

Making the Forest Sector
Transparent

Annual Transparency Report 2010

Country Specific Report: **Liberia**



Prepared by the Sustainable Development Institute,
October 2011

Global Witness is a UK-based non-governmental organisation which investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses. Through the *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* programme, Global Witness supports civil society organisations and campaigners in a group of forest-rich countries in Africa and Latin America to promote good governance and expose illegal and corrupt practices in the forest sector.

This report is an independent publication authored by the Sustainable Development Institute in Liberia. None of the contributors, participants, sponsors, managers, administrators or anyone else connected with *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* in any way whatsoever can be held responsible for the appearance of any inaccurate information for which they are not stated as an author. Any inaccurate or inappropriate material should be drawn to the attention of the Sustainable Development Institute.

© Sustainable Development Institute, 2011

Cover photo: First log exports after sanctions. All images copyright Sustainable Development Institute.



The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) is a Liberian non-governmental organisation, founded in 2002, that is working to transform and improve natural resource-related decision-making processes in the country. SDI focuses on resource governance, corruption, community benefits and public participation; in 2006, it received the Goldman

Environmental Prize for outstanding environmental achievements in Africa. SDI actively participates in national and international discussions on forests and climate change. Besides forestry, SDI plays an active role in the 'Mine Watch Initiative,' which enhances public understanding of social, environmental and development issues associated with mining.

Project Leader: Jonathan Yiah, jyiah@sdiliberia.org

Sustainable Development Institute, PO Box 5678, Duarzon Village, Robertsfield Highway, Monrovia, Liberia, www.sdiliberia.org

This material has been funded by UK aid from the Department for International Development; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the department's official policies.



References to 'Global Witness' in this report are to Global Witness Limited, a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England (Company No. 2871809)

Global Witness Limited

6th Floor

Buchanan House

30 Holborn

London EC1N 2HS

Email: foresttransparency@globalwitness.org

www.globalwitness.org

www.foresttransparency.info



global witness

Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

Since the end of the civil war, Liberia has made clear efforts to recognize the need for transparency and free access to information. For example, the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act passed in 2010 reinforces existing legislation including the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Act 2009 and the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) 2006 that promote transparency. The FOI Act states that everyone has the “*right of access to information generated, received and or held by public bodies*”. This has the potential to greatly contribute to public accountability and transparency. The logical next step is for the Government to set up supporting institutions to enable people to pursue and access information, but the government has been slow to act in this respect. For example, at the end of December 2010, the Ministry of Information had still not uploaded the FOI law on its websites, nor had the Press Union of Liberia hosted it on its own website. Based on the findings of a forest sector transparency survey, SDI recommends that the government should:

- Take concrete measures to fully implement its obligations for transparency under the various laws including the FOI Act, LEITI Act, NFRL and Community Rights Law (CRL) 2009, for example by establishing the Independent Information Commissioner and supporting it fully to carry out its functions.
- Require all agencies of government to develop clear and measurable action plans with timetables for fulfilling key obligations for information provision, for example the LEITI Secretariat and Forest Development Authority (FDA) should be requested to present plans for uploading all public documents within their possession onto their websites and for setting up

systems for facilitating public access to information.

- Communicate to all agencies the consequences for not meeting their responsibilities for information provision, which could include clear and unambiguous administrative measures that would be taken to compel compliance.
- Embark on a program of public sector-wide measures to apply the same transparency requirements that exists in the forest sector to other natural resources, especially those whose allocation directly impacts on forests such as large-scale agriculture.

The Annual Transparency Report 2010 for Liberia is a component of the annual report cards collected for the *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* project, which in 2010 included the following partners: [Sustainable Developed Institute](#) (Liberia); [Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development](#) (Ghana); [Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement](#) (Cameroon); [Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales](#) (Perú) and [Grupo FARO](#) (Ecuador). The project is being coordinated by [Global Witness](#) (UK). Further partners are expected to join the project in 2011. The full report and results of the 2010 report cards in all five countries can be found at www.foresttransparency.info, including the Liberia specific section at www.foresttransparency.info/liberia/. The report card was first collected in 2009, and will be refined in coming years as a tool for monitoring transparency in forest governance.

Liberian Context

Liberia has large and valuable tropical, semi-deciduous and mangrove forests, which support the livelihoods of much of the poor rural population. The country is recovering from the lingering effects of the civil war, which ended in 2003 after 14 years of conflict, and faces many challenges, including high levels of poverty and eroded customary and traditional structures.

Uncontrolled exploitation of resources took place leading up to and during the war, and led to sanctions on timber exports in 2003 and the cancellation of all concessions in 2006. Since then, a new legal framework for forest sector has been established, which is progressive in some regards such as providing for public access to information, benefit sharing with communities and increased transparency in forest management, but the main focus has been on logging over other uses. The Government favoured the development of a large-scale commercial logging concession model, even though this approach has had a poor track record. Seven logging contracts to 2033/34 were controversially issued in 2008/09 covering just over one million hectares of forests. The process was not transparent because critical documents such as due diligence checks were not released to the public and some contracts were ratified in closed sessions of the Senate. In addition, the previously unused Private Use Permit has started to be used to grant logging activities on land under 'private' ownership, which

may include community land, without going through public auction processes. The Government has also issued several large-scale mining and agricultural concessions, such as for palm oil, rubber and other monoculture plantations, without making information available to the public as required by the legal framework for public procurement and concessions. Some of these concessions are located close to or inside significant biodiversity conservation areas, which raise the risk of increased deforestation and threaten the livelihoods of local communities.

The Forest Development Authority is the public institution responsible for managing and regulating forest activities in the country, which is independent of line ministry control and accountable to a board. The Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), which includes forestry within its remit to improve revenue management. International organisations have been active in supporting reform of the Liberian forest sector since the end of civil war – the Liberia Forest Initiative includes several multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, international donor agencies and non-government organisations. The NGO Coalition for Liberia and other civil society organisations (CSOs) are active in the country on forest sector issues, and Community Forestry Development Committees (CFDCs) have been established to legally represent affected communities in which logging activities occur. Private sector groups including the Liberia Timber Association (LTA) and Liberian Loggers Association (LLA) represent commercial interests, and other investors are promoting the development of carbon concessions and plantations.

Following two years of negotiations and consultation, a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) was signed in May 2011 to prevent illegal timber exports as part of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programme. Liberia is one of the countries included in the preparations for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) coordinated by the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF); work on drafts of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) took place over 2010 and into 2011.



Container left by side of logging access road. Photo: SDI

Report card analysis

This section presents the key findings and analysis from the data gathered through questionnaire interviews carried out in 2010 in six counties. There were 84 participants in total, including representatives of government agencies, local media, CFDCs, community-based organisations and associations representing logging operators. Desk-based research on information held by the government institutions was also gathered and specific data was requested. Further details on the methodology and participant responses are provided at the end of this report.

The Freedom of Information Act and other Legal Provisions for Transparency

Since the end of the civil war, Liberia has made clear efforts to recognize the need for transparency and the free access to information. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, which became law in October 2010, reinforces existing legal provisions including LEITI Act (which was the first EITI to include forestry) and the National Forestry Reform Law 2006 (NFRL) that promote transparency. The FOI Act states that everyone has “right of access to information generated, received and or held by public bodies”, and it has the potential to greatly contribute to public accountability and transparency. Even though it is important to make the FOI law available on-line and to raise people’s awareness of their rights under the law, the Government also needs to set up supporting institutions for people to pursue information. The office of Independent Information Commissioner is specified as the responsible body for processing information requests and ensuring right of access, but no specific date for the appointment of this arbiter has been planned. Additionally, the law requires every public authority and private entity to appoint at least one staff member with responsibility to receive requests and coordinate responses. These laws will also have more impact if individuals and groups within civil society develop the skills and knowledge to exercise these rights to access public information and to use them to demand accountability in government.

The analysis of the 2010 field data indicated that there was a slight improvement in the level of knowledge across the respondents of freedom of information provisions in the law. Fifty-eight respondents (69%) were aware of the FOI Act and 59 (70%) were aware of the NFRL. While it is encouraging that many of the respondents are aware of these laws, access to available information remains a challenge for people outside Monrovia in particular. Only nine of the 84 respondents said that they have a copy of the FOI law (and four of them were government officials from outside Monrovia). At the end of December 2010, the Ministry of Information had still not uploaded the FOI law on its websites, nor had the Press Union of Liberia (an important body for public information) hosted it on its own website.

Hosting laws on websites may be a step towards fulfilling legal obligations for public information, but will also fall short. For example, 69 respondents stated they did not have access to the NFRL even though it is hosted on the FDA website. There is limited internet access outside Monrovia and locals lack the know-how or the means to access information in their communities. To partially address this situation, the World Bank gave a grant to the FDA to set up an ‘info shop’, but the FDA has not yet established it and there has been very little progress on this front. The FDA central office and regional offices seem to be disconnected in raising public access to forest sector information.



CFDC meeting on community rules. Photo: SDI

Development of an Information Management System for the FDA

The FDA has received funding from the World Bank to improve public access to forest sector information, but progress was slow over 2010. The funding is intended to set up a library and train website managers, but there has been little planning on how new staff and facilities will function. Making the Forest Sector Transparent has pointed out over the last two years that information management policies and systems will be required alongside plans to create physical information centres. Citizens will also need greater understanding of how they can make sure that information is made available and accessible.

The FDA has taken a selective approach to information dissemination in the past, and failed to give reasons for refusing to provide information. A top-down approach dependent on the discretion of managers to agree to the release of information on request has proven

ineffective and run the risk of violating the right to information in a timely manner. Documents have been inconsistently posted on the web, and there is no transparent process behind decisions on what is published. Non-confidential information can be withheld due to the lack of will on the part of authorities and/or the lack of dissemination mechanisms. The FOI Act sets out key clauses on the right to information and obliges every public authority to establish a clear publication scheme (including automatic publication of many documents). The World Bank funding will also support improvements to the websites and archives, but this will be inadequate unless the FDA develops and approves an information management system in consultation with other key stakeholders, and then implements it according to a set timetable.

Permits for Forest Operations

The NFRL and the Public Procurement and Concession Act require transparent processes for allocating forest use concessions and permits. Under law, major concessions are subject to competitive bidding and public consultation prior to confirmation. Before the National Legislature ratifies a contract, either in plenary or executive session, it conducts a public hearing to solicit expert opinion on said contract. In practice however, when the process is opened to the public it is often superficial and public comments are seldom acted upon. Furthermore, contrary to the legal requirement, four Forest Management Contracts were ratified in an executive session of the Liberian Senate in 2009, when all records of discussions are classified so that the proceedings are not shared with the public. No new forest contracts were ratified in 2010, but the Private Use Permit (PUP), which does not require open competitive processes, was used instead in some contested areas. The Land Commission has lobbied the Executive to place a moratorium on new concessions as an interim measure ahead of policy recommendations to

address the gaps in allocation processes. The moratorium is critical given the lack of clarity of tenure rights related to land use.

The LEITI Act and the NFRL specifically require that logging contracts are public documents, but not all of these documents had been uploaded onto the FDA website more than a year following their ratification. Whilst LEITI remains committed to its mandate and has uploaded most of the logging contracts on its website, the FDA is equally obligated to do this. Neither are the contracts accessible to members of the public through other means, such as from the relevant FDA offices in the four regions. Of the 30 respondents that said they believed that the contract documents were public documents, only four had actually seen one. This means that people have limited access to such vital information which they need to effectively audit commercial forestry.

Some logging concession areas and protected areas have been demarcated and mapped, but 76 respondents (90%) stated that they did not have such maps. Only one FDA official in Monrovia had a concession map, and only four government

Participatory Negotiations towards the Signing of the VPA

Overall, the VPA is a positive example of a process that balances community, conservation and commercial interests as specified in Liberia's forest policy. The negotiation of the VPA followed a multi-stakeholder participation process, including forest communities, to generate real commitments from the Liberian government towards good governance and sustainable forest management. Civil society played an important part in influencing the process and final agreement, including substantive inputs into the text on promoting the role of communities in independent monitoring of the implementation of the VPA. The agreement will lead to increased revenue collection from forestry operations and greater respect for community rights in forest management.

The VPA is primarily aimed at preventing illegal logging as a way of improving forest governance. The Government of Liberia and the EU now need to take the necessary steps to

implement the agreement. Various actors in civil society have consistently raised concerns about violations of new laws and regulations and neglect of different procedures and rules by the FDA. There were also irregularities in how the first logging concessions were approved. In this context the VPA is broadly welcomed to curb illegal activities, but experience to date has shown that legal and institutional reforms do not necessarily translate into improvements on the ground. Political will from the national to the local level is crucial to implement reforms. In order for the VPA to be effective, the functioning of key institutions will need to be strengthened and their compliance with the rule of law will need to be enhanced. Transparency and accountability is crucial to ensuring that forest governance is improved to deliver benefits to all stakeholders, especially rural communities. Liberian civil society is hopeful that the VPA with the EU will provide the stimulus for improvements.

respondents (one in Monrovia and three in Tappita where there is one of the largest logging concession areas) stated that they have copies of documents that contain maps and details about the boundaries of the concession. Generally, information about the forestry sector within the public domain is limited in spite of the transparency laws. Thirty respondents were aware that information exists related to logging volumes but only five respondents said they have seen the figures.

Addressing illegal activities about awarded concessions remains a sticky issue. The FDA has demonstrated little commitment in applying the rule of law when dealing with infractions as they occur. Repeatedly, it has also reneged on compiling the debarment list recommended by Executive Order #1. In addition, the existing forest legislation contains some loopholes and risks for the expected VPA implementation.



CFDC meeting on community rules. Photo: SDI

Land Tenure

There has been a slight improvement towards clarifying forest tenure following the adoption of the CRL in 2009 although the regulations to implement the law are still being developed and no community has successfully used the law to establish its ownership rights. Community governance of forests is a central element of the draft regulations. Currently, maps substantiating forest land ownership are not publicly available. A number of deeded titles for forest land exist in Liberia, but official land ownership maps are not available for privately owned lands. Once the supporting regulations have been adopted, this will open the possibilities of communities demarcating their community land areas, including forests, and formally mapping them. Making the Forest Sector Transparent is supporting work to monitor these steps and track progress.

Competing interests for large scale land-use

To date there is no official policy or framework for deciding on competing development options for forests and land use, which means that the public is

often not engaged and decision making is arbitrary and open to abuse. One consequence is that, while progress is being made towards formalising community control forests in community land areas, large concessions for oil palm and rubber have been allocated in different parts of the country. In addition to the lack of transparency in the allocation of these use rights, this development poses additional threats to communities seeking secure tenure and livelihoods. A Strategic Environmental Assessment on the role of forests in national development was conducted in 2008/09 with funding from the World Bank, but it was released only after a third of the logging concessions had been awarded. It recommended that a strategic framework for decision-making on land and resource use needed to be established.

Moreover, coupled with the agricultural concession, the ongoing attempts to allocate REDD concessions for carbon rights are taking place in a policy vacuum, which has alarming implications for local communities in particular. These issues must to be tackled if community-based forestry is going to become a reality and contribute meaningfully to sustainable rural economies.



Logging access roads lead to conversion of the natural forest to other land uses. Photo: SDI

Challenges for the REDD+ Preparations

Civil society has faced considerable difficulties in understanding and contributing to the development of the draft R-PPs for the World Bank FCPF over 2010 and the first half of 2011. None of the three drafts were released for public comment in line with the core regulations for the forest sector. The World Bank itself has commented that full participation of Liberian stakeholders, civil society, and cross-sector agencies including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy and the Land Commission is critical to ensuring shared solutions and benefits.

Since the existing forest legal framework makes no reference to REDD+ or environmental services in general, the team responsible for the preparation of the R-PP has taken the liberty of managing consultation as it sees fit. Regional consultation events and national workshops were conducted to share lessons from REDD+ pilot project and inform a potential strategic framework for REDD+ activities, but it proved

difficult to generate civil society buy in and ownership. This created a gap that was filled by international conservation partners.

Before it signs off a grant to move preparations forward, the FCPF has requested that a number of issues are addressed, including assessments of capacity building needs, budgets for proposed work, and land use options. These issues are rather technical and abstract; an alternative view is that REDD+ needs to be positioned in line with the development priorities and needs of Liberian people and communities instead of being driven forward as a market scheme under the mandate of a confused international framework. The R-PP also proposes strategies to transform the agricultural sector, but there is no clear strategy to influence this sector. To date, community participation in the contract negotiation of large-scale plantations has been negligible and there is no information on the share of revenues from potential carbon stocks that agro-industrial companies may earn from such plantations.

Forestry Taxes and Redistribution

There is a system to identify taxes collected from each forest area and the amount redistributed to those communities entitled to receive a share. The Société Générale de Surveillance provides timber tracking services under contract to the FDA, including weekly payment updates circulated to forest stakeholders on an email list it has established. Export volume data is also provided. However those without email or those that have not signed up for the data do not receive this information. The fieldwork found that local communities do not know if production volumes of logging companies are published. For people living closest to the forest exploitation sites that generate this revenue, it is not realistically possible to access this information.

Calculations of communities' share of land rental are based on the area fees and not the bid premium. A total of seven Forest Management Contracts (FMCs) have been allocated on 1,007,459 hectares of forest

and nine Timber Sales Contracts (TSCs) and three Private Use Permits on 121,889 hectares. The total annual community share based on the area fees calculation is only \$777,124.50. On the other hand, a calculation of land rental bid fees would accrue an additional \$3,110,065.86 to communities. If government fairly distributed the land rental, then significant benefits would have been shared with local communities. The failure to follow the rule of law is counterproductive and will undermine the credibility of the FDA and the sector if the current trend continues.

Representing community interests

CFDCs are committees whose members are elected by communities affected by logging operations to serve as their official representatives in matters related to forests or their engagements with FDA and logging companies. Generally, they are better informed about matters related to forests than others at the community level. Nonetheless, there

appear to be gaps in knowledge amongst members. Of the 13 CFDCs interviewed in six communities, nine correctly stated that there is an official process for consultation on how revenue redistributed from the timber industry to communities should be used, but the other four noted that they have an internal process for this. Forest Regulation 106-07 provides the mechanism for benefit sharing, whereby projects must have been identified by representatives of affected communities in a community meeting. The process for developing projects is not defined in the law, and each community addresses that in their by-laws. Some communities are eager to receive their funds from the benefit redistribution system, and are awaiting formalisation of a National Benefit Sharing Trust Board and other arrangements.

There have been concerns over members of the National Legislature serving on community management bodies. Communities have firmly opposed this due to the potential conflict of interest. The CRL regulation is partially addressing this issue, through a provision in the final draft that prohibits legislative representatives from holding leadership positions in the General Assembly and Executive Committee.



Bridge on logging access road opening up land to forestry.
Photo: SDI

Conclusions

There were two major improvements in 2010. Firstly, over and above existing forest sector specific laws, the FOI Act will apply across the public sector and could contribute greatly to public accountability and transparency. Secondly, several CFDCs began organising forums in their communities to discuss forest related issues, such as logging operations.

Government agencies responsible for facilitating public access to information have not done enough to fulfil their obligations. Apart from SGS, which is a contracted private sector body, none of these agencies have in place a publicly accessible and efficient means for facilitating public access to the information they hold. Those that publish via websites – including the FDA and the LEITI Secretariat – appear to arbitrarily select the information they post to the sites. The Executive website also hosts some concession agreements, but not others. The basis for selection needs to be clear and justified under FOI Act.

In general, there is little understanding of the significance of new legal commitments to openness, and therefore the interest necessary to advance them has not developed. Government agencies with statutory responsibilities for implementing various laws and regulations need to do more to fulfil their responsibilities. For example, this could include the setting up of the Commission on Public Information and providing it with the support it needs to begin to function.

The dissemination of information to the public needs the development of management systems. Even though current efforts to provide information through websites and emails avoid the need for bureaucracy, and intermediaries such as NGOs and media organisations based in Monrovia are able to access, analyse and redistribute the information to an extent, ultimately rural communities are not receiving the information they need due to the lack of connectivity. The FDA has not fully utilised the World Bank funding committed in 2006 to improve public access to forest sector information.

Despite these problems, the fieldwork found that there has been an improvement in the level of awareness about the legal framework and other forest sector information. This is particularly

noticeable amongst CFDCs, but remains too low amongst civil society groups who seek to influence forest sector governance. Nonetheless, the different forest governance processes are starting to generate information, albeit limited, that can be used to hold duty bearers to account. For example, CFDCs are beginning to raise concerns about issues relating to log volume production, revenue and infractions.

Collaboration and participatory stakeholder processes are improving forest governance generally. Representatives of civil society, communities and the private sector were actively involved in the national discussion about a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU regarding forest governance. Progress on setting up Forest Forums has been slow. Given the potential they have for improving participation and broadening forest sector dialogue in Liberia, their development needs to be prioritised by the FDA and other stakeholders.

There are also lessons to be learned from improving collaboration and stakeholder participation, especially for donors supporting forestry and other development projects. While sector specific processes are noted for being more open and participatory, other sectors such as agriculture and mining that directly impact on forests are less so.

Recommendations

The Government of Liberia should:

- Take concrete measures to fully implement its obligations for transparency under the various laws including the FOI Act, LEITI Act, NFRL and CRL, for example by establishing the Independent Information Commissioner and supporting it fully to carry out its functions.
- Require all agencies of government to develop clear and measurable action plans with timetables for fulfilling key obligations for information provision, for example the LEITI Secretariat and FDA should be requested to present plans for uploading all public documents within their possession onto their websites and for setting up systems for facilitating public access to information.

- Communicate to all agencies the consequences for not meeting their responsibilities for information provision, which could include clear and unambiguous administrative measures that would be taken to compel compliance.
- Embark on a program of public sector-wide measures to apply the same transparency requirements that exists in the forest sector to other natural resources, especially those whose allocation directly impacts on forests such as large-scale agriculture.

The FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency should each take appropriate steps to:

- Proactively put all public information within its custody online while it develops systems for facilitating public access to hard copies, including all concession agreements for forestry and agriculture as well as Environmental Impact Assessments that have been conducted.
- Develop and make public action plans with timetables for fulfilling their obligations under the various laws; for example each one should specify when it will upload electronic versions of all documents within its possession and when it will establish an information desk to handle public requests for information while it also develops a long term information management system.
- Develop a mechanism to make information available to local communities through local FDA offices in association with CFDCs – a first step in this direction could include establishing an information desk in each local office where members of the public may go to request information.

The progress made by the Liberia EITI to deliver natural resource related agreements and revenue information to the public is commendable. In addition, it should:

- Put online all concession agreements for forestry, agriculture and mining within its custody and establish a system for facilitating public access to hard copies.
- Develop and make public action plans for fulfilling its obligations with respect to facilitating public access to natural resource related contracts.

- Publish the monthly payment updates developed by SGS on its websites, including figures for fees and taxes owed that are not reported in the annual reporting templates.

Liberian NGOs and CSOs should:

- Identify their specific information needs in order to be able to articulate them directly to the information providers in government agencies and elsewhere. Providers are more likely to respond expeditiously to requests for information, as well as provide it in a useable format, if there is a clear case made by the requestor.
- Take steps to improve the public availability, accessibility and usability of information produced by different stakeholders. This could include developing a program for real time dissemination of information provided by SGS on revenues and key sections of the laws highlighting public right to information.
- Distribute information at the national and local level in ways that contribute to public knowledge

about forestry in particular and other natural resources more broadly. This could include cost-effective reprinting and distribution of the information at the national level and at the local level through cost-free media.

Community Forest Development Committees should:

- Begin to organise events aimed at increasing their understanding of the forestry legal framework as well as strengthening their internal governance by cataloguing the key challenges that hinder effective representation of their communities.
- Ensure their push for transparency and accountability adheres to forestry legal provisions. CFDCs have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the law, and to this end should consult with other stakeholders, including civil society, if their actions – including internal transparency and governance, implementation of benefit-sharing projects and sanctions against violators – are justified in the context of the forestry legal framework.



Some of the first logs being transported for export after sanctions were raised in Liberia. Photo: SDI

Methodology

The data collection in 2010 followed a similar methodology to that applied in 2009. Questionnaire interviews were carried out in October and November 2010 in six counties, which was three more than in 2009. Three civil society organisations participated in the data collection and compilation: Action Against Climate Change, Rural Integrated Centre for Community Empowerment and Human Concern Inc. The key factors used to select five of the counties were their proximity to major forests and logging operations, whereas Montserrado was selected because it hosts the headquarters of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), where all official forest related information are housed and people in Monrovia have better access to communication including the internet.

Information gathering was based on the common template adopted by all Making the Forest Sector Transparent programme partners in June 2010, but extended to provide a methodology to capture community-level perceptions. A total of 72 questions were administered covering 15 themes. This focused on recording participants' responses

Locations surveyed

- Monrovia, Montserrado County
- Buchanan, Grand Bassa County
- Cestos, Rivercess County
- Bopolu, Gbarpolu County
- Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County
- Tappita, Nimba County

to each question with a “yes” or “no” under two labels: Does it exist? and Do you have it? In the case where a participant has answered “yes” to a question under the label “Does it exist?” she/he was asked a follow up question to provide the source under the label “Do you have it?” to test whether they could access the information in question.

The field team encountered several obstacles including reluctance to participate in the research for reasons such as the time required for completing the questionnaire. Nonetheless, many respondents appreciated the contribution the Report Card is making to transparency and accountability in the forest sector.

Table 1: Total number of participants by type of stakeholder and county

Area	Community Based Orgs	CFDCs	Key informants	Other Govt. Agencies	LTA/ LLA/ Chainsaw Assoc.	CSOs	FDA	Local media	Total
Cestos	2	3	1	4	1	1	0	2	14
Buchanan	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	7
Monrovia	0	0	0	2	0	4	1	4	11
Bopolu	2	4	1	3	0	1	0	1	12
Zwedru	0	4	2	4	4	3	0	3	20
Tappita	0	1	8	6	1	0	0	4	20
Totals	7	13	12	22	6	9	0	15	84

Table 2: Knowledge and availability of Freedom of Information law

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	29	5	0	14
Buchanan	5	2	0	7
Monrovia	11	0	5	6
Bopolu	10	2	1	11
Zwedru	13	7	0	20
Tappita	10	10	3	17
Sub-totals	58	26	9	75
Totals	84		84	

Table 3: Knowledge and availability of Forestry law

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	12	2	0	14
Buchanan	6	1	1	6
Monrovia	8	3	3	8
Bopolu	9	3	1	11
Zwedru	11	9	5	15
Tappita	13	7	5	15
Sub-totals	59	25	15	69
Totals	84		84	

Table 4: Knowledge and availability of land ownership maps

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	6	8	0	14
Buchanan	3	4	2	5
Monrovia	4	7	1	10
Bopolu	2	10	1	11
Zwedru	8	12	2	18
Tappita	7	13	2	18
Sub-totals	30	54	8	76
Totals	84		84	

Table 5: Knowledge and availability of permit documents

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	6	8	0	14
Buchanan	2	5	0	7
Monrovia	4	7	1	10
Bopolu	5	7	0	12
Zwedru	5	15	0	20
Tappita	8	12	3	17
Sub-totals	30	54	4	80
Totals	84		84	

Table 6: Knowledge and availability of logging quotas/production volumes

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	6	8	0	14
Buchanan	4	3	1	6
Monrovia	3	8	0	11
Bopolu	6	6	1	11
Zwedru	5	15	1	19
Tappita	6	14	2	18
Sub-totals	30	54	5	79
Totals	84		84	

Table 7: Knowledge and availability of strategy for mining versus forestry trade-offs

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	3	11	0	14
Buchanan	4	3	0	7
Monrovia	3	8	0	11
Bopolu	7	5	1	11
Zwedru	8	12	2	18
Tappita	12	8	3	17
Sub-totals	37	47	6	78
Totals	84		84	

Table 8: Knowledge and availability of consultations on how community funds should be used

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	4	10	0	14
Buchanan	4	3	1	6
Monrovia	5	6	2	9
Bopolu	8	4	2	10
Zwedru	9	11	2	18
Tappita	13	7	3	17
Sub-totals	43	41	10	74
Totals	84		84	

Table 9: Knowledge and availability of a National Forest Forum

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	5	9	1	13
Buchanan	5	2	0	7
Monrovia	4	7	1	10
Bopolu	9	3	1	11
Zwedru	7	13	2	18
Tappita	1	19	1	19
Sub-totals	31	53	6	78
Totals	84		84	

Table 10: Knowledge and availability of revenues redistributed to communities

Location	Does it exist?		Do you have it?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cestos	8	6	1	13
Buchanan	5	2	1	6
Monrovia	5	6	2	9
Bopolu	10	2	1	11
Zwedru	12	8	1	19
Tappita	10	10	1	19
Sub-totals	50	34	7	77
Totals	84		84	



global witness

www.globalwitness.org



www.sdiliberia.org

Printed on 100% recycled paper