a logging company;
- m. Attends national and international level meetings, forums and other functions on behalf of the CFDCs and feedback to them over time.

The CFDC

Its Composition

The CFDC is composed of 10 members who are elected by individual clans or districts of a forestry concession area. It has a by-laws and constitution and is registered with national government. The CFDC have 5 officials and 5 members and an advisor including:

- A Chairman
- A Co-Chairman
- A Financial Secretary
- A General Secretary
- A Chaplain
- Women and Youth Representatives and

-
- Members
 - An Advisor

Roles and Responsibilities of the CFDC

- Ensure that community receives its benefits (social and economic) from logging company operating in its area;
- Ensure that benefits received from a logging company are expanded in the general interest of the larger community;
- The CFDC is under obligation to report its activities and other forest related matters to the larger community in a timely manner;
- On the overall, the CFDC is responsible to represent the community during and after the negotiations and signing of Social Agreement with a logging company;
- Ensure the regular quarterly meeting between the larger community and the logging company is happening in line with the provisions in their Social Agreement;
- The CFDC represent the community at the NUCFDC level at all times;
- CFDCs are under obligation to monitor and report on the implementation of SAs, CUC and other forestry activities in their areas;
- Mediates between the logging company and the community.

The NUCFMB Its Composition

The leadership of the NUCFMB is headed by a President with a board of advisors, Executive Officials, a Secretariat, Regional Coordinators, County Contact persons and CFMB Chief Officers. The Secretariat is headed by a National Facilitator.

Roles and Responsibilities of the NUCFMB include:

- A. Ensures that forestry issues and other concerns of forestry matters raised by communities are; addressed through national multi-stakeholder dialogue and in a timely and appropriate manner;
- B. Ensures that all forestry related issues are presented at national or international discussion tables;
- C. Ensures that benefits accrued from the forest and its resources are used and managed sustainably in the interest of the authorized forest communities;
- D. Solicit capacity building opportunities for all CFMB members;
- E. Seek funding opportunities with partners including CSOs and other donor organizations to enhance transparency and accountability for development initiatives undertaken by CFMBs;
- F. Maintain regular consultation with individual CFMBs ;
- G. Strengthens the CFMBs especially for engaging the logging company (i.e. during and after negotiation of CUC with a company or investor);
- H. Provide back stopping support for CFMBs to regularly engage with their individual larger communities;

-
- I. Ensure that CFMBs are accountable to their individual communities;
 - J. Provide guidance, monitor and report on community development projects to ensure they are successfully implemented;
 - K. Serves as a platform for addressing forestry issues by multi-stakeholders;
 - L. Ensures the existence of good relationship between logging companies and communities thereby mitigating misunderstanding between the community and a logging company;
 - M. Attend national and international level meetings, forums and other functions on behalf of the CFMBs and feedback to them over time;

The Community Forestry Management Agreement (CFMA)

Its Definition

A CFMA is defined as; Community forestry Management Agreement granted by FDA to a community after the community must have completed requirements to be awarded a community forestry status. This forestry management gives communities the exclusive rights to manage and govern their community forest land.

In the arrangement of a CFMA, there exist community governance structures that are responsible for the management of the community forest.

Structures and Composition of the Governing Bodies

A CFMA is governed by three Structures including;

- A Community Assembly (CA);
- An Executive Committee (EC) and
- A Community Forestry Management Body (CFMB)

Composition, Roles and Responsibilities of the CA, the EC and the CFMB

The CA

Its Composition

The CA is comprised of representatives from all towns within the authorized forest community, including men, women, youth and members of the various ethnicities. This is the highest decision making body of the authorized forest community.

Roles and Responsibilities of the CA

- They meet twice a year to make decisions on community forestry matters;
- They elect officers of the CA to the Executive Committee;
- They receive, review and adopt reports submitted by the EC and other subordinate committees;
- They appoint members to the CFMB;
- They receive, review and adopt reports of the CFMB;
- They approve CFMPs and budgets drafted by the CFMB;
- They report to the EC
- They ensure sustainable management of community forest resources and
- They ensure that incomes from community forest resources contribute to the development of the community and the well being of community members, according to the vision of the CA

The EC

Its Composition

The EC is comprised of community members who are elected officials of the CA, The Representatives in the House of Legislature serves on the EC as an ex-officio who are not allowed to influence decision making and they do not have voting rights.

Roles and Responsibilities of the EC include;

- Manages the affairs of the Community Assembly
- Oversees the function of the CA in the absence of the community in section;

The CFMB

Its Composition

Each CFMB is registered with national government with an Article of incorporation, a bank account and a by-laws and Constitution to ensure legality and its governance.

The CFMB is formed as the result of a CFMA and it has a core of leadership including;

- A Chief Officer;
- Secretary;
- Treasurer;
- Member;
- Member

Roles and Responsibilities of the CFMB

- Implement policy of the Community Assembly and its Executive Committee;
- With the involvement of community members and approval of the Executive Committee, prepare and implement a Community Forest Management Plan approved by the FDA and CA;
- Operate in accordance with the terms and conditions established in the Community Forestry Management Agreement, Community Forest Management Plan, Community Forestry Rules and other relevant legislations and Regulations;
- Represent the community in all matters related to the community forest program, including in negotiations related to the community forestry program and forest resources;
- Stop and immediately inform the nearest forestry office about forestry related offense occurring within the community forest;
- As a matter of protocol, the CFMB reports to the Community Assembly;
- Report quarterly to the Executive Committee on the management of the community forest;
- Also submits quarterly financial report to the Executive committee;
- Develop and implement Community Forest Management Plans under guidelines and specification issues by the forestry authority;
- Monitor the day-day activities of logging companies and other forestry activities in their area;
- Ensure good governance and accountability in community forest management, and perform other functions as are necessary and consistent with the functions of the community forest management body;

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

CSOs provide backstopping support to communities and FDA through conducting and facilitating independent forest monitoring and reporting activities. CSOs also conduct advocacy and awareness raising activities so as to ensure the reduction of illegal forestry activities. CSOs play a role of ensuring that benefits from forest resources are equitably distributed and expanded to contribute to local and national development agendas.

CSOs or platforms that communities can contact

The NGO Coalition of Liberia (NCL)

This is a consortium of CSOs which comprise of over eighteen organizations including; the CS-IFM team working to ensure natural resource governance and management. Its vision is to see a Liberia where natural resources are managed sustainably and governed by the rules of law for the benefits of all Liberians.

Community Forestry Working Group (CFWG)

The CFWG comprises of government agencies, CSOs, International Non-Government Organizations (INGO) and donor partners. The CFWG mission is to:

- a. serve as a vehicle for public participation in the work of the FDA on community forestry matters;
- b. provide opportunities for building the capacity of forest stakeholders;
- c. promote closer relationships between the FDA, forest communities and other stakeholders;
- d. strengthen the capacity of the FDA to implement and enforce community forestry laws, regulations and policies;
- e. Assist the FDA to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the community forestry program; and provide advice on issues relating to community forestry;

The National Multi Stakeholder Monitoring Committee (NMSMC)

This is the platform that brings together all significant forestry stakeholders. It comprises of the EU, VPA SU, FDA, LTA, CSOs and Communities. The NMSMC seeks to ensure that only legally sourced timbers are allowed to leave Liberia. In so doing, the NMSMC discussions are focused on issues including;

- Monitoring;
- Violations;
- Illegalities;
- Forestry laws enforcement and
- Compliance

Forestry Development Authority (FDA)

FDA is a governmental agency responsible to regulate the forestry sector of Liberia including monitoring and evaluating the implementation of each approved Forest Land Used Action. Furthermore it is the responsibility of FDA to ensure that logging companies and communities are conducting forestry activities in compliance with the forestry laws and its regulations and to levy associated taxes and revenue fees from the use of the forest and its resources.

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement Support Unit (VPA SU)

A Voluntary Partnership Agreement has been signed between Liberia and the European Union (EU) to ensure a legal forestry sector in Liberia, and to enable legal timbers exportation. Through the implementation of the VPA, its Support Unit provides technical, financial and capacity building support to forestry stakeholders to ensure their participation aimed at reducing illegality in the forestry sector. The VPA includes a framework for overseeing, monitoring and evaluating implementation of its protocol and its economic, social and environmental impacts. The EU and Liberia have signed a joint commitment to monitor the social, economic and environmental effects of the VPA. Monitoring is considered whether the VPA is having the desired outcomes.

The Logging Company

The logging company (also known as the contract holder) is expected to deliver economic and social benefits to the communities, contribute to the national revenue and ensure sustainable forest management practices in compliance to the forestry laws and its regulations.

Types of logging contracts

To harvest timber in Liberia you must first obtain a permit or contract, otherwise the logging operations will be illegal. Under the National Forestry Reform Law chapter 5 section 5.3 and section 5.4 and Community Rights Law chapter 1 section 1.3 there are three types of logging contracts that can be issued:

- a. The Forest Management Contract (FMC) - this contract is awarded for a maximum period of 25 years and covers a maximum of 49,999 hectares of forestland. A FMC is issued by the FDA to a logging company;
- b. The Timber Sales Contract (TSC) - this contract is awarded for a maximum period of five years and covers a maximum of 5,000 hectares of forestland. Like the FMC it is issued by the FDA to a logging company.
- c. The Community Forestry Management Agreement (CFMA) – this contract is for a maximum of 15years and is a contractual agreement approved by FDA and awarded to a community either for logging or conservation, with basic requirements to ensure sustainable forest management practices and to mitigate illegality in the use of forest resources. This agreement has a status of either commercial or conservation.

Types of Forestry Agreements between Logging Companies and Communities

There are two types of agreements between companies and communities namely:

- The Social Agreement (SA) and
- The Commercial Use Contract (CUC)

The Social Agreement (SA)

FDA Ten Core Regulation 105-07 provides that a Social Agreement must be signed for FMCs and TSC contracts before operations begin, to ensure both parties are conducting logging and other forest resources extraction activities in line with the forestry laws and its regulations, and to also ensure that communities that are affected by logging activities benefit from the forest and its resources in a legal manner. It is the outcome of a series of negotiations between the community and the logging company. The SA outlines how benefits (financial

and development) are to be awarded to communities. It has a timeline for the benefits a community should receive and highlights how the relationship between the community and the logging company are to be managed.

An SA obliges the company to provide the community with benefits such as; schools, community development programs, clinics, the maintenance of roads and scholarships. It also provides that communities should receive a minimum of \$1.00 per cubic meter fees of timber harvested. The company also promises to not damage farmland or water sources through their timber operations. In return communities also make certain commitments, such as not to carry out pit-sawing or commercial timber harvesting or any other activity that would harm the logging company operations. They must also use a proportion of the funds they receive to ensure that the CFDC monitors the Social Agreement.

Every Social Agreement is negotiated between the logging company and the affected community, so the terms of each will have certain differences. It is therefore important to check with your various CFDCs to obtain a copy of the Social Agreement affecting your area to read through it and familiarise yourself with before starting any monitoring activities, so that you can monitor whether or not the rules and regulations are being followed.

The CUC

This agreement applies to CFMAs. Where the community has decided to contract a logging company to harvest timber, a CUC is signed between the logging company and the community. The CUC should indicate that the community represented by its CFMB participated fully during the process of its negotiations and development. It should also have the approval of FDA as a witness to the discussions or negotiations between the community and the company.

Key Principles of Community based-Independent Forest Monitoring

Step 1: Plan your investigation

No matter how big or how small the investigation you wish to do, before you start to gather information it is good to have some idea of what you want to find out. Write down a few ideas on what you want to know, who may be able to give you information, and what are the documents you might need. Ask yourself 'What do I want to find out?', 'Why would it be useful to find out this information?', 'What documents will I need to prove that the information is true?', 'Who would it be a good idea to talk to find out this information?'. Once you have noted the answers to those questions down you are in a better place to begin your investigation.

There may be different things that make you want to do community based investigation – for example you may have heard reports of community rights being disrespected by the logging company, or that they are logging outside the concession boundary or in a protected area. There may be many other reasons that prompt you to want to find out more information. Follow your instincts and investigate if something doesn't seem right.

Also submit a letter of request to Forestry Development Authority (FDA). Remember to firstly introduce yourself/organization, explain the intent and the expected outcome of your letter and also put the number of days you are willing to wait for a response. See Table 3.

Table 1: Simple Checklist for Planning the activities of a CB-IFM

#	Activities Description
1.	Develop a work schedule
2.	Have a clear objective about the issue or situation you want to investigate or monitor
3.	Do a desk review/research (i.e. reviewing a SA, a CUC or a Business Registration Certificate of company)
4.	Use the information from the desk review/research to develop questionnaires that clearly define the targeted audience in line with the forestry laws and its regulations
5.	Share the questionnaires with the NUCFDC/NUCFMB and the CS-IFM team for comments or inputs
6.	Inform other relevant stakeholders (FDA, LTA, and other CSOs) about your CB-IFM activity and plan
7.	Make a check-list of available equipment needed for your IFM activities (see table 2)

Step 2: Gather your information

There are many ways of gathering the information that you need. The most common way for community forest monitors to gather information is by talking to people (interviews), field observations and getting hold of key documents. Always conduct your CB-IFM during the day and at most spend 5 days in an area with an additional 2 follow-up trips.

Another way of getting concrete information is; through contacting the LTA for getting information about a logging company. The LTA is the umbrella organization for all timber and logging companies in Liberia. Contact the LTA through its offices located at the Methodist Building on 12th Street, Sinkor in Monrovia.

List of materials/gadgets for community forest monitoring

- a. Ink pen (black or blue) ball point pens are good when its raining;
- b. Note pad;
- c. Hard back file;
- d. Strong shoes or safety boots;
- e. Rain gear (rubber boots and coat);

Optional and useful materials/gadgets if available;

- a. Digital audio recorder – this is useful for the monitor to compliment his facts and findings especially for the purpose of verification;
- b. Digital camera (video or ordinary) – this helps the monitor t have picture or video to ensure proof of evidence;
- c. GPS devise – this is useful when the monitor needs to verify with facts, the demarcation or boundaries within the concession;
- d. Spare batteries for all the items above – to maintain the power source of the

gadgets including; camera, GPS, audio recorders;

All these gadgets are potentially available on a smart phone, and you should learn and practice how to use them (for example how to use the GPS function with the camera) before you start fieldwork

Table 2: An example of a template developed by the NUCFDC as a monitoring tool for Social Agreement Implementation

No.	Specific Information	Respond	
1.	Name of Company		
2.	Contact person		
3.	Contact # & Email		
4.	Office Site		
5.	Signed SA?		
6.	Date SA Signed		
7.	CFDC Chairperson		
8.	Contact # & Email		
Social Agreement Implementation			
No.	Terms & Conduction	Respond	Comment
1.	Has the company operation negatively impact traditional practices?		
2.	Has the company operation destroyed animals and water collection points?		
3.	Has the company constructed hand pumps & Latrines? If yes, how many?		
4.	Has the company operation disrobed subsistence farming of damaged existing cash crops? If yes, how		
5.	Has the company paid the scholarship fund? If yes, how much		
6.	Has the company constructed or maintained roads that connect affected communities?		
7.	Do the communities have first preference for employment? If yes, how many community members employed?		

8.	Has the company provided timbers for community development?		
9.	Has the company respected the rights of her workers according to the labour law?		
10.	Has the company notify the CFDC on the sub cultural agreement?		
11.	Have the quarterly meetings been held between the CFDC and the Company?		
12.	Have the regular community meetings been held?		
13.	Has the company constructed Workers Camp?		
14.	Do the company has first Aid facilities?		
15.	Do the company allow CFDC to verify production?		
16.	Do the company has subcontractor & is the CFDC aware of the sub-contractual agreement?		
17.	Has the company paid cash to your CFDC? Please indicate year		

18. Please explain briefly what has been done with these funds and attach supportive documents if possible

A.	Land Rental fees		
B.	Cubic Meter fees		
C.	Scholarship fees		
D.	Other fees, specify		
TOTAL			

Table 3: An example of a letter of request submitted to FDA by CS-IFM team – this is how a letter of request should look



March 22, 2016

Mr. Harrison Karnwea
MANAGING DIRECTOR
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)
Whein Town
Monrovia, Liberia

Dear Hon. Karnwea:

The Civil Society Independent Forest Monitors (CS-IFM) of the NGO Coalition of Liberia is following up progress on the management of the Blueyeama Community Forest, in so doing we are pleased to request the following documents from your honourable office that will further inform our investigation.

1. Copy of Forest Management plan
2. Copy of Community Forestry Management Agreement
3. Map of the Community forest
4. Copy of contract Agreement with new logging company
5. By-laws and Constitution for the Community Assembly
6. The list for the governance structures of the CFMA

Our request is directly related to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act Section 3.1 Accessibility of information: which states that “All public information held by public bodies..... shall be accessible, and may be inspected, requested, provided, reproduced and retained as provided for in this Act”.

The Civil Society–Independent Forest Monitors of the NGO Coalition of Liberia is a team monitoring and reporting on the forest sector in Liberia, focusing on community rights, benefit sharing and participation in forest governance.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph D. Kennedy
Team Leader
Civil Society-Independent Forest Monitors
NGO Coalition of Liberia

Step 2.1 Interviews

Interviews should be done with people who you believe will be able to give you accurate and truthful information. They may be other community members, employees of the logging company or the FDA, civil society or any other person you identify as being a knowledgeable and trustworthy source of information. It is always good to plan your monitoring activities ahead of time; send out written communication to the targeted individuals or company indicating the date and time and also how long the interview will take. If possible do a follow-up with phone calls where necessary to confirm their willingness and availability.

Develop a short questionnaire with written down questions to help you get the answers you need. If someone tells you something interesting then you can ask them more questions so you get more information, you don't have to stick exactly to the questionnaire, but it is good to have some standard questions to guide you in your interviews. It is important that you keep your information or data in a safe and secure place because they could be needed for reference at any time, you may be called on to provide your evidence after you release your findings so make sure it is stored carefully.

Step 2.2 Getting documents

These could include official documents in the possession of CSOs, CFDC, CFMB, FDA or the logging company. Contract documents are public documents and can be found on FDA's official website www.fda.gov.lr, FDA local offices including the company operation areas. Do a formal request to the FDA, the company or the targeted actors.

For example, logging companies are obliged to handout copies of their operation or administrative documents including:

- a. Deposit slips for cubic meter fee payment (proof of money paid to the community account in a bank by the logging company);
- b. Records of logs harvesting and export data (logs sheets in the possession of the company for logs that has been felled), etc.

Correspondence between the community, the FDA and the logging company is very useful as it can identify previous conflicts or issues. Examine all these documents carefully and look out for interesting dates or names that re-occur, sometimes with different spellings. Look for patterns and anything that looks interesting or suspicious and make a note of interesting findings. Try to get hold of printed copies that you can keep, as it will be useful to be able to refer back to them over and over again.

At the logging operations' site, you may gather relevant documents such as;

- a. Log data sheet;
- b. Tree data sheet;
- c. Waybill and
- d. Export data sheet

Step 2.3 Documents to look for

The Contract signed between FDA and the logging company which is available in the office of FDA and also with the leadership of a CFDC. This document contains the following information;

- The duration of the contract;
- The date the contract was signed;

- The number of hectares the concession covers;
- The financial obligations of the logging company;
- The metes and bounds of the concession;
- The full name and address of the logging company;

The contract or agreement signed between the community and the logging company can be found either with the CFMB, the CFDC or the office of the logging company. Also, this document can be found in the Community Forestry Department of FDA. This document contain the following information;

- The required amount for either cubic meter or land rental fees;
- A description of the responsibilities of the logging company and the community;
- A timeline for the implementation of Social Agreement or Commercial Use Contract;
- The duration of the contract;
- The full address including contact numbers of the logging company;

Business registration documents for the logging company: This document can be found in the office of the Registrar at the Liberia Business Registry located on Ashmun Street in Monrovia. It contains the following information: Business certificate; Owners and shareholders of the logging company; Duration of the business registration period;

Copies of Forest Management Plan: This document can be obtained from the offices of the CFDC, CFMB, and FDA. This is usually posted on the bulletin board at the logging company's operational site. This document contains the following information; Maps indicating boundaries between the concession and the community as well as logging contract areas

Copies of Social Agreements and Commercial Use Contracts: This document can be obtained from the offices of the CFDC, CFMB, FDA's Commercial Forestry Department and the main/headquarter office of the logging company. This document contain the following information; Type and description of social obligation owed to the community by the logging company; Cost for cubic meter and other fees payment; The duration of the agreement signed between the community and the logging company;

Timber Harvest Permits: This document can be obtained in the field office of the logging company and the Commercial Department of FDA. This document has the following information:

- Qualification for a logging company to do harvesting and which means the logging has completed basic requirements including;
- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment;
- Have an approved Social Agreement or Commercial Use Contract,

The official website of FDA is a useful place to find information –www.fda.gov.lr. listed web pages, the following documents are particularly useful for IFM:

For SAs, CUCs, CFMAs and the ‘nine steps CFMA Application process: www.fda.gov.lr/information/agreements/; www.fda.gov.lr/community_forestry_management_agreements/; For data on fees, taxes, exports are obtained from SGS and the Legality Verification Department website: www.fda.gov.lr/vpa-flegt/sgs-liberia-reports/; For laws and regulations governing Liberia forest sector: www.fda.gov.lr/information/laws/; For CS-IFM Briefing Papers:<http://loggingoff.info>. For Business Registration documents: Office of the Registrar, Liberia Business Registry. Whenever you realize a document is missing, inform FDA.

Step 2.4 Information to look for in the documents

- Maps, or metes and bounds (descriptions of boundaries) are marks showing boundaries between logging areas, conservation areas and communities.
- The yield approved and signed between FDA and the logging company;
- Copies of Pre-felling Inspection Forms showing the composition of the inspection team,
- A map of the area showing the boundaries of the compartment for felling in line with the felling schedule;
- Approved tally sheet showing number of to be harvested from a defined area
- Copies of Pre-felling Inspection Forms showing the composition of the inspection team, a map of the area showing the boundaries of the compartment and the schedule for felling
- Approved number of trees and volumes released to logging company to be harvested from a defined area.

Step 3: Draft your report

It is good to present your information in the form of a written report if possible. This can just be a simple one-page document, although sometimes you will need more space to explain all your findings and evidence in enough detail. When you write your report, assign code names to individuals (e.g. Respondent 1-001) just in case they don’t want you mention their names or they don’t want their identities disclosed.

You can structure a paragraph like this in the format below to make your evidence and your observations clear in relation to the law:

- a. Law – Ensure that your investigations are based on reference or provisions within the NFRL, CRL, FDA Ten Core Regulations and the VPA Protocol;
- b. Evidence – Always show proof (i.e. Recordings, photos, video, documents, and interviews) so that people can be sure your statements are credible.
- c. Analysis – If your evidence is different from what the law requires, make a statement about what you believe that means.

Step 3.1 Structure of a Community monitoring report:

It is good to include separate sections on: Introduction, Background, Methodology, Findings (using the Law, Evidence, Analysis structure outlined above), Conclusions and Recommendations.

Table 4: Reporting Template

INTRODUCTION	In this paragraph, you write about the purpose and intent (goal) of the report
BACKGROUND	Give a brief history and nature of your monitoring activity – which gives the reader the opportunity to know the roots/cause of the problem
METHODOLOGY	This to show to the reader the process you use to gather your information and how you derive at the conclusion and the source of your recommendation.
FINDINGS	The main outcomes of your monitoring activity which shows the result of the process you used to gather your information.
CONCLUSIONS	The results are explained in summary so that the reader can quickly see and understand what you're saying. This is the relationship between the facts and the results.
RECOMMENDATIONS	This is when you do a comparison about which part of your findings is important to address. It is focused on providing solution to a problem.

Step 3.2: Present only the facts for which you have evidence

It's tempting to write about things which you believe to be true but don't have concrete evidence for. So be sure to base your reports around the actual evidence you have to make sure that your reports are credible and trustworthy. Any attempt to report an infraction, violation or illegality of any kind that falls short of citing the law and the evidence of the violation, but rather acts on mere rumors, emotion or gossip, stands at risk of law suit, lost of credibility etc.

Presenting only the facts and the evidence you have to back them up mean that authorities and others are more likely to take action, and they themselves can look to uncover further evidence based on the facts you present. Be careful to separate facts (which should be indisputable) from their interpretation (which might only be your opinion). An example of this is the briefing papers circulated by the CS-IFM Team. Hard Copies can be found in the office of the CS-IFM team, library of the NGO Coalition Resource Center in Duazon Village, Robertfield High way and on the website <http://loggingoff.info>.

For example, you can start a sentence with: "Section 14.2 of the National Forestry Reform Law states that affected communities must receive 30 percent of Land Rental Fees from logging

concessions on their lands.” You can then go on to say “However, documents obtained from the Ministry of Finance show that the affected communities have not yet received any money owing to them from the payment of Land Rental Fees.” You can follow this with your analysis: “This means that the government currently owed an amount of \$150,000 to the affected community as land rental fee paid by the logging company, money that they could spend on improving the livelihoods of community members by building schools, clinics and roads.” This is a good structure – Law, Evidence, Analysis -, allowing you to clearly show how a law has been broken and what is the impact of the law being broken. Failure on the part of the logging company to rehabilitate roads connecting towns and villages as enshrined in the Social Agreement or the Commercial Use Contract.

Step 3.3: Make realistic and clear recommendations

Beware of including too many recommendations, just stick to the most important ones that really need to happen for the problem to be solved. A good way to think about a meaningful recommendation is to ask yourself “if I was given this as a recommendation, what would I actually do?”. This helps you to make sure that your recommendations are realistic and achievable. They should also be phrased in a way that makes it easy (and indisputable) to subsequently determine whether they have been achieved. Recommendations should be objective, outlining concrete actions that should be taken and directed towards the relevant actors, eg. Government, donors, civil society etc. An example of a good recommendation is “The FDA must ensure that the community develop and presents a Forest Management Plan approved by the FDA before a CUC is entered into between the community and an investor”.

Step 4: Engage people in a respectful manner

It is very important that you talk to cross section of people including leaders of women and youth groups, elders, traditional and other local leaders. If you want to record what people say, using a voice recorder, video camera, or ordinary camera (all of which may be available on a smart phone) you should first seek their consent;

Maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the people that give you information – this means that you do not name anyone and you keep their identities hidden so no one can find out who said something or gave you a piece of information. Do not name people unless they have given their permission to be named. Even then decide if it is a good idea for them to be named (remember to always prioritise the safety of everyone involved); Naming people in reports can risk their safety and even your own safety in certain cases so it needs to be thought through carefully;

Step 5: Get your findings to a wide audience

After you have written your monitoring report, be sure to firstly share your report/information with your CFDC or CFMB in your internal meeting so that they all consent that your report can be made public. If it is agreed that your report can be made public, share it with the NUCFDC or the NUCFMB, CS-IFM team, SDI or a CSO of your convenient. This is intended to help you improve the text quality and standard of your report. When this is done, share your report with the National Multi-Stakeholder Monitoring Committee) NMSMC and the FDA so that you begin to seek redress to the issue/s and also as an opportunity for them to make input/s to the issues raised in the report.

Additionally, you can use the media to publish your report by news paper publication, hosting or calling on radio talk shows to present your evidence so that people know what's going on. Bad things happen under the cover of darkness – community forest monitors are able to shine a torch into what's really going on. Let newspapers know of any findings they may be interested in and invite them to do a story on it. If you use Facebook or other social media (if accessible to you) write a post about the evidence you've uncovered. Make sure that you closely stick to the facts so that community forest monitoring remains a credible and trusted source of information.

Step 6: Follow-up to make sure the recommendations you make are acted on

Arrange follow up meetings with the FDA and other relevant bodies to find out what action is being taken. If you don't feel enough is being done, go to people higher up and urge them to take action. Work with allies such as other CSOs or community groups and brainstorm how to get things moving. Every situation will be different and its important to decide on the most appropriate course of action, but here is an example of where to start and who to meet with if your complaints aren't followed up on:

FDA district office, FDA regional office, FDA national office in Monrovia, Local radio stations, National Multi-stakeholder Monitoring Committee meeting (NMSMC), FDA managing director, National media (newspapers, radio) and International donors

Step 7: Log Scaling and log volume calculation

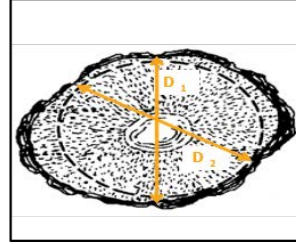
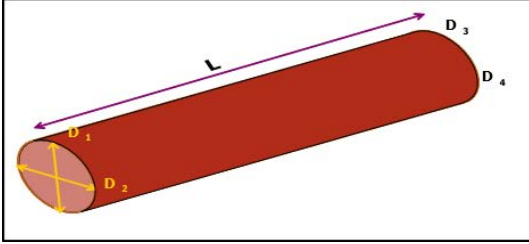
The practice of log scaling is an added responsibility for a community-based forest monitor because it involves gathering information about the volume of logs extracted in order to establish the amount to be paid for cubic meter fee. This involves independently calculating the Cubic Metre Fee that a community should be receiving every three months from the logging company. In this way CB-IFM is gathering information on the volume logs to establish the amount of money for cubic fees. Measuring log is called scaling. It enables a monitor to measure the accuracy of reported volumes or the volume of illegal logging.

Step 7.1: Calculating the volume of a log

The formula for calculating the volume of a log is: $V = 0.7854 \times D^2 \times \frac{L}{4}$

1. V is for Volume
2. L is for Length
3. D^2 is for Diameter square – meaning the diameter is multiplied by itself.
4. 0.7854 is the standard number for calculating the volume of a piece of log.

Table 5: An illustration for calculating the volume of a log



Step 7.2: An example of Simple Practical Step on how to calculate to get the Volume

Variables (in this example)

$$D^1 = 72\text{cm}, D^2 = 73\text{cm}, D^3 = 64\text{cm}, D^4 = 62\text{cm}$$

$$L = 10.13\text{m}$$

Average diameter

$$D^1 + D^2 + D^3 + D^4 = 72 + 73 + 64 + 62 = \frac{271}{4} = 68\text{cm}$$

(Always convert centimetres to meters, $1\text{m} = 100\text{cm}$): $\frac{205\text{cm}}{100} = 2.05\text{m}$

$$\text{Volume} = V = 0.7854 \times D^2 \times \frac{L}{4} = 0.7854 \times 2.05 \times 2.05 \times \frac{10.13}{4} = 8.35\text{m}^3$$

Note the following:

- a. Four diameter readings, in centimetres, should be taken, two at each end of the log;
- b. The four diameter measurements should then be averaged, which means to average you add the measures together and divide by 4 because there are 4 sides to measure;
- c. The average diameter should be divided by 100 to convert from centimetres to meters;
- d. The diameter should be squared (which means you multiply the diameter by itself);
- e. Then multiplied by 0.7854* to give the average of the end of the log; and
- f. The average diameter in meters is then multiplied by the length of the log measured in meters to give the volume of the log in cubic meter (m^3).

* 0.7854 is derived from the mathematical constant π ('pi'), 3.14159. It is $\frac{\pi}{4}$



Community based-forest monitors been trained on the use of the measurement tapes during training on logs scaling