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EVALUATION

FOREST INCOMES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared independently by Social Impact, Inc. under the Liberia Strategic Analysis activity.

ABSTRACT

This midterm performance evaluation of the USAID/Liberia Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) activity measures its results to date and investigates the effectiveness of its technical assistance and capacity-building approach to achieve them. Qualitative evaluation methodologies, involving ninety-four key informant interviews, twenty focus group discussions, and eight field observations, were used to supplement documentary data. The evaluation's principal conclusions are: (1) FIFES has become more of an agricultural extension activity than the community forestry activity originally intended; (2) community forests should be used to finance forest management and protection and improve the welfare of their populations by sustainably producing and selling commercial forest products and services; (3) community forests can effectively protect biodiversity by protecting key habitats for endangered species and ecosystems, implementing best forestry practices and supplying market demand for forest products; (4) the involvement of women and youth in decision-making processes and financial management is necessary for community forests to become successful and sustainable. The principal recommendation is to refocus FIFES on creating model community forests that are linked to Liberia's overall forestry sector, thereby helping it to improve.

FOREST INCOMES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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ACRONYMS

ACDI/ VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
CA	Community Assemblies
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CF	Community Forest
CFDC	Community Forest Development Committees
CFMA	Community Forest Management Agreement
CFMB	Community Forest Management Body
CFMP	Community Forest Management Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EC	Executive Committee
EG	Enterprise Group
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMC	Forest Management Contracts
FIFES	Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability
FO	Field Observations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Government, and Trade
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
GOL	Government of Liberia
IP	Implementing Partner
KTC	Kparblee Timber Company
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LRCFP	Land Rights and Community Forestry Program
LSA	Liberia Strategic Analysis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PROSPER	People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
SI	Social Impact, Inc.
SOW	Statement of Work
TOC	Theory of Change
TSC	Timber Sale Contracts
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WORTH	Women Operating Resources Together

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) activity is a five-year (November 6, 2015–November 5, 2020) Cooperative Agreement with a total estimated cost of \$22,290,239. FIFES is implemented by ACDI/VOCA and sub-grantees Pact, Inc. and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). FIFES is intended to build on previous U.S. Government (USG) funding in Liberia's forest sector, including the Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP, 2007–12) and the People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER, 2012–17) activities. FIFES is intended to address the primary drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss in eleven authorized Community Forests (CFs) in Nimba and Grand Bassa counties.

FIFES PLANNED RESULTS

The FIFES activity, as stated in the Statement of Work (SOW) for this evaluation, was intended to produce the following three results:

- *Result 1. Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Developed and Strengthened:* (1) Provides farmers with technical assistance to improve their production of pepper, plantain, cocoa, groundnut and cowpeas; and (2) Prepares CF business plans. Result 1 is intended to stabilize agricultural production on existing farmland, thereby reducing the extent of slash-and-burn agriculture that eliminates or degrades natural forest and the biodiversity it harbors.
- *Result 2. Community Forest Management Improved:* (1) Assists communities in preparing Community Forest Management Agreements and Plans (CFMA/Ps) and business plans; (2) Provides capacity building in forest governance to Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs), Community Assemblies (CAs), and Executive Committees (ECs); (3) Increases the capacity of CFs to make forest inventories, monitor forest biodiversity, and locate and maintain forest boundaries; and (4) Increases the capacity of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to support and regulate CFs.
- *Result 3. Cross-Cutting Gender and Youth: Improved Stakeholder Engagement for Co-Management:* (1) Increases the knowledge and skills of women and youth with livelihoods in forest landscapes; and (2) Incorporates gender and youth issues into the other two FIFES results.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Through the Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) activity, USAID/Liberia engaged Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to conduct an external midterm performance evaluation of FIFES. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide USAID/Liberia with a sound basis for (1) Adjusting FIFES' technical approach and/or implementation practices to more effectively and efficiently achieve its planned results; (2) Link FIFES closely to the achievement of biodiversity conservation; and (3) Determine priorities for USAID/Liberia investments in forest management.

The primary audience for the evaluation are USAID/Liberia, the implementing partner (IP), and the FDA. The secondary audience for the evaluation are the offices in USAID/Washington's Africa and pillar bureaus who backstop USAID/Liberia's natural resource office, and other donors and organizations working in similar development contexts.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation focused on the following specific questions:

- I. **Progress:** To what extent has progress been made in achieving the results under FIFES?

- How have youth and women benefited?
 - Are the appropriate technical skills and support available and being applied to achieve results?
2. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Which approaches have been most effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES? Which approaches have been the least effective and efficient, and why?
- Specifically, for enterprise development:
 - Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?
 - What methods of connecting sellers and buyers are most effective in the long run to increase income from forest-based enterprises?
 - Is there an improved enabling environment for agroforest-based business enterprises? If so, is it influencing farmers' abilities to advance their enterprises?
3. **Relevance:** To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?
4. **Sustainability:** To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, the Forestry Training Institute [FTI], and the local-level CF management groups)?
- Specifically, for FDA, consider due diligence of proposed Social Agreements of other co-managed agreements with CFs.
 - To what extent are financial sustainability arrangements being built into CF management structures to encourage full consideration of environmental factors in development of the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP)?

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation relied principally on qualitative data because the FIFES monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system has not produced reliable quantitative indicator data. The evaluation scope lacked time and resources to produce its own quantitative data. Qualitative data were obtained through: (1) review of documentation (Annex A, References); (2) semi-structured interviews with ninety-four key informants (KIs); (3) discussions with twenty focus groups (FGs), separated by men, women, and youth; and (4) FOs on farms and within CFs.

These qualitative data were collected in Monrovia and in and around six of the eleven CFs that FIFES assists in Northern Nimba, Southern Nimba, and Grand Bassa. The six forests were selected as examples of more successful and less successful CFs. The team reviewed the data to identify emerging findings related to the evaluation questions.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Progress: FIFES was designed to contribute to achieving the sub-results in USAID/Liberia's Results Framework to establish sustainable, profitable agroforest business enterprises. However, the evaluation found that FIFES has concentrated on improving the production practices of farms outside the boundaries of the eleven CFs it assists. FIFES has not assisted forest-product enterprises or considered the CFs themselves to be business enterprises. Instead, CF governance bodies—which include the CFMBs, ECs, and CAs—have been encouraged to prohibit people from using forest resources, including the forests' relatively fertile soils. Qualitative data indicate that the production of upland rice, cassava, and forest products from within the CFs may have declined.

Since the CFs have produced few benefits for the communities so far, members are urging the CFMBs to negotiate timber sale agreements with logging companies. The FDA is actively helping logging companies and communities to make these agreements, perhaps due to the forty-five percent of the income from sales of CF timber that the government receives. Four of the eleven CFs have already signed or are about

to sign logging agreements, and most of the others are likewise interested in doing so. The CFs are unprepared to negotiate fair, technically sound logging agreements, or monitor and enforce compliance by logging companies within the terms of such agreements.

FIFES has also supported the establishment of Women Operating Resources Together (WORTH) groups, through which women have learned to keep track of finances and to read and write, which has given them more self-confidence in starting small-scale businesses. Overall, however, FIFES' assistance to CF governance has not increased the knowledge and access to information required for women or youth to exert influence on CFMBs' decisions. Based on these findings, the evaluation concludes that FIFES has made little progress in achieving sustainable forest-based enterprises, improvements in CF management, or improved participation of women and youth in CF decision-making processes.

Effectiveness and Efficiency: FIFES' most effective and efficient activity has been in supporting the functioning of the CFs by partially financing the costs for CFMBs to conduct meetings, thereby enabling them to plan and learn more about their roles and responsibilities. Awareness messages have effectively persuaded members of CF communities not to extract products from, or cultivate upland rice and cassava within, the CFs. The evaluation could not determine if these awareness messages originated in the FDA, PROSPER, or FIFES itself. The evaluation believes that managing the CFs as forest-based business enterprises, rather than discouraging the use of CF resources, would be an effective way to both improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity, while still adhering to the USAID Biodiversity Code.

The evaluation concludes that FIFES' current focus on promoting a few agricultural cash crops grown outside the CFs neither adheres to USAID's Biodiversity Code, nor is effectively increasing sustainable economic opportunities outside the CFs. The evaluation also concludes that it is unlikely that the enterprises supported through FIFES will generate sufficient income to improve the livelihoods of the CF communities or offset illegal or unsustainable forest uses, especially due to the lost income from production within the CFs.

The most effective and efficient method to connect buyers and sellers for forest products would be through competitive bidding. The evaluation found that producers of agricultural products do not need assistance in connecting with buyers of those products. As FIFES was not designed to improve the enabling environment for forest or agriculture enterprises—such as through high-quality plants and seeds, improved infrastructure, access to credit, or supportive laws and regulations—it has consequently implemented few actions intended to improve the enabling environment.

Based on these findings, the evaluation concludes that FIFES' most effective and efficient approach has been its assistance to the functioning of the CFs. The WORTH experience has the potential to be a model for increasing credit availability to forest-based enterprises. Meanwhile, approaches to improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity have been ineffective and inefficient.

Relevance: FIFES' design includes few specific actions that respond to the needs of the FDA Community Forestry Department and the FTI. Through a sub-grant with Pact, FIFES was intended to strengthen the CFMB's ability to govern the use of the CFs. However, FIFES' emphasis on agricultural rather than forest production has made most members of CFs skeptical that the CFMBs will respond to their needs for income, and therefore, press the sale of CF timber to logging companies. Pact has not made noticeable improvements to the ability of the CFMBs to negotiate fair, technically sound agreements with logging companies or to manage the funds produced from such agreements. Based on these findings, the evaluation concludes that FIFES has responded to the needs of institutions or beneficiaries with CF-related interests and responsibilities to only a limited extent.

Sustainability: The evaluation found that FIFES is marginally involved in assisting the FDA in regulating CF contracts with logging companies. The FDA appears to be approving logging agreements without due diligence and, in some cases, in violation of the regulations that govern them. Community members lack sufficient information about CFMA applications and contracts with logging companies, leaving them unable to make informed decisions about the terms of these contracts. CFMPs are essential mechanisms to guide sustainable production of forest products, however FIFES has yet to produce any CFMPs.

CFs are negotiating directly with logging companies without waiting for FIFES management plans to be prepared. Consequently, it appears likely that logging contracts will fail to provide mechanisms for silviculture, low-impact logging, and forest management practices that will protect CFs' long-term sustainability. At the same time, the CFs are unprepared to manage the potential income from timber sales to logging companies, and disagreement over the management of funds is likely to weaken CF governance.

Based on these findings, the evaluation concludes that FIFES' current capacity building and technical assistance efforts to the FDA, FTI, and CFMBs will not achieve FIFES' intended governance, biodiversity monitoring, or forest enterprise development results. It is unlikely that FIFES will create sustainable models for CF in Liberia if it does not return to the original focus described in the Cooperative Agreement on establishing CFs and forest enterprises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Progress: To achieve FIFES' intended results, the evaluation recommends: (1) Concentrating on improving the management of CFs as business enterprises; (2) Quickly completing simple, low-cost, practical, effective, and locally prepared forest management plans; (3) Designing and implementing a forestry training program specifically for community women and youth; (4) Financing the hiring of forestry technicians to work in CFs; and (5) Revising FIFES' institutional and administrative arrangements so that it can provide timely, sufficient, and effective administrative support to community forestry field activities.

Effectiveness and Efficiency: To achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency, the evaluation recommends: (1) Concentrating support on improving CF governance to ensure transparent, efficient, effective, and accountable management of CF funds, especially those received from timber sales to logging companies; (2) Concentrating technical assistance on establishing and improving agroforestry and forestry practices within the CFs; and (3) Establishing measurable targets for community forestry contributions to biodiversity conservation based on the specific threats identified in each CF.

Relevance: To increase FIFES' relevance to Liberian forestry institutions and members of CFs, the evaluation recommends: (1) Establishing viable, self-financing, sustainable CFs to serve as models for Liberian forestry; and (2) Linking the forests to Liberia's Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) for legal logging.

Sustainability: The evaluation recommends that FIFES achieve sustainability of the eleven CFs by: (1) Reorienting FIFES to the establishment of model CF enterprises; (2) Assisting the model CFs in becoming financially self-sustainable through the production of profitable forest products; (3) Assisting CFs in directing profits toward sustainable forest management and improvements in the welfare of community members; and (3) Increasing the CFs' contribution to overall the conservation of biodiversity in the overall surrounding landscape by assisting them in maintaining, protecting, and enhancing their own biodiversity.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Liberia contains most of the remaining Guinean forests in the West African Biodiversity Hotspot.¹ This forest not only harbors extremely high levels of biodiversity but also provides goods and services essential for the welfare and livelihoods of Liberia's poorest rural people. Where rural communities in Liberia had formerly owned, managed, and protected Liberia's inland forestland, in 1957, Liberia's social and economic elite changed the legal status of inland forestland to permit them to expropriate its timber resources for their own financial benefit.² The subsequent rural poverty and unrest contributed to Liberia's 1989–2003 civil war, with timber sales financing much of the fighting.³

Since 2003, the Government of Liberia (GOL), assisted by Liberian civil society organizations (CSOs) and international institutions, has changed its official policies to balance commercial logging with conservation and community forestry in what is referred to as the "Three Cs Approach." USAID and the U.S. Forest Service have supported the GOL in implementing this change in forest policy through a series of forestry interventions. USAID/Liberia funded the *Land Rights and Community Forestry Program* (LRCFP) between 2007 and 2011, the *Liberia Forestry Support Program* (LFSP) between 2011 and 2012, and the *People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources Program* (PROSPER) between 2012 and 2017. These programs have helped strengthen the FDA's ability to promote community forestry and have created eleven CFs in Nimba and Grand Bassa counties.

Nonetheless, unsound commercial logging practices, clearing of forest land for agriculture, and over-hunting of wildlife continue to threaten the biodiversity of much of Liberia's forest and its contribution to the welfare of its people. Continuing its assistance in helping Liberia reduce these biodiversity threats, USAID/Liberia designed and financed the FIFES activity.

ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

FIFES is a five-year (November 6, 2015–November 5, 2020) Cooperative Agreement with a total estimated cost of \$22,290,239. FIFES is implemented by ACDI/VOCA and sub-grantees Pact and CIFOR.

FIFES is intended to build on previous USG funding in Liberia's forestry sector to address the primary drivers of deforestation and loss of biodiversity in eleven authorized CFs in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. FIFES contributes to the achievement of the Intermediate Result (IR) 2.2 of the USAID/Liberia 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Results Framework: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably and to this IR's two sub-IRS: IR 2.2.1 Forest Management Improved and IR 2.2.2 Sustainable Forest-based Enterprises Strengthened (see Results Framework in Annex D).

The FIFES activity was planned to produce three results:⁴

- *Result 1. Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Developed and Strengthened:* (1) Provides farmers with technical assistance to improve their production of pepper, plantain, cocoa, groundnut, and cowpeas; and (2) Prepares CF business plans. Result 1 is intended to stabilize agricultural production on existing farmland, thereby reducing the extent of slash-and-burn agriculture that eliminates or degrades natural forest and the biodiversity it harbors.

¹ Foster, Pat, et al., 2018. Tropical Forest and Biodiversity Analysis (Draft).

² USAID, 2018, Statement of Work for Performance Evaluation of the FIFES Activity.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- *Result 2. Community Forest Management Improved:* (1) Assists communities in preparing Community Forest Management Agreements and Plans (CFMA/Ps) and business plans; (2) Provides capacity building in forest governance to CFMBs, CAs, and ECs; (3) Increases the capacity of CFs to make forest inventories, monitor forest biodiversity and locate and maintain forest boundaries; and (4) Increases the capacity of the FDA to support and regulate CFs.
- *Result 3. Cross-Cutting Gender and Youth: Improved Stakeholder Engagement for Co-Management:* (1) Increases the knowledge and skills of women and youth with livelihoods in forest landscapes; and (2) Incorporates gender and youth issues into the other two FIFES results.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide USAID/Liberia with a sound basis for (1) adjusting FIFES' technical approach and/or implementation practices to more effectively and efficiently achieve its planned results; (2) linking FIFES closely to the achievement of biodiversity conservation; and (3) determining priorities for USAID/Liberia investments in forest management.

The primary audience for the evaluation are USAID/Liberia, the IP, and the FDA. The secondary audience are USAID/Washington's Africa and pillar bureaus who backstop USAID/Liberia's natural resource portfolio, as well as other donors and organizations working in similar development contexts.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation focused on the following specific questions:

1. **Progress:** To what extent has progress been made in achieving the results under FIFES?
 - How have youth and women benefited?
 - Are the appropriate technical skills and support available and applied to achieve results?
2. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Which approaches have been most effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES? Which approaches have been the least effective and efficient, and why?
 - Specifically, for enterprise development:
 - 0 Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?
 - 0 What methods of connecting sellers and buyers are most effective in the long run to increase income from forest-based enterprises?
 - 0 Is there an improved enabling environment for agroforest-based business enterprises? If so, is it influencing farmers' abilities to advance their enterprises?
3. **Relevance:** To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?
4. **Sustainability:** To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level CF management groups)?
 - Specifically, for FDA, consider due diligence of proposed Social Agreements of other co-managed agreements with CFs.
 - To what extent are financial sustainability arrangements being built into CF management structures to encourage full consideration of environmental factors in development of the CFMP?

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The evaluation was conducted using a qualitative evaluation methodology that included:

- Review of documentation (Annex A: References);
- Ninety-four key informant interviews (KIIs);
- Twenty focus group discussions (FGDs) with men, women and youth; and
- Field observations (FOs) on farms and within CFs.

Opportunities to discuss the evaluation methodology and preliminary findings with USAID included in-brief and out-brief meetings. An Africa Bureau technical backstop also accompanied the team during part of its field work and participated in field interviews, FOs, and discussions of preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Desk Review

The evaluation methodology was designed to respond to the evaluation questions. The background data provided by USAID/Liberia were reviewed to determine what further data would be required to establish sufficient pertinent, reliable, current, and representative data to answer the evaluation questions. The review of documents and data included FIFES' reports and deliverables; relevant laws and regulations pertinent to community forestry in Liberia; key documents provided by KIs and FGs, including CFMPs, by-laws, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs); and background reports and research documents.

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

A sampling plan was prepared for obtaining data from KIs, FGDs, and FOs. To ensure a geographically representative sample from the eleven CFs (located in northern Nimba, southern Nimba, and Grand Bassa counties) in which FIFES is being implemented, two CFs were selected in each of the three regions. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select two forests in each region. USAID/Liberia and FIFES staff were asked to identify which CFs they considered to be “most successful” and “least successful” in each of the three regions to be chosen for sampling; all staff chose the same CFs. Two communities associated with each of these CFs were selected, one within or close to the forest, and one more distant from the forest. For logistical reasons, some adjustments were made to the sample of communities while in the field. Table 1 indicates the CFs and communities that were initially selected (see limitations section for update).

Table 1: Selection of Sample Community Forests and Communities

Region	Community Forest and Communities	
	Most Successful	Least Successful
Northern Nimba	Zor CF 1. Sehtontuo 2. Zor-Tapa	Sehyi CF 1. Sehyi-Geh 2. Mankinto
Southern Nimba	Gbear-Gblor CF 1. Kwipea Village (modified to Yeekor Village) 2. Yriah Town	Gblor CF 1. Gangay Hill 2. Bahblee Town
Grand Bassa	Barconnie CF 1. Kono Town 2. Sarwhein	Matro CF 1. Korjuah 2. Keyah

The categories of potential KIs (shown in Table 2) were established and then divided into “implementors,” “enablers,” and “beneficiaries.” The potential implementor and enabler KIs were in either Monrovia or in FIFES’ field sites in northern and southern Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Annex C: Evaluation Methods and Limitations provides maps indicating the location of the six CFs where field data was collected.

The Monrovia implementing KIs were selected because they are directly involved in implementing FIFES. The Monrovia enabling KIs were selected for their knowledge and experience related to FIFES’ objectives and activities. The field implementing KIs were selected because they are working for FIFES as extension agents or as office heads and employees. The field enabling KIs were selected for their knowledge and experience. The beneficiary KIs were all located at FIFES field sites and were all associated with a community that is part of one of the six CFs that had been selected for sampling and were able to attend the meetings in each of the communities organized by FIFES field staff. In each community, the team attempted to interview two CA members and, if they were present, members of the CF’s CFMB and EC. When present, women members of these governance bodies were preferentially selected for KIs.

FGDs were organized only outside of Monrovia. They were organized to include only men, only women, or only youth. All the participants in FGDs were FIFES beneficiaries.

Table 2 indicates the categories of KIs, the number of KIs in each category, and whether the KIs are within or outside of Monrovia.

Table 2: Categories and Numbers of Key Informants

Categories of Key Informants/ Focus Group Discussion Participants	Number	
	Key Informants	Focus Groups
Monrovia Level	13	0
Implementers	5	0
USAID/Liberia	2	0
FIFES Central Staff	3	0
Enablers	8	0
FDA Central Staff	1	0
Educational & Research Institutions	2	0
Environmental & Community Rights CSOs	3	0
International Development Institutions	2	0
Field Level	81	20
Implementers	12	0
FIFES Field Staff	12	0
Enablers	5	5
FDA Field Staff	2	0
Other Local Government Authorities	3	0
Beneficiaries	64	20
Women Community Members	4	9
Youth Community Members	0	4
Men Community Members	8	7
CF Governance body members	24	0
Forest Industry	3	0
Agroforestry Producers	15	0
WORTH Members	10	0
TOTAL	94	20

Interview guides were prepared for the implementers, beneficiaries and enabling categories of KIs, as well as the FGs (see Annex B, Interview Guides). KIs were disaggregated by category (beneficiary, enabler or implementer) gender, (63 men; 31 women total) age group (youth or adult), occupation and/or position and association with FIFES.

KIs were held in each community with two representatives of CF governance bodies,⁵ including one female member; traditional and community leaders; local GOL officials and FIFES field staff. Within each community, the team also held FGs, each with six to ten participants, who were the available participants in each community. Separate FGs were held with men, women, and youth. FG and KII participants were informed about the objective and voluntary nature of the interview, assured of anonymity, and informed that their responses would be generalized and not attributable to any specific individuals.

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were recorded and analyzed as follows:

- **Data Taking:** Interview notes were taken in Microsoft Word and stored in separate files in a SharePoint database.
- **Daily Reviews:** Data were reviewed at the end of each day to identify preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Triangulation and Findings Matrix:** The team used the triangulation and findings matrix to identify evaluation themes that emerged from the data. Themes stated as preliminary findings were listed in the first column of a triangulation table, with supporting references in the same row in columns for documentary, KII, FGD, and FO data.
- **Reiteration:** Findings were reviewed iteratively during the data collection period.
- **Preliminary Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations Table:** This table was prepared through group discussions at the end of each week during the field data collection phase.

The KI and FG interview guides include specific questions related to the gender-differentiated roles of men, women and youth in CF management and in FIFES' activities. Data from KIs and FGs were collected, disaggregated and reported by male, female and youth and adult categories. These disaggregated data enabled the team to identify ways in which CF management and FIFES actions have or would affect men, women, and youth differently.

LIMITATIONS

Quantitative Data Largely Unavailable

The evaluation anticipated using quantitative data from FIFES reports on its eight standard and eleven custom indicators for the performance evaluation. However, LSA's recent Data Quality Assessment (DQA) of these data found them to be unreliable, a finding with which the team concurred upon spot-checking the data in FIFES' central and field offices.⁶ No other source of quantitative data on FIFES activities and results could be identified, and the evaluation lacked the sufficient time and logistical capabilities to collect its own.

Lack of Baseline Data

⁵ From the Community Forest Management Board (CFMB) and the Community Assembly (CA).

⁶ For example, the majority of field data held at the FIFES head office in Monrovia were being stored on loose leaf paper in plastic bags and indicator data varied between the FIFES head office and FIFES regional offices.

The Cooperative Agreement's (A.11.3) M&E Plan states that “the system must be capable of generating baseline conditions at the start of the activity.”⁷ However, the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan mentions no baseline study; all starting inputs are labelled ‘zero’ or ‘N/A,’⁸ and the team could locate no other baseline report or data that indicated conditions at the start of the activity. FIFES was premised on the work of two prior USAID activities,⁹ which had brought eleven CFs to the point of being legally established.¹⁰ Because the evaluation was not mandated to recreate a baseline and would have lacked the time and means to do so, the team considered the baseline to be the legal recognition of the eleven CFs and have evaluated the progress and performance towards implementing CFs from this point.

Response Bias

Because KIs and participants in FGs may provide answers that are biased towards the answers they perceive the evaluators may prefer to hear or which may provide them with access to FIFES’ potential benefits, the potential for response bias was mitigated by: (1) triangulating data across multiple respondents and respondent types; (2) explaining to KIs and participants in FGs the need for frank, unbiased qualitative data; and (3) asking probing follow-on questions to confirm the knowledge and opinions of the KIs and FG participants. Based on the results of triangulation, the evaluation did not identify significant systematic response bias.

Limited Access to Key Informants

Access to KIs was limited because the field work took place during the March burning season, when communities are occupied in the preparation of fields for planting. Men and youth were frequently unavailable because they were working. KIs with community members were substituted for FGDs of the same gender when insufficient participants FGDs were available. All anticipated KIs with key stakeholders were obtained.

Access to Remote Locations

Access to three sample communities in southern Nimba—Yriah Town from Gbear-Gblor CF, and Gangay Hill and Wrorly (modified from Bahblee Town) from Gblor CF—became impossible when early heavy rains made some roads impassable. This limitation was overcome by arranging for informants from the communities to travel to the FIFES field office in Tapitta. Since FGs in these communities were not feasible, this was compensated by conducting more in-depth interviews with these KIs. Further access difficulties required data to be collected in Yeekor Village instead of Kwipea Village in Gbear-Gbor CF. The evaluation included Miller’s Town in Sehzuplay CF as an additional site to compensate for potential limitations in other site visits in southern Nimba. Miller’s Town was selected by FIFES field staff due to its proximity, ease of access, and availability of enterprise and WORTH groups.

⁷ USAID. 2015a. Cooperative Agreement No. AID-669-A-16-00002.

⁸ FIFES, 2016a. Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Plan.

⁹ (1) Land Rights and Community Forestry Program; (2) People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources.

Russell, Diane et al. 2011. Final Evaluation of the Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP).

¹⁰ According to knowledgeable KIs who were involved in the development of the design, the purpose of FIFES was originally to build on the legally established CFs to enable them to begin implementing community forest management.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: PROGRESS

To what extent has progress been made in achieving the results under FIFES?

Findings

This evaluation measures the progress toward the achievement of the three result areas as described in the FIFES activity's SOW.

Result 1: Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Developed and Strengthened

FIFES was conceived as a CF management activity. The SOW for the Cooperative Agreement between USAID/Liberia and ACDI/VOCA describes an activity intended to follow on the work of LRCFP and PROSPER in establishing CFs in Liberia. FIFES was designed to use forest-based enterprises to benefit the forest communities, thereby achieving financially and ecologically viable CFs and environmental sustainability.¹¹ KIs who worked on PROSPER and participated in FIFES' design confirmed that FIFES was originally intended to be a community forestry activity.

FIFES selected six specific agricultural crop value chains to receive assistance. To help stabilize agricultural production on existing farmland, FIFES selected six commodity value chains based on prior USAID value-chain studies: cocoa, oil palm, pepper, peanuts, plantains, and honey. A consulting company, Making Enterprises, subsequently prepared a value-chain analysis for these products to develop a detailed approach for each commodity.¹² None of these are products of forests or of agroforestry systems.

Data on crop yields and farmer income are lacking. It is important to note that FIFES could not provide quantitative data on the baseline or the current household incomes or crop yields of farmers in its Enterprise Groups (EGs). It was not possible, therefore, to compare current crop yields or cash incomes with the status on those indicators either before the establishment of the CFs or before FIFES had begun.¹³ KIs and FGDs also provided no such quantitative data because farmer KIs said they do not keep quantitative records of their crop production or their cash incomes.

Technical assistance has benefitted farmers. All farmer KIs said they joined the EG to better learn production practices for the selected FIFES crops. Over eighty percent of the KI farmers said that FIFES technical assistance taught them how to produce new crops, rehabilitate old crops, or improve the yield of their existing crops.

Further training is needed to improve production. All farmers said that they need further training and advice about crop production techniques. This finding was corroborated by FOs, where it was apparent that the farmers had not been trained in key areas relating to sustainable agroforestry and agricultural production for infertile soils.

Crop yields on permanent plots are less than from slash-and-burn agriculture. Eighty percent of the community KIs said crop yields on their permanent plots outside the CFs are less productive than their previous slash-and-burn crops within the CFs. KIs and FGs consistently attributed this reduced productivity to the less productive soils on permanent plots compared to the temporary slash-and-burn

¹¹ USAID. 2015a Cooperative Agreement.

¹² Making Enterprises. 2017. Value Chain Gap Analysis of Target Agricultural Product Value Chains.

¹³ LSA. 2017. Data Quality Assessment Report for FIFES.

plots, but the shortcomings in productivity may at least be partially attributable to the aforementioned knowledge gaps in production.

EG farmers have reliable markets for their products. Making Enterprises' value-chain analysis for FIFES' six agricultural crops states their "markets are limited and many producers sometimes tussle over customers."¹⁴ However, eighty percent of the farmer KIs said that they did not join the EGs to improve their access to markets, since they can generally easily sell all six of FIFES' priority agricultural products from their farms or in local markets.

Restricted access to the CFs has degraded livelihoods. All community KIs said that they had formerly obtained products important to their livelihoods from within the CFs.¹⁵ Community KIs also mentioned that the CFMBs had prohibited them from harvesting cacao and plantain from their farms within the CFs, thereby reducing their cash income and food supplies.¹⁶ Many women KIs complained that restrictions on the extraction of forest products had reduced their cash incomes and their supplies of staple foods—especially cassava and upland rice—and that they had to buy more food and lacked money to pay school fees.

FIFES has not assisted forest product-based enterprises. The FIFES FY 2016 Annual Report says that FIFES had laid the "foundation for exploring opportunities in sustainable timber extraction", identified "...promising opportunities in timber-based value chains," and "scheduled the field visit of ACDI/VOCA's wood-based expert to identify promising opportunities in timber-based value chains."¹⁷ Although the Annual Report says that ACDI/VOCA "selected priority farm/forest value chains," those value chains, in fact, were all for non-forest products. The FIFES Draft FY 2017 Annual Report says that FIFES will help to start new timber and non-timber forest product (NTFP) EGs.¹⁸ None of the KIs or FGDs, however, referred to plans to start new timber or NTFP EGs.

Result 2. Community Forest Management Improved

Members of CFMBs know little about forest management. The FIFES FY 2017 Annual Report says that "training emphasized...community forest management skills" but provides no data on the number, length, or content of these forest management training events.¹⁹ A few CFMB KIs were able to make general statements about forest management, such as, "We take some and leave some for future generations." However, KI and FGD data consistently indicate that the members of the CFMBs have only rudimentary understanding of such standard forest management practices as forest inventory and zoning, silvics and silviculture, rotation ages, or low-impact logging.

CF members are anxious to learn forestry practices. Data from KIs and FGDs consistently indicates that members of the CFMBs, forest guards, and community members want to learn about

¹⁴ Making Enterprises. 2017. Value Chain Gap Analysis of Target Agricultural Product Value Chains.

¹⁵ KIs mentioned: staple crops (upland rice, cassava, plantain), cash crops (cocoa, coffee), wild food (beans, snails, fish, walnuts), medicinal plants, spices, fibers (thatch, rattan), and bushmeat.

¹⁶ Stocking 2003. Tropical Soils and Food Security: The Next 50 Years. Stocking notes that food grown on infertile soil is not as nutritious as food grown on fertile soil. The nutritional value of food grown on the less fertile soils of permanent plots may, therefore, be less than the food grown in slash-and-burn agriculture. This aspect of the shift from shifting to permanent agriculture, however, is not mentioned in any FIFES document and the team did not investigate it.

¹⁷ The FIFES FY 2016 Annual Report says that FIFES began value-chain assessments of timber and selected NTFPs, developed tools for obtaining data about nine forest-product based value chains, and produced a strategy assisting NTFP value chains.

¹⁸ FIFES. 2017. Draft FY 2017 Annual Report.

¹⁹ The discussion of EG 3.1 in the FIFES Draft FY 2017 Annual Report mentions only farmer-to-farmer agricultural training events.

forestry. Most of them expected that FIFES would increase their knowledge of forestry practices. One forest guard, for example, said:

“FIFES does not know about the forest. They are only focusing on their agriculture work... For us, the forest guards, they don’t even know if we are in the forest or how our work is coming along... We... need technical training in areas like biomonitoring and knowing the scientific names for the trees.”

Forest inventories and management plans have not been completed for any of the eleven CFs. The FY 2017 Draft Annual Report says that FIFES partially completed inventories in two privately owned forests but refers to no completed forest inventories or forest management plans.²⁰ KIs indicated that FIFES has not yet begun any forest inventory in CFs or produced any forest management plans. Data were unavailable on what forest inventory methodology FIFES intends to use or when the forest inventories will be completed.²¹ Data were also unavailable on how and when CIFOR intends to implement biodiversity monitoring within the CFs.

A baseline for satellite image monitoring of biodiversity has been established. According to a KI, the baseline for the location and condition of the eleven CFs was established at FIFES’ inception using 2014 satellite imagery. In April 2018, CIFOR submitted a geospatial assessment based on these images of forest fragmentation in the CFs. According to a KI, in 2018 and 2020, FIFES will use free satellite image data and field surveys to determine changes from the baseline in forest fragmentation within the CFs.

FIFES plans to use the RAPELD methodology for collecting field data on biodiversity in the CFs. CIFOR provided no information on when and how it intends to implement the biomonitoring that is mentioned in the FIFES Draft FY 2017 Annual Report. According to a KI, however, CIFOR is adapting the RAPELD methodology for biomonitoring for use in the CFs. RAPELD was developed for long-term ecological studies conceived as research projects implemented by local people and institutions.²²

Result 3. Cross-Cutting Gender and Youth

Women are participating marginally in CF decision-making processes. CFMB KIs consistently indicated that the communities have adhered to the regulation of the Community Rights Law that requires each CFMB to have at least one female member. However, their ability to influence decision-making regarding the CFs requires not only membership in the CFMBs, but the knowledge and access to information that would enable them to influence CFMB decisions. No FIFES quantitative indicator tracks the participation of women in the eleven CFs’ decision-making processes, so no quantitative data on their participation were available. Seventy percent of those in the women FGDs said they felt less capable than men to speak out on governance issues, particularly in negotiations with logging companies, establishing CFMPs, or what would be done with income generated from CF land. That male leaders may sometimes intimidate women’s participation in CF decision-making was indicated by how women participating in a FGD noticeably limited their input when the town chief entered the room.

Youth are participating marginally in decision-making about the CFs. Though several of the CFMB KIs were youth, no quantitative data were available on how many youth are members of the CF governance bodies (CAs, ECs, CFMBs) since no FIFES indicator tracks that variable. Qualitative data from FGDs indicate that youth know less about CF management compared to non-youth men. The qualitative data also indicate that youth may have more access than women to information about the CFs, possibly because forest guards are mostly male youth. Data from the youth FGDs indicate that when they are

²⁰ FIFES. 2017. Draft FY 2017 Annual Report.

²¹ CIFOR did not provide the team with any information on its forest inventory methodology.

²² Magnusson et al. 2005, RAPELD: A Modification of the Gentry Method for Biodiversity Survey in Long-Term Ecological Research Sites.

marginalized from decision-making about the CFs, it may be attributable to their purposeful exclusion by community elders or traditional leaders. One male FGD participant commented, “The interests of the youth are not being represented.” He gave the example that in his community, the town chief had personally chosen the two Community Assembly representatives, rather than them being elected, as the Community Rights Law stipulates.

FIFES is not clearly differentiating gender differences in forest use. Social norms and traditions shape the different uses men and women make of forest products, so changes in access to forest resources affect men and women differently.²³ KI data indicated that women are primarily responsible for gathering wood and non-wood forest products to meet household requirements for food, energy, and traditional medicines and for sale for cash.²⁴ One woman in a FG said:

“Women used to use the forest. The men felled the trees, and the women went to plant pepper, rice, and aloe. The men would enter in the same forest and get animals, and women would get firewood.”

The FIFES Draft Gender and Youth Strategy and the FIFES FY 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports do not refer to these different uses of the CFs by men and women. Also, no data were available about the methodology that FIFES intends to use to prepare CF forest management plans and how the plans will treat gender differences in forest use.

Benefits for Youth and Women

WORTH groups have effectively assisted women in teaching good financial practices. WORTH groups are a group of predominantly women who save money together and enable low-income women to access credit. The members can take loans for terms of a year or six months with fifteen to twenty percent annual interest. Members share the interest payments upon repayment and are taught basic literacy, record-keeping, and business management.²⁵ All WORTH group KIs appreciated the formality of the WORTH saving model, with its recording of transactions and signatures of the savers and administrators, and the sense of control its training has given them over their household expenses. They all appreciated the literacy classes. The WORTH group KIs unanimously said WORTH groups helped them to expand or start farming and trading enterprises and pay school, health, and home improvement expenses.

Technical Skills and Support

No documents were available that indicate for which of FIFES’ planned results the International Center for Forestry Research (CIFOR) is primarily responsible, and CIFOR did not respond to requests for information about its activities within FIFES. KIs, however, indicated that CIFOR is preparing the methodologies for the forest inventory and biomonitoring of the eleven CFs. At present, none of the eleven CFs have an inventory or biomonitoring for a forest management plan.

EG farmers are not using techniques to maintain soil fertility in permanent agricultural plots. Slash-and-burn agriculture is a technique to increase soil fertility temporarily.²⁶ By contrast, the permanent, non-migratory agriculture that FIFES promotes requires that farmers adopt agroforestry systems, mulching, and cover crops to maintain soil fertility.²⁷ FOs confirmed that the upland sites where FIFES is

²³ Agarwal, 2009; Rule-making in community forestry institutions: The difference women make; and Finlay, 2015 Addressing Customary Land Rights for Women.

²⁴ Evidence from 86 percent of FGDs held with women.

²⁵ FIFES 2016b. FY 2016 Annual Report.

²⁶ Atangan, A. et al. Tropical Agroforestry. 2014.

²⁷ That slash-and-burn agriculture also is a technique for combating weeds and crop pest is also well-known. However, no data were collected from EG KIs about their pest and weed problems.

encouraging farmers to establish permanent agriculture typically have infertile soils and are likely to become unproductive for short-cycle agricultural crops after one or two cycles unless farmers use techniques to maintain soil fertility. The FIFES extension agents, however, could not explain what soil fertility techniques they are teaching the EG farmers, nor show that these techniques are being used on FIFES demonstration agricultural plots. FOs at one EG training site, for example, showed that FIFES is recommending intercropping of plantains with pineapples and pepper, but trees were not part of this agricultural system. Indeed, all the natural trees had been felled and burned. Only a quarter of the FIFES extension agent KIs said the training they give EG farmers includes techniques to conserve or increase soil fertility.

Pact lacks the skills and knowledge required to strengthen CFMBs' ability to negotiate logging agreements. In one of the two FIFES-assisted CFs that had already signed a CFMA with a logging company, beneficiary KIs stressed they need support from FIFES to negotiate logging agreements, but neither its reports nor interviews with Pact's staff give any indication it could ever have provided support for negotiating logging agreements.²⁸ Pact KIs seemed unaware that FDA and logging companies are using CFs to bypass logging regulations and gain access to timber.²⁹ CFMB KIs who had participated in Pact workshops had not found them useful for negotiating logging agreements, and consequently, they had obtained advice from an ex-PROSPER staff member. These KIs also referred to local CSOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that had assisted other CFs in negotiating logging and revenue-sharing agreements. Furthermore, KIs knowledgeable about Liberian forestry did not know that Pact has been working on CF governance in Liberia.

Pact may lack the necessary skills to strengthen CFMBs' ability in establishing fair, feasible financial mechanisms. Pact KIs indicated that strengthening CFMBs' ability to find non-FIFES funding is in Pact's SOW, but that strengthening their ability to manage funds is not. Perhaps for this reason, Pact KIs were unable to articulate a feasible mechanism for sharing the benefits of CF revenues fairly and transparently, even though benefit-sharing of revenues is central to CF governance.³⁰ No evidence indicates that Pact has the skills to assist CFMBs in managing funds, and in the absence of fair, feasible, and transparent mechanisms, the mismanagement, exploitation, and corruption of CF revenues are almost certain to occur.

Examples of fair, feasible, financial benefit-sharing procedures exist in Liberia. The experience of financial benefit-sharing procedures for commercial logging activities in timber sales contracts (TSCs) and forest management contracts (FMCs) offers lessons for CFs.³¹ Community Forest Development Committees (CFDCs), unlike CFMBs, must adhere to strict procedures to use funds they receive from land rental fees and timber sales. Logging companies pay these to the national government, which then deposits them into a trust fund that the National Benefit Sharing Board controls and manages. Communities can access these funds only through competitive bidding, which their governance bodies (CFDCs) manage. The CFDCs have ten elected members, all community members, with whom the CFDCs consult to identify their needs, keep communities informed on what benefits are owed, and oversee the preparation of project proposals. Pact KIs did not indicate that they had integrated lessons learned from other forest resource governance structures to guide CFMBs and CFs.

Pact has not established a timeline for CFMB to achieve specific, measurable targets for governing capacity. CFMBs must transparently and accountably manage multiple complex CF activities

²⁸ Pact and FIFES staff informed the team that there were Pact field staff until December 2017.

²⁹ Pact KIs also seemed unaware of the Private Use Permit scandal, which has recently so roiled Liberian forestry.

³⁰ The potential dangers to governance when strong financial mechanisms do not exist were evident in the Matro CF. There accusations of mismanagement of a small amount of funds stalled CFMB activities for three months, caused the suspension of the CFMB members, and required county, elected representative and the paramount to intervene.

³¹ See more: <https://loggingoff.info/organisations/cs-ifm/> and https://www.sdiliberia.org/publications_grid

through structures unlike any of those at the community level. Pact's role in FIFES is to assist the CFMB to achieve this governing capacity. The evaluation did not find the Community Performance Indexes that Pact uses to assess the capacity of the CFMBs increased understanding of how capably the CF's governance bodies (CA, EC, CFMB) can resolve urgent problems that CFs are facing, such as lack of funding and pressure to enter into logging contracts. First, these measures of governance capabilities are self-assessments by members of the CFMBs of their own capabilities. Although perhaps useful for other purposes, they do not provide an objective measure of each CFMB's strengths and weakness. Second, no Pact document sets measurable targets for levels of governance capacity that the CFs could feasibly achieve by the time FIFES' ends, nor do they establish timelines and milestones for each CF to achieve those governance targets.³²

Administrative problems limit FIFES' ability to provide support for field activities. FIFES' administration suffers from five interrelated problems:

- **Personnel changes:** One change in Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, and frequent changes in its other staff (in late 2017 FIFES lost its Biodiversity Advisor, Livelihood Advisor, and the Deputy Chief of Party) have disrupted its administration. More recently, the Communications Director accepted a scholarship to attend a master's degree program.
- **Budget uncertainty and cuts:** In 2017, FIFES' budget was cut from about \$23 to \$16 million, making it necessary to reduce the number of administrative and technical personnel and to focus on the eleven existing CFs, rather than expand to seventeen CFs.
- **Over-centralization:** FIFES field staff consistently noted that FIFES' administration is so centralized that it has become difficult for its field staff to resolve field problems quickly and efficiently. They said, for example, that they have been unable to obtain new tires for the extension agents' motorcycles. A chairperson of an EG said that FIFES provided plantain suckers so late in the planting season that many of them grew poorly or died when planted.
- **Field under-staffing:** All FIFES extension agent KIs said that they intend to visit each EG farm once during each crop cycle, but that achieving that target is difficult since they may be responsible for as many as 90 EG members.
- **Insufficient vehicles and equipment:** FIFES field staff KIs and FOs indicated that the FIFES field staff are operating with insufficient trucks, motorcycles, and field equipment

Unreliable M&E: FIFES has not established an effective M&E system, so it has been unable to track its activities accurately or to report reliably on its indicators to USAID/Liberia.³³

FIFES has limited interactions with other forestry projects and institutions. FIFES is not sharing its experiences with, or learning from, other forestry activities currently being implemented in Liberia. KIs and documents, for example, indicate that the VPA is strongly influencing forestry in Liberia.³⁴ The VPA is a comprehensive governance and verifying system to control, verify, and license legal timber. No evidence, however, indicated that FIFES has coordinated or learned from VPA or taken actions to integrate the eleven CFs into the VPA. Several KIs suggested that if the CFs were to be integrated into the VPA, they would be required to adhere to Liberia's regulations that mandate the use of low-impact logging practices.

Conclusions

³² They do not indicate the functional literacy rates of CFMBs.

³³ LSA, 2017, 2018 FIFES Data Quality Assessments.

³⁴ USAID. 2015a. Cooperative Agreement. The cooperative agreement says, "We will also coordinate activities to dovetail with PROSPER, and take up where PROSPER leaves off. The ACDI-VOCA consortium will regularly meet with staff of other projects, and participate in government, FDA, civil society, and donor forums and roundtables."

FIFES has made little progress in achieving Result 1, Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Developed and Strengthened. FIFES has not developed and strengthened forest-based enterprises. It has prepared no CFMPs or organized EGs to produce and market products from the CFs. Instead, FIFES has considered “business enterprises” to be farms growing agricultural products outside the CFs. Though it has provided farmers organized in EGs some technical assistance to improve their production of agricultural crops, this assistance has not given farmers proven, reliable techniques—such as agroforestry systems—that would enable them to maintain soil fertility and, therefore, productivity on the infertile, upland soils where these crops are grown. Therefore, FIFES’ focus on agricultural crops is unlikely to stabilize agricultural production on existing farmland. Prohibiting access to the CFs for slash-and-burn cultivation of upland rice and cassava and extraction of forest products has likely degraded the livelihoods of the people who own the CFs by reducing their supply of staple foods, reducing their cash incomes, and exposing them to fluctuations in market prices for cash crops.

FIFES has made little progress in accomplishing Result 2, CF Management Improved. Since FIFES has undertaken no actions to assist the eleven CFs in implementing CFMPs, no feasible plans for conserving the CFs’ biodiversity have been accordingly produced. Though FIFES has given CFMBs, CAs, and ECs opportunities to meet, converse, and plan, little has been done to increase the CFs’ governing bodies’ knowledge in the technical, financial, and business aspects of forest management. Because FIFES also has not enabled the CFMBs to effectively negotiate contracts with logging companies, the logging agreements they agree to are unlikely to provide for fair prices, transparent payment mechanisms, performance bonds, or technically sound logging and silvicultural practices. Furthermore, FIFES has not increased the capacity of the CFs to maintain boundary lines, conduct forest inventories, zone the forest for different uses, monitor forest biodiversity, or supervise extractive operations such as logging. Although FIFES prepared an analysis of the barriers within the FDA that prevent it from effectively regulating and supporting CFs, FIFES does not encompass measures to overcome those barriers.

FIFES has made marginal progress in Result 3, Cross-Cutting and Youth: Improved Stakeholder Engagement for Co-Management. FIFES has provided partial financial support for the costs of holding meetings of the CAs, CFMBs, and ECs, thereby helping to maintain stakeholder engagement for management of CFs. Though FIFES’ governance and agricultural training activities have included women and youth, women and youth still know less than men about the various regulatory requirements that govern the CFs and have little role in negotiating the terms of the agreements with logging companies. No evidence indicated that FIFES actions have succeeded in increasing the role of youth and women in making CF decisions. If CFs do receive funds from selling timber, it seems improbable that women and youth will be much involved in making decisions about how that money will be used.

The WORTH groups have been the principal benefit for women from FIFES. WORTH training for women has given them more confidence in managing their finances and starting new enterprises or expanding and improving their existing enterprises. WORTH groups, however, have had little or nothing to do with EGs and CFs. Women’s new capabilities, therefore, for planning expenditures and managing funds are not contributing to making “farm enterprises” or CFs more financially stable and viable. The WORTH groups may provide a model for expanding the credit available for initiating forest product-based CF enterprises.

FIFES has provided no specific benefits for youth. The findings do not indicate that FIFES has provided any specific benefits for youth. Though FIFES may have increased demand for their on-farm labor, it also may have restricted them from benefiting from slash-and-burn agriculture or extraction of forest products from within the CFs.

FIFES has not provided sufficiently effective administrative support to its field staff for them to be able to achieve its planned field results. Its inability to provide such support is attributable to frequent changes in

personnel, an inaccurate M&E system, insufficient field staff to attend to all EG farmers, and over-centralization of decision-making. Reducing the number of CFs that FIFES assists has not resolved these administrative problems.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Which approaches have been most effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES?

Findings

Effective & Efficient Approaches

FIFES has been effective in helping to maintain the CF management bodies. FIFES has financed some of the costs of the meetings of the CAs, ECs, and CFMBs, thus giving them opportunities for them to stay engaged, meet, converse, plan, and learn more about their responsibilities. It has also partially financed training events. No quantitative data, however, were available to indicate the efficacy or efficiency of the training events.

Awareness messages have reached many members of the CFs. FIFES has signed contracts with four radio stations to air forest management messages, thereby raising awareness on the nine-step process to obtain CF status, promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management.³⁵ That beneficiary KIs consistently referred to “awareness” messages may indicate that these messages have reached many community members. Data were unavailable on the content of the radio awareness messages. The KIs generally mentioned them, however, in the context of prohibitions on entering the CFs, extracting their resources, or doing slash-and-burn agriculture within them. Since nearly all the KIs agreed that these activities within the CFs are so strictly prohibited, the messages may have been effective.³⁶ Quantitative data were unavailable to determine the extent to which people have stopped extracting products from the CFs.

CF management could improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity. The SOW for the USAID/Liberia-ACDI/VOCA Cooperative Agreement clearly indicates that USAID/Liberia intended FIFES to establish CFs that provide benefits to local communities and thereby encourage them to manage the CFs for both production of forest products and the conservation of biodiversity.³⁷ Experience from Mexico, Guatemala, and Cameroon provides persuasive evidence that managed CFs can provide both improved livelihoods and conservation of biodiversity.³⁸ The CFs which FIFES was intended to assist, could contribute to conservation of biodiversity by zoning off from logging habitats that are critical for endangered species and ecosystem functions, by implementing best management practices during extraction of forest products, and by supplying a sustained yield of forest products to help satisfy market demand.³⁹

FIFES’ CF management activities could adhere to USAID’s Biodiversity Code.⁴⁰ Documentary, KII, FGD, and FO data provide evidence that FIFES’ planned CF activities and forest-based enterprises

³⁵ FIFES 2017 Draft FY 2017 Annual Work Plan.

³⁶ There may have been response bias from KIs. However, data from FGDs corroborated this finding. Follow up questions and cross-checking questions were used to test participant responses.

³⁷ USAID. 2018. Statement of Work for Performance Evaluation of the FIFES Activity. It states, “Research on sustainable community forest systems elsewhere in Africa suggests that increasing the benefits local communities receive from such schemes plays an important role in the effectiveness and sustainability of community forest management.”

³⁸ Christian, Julia. No date. Lessons learned from community forests in Mexico and Guatemala to benefit community forest work in West and Central Africa; Stevens et al. 2014. Lessons Learned from Community Forests and Implications for REDD+ FCMC. Measuring the Influence of Community Tenure on Deforestation and Climate Change: Which Bundle of Rights Is Best.

³⁹ USAID. 2015b. Sector Environmental Guidelines – Forestry.

⁴⁰ USAID. 2017b. Biodiversity Code, Requirements of USAID Biodiversity Programs.

could adhere to the USAID Biodiversity Code if there were explicit biodiversity objectives in the CFMPs and the means to achieve them were defined, as required by Criterion 1. Because FIFES has not yet produced any forest management plans, no data on their content are available. However, in accordance with Criterion 2, CFMPs could identify the specific drivers and threats to biodiversity in the CF and specific ways to mitigate them through forest management and enterprises. The plans could conform to Criterion 3 by identifying and reserving from extractive activities zones of the forests that are critical for conserving biodiversity and by specifying the best forest management practices that will be used to conserve biodiversity.⁴¹ Monitoring of indicators of biodiversity, as Criterion 4 requires, could be conducted as part of the overall monitoring of the CF's conditions.⁴² FIFES undertook a theory of change (ToC) workshop in Monrovia in January 2018, where general threats and drivers were identified; however, specific threats and drivers for each CF were not identified.

Non-Effective, Non-Efficient Approaches

FIFES' current approach does not adhere to USAID's Biodiversity Code. FIFES' current approach of focusing on agricultural extension for cash crops does not have an explicit biodiversity objective. Instead, the approach explicitly seeks to conserve biodiversity as a positive externality from increased income through more profitable agricultural value chains. It does not, therefore, adhere to the code's Criterion 1. Though FIFES' ToC makes some general statements about the drivers and threats to biodiversity in Liberia, it does not indicate the drivers and threats in specific CFs, as required by Criterion 2. FIFES is not identifying specific biologically significant areas or how it will conserve them, and therefore, is not adhering to Criterion 3. FIFES also is not monitoring the indicators associated with an activity's ToC, as required by Criterion 4.

FIFES' current approach is not effective in increasing sustainable economic opportunities. FIFES' ToC is: "If key rural forest-based enterprises provide sustainable increased economic opportunities for farmers and forest-based communities, and the technical and management capacity of GOL institutions and communities on the periphery of CFs is enhanced, then deforestation and biodiversity loss will be reduced."⁴³ So far, FIFES' "key rural forest-based enterprises" are not "forest-based enterprises" but the EGs it has established for producers of agricultural products.⁴⁴

FIFES' Annual Reports indicate that it has not established any EGs for forest-based products (e.g., lumber, poles, rattan, medicinal plants, herbs, and spices).⁴⁵ Beneficiary KIs and FGDs indicate that FIFES has instead encouraged the CFMBs to prohibit extraction of these products from the CFs. No evidence from FIFES documents, KIs, FGDs, or FOs indicates that this approach to achieving FIFES' goal has been effective or efficient. Rather, evidence from a broad range of KIs and FGDs corroborated the finding that prohibiting use of the CFs has decreased economic opportunities for farmers and forest-based communities and a shortage of staple food crops, especially upland rice and cassava. This has created more need to purchase rather than grow these staple crops. Evidence from KIs and FGDs indicates farmers and forest-based communities are turning to logging contracts, which may be at least partially explained by the reduced production in staple crops. Documentary, KI, and FO evidence substantiates that logging, as currently

⁴¹ The management plans could also define ways to restore or augment biodiversity in the protection zone of the CFs.

⁴² The aspect of FIFES that would promote community forest management and forest-based enterprises also adheres to USAID Sector Environmental Guidelines for Forestry. They say that USAID's forestry projects should be small-scale, people-oriented and managed by individual or groups of smallholders, and promote traditional, small-scale forest industries, thereby maintaining forest health, diversity, and productivity" and enhancing the overall economic, social, and biological integrity of a much larger landscape.

⁴³ FIFES. 2017. Draft FY 2017 Annual Report.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid; FIFES 2016b Annual Report.

generally practiced in Liberia, will degrade their capacity to produce forest products and harbor biodiversity sustainably.

A direct result stemming from communities no longer being allowed to farm inside the CF is the unequal gendered access to productive farmland in the secondary forest. Data from KIs and FGs showed that the land allocated to men and women to farm on outside the CF were not of equal value, with women in some CFs being allocated swamp land and men being granted farmland that is of a higher elevation and more easily cultivated.

Revenue to Offset Illegal or Unsustainable Forest Use

The enterprises that FIFES has assisted are unlikely to have generated sufficient income to improve the livelihoods of the CF communities. Qualitative data indicate that people's incomes have declined overall because they no longer have access to forest resources. Nearly all community KIs said that they had been cultivating staple crops (upland rice and cassava), bitter ball, peppers, vegetables, and their cash crops (cocoa and coffee) within the CFs until doing so had been prohibited. They stated that since the start of FIFES, they no longer practice the "unsustainable" activities (i.e., slash-and-burn agriculture, pit-sawing, charcoal making, and hunting for bushmeat) within the CFs.⁴⁶ Nearly all of the beneficiary KIs said they lost an important source of cash and staple foods when they were prohibited from extracting forest resources or slash-and-burn agriculture within the CFs. A typical KI comment about the effect of losing access to forest products was:

"Since they drove us from the forest in 2015 and told us to stop making farms there, we no longer go in the forest. Really, since that time it has been rough for us...we are now planting rice in the swamp. We have only just started to plant the rice, so food has been hard for us."

FIFES did not have baseline data available regarding the income of the enterprise members or the degree to which income came from "illegal or unsustainable forest uses" prior to the intervention. Data on community members' current income was also unavailable. Quantitative data on whether the enterprises have offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest uses are therefore not available.

Connecting Buyers and Sellers

CFs could sell forest products through competitive bidding. FIFES design documents do not describe any weaknesses in or methods to improve the current method for connecting CFs with buyers of forest products. However, the Community Rights Law of 2017, as amended, gives communities the right to enter into commercial agreements with companies for logging or non-timber forest materials through CFMBs, who in turn may sell forest products through competitive bidding procedures. For CFMBs, competitive bidding provides several advantages. First, competition between potential buyers tends to make them offer prices that reflect the real commercial value of the product, thereby producing more income for the community. Second, competitive bidding gives the CFMB more leverage to build technical standards for logging operations (e.g., low-impact logging, road construction and maintenance, and silvicultural practices) into contracts. Third, competitive bidding gives the CFMB the opportunity to require that the winning bidder agree to post a performance bond, which the CFMB could redeem if a logger does not adhere to contract terms. Fourth, competitive bidding would reduce opportunities for corruption due to collusion between logging companies, FDA officials, and privileged CFMB members.

Functioning farm-to-market connections already exist. No KI or FG expressed the need for help in marketing their products. Standard agricultural marketing practices would require farmers to establish reliable, stable markets for the crops by ensuring that their quality, quantity, and reliability meet buyer

⁴⁶ FIFES documents do not clarify if slash-and-burn agriculture, pit-sawing and bushmeat hunting are unavoidably "unsustainable," or if they could be sustainable if practiced using better production techniques.

requirements. A standard way to reduce the risk to farmers from fluctuating market prices is to sell farm products at a fixed price before they are produced, a practice known as “forward contracts.” Documents, KIs, and FGDs, however, indicated that current marketing practices for agricultural produce are already well-established in CF areas. It therefore is unlikely that forward contracting would be feasible.⁴⁷

Enabling Environment

FIFES has marginally increased the availability of agricultural plants and seeds. All EG KIs said it is difficult for them to obtain high-quality plants and seeds. FIFES has helped a few EGs to obtain small amounts of cocoa, oil palm, and ground nut seeds and plants.⁴⁸ Data were unavailable to clarify if this plant material was of high-yielding varieties and what proportion of the overall need for high-quality plants FIFES has been able to satisfy.

Access to credit remains limited, small scale, at a very local level, and mostly to finance non-agricultural uses, e.g., education, home improvements, etc. There are no formal credit institutions in the area surrounding the CFs⁴⁹ and the closest credit institutions are in Ganta and Sanniquelle, in Nimba and in Buchanan, in Grand Bassa.⁵⁰ KIs, FGDs, and the 2017 FIFES Annual Report indicate, however, that WORTH groups have increased the small-scale availability of credit at a very local level.⁵¹

Road infrastructure remain unreliable. When properly controlled and built to high technical standards, good road access is essential for sustainable CFs because it enables management activities, reduces negative environmental impacts, and reduces logging costs, thereby increasing the value of timber.⁵² However, “the roads are mainly impassable during the rains and difficult to travel on at any time during the year,” according to the 2016 Making Enterprises report.⁵³ FOs in Grand Bassa and Nimba confirmed the poor condition of the roads and unreliability of electricity supplies.⁵⁴ FIFES was not designed to address infrastructure as it relates to the enabling environment, and these barriers remain and impediment to effective implementation.

Currently, Liberia’s forestry laws and regulations are not creating an enabling environment for CFs. The 2009 Forestry Law states that communities own and control CFs, and the intent of the Community Rights Law is to “empower communities to engage fully in the sustainable management of the forests of Liberia.”⁵⁵ Yet the Community Rights Law requires the FDA to regulate activities in these CFs⁵⁶ and the Forestry Law says that forty-five percent of the profits from logging must be paid to the national government.⁵⁷ With two contradictory mandates, KIs and documents made it clear that FDA is favoring its mandate to generate income for the national government over its mandate to empower communities.⁵⁸ A knowledgeable KI described this situation as follows:

“At present, the legal framework governing CFMAs does not encourage choice, and instead pushes communities towards contracting with logging companies. Notably, under Chapter 10 of the 2017 Community Rights Law

⁴⁷ Making Enterprises 2016, Value Chain Gap Analysis of Target Agricultural Product Value Chains; FIFES 2017, FY 2017 Draft Annual Report.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ FIFES, 2017, FY 2017 Draft Annual Report.

⁵⁰ Making Enterprises, 2015, Value Chain Gap Analysis of Target Agricultural Product Value Chains.

⁵¹ FIFES, 2017, FY 2017 Draft Annual Report.

⁵² USAID. 2015b. Sector Environmental Guidelines.

⁵³ Making Enterprises, 2016, Value Chain Gap Analysis of Target Agricultural Product Value Chain.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Kaba, 2017; PROSPER 2017 Community Forestry Facilitator’s Manual.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Guillen and Skedsmo, 2017; Mukpo, 2016.

⁵⁸ Mukpo, 2016.

Regulations, communities wishing to monetize their forests are required to follow Liberia's Ten Core Regulations, which focus overwhelmingly on the establishment of logging contracts and are not suited to the management of forests by communities."

Uncertainty about the proposed Land Rights Act has weakened the enabling institutional environment for community forestry. With a new Land Rights Act pending approval since 2012, the FDA has not been granting new logging concessions within national forest land classified for commercial logging. Logging companies and FDA have consequently been targeting CFs as alternative sources of logs and revenue.⁵⁹ A knowledgeable KI said the FDA's Community Forestry Department is vigorously helping communities to become authorized CFs and thereby qualify for a 15-year Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA), through whom communities can make agreements with logging companies. The KI explained that once the CFMA is signed the FDA Community Forestry Department transfers supervisory authority to the FDA's Commercial Logging Department. This department then assists logging companies to locate CFs with timber that they can exploit profitably, while encouraging those communities to sign logging agreements. In 2016, both Pact and the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) warned that FDA and the logging companies are collaborating to push the communities to sign agreements quickly. They noted that the Community Rights Law could thus become an instrument for worsening the enabling conditions for community forestry.⁶⁰ CFMB KIs corroborated this warning.

Conclusions

FIFES' most effective and efficient approach has been its assistance to the functioning of CFs. FIFES support may have helped to keep the CF governance structures functioning (e.g., CFMB, CE, CA) that PROSPER helped to establish in the eleven CFs. Data on the frequency, content, and results of meetings of the various CF governing bodies were unavailable. CFMB, ES, and CA KIs, however, conveyed the impression that FIFES has been providing some logistical and financial support for these meetings.

FIFES' livelihood approach has been marginally effective and efficient. FIFES' livelihoods approach is intended to stabilize agricultural production on existing farmland—thereby reducing the extent of slash-and-burn agriculture that eliminates or degrades natural forest and the biodiversity it harbors⁶¹—while also improving livelihoods through the production and sale of forest products. Though its agricultural extension and awareness messages have encouraged EG members to grow cash crops on permanent plots, it has not introduced effective technologies for maintaining soil productivity or increased production of staple crops and cash crops. FIFES' CF activities have aimed to keep people from extracting, rather than benefiting from, forest resources.

FIFES' biodiversity approach has been minimally effective or efficient. FIFES' current approach to biodiversity conservation does not adhere to USAID's Biodiversity Code. KI and FGD data consistently indicate that the introduction of CFs has degraded, rather than improved, the livelihoods of many community members. Though KI data indicated that community members understand the purpose of CF and are interested in implementing long-term CF management for a permanent flow of benefits, there is frustration among beneficiaries that they have not received any meaningful benefits. This is fueling interest in commercial timber extraction as an alternative pathway to receiving community development from the forest. KIs with CFMB members spoke of pressure from the wider community to sign contracts with third-party logging operators—including from the FDA and logging companies themselves—to provide community development and income through commercial logging. While there is an overarching pressure from the FDA and commercial logging interests in CFMAs, many of the communities are vulnerable to this pressure, especially since they do not yet have CFMPs. In the absence of effective alternative livelihood

⁵⁹ Kaba, 2017; Mukpo, 2016.

⁶⁰ Mukpo, 2016, Keeping the Promise: Protecting Forestry Reform in Liberia and Addressing Emerging Threats.

⁶¹ USAID. 2015a. Cooperative Agreement No. AID-669-A-16-00002.

opportunities and adequate capacity to challenge and push back against the FDA and third-party logging operators, CFs are rendered vulnerable, and community members are insisting that the CFMBs negotiate timber sale contracts with the FDA and logging companies. Meanwhile, CFMBs are not using competitive bidding to make these contracts and are not capable of negotiating fair, technically sound logging agreements. Consequently, the agreements are unlikely to improve livelihoods or halt the degradation of CFs' productivity and biodiversity.

The current ToC is flawed. It minimally adheres to the USAID Biodiversity Code, as discussed previously. The demand for forest products does not originate entirely in the farming population around the CF so increasing the income of that population is not likely to reduce demand. Even if the income of the farming population around the CF were to increase, it does not necessarily follow that the farming population would forgo additional income from production in the CF. Additionally, no data could be identified to establish an empirical basis for the ToC. A ToC based on the content of the Cooperative Agreement would be more appropriate to the requirements of the Biodiversity Code and that of CF members, and be more easily measurable.

The enterprises that FIFES has assisted are unlikely to generate sufficient income to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest uses. Reliable quantitative data are lacking regarding the income that the enterprises have generated and the income from illegal or unsustainable forest uses. The qualitative findings, however, indicate that income from the enterprises has not and is unlikely to substitute income from illegal or unsustainable forest uses.

Competitive bidding is the most effective method of connecting sellers and buyers to increase income from enterprises based on forest products. The findings regarding competitive bidding for forest products support this conclusion.

Current methods already effectively connect buyers and sellers of agricultural products. The qualitative data gave no indication that FIFES has or needs to intervene to improve the current methods of connecting buyers and sellers to increase the income of the farm enterprises.

The enabling environment for agroforestry business enterprises is not being improved. FIFES was not designed to support actions that would improve the enabling environment for agricultural and forest enterprises. Its only actions related to improving the enabling environment have been to marginally increase the availability of plant material for oil palm and cacao and of credit through the WORTH program. No available data indicated that the other enabling factors have improved during FIFES' implementation.

The WORTH experience could be used for forest-based enterprises. Many WORTH KIs expressed their interest in creating enterprises, but their initiatives have not been linked to FIFES' community forestry objectives. Creating local savings and credit groups alone will contribute little to the management of CFs. Not linking WORTH to forest enterprises, particularly NTFPs, to support the credit aspect of the enabling environment has been a missed opportunity.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: RELEVANCE

To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?

FIFES' Relevance to Institutions

FIFES' design includes few specific actions that respond to the needs of the FDA's Community Forestry Department. Pact prepared a rapid barrier analysis that identified four main types of barriers (i.e., material resources, human resources, political opportunities and challenges,

community-level factors) that limit the FDA's Community Forestry Department's effectiveness.⁶² The barrier analysis does not mention that the FDA Community Forestry Department has direct responsibility to CFs only up to the point of legal recognition. The head of the FDA Community Forestry Department noted that after CFs were legally recognized, the Commercial Forest Department within the FDA assumed responsibility for the implementation for CF management. The barrier analysis focuses mainly on the nine-step process to establish the CFs, rather than the barriers affecting management issues concerning CFs once they have been legally recognized, which is the principle focus of FIFES.

FIFES has also financed four interns who work on CF within FDA, and FDA has currently seconded an FDA staff member to work in FIFES. KII data indicated that these interns have had minimal influence on the operations of FDA's Community Forestry Department. The VPA offers a proven mechanism for the FDA to regulate and monitor CF compliance with low-impact logging practices, and several KIs expressed that the Community Forestry Department should be using the VPA mechanisms for CFs. However, the evaluation found no indication that FIFES has assisted the Community Forestry Department in investigating or implementing the VPA mechanisms.

FIFES design includes few specific actions that respond to the needs of FTI. FOs indicated that the FTI lacks adequate infrastructure and equipment.⁶³ A knowledgeable KI commented that FTI teachers require professional improvement and more practical experience, especially regarding community forestry. A new community forestry curriculum, prepared by a Peace Corp volunteer, could be implemented in 2018. Meanwhile, the curriculum designed by PROSPER for the FTI was not found to be used. FIFES' only support to the FTI has been to finance twenty-six interns to work with FIFES' experienced field teams for sixty days.⁶⁴ Interns work side-by-side with field agents on specific tasks related to community forestry.⁶⁵ Leadership at FTI indicated that there are no jobs for FTI graduates in community forestry and few jobs in industry or government. They commented that students who work as interns in community forestry may lose opportunities for jobs, since they do not gain experience and make connections with the industrial logging operations that are the principal employers of forestry technicians. Another KI said, however, that the FDA will soon be hiring sixty new foresters and forestry technicians in the next few months to replace early retirees, and that most of these will be recent FTI graduates.

FIFES' Relevance to Beneficiaries

Communities lack the capacity for negotiating timber sales to logging companies. KIs consistently indicated that CFMB members lack the sufficient skills to negotiate fair, technically sound logging contracts. Standard professional forestry practice requires timber sale contracts to be based on forest timber inventories and forest management plans, but FIFES has not provided communities with either. The majority of KIs showed no knowledge of the basic elements required in a fair, technically sound logging contract. A KI from the Liberia Timber Association said:

"The communities have to know what a commercial logging operation actually is and what the company is supposed to do. They currently understand commercial logging as pit-sawing, rather than a real, commercial operation, so they cannot properly monitor the company's activities."

Triangulated evidence from CFMB members expressed sentiments similar to the following:

⁶² Pact (no date). Rapid Analysis of Barriers Faced by the Liberia Forestry Development Authority in Forming Community Forests.

⁶³ Students were observed taking exams outside, and the interview with three professors was conducted in an office little bigger than a closet. Several KIs said that none of the school's computers are operating.

⁶⁴ FIFES, 2016b, FIFES Annual Report; FIFES FY 2017 Draft Annual Report.

⁶⁵ Interns have come from the forestry technician programs at the Grand Bassa and Nimba Community Colleges as well as from the FTI.

“We signed the (logging) agreement because we needed development quick. We still do not have any knowledge about selling logs, so we want FIFES to train us in grading the logs. We do not have any map of the forest, and the numbering of logs is not included in the agreement with the company.”

The communities’ lack of capacity for negotiating timber sales contracts is creating conflict. For example, the chairman of one EC said:

“The other CA members have complained that the CFMB accepted a third-party agreement before a lawyer reviewed the documents. We as the EC said there is no need for a lawyer now because we are not in any problem with the company, and we also do not have any money now to pay a lawyer.”

A CFMB member from the same CF said that the EC signed this Social Agreement on the same day its members took office.

FIFES has provided limited support to meet CFMB’s needs. Pact conducted institutional capacity assessments⁶⁶ of the eleven CFMBs and found that their principal administrative needs were operating funds, work plans, transportation, working and investment capital, and forestry equipment. Their principal technical needs are a forest management plan, including financial aspects and technical expertise for planning, negotiating, supervising, and monitoring forest management operations. CFMB KIs reported no FIFES support on these needs, other than some training events and limited financing of meetings of the CAs. FIFES has not yet produced CF inventories, management plans, zoning, or forest enterprise plans.

CFMBs expect logging companies to finance forest management expenses and community infrastructure. CFMBs do not have a sustainable source of financing, as any potential profits from EGs will go to individual farmers and not to support the running of CFMBs or management of CFs. Nearly all KIs and FGDs clearly indicated that the principal preoccupation of CFMBs is to negotiate and sign logging contracts (i.e., Social Agreements). Over fifty percent of CFMB KIs saw revenues from logging companies as a way to cover CFMB costs. One CFMB Chief Officer said:

“We signed an initial two-month agreement with Kparblee Timber Company (KTC) in which time, they were to help us do our boundary line cleaning and forest inventory. Our agreement has expired, but the boundary line is not cleaned, and we still don’t have a forest inventory.”

FGDs and KIs also indicated consistently that community members view income from logging contracts as a source of funds for building community infrastructure. The typical viewpoint among community members is that expressed in one FGD:

“The enterprises will not get us community infrastructure. The enterprise activities are too slow for us, we are left behind, so we prefer the third-party agreements (i.e., logging agreements).”

CFs have not provided the benefits expected of them. A constant theme of KIs and FGDs was that community members had expected CFs to provide them with infrastructure, income, and jobs. Male youth in the FGs unanimously wanted to be engaged in remunerated work. Women beneficiaries consistently voiced their desire for education and clinics to be built in their communities. KIs in most communities complained that food production was lower now as compared to when communities were able to farm in the forest and said that the prohibition of slash-and-burn agriculture in the CFs had particularly affected the production of staple crops (cassava and upland rice). One woman in a FG in northern Nimba said:

⁶⁶ Pact. 2016. Organizational Capacity Assessment of Community Forests.

“We used to have more food before than now, but we need more training. We want to know how to manage the farm. No one hunts in the forest, we now buy from the market or get possum and squirrels from outside of the forest.”

Similarly, in northern Nimba, a youth KI said:

“They came at first and told us about so many crops, like cocoa, coffee, palm, and plantain. We decided we wanted palm. We waited for some time, and then FIFES came back to us and said they were only going to bring 48 seedlings of the palm, but there were over 100 people in the group! What will that do for the group? Most of the young people that were in the group got discouraged and dropped out. The others who have their old palm farms, they have helped them to show them how to manage it, but for we who wanted new palm, it was not good for us.”

CFs may have reduced their production of forest products. FIFES was designed to establish enterprises that would operate in some part of the forest product value chains. The most common products previously derived from forest areas and now within the eleven CFs have been staple crops (upland rice and cassava), lumber, poles, fibers, charcoal, firewood, bushmeat, medicines, and spices. Many of the KIs said that the CFs with which they are associated no longer allow the extraction of forest products. To the extent that the extraction of forest products has been curtailed in the eleven forests, this curtailment is attributable to FIFES interventions. Quantitative data, however, were unavailable to determine how FIFES' actions may have reduced the supply of products from the eleven CFs and, if so, whether or how much such a reduction in supply has affected FIFES' indirect beneficiaries. Nonetheless, no FIFES data indicate that the activity has increased the supply of forest products.

Conclusions

FIFES has responded to a limited extent to institutional needs. Though FIFES was not specifically designed to respond to the institutional needs of the FDA or FTI, the activity has responded marginally to the FDA's Community Forestry Department's capacity needs by financing of interns. However, the activity has not responded to its needs for more personnel, increased technical capabilities, and a larger budget, nor integrated CFs into the VPA system of logging standards and oversight. FIFES also has not responded to the needs of FTI except for some short-term internships for its students and provided FTI graduates with jobs in CFs. FIFES has kept the CF bodies operating but has only marginally increased their institutional capacity. An infusion of money from logging agreements is likely to strain the institutional capacity that the CFs may have developed.

FIFES has responded to a limited extent to the needs of direct beneficiaries. FIFES has responded to beneficiaries needs mainly through its agricultural extension program and through its support to the CFMBs. The former has involved considerable effort, and beneficiaries in general have appreciated this response, and the latter has assisted the CFMBs in continuing their operations. However, FIFES has not responded to any great extent to some of its beneficiaries' most urgent needs. It has not increased the capacity of the members of the CFMBs to negotiate fair, enforceable timber sales with logging companies. Income from fair timber sales could provide funds to finance forest management expenses and secondarily, provide communities an avenue to invest in their infrastructure, such as schools, health clinics, water systems, and roads. FIFES has also not supported enterprises based on forest products, and therefore, has not used forest-enterprise income as a way for CFMBs to obtain a regular source of financing for forest management expenses. FIFES' ToC indicates that community members will manage forest resources sustainably if they receive benefits from forest management. Given the current lack of benefits from forest management, CFs are more likely to seek immediate financial benefits by signing timber sale agreements.

FIFES has not responded to the needs of indirect beneficiaries. If the CFMBs develop adequate capacity to manage income from fair timber sales, this income could finance forest management and improvements in community infrastructure. CFMPs can be used to assist the CFs to produce these products sustainably.

EVALUATION QUESTION 4: SUSTAINABILITY

To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level CF management groups) achieve the results of FIFES?

Capacity Building for Results

FIFES is marginally involved in assisting FDA to regulate CF contracts with logging companies. The FIFES FY 2016 Annual Report states that FIFES was designed “to have engaged most with FDA in order to build its capacity to execute sufficient due diligence in its role as a regulatory force.”⁶⁷ According to a KII with FDA, FIFES is not assisting FDA in preparing logging agreements between communities and logging companies and said:⁶⁸

“This particular [lack of] funding [from FIFES] is a concern to us and [...] we expected that FIFES would help us. It is extremely worrying to see the communities moving towards commercial logging. We need FIFES people to come over to the FDA, sit with us, and say what can we do? If they do nothing on this project to engage the communities, they will all go towards commercial. They are all already going commercial. If they all go commercial what happens to the whole country?”

Evidence from KIIs and FGDs corroborated that FIFES has not been closely involved in assisting the FDA Community Forestry Department in regulating CF contracts with logging companies.

FIFES has provided little support for improving the capacity of the FTI other than arranging for interns to work for a few weeks in CFs, as discussed under Evaluation Question 3.

Due Diligence for Social Agreements

FDA is approving logging agreements to communities without adequate due diligence on the CFMP or logging agreements. Before 2012, logging companies obtained rights to log through FMCs or TSCs. Due to uncertainty over the effects of the pending Land Rights Act, the FDA has not given out FMCs or TSCs since 2012. All new commercial logging contracts have been made between logging companies and CFs. An FDA KI said that twenty-one CFs have been authorized, eleven are being processed, and 123 communities have submitted applications. Of the six CFs visited (all associated with FIFES), four have already signed logging agreements or MOUs with a logging company, and one is pursuing changes to its CFMP to allow commercial logging.

An enabling KI said:

“The FDA is signing these agreements without going through the proper channels. They are really not engaging on the management of the CFs. They only get involved when it is time for a Social Agreement. At that point, they come

⁶⁷ USAID, 2018, FY 2017 Draft Annual Report.

⁶⁸ A KI shared, “The chief officers of both Kparblee and Gbear-Gblor and KTC have jointly agreed to sign the tripartite MOU (FIFES/CFMB/KTC) and have agreed to respect its guidance and protocol contained. The chief officer of the Kparblee CFMB has promised to share with FIFES a copy of the contract when approved by FDA. They also, according to verbal statements, have a draft, unapproved CFMP. FIFES staff have asked for evidence that a forest inventory, zoning, and environmental impact assessment were conducted (as prerequisites to an approved CFMP and eventual approval of a Social Agreement), but nothing has been provided.

from Monrovia and do not even inform their teams in the field. This past December when they signed the agreement in Sehzuplay, the local FDA office was not even informed. FDA is the problem.”

Another KI agreed that the preparation of logging contracts is being run “by the bosses” in Monrovia without local FDA staff participation.

CSOs are an untapped resource for monitoring community logging contracts. In 2012, Liberian CSOs discovered that the FDA had colluded with logging companies to forge documents and issue sixty-three private-use permits to logging operators.⁶⁹ In 2016, CSOs warned that a similar scandal could embroil the CFMAs. The FDA appears to have signed off on many CFMAs without due diligence and without requiring adherence to the regulations of the Community Rights Law.⁷⁰ Several KIs suggested that Liberian CSOs with forestry experience, of which there are several with decades of relevant experience, who, with appropriate funding, could effectively monitor FDA and logging company due diligence of CFMAs, noting that the VPA uses Liberian CSOs to monitor FMC and TSC concessions.

Community members lack sufficient access to information about CFMAs applications and contracts with logging companies. Effective, transparent, and participatory forest governance requires access to information about forest management.⁷¹ The Community Rights Law requires that all community forestry documents be made public, unless such publication is prevented by another law.⁷² Despite this requirement, the FDA was unable or unwilling to provide the evaluation with any data about the 123 CFMA applications it has received.⁷³ The evaluation found in KIs that in two CFs in southern Nimba, which had gone through the process of negotiating with a logging company, information at the community level was largely being controlled by a few, more powerful, local elites who dealt directly with the FDA in Monrovia.

Financial Sustainability Arrangements

Commercial logging threatens the productivity of the CFs. Little technical information could be located about the silvics and silviculture of the forest types that occur in the eleven CFs, and a silviculture professor at the University of Liberia Forestry School said that almost no such knowledge exists in Liberia. Conservation International, however, estimates that to break even, logging operations must remove twenty to thirty cubic meters of timber per hectare. It recommends not removing more than seven cubic meters per hectare.⁷⁴ KIs said that the commercial logging operations do not generally adhere to the FDA’s Code of Harvesting, so they often cause irreversible damage to the forests’ productivity, ecosystem functions, and biodiversity.

Commercial logging threatens the financial sustainability of the CFs. It would be standard forest management practice to divide a CF’s production forest area into the same number of blocks as the number of years in the forest’s rotation cycle,⁷⁵ allowing one block to be logged each year. No data indicate, however, that the communities and logging companies intend to plan out logging through a

⁶⁹ Mukpo, 2016, Keeping the Promise: Protecting Forestry Reform in Liberia, and Addressing Emerging Threats; Siakor, 2017, Forestry Concessions in Post-Conflict Liberia.

⁷⁰ See more: <https://loggingoff.info/organisations/cs-ifm/> and https://www.sdiliberia.org/publications_grid

⁷¹ PROFOR, 2012, Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance.

⁷² PROSPER, 2017, Community Forestry Facilitator’s Manual.

⁷³ The team attempted to interview KTC, but it was not possible to arrange a meeting with its country representative.

⁷⁴ Conservation International 2017. Natural Capital Mapping and Accounting in Liberia: Understanding the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to Liberia’s Sustainable Development.

⁷⁵ A rotation cycle is the number of years that would be technically sound to let the forest grow without cutting timber. A rotation cycle based on the rate at which timber trees reach maturity provides for the financial sustainability of the forest. No reliable technical data could be located for the recommended rotation age for the forest types of the eleven CFs. KIs, however, suggested that the rotation age may be from between 25 to 50 years.

technically determined rotation cycle. Rather, KI and FG data imply that commercial logging in the CFs will endeavor to remove all commercial timber as quickly as feasible, after which the CF is unlikely to be capable of producing a sustainable flow of income to the communities.

CFMB do not have specific plans for financing forest management. No KI or FG could explain how CFMBs plan to finance forest management costs. A few KIs said these costs might be covered through timber sales. One KI mentioned a plan to finance a CFMB from profits of a cocoa farm. No KI knew the costs of operating a CF or the revenues it might produce. A CFMB member said:

“As a CFMB, we do not have a business operating now. We have only just started the cocoa, so even to buy basic things like stationery, or rain boots, we cannot even pay for the transportation or harvesting of NTFPs in the forest because those distances are so far in the forest.”

FIFES, FDA, and CFMB KIs agreed that the CFMBs have no external source of financing other than FIFES.

Although Pact has trained CFMB members in accounting, only one CFMB had managed any funds. Some CFMB members did not know if the CFMB has a bank account. A CFMB treasurer said:

“Although we do not have any money in our account now, I still think I need more training on depositing money in the bank and also withdrawals. That way, when we have money to put there, I will understand the whole process well.”

Her opinion was born out of the experience of the CFMB in Matro CF receiving a small amount of money. In this instance, the process of receiving, handling, and reporting on these funds became so contentious that all the members of the CFMB were subsequently suspended.

Conclusions

FIFES’ current capacity building and technical assistance efforts to the FDA, FTI, and CFMBs will not achieve the activity’s intended results for governance, biodiversity monitoring, or forest enterprise development, and capacity building and technical assistance to strengthen CF governance has been very limited. Though FIFES was intended to strengthen the FDA Community Forestry Department, the department is involved only in the preparation and approval of CFMAs, not in the management of the CFs, which is overseen by the FDA’s commercial and conservation departments. FIFES was not designed to and has not built the capacity of the commercial and conservation departments for assisting CFs.

FIFES also was not designed to, and has not improved, FTI’s capacities. Local-level community management groups (CFMB, EC, and CA) have continued to function, but they have not become more capable since PROSPER ended. FIFES has formed EGs, but these are simply groups of farmers who come together occasionally to receive technical assistance and training. Given these gaps, it seems unlikely that FIFES will achieve its intended results for biodiversity monitoring and forest enterprise development.

Though quantitative data are unavailable to make a value-for-money analysis, FIFES’ results are probably not commensurate with the funds it has spent so far, and these results are not likely to create sustainable models for community forestry in Liberia if FIFES continues on its present course. It seems unlikely that USAID funds will produce eleven model CFs by 2020. Furthermore, the conclusions suggest the activity is not on track to improve CF governance, biodiversity monitoring, or forest enterprise development. Most of the eleven CFs which were planned to become sustainable models for community forestry in Liberia have already, or are in the process of, negotiating agreements with logging companies—even though they lack the capability to negotiate or enforce such agreements that would be financially fair or

technically sound. The result of these logging agreements will, therefore, mostly likely be the irreversible and severe degradation of the CFs' commercial biodiversity and ecosystem values.

FIFES has not been involved in due diligence for the logging agreements (Social Agreements) or forest management plans that the FDA has been promoting between authorized CFs and logging companies. This may be a missed opportunity to promote transparency and support communities in the stage where they are most vulnerable to exploitation from commercial logging interests. Several Liberian CSOs with forestry experience could serve to monitor contractual due diligence; increase community access to information; and help prepare CFMPs.

Financial sustainability arrangements are not being built into CF management structures to encourage full consideration of environmental factors in the development of CFMPs. That CFMBs have no financial plans indicates that the CF management structures lack financial sustainability arrangements. The commercial logging, which seems nearly certain to take place soon in many, and perhaps all, of the eleven CFs that FIFES assists will undercut their financial sustainability by irreversibly degrading their potential for producing commercially valuable forest products. CFMBs are furthermore unprepared to manage the funds that the logging agreements might provide. It is therefore likely that quarrels within the CF management structures will occur over the use of these funds and severely weaken them. Without strong CF management structures, it will be impossible to achieve long-term conservation of the CFs' environment and biodiversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Progress

Reorient FIFES to improve the management of CFs as forest enterprises. FIFES has made little progress in achieving either sustainable forest-based enterprises or improved CF management. If it does not accomplish its Results 1 and 2, it is unlikely to achieve its Result 3 of increased youth and women's participation in CF management. Moreover, commercial logging is now the most urgent threat to the CF's biodiversity. The evaluation recommends combining Results 1 and 2 into a single Result that focuses on the establishment of model CF forest enterprises that utilize the VPA mechanism for regulating and monitoring forest management. Support should be provided to the work of the VPA to ensure CFMAs are subject to its regulatory standards and independent monitoring, in line with FMCs and TSCs.

Complete simple, low-cost, practical, effective, and locally prepared forest management plans. CFMPs are the guides to forest management and forest-product enterprises, and a principal problem for FIFES has been that it has not produced a management plan for any of the CFs. Without them, FIFES has been unable to implement its forest management component. A model for CF management must include a replicable methodology for preparing feasible, practical CF management plans quickly and inexpensively. Replicability requires that Liberian foresters learn to prepare the CFMPs.

Design and implement a forestry training program specifically for community women and youth. It is unlikely CFs will become financially and environmentally sustainable if women and youth are not involved in making the management decisions for the forests, given the evidence of how they use them. Yet women and youth are lagging behind men in their knowledge about forestry and in their influence on forest management decisions. Their knowledge and influence are unlikely to increase sufficiently for them to exert the level of influence required to achieve the sustainable model CFs. Therefore, a specially designed, effective, training program in forestry for women and youth is required to quickly elevate their level of knowledge about forestry, thereby opening a place for them in the decision-making process for the CFs.

Hire forestry technicians to work in CFs. The CFs are productive economic assets that can potentially provide large, multiple financial and non-financial benefits, including protection of threatened biodiversity, not only to their owners, the community members, but also to Liberia as a whole. Yet Liberia's CFs in general—and including the eleven FIFES CFs—lack the trained technical expertise required to bring these forests under sustainable management.

FIFES has so far devoted little resources to financing the appropriate types of technical assistance for achieving the result of model CFs. At the same time, FTI, the University of Liberia, and the Buchanan Community College are training foresters and forestry technicians to manage forests technically and sustainably. Most of these foresters and forestry technicians, enthusiastic as they may be upon graduating, end up working in some other activity than forestry.

This gap between the technical requirements of CFs and the graduates of Liberia's forestry programs offers a golden opportunity for FIFES to play a pivotal role in creating model CFs. An effective use of FIFES funds would be to finance foresters and forestry technicians to work in the CFs on the various tasks required to bring them under management. Depending on the size and characteristics of the forest, as determined by the CFMP, the income from the sale of forest products could begin to pay for the relatively minor costs of the forestry technicians. Such work would also create a cadre of foresters and forestry technicians who know CFs' problems and solutions first-hand.

Revise FIFES administrative practices and procedures so that it can provide timely, sufficient, effective, and efficient administrative support to forestry field activities. Because forestry is a field activity, it will be impossible to create model CFs unless FIFES is able to provide effective and efficient administrative support to its field staff. Liberia's poor roads and long rainy season make field work difficult, making such support even more important. Ineffective and inefficient administrative support for forestry field activities, furthermore, undermines the trust of community members in FIFES, inciting them to look elsewhere for the assistance they need to manage the CFs. Several organizations are present on the ground in FIFES' geographic areas of work that have the experience and knowledge required to establish functioning CFs. Administrative problems could be reduced if FIFES were to operate through a single, experienced organization, in collaboration with the several dedicated Liberian CSOs who have accumulated valuable forestry experience over the last few years.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

Concentrate governance on designing and implementing mechanisms to ensure honest, transparent, efficient, and effective management of CF funds. A CF is a business enterprise that sustainably extracts forest products, while also protecting the forest's biodiversity and ecosystem functions. Generating income sufficient to cover operating and investment expenses while also benefiting communities is, therefore, a core function of the CFs. Yet if the CF does earn income, inevitably a risk of conflict over money will develop. To achieve the result of creating model CFs, therefore, will require a concentrated effort to establish mechanisms for effective, honest management of CF funds. Such mechanism might be a professionally managed trust fund, for example, into which proceeds from the sale of CF income would be automatically deposited. A trust would also allow donations to be made for the management of the CF with some assurance that the funds would be managed well and used as intended. It would also not create more dependence of the communities on external donations for day-to-day forest management activities, and permit donations to be made to the CFs that are able to demonstrate success in achieving forest management objectives and managing funds.

Concentrate technical assistance on establishing and improving agroforestry and forestry practices within the CFs. The CFs have tremendous productive potential for goods and services to community members and society at large, but the proper management of any forest requires technical

knowledge and skills—especially those that are as extraordinarily diverse in tree species and complex in their ecosystems as those in Liberia. To achieve the creation of model CFs, FIFES will need timely advice of tropical forestry experts in the fields of forest management, competitive timber sales, forest product utilization, silviculture, agroforestry, soils botany, biodiversity conservation, forest inventory, and wildlife management about how to set up and manage the model CF. However, FIFES has so far provided the CFs with almost no specialized, expert technical advice or training despite the activity's forest management component being the responsibility of CIFOR, a preeminent tropical forestry research institution.

Establish measurable targets for CF contributions to biodiversity conservation. Liberia's CFs harbor much of its remaining biodiversity and form the corridors of natural vegetation that can be important for maintaining viable populations of some species of plants and animals. A principal purpose of a model CF should be to demonstrate with reliable, quantitative data the contribution CFs can make to conserving biodiversity both within forests, and by helping compensate for the loss of production of forest goods in protected areas. By establishing measurable targets for biodiversity conservation, CFs can thereby relieve the pressure created on non-protected areas for forest products.

Relevance

Make FIFES relevant to Liberian forestry institutions and members of CFs by focusing it on establishing viable, self-financing, sustainable model CFs. Liberian forestry institutions have many persistent, recurring institutional needs. The FDA and the FTI, for example, will always need more funds for operating expenses, better trained staff, better infrastructure, equipment and materials, and more effective teachers. With the funds and time remaining in FIFES' period of performance, USAID is not likely to be able to demonstrate significant, lasting results by financing these needs temporarily. Similarly, USAID is unlikely to be able to produce tangible benefits for CF members, decrease the inequitable treatment of women, or interest and involve youth in managing forests by financing the needs of government institutions. In contrast, USAID could accomplish all of these results by focusing its resources on establishing model CFs, while also strengthening FDA and FTI. The model forests would provide FDA with examples of how it could promote sustainable, professional forestry, while providing FTI with teaching tools for its students and employment for its graduates. Most importantly, it would provide other CFs in Liberia with models for how to manage their forests sustainably, producing commercial forest products whose sale will finance forest management and improve livelihoods, while also protecting biodiversity.

Sustainability

Reorient FIFES so it produces financially sustainable CFs. Financial viability would make the model forests sustainable without external financing and establish the members of CFs as independent actors in Liberian forestry, rather than dependent on logging companies and government institutions. Therefore, FIFES should focus on making the model CFs into business enterprises that produce commercial products that can compete in quality, quantity, and reliability in Liberian markets. FIFES should also focus on the distribution and use of these profits from the forest enterprise, so that they benefit the members of the community equitably and substantially improve their welfare. These benefits will elicit the support of community members for protecting the CF area from conversion to other land uses.

Reorient FIFES so it produces sustainable yields of commercial forest products. FIFES should focus on providing the model CFs with the technical expertise, training, and equipment required to implement forest management practices that effectively replenish extracted plant species. If the CFs produce sustained yields of commercial forest products, they will be able to protect the CFs and their surrounding landscapes' ecosystems and biodiversity.

UTILIZATION PLAN

The evaluation strongly recommends that a joint review meeting of USAID, FDA, FTI, ACDI/VOCA, Pact, and CIFOR be held to strategize next steps based on the recommendations put forward in this evaluation report. A joint meeting would enhance dialogue among the activity's partners and be useful in enhancing existing relationships and operationalizing a plan to make FIFES more effective in advancing community forestry in Liberia through model CFs.

Following the submission of the final evaluation report, LSA could facilitate a learning event with participants from these institutions, thereby providing an opportunity to apply findings and lessons learned directly to relevant decision-making, including policy development and larger sectoral assessment needs.

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ANNEX B: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

KII Guide: Implementers

Key Informant:

Position/Occupation:

Category: I

Male or Female:

Age Group:

Email:

Telephone:

Date & Time:

Place:

Relation to FIFES:

I. Progress:

I.1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving results under FIFES?

I.1.1. What is your understanding of the relationship between introducing sustainable streams of income through FIFES activities and unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

I.1.2 Is the relationship between the livelihood and the CF components clear?

I.1.3 What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?
Can you share a copy of your M&E plan?

I.1.4 Have FIFES activities creating agro & forest-based SMEs reduced the occurrence of unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

I.1.5 What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

I.1.6 What activities are considered unsustainable? Are you collecting any data on the impact of these activities?

I.1.7 What is your understanding of the relationship between the ecology of the CFs and the livelihood activities introduced by FIFES SMEs?

I.1.8 What data are you collecting on this link (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

I.1.9 Is there any difference in the ecology of the CFs now from when FIFES activities began?

I.1.10 What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

I.2. How have youth benefited?

I.2.1. How have FIFES interventions in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged youth?
What has been the impact of this engagement approach?

What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

I.2.2. Does FIFES have a standardized system for evaluating the impact of training on youth?
Disaggregated by sex?

I.3. How have women benefited?

I.3.1. How have FIFES interventions in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged women?

I.3.2. What has been the impact of this engagement approach?

I.3.3. What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

I.3.4. Does FIFES have a standardized system for evaluating the impact of training on women?

I.3.5. How is FIFES identifying, addressing and monitoring the barriers to women's participation in CFs?

I.4. Are the appropriate technical skills available and applied to achieve results?

I.4.1. Do you feel you have the appropriate technical skills to implement and monitor the activities for this program?

- 1.4.2. If required, what additional skills and support would you need to deliver the results?
- 1.4.3. Does the FDA have the appropriate technical skills to monitor and regulate CFs (CFMAs, SAs, CFMPs, CRL)?
- 1.4.4. Are agricultural production trainings customized based on beneficiary needs? And how?
- 1.4.5. Are you collecting data on community awareness and capacity to monitor their CF boundaries?
- 1.4.6. Are the FTI and CAF-UL graduating sufficient people with requisite technical skills for community forestry related jobs and agroforest enterprise management?
- 1.5. Is the appropriate support available and applied to achieve results
 - 1.5.1. Does FIFES have sufficient support from relevant partners to achieve results?
 - 1.5.2. What additional support would FIFES need to achieve results?
 - 1.5.3. Is the FDA providing appropriate level of support to the CFs?_What data are you collecting on this (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?
 - 1.5.4. What non-FIFES support is available for CFMBs?
 - 1.5.5. Has FIFES engaged in processes such as FLEGT VPA, REDD+, land law reform, and the development of concession policies or worked only with the Community Forestry Department of the FDA?

2. Effectiveness and Efficiency:

Which approaches have been most and least effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES?

- 2.1 Do these approaches consider boys vs girls and young women vs young men?
Is it being implemented & if so to what extent?
 - 2.1.1. What are the systems for oversight and accountability of community forestry governance bodies?
Are they effective?
 - 2.1.2. Has FIFES created a plan for using the PROSPER manual for monitoring forest biodiversity and has it supported systematic biodiversity monitoring of community forests, including training?
 - 2.1.3. How have lessons learned from previous CF projects been integrated and applied into FIFES?
 - 2.1.4. Who are the stakeholders FIFES engages at both the national & community levels?
 - 2.1.5. How have you addressed the issue of hunting in the context of biodiversity within CFs?
 - 2.1.6. How do FIFES activities handle differences in the power of local power elites and social divisions (e.g. between towns, men & women, new people in the community, non-resident members of the community, etc.)?
 - 2.1.7. How has FIFES ensured/secured political will and buy in?
 - 2.1.8. Conflict mitigation
Have any conflicts occurred at the community level where FIFES interventions occur?
How has FIFES used conflict mitigation strategies to address these?
Have any lessons been learned from the recent experience with Matro community in Grand Bassa?
 - 2.1.9. What are the challenges in the effective implementation of project activities?
 - 2.1.10. Are there factors related to enabling environment that are hindering or helping in the achievement of project outcomes?
 - 2.1.11. Are there delays in the implementation work-plan?
Is there any impact or consequence of these delays on project effectiveness?
 - 2.1.12. How does FIFES use the monitoring data to update continued planning of project activities?
- 2.2. Why have these approaches been less effective and efficient?

- 2.2.1. Has FIFES reduced any known barriers for communities to establish and maintain community forests?
- 2.3. What are the best practices and opportunities?
 - 2.3.1. Have you identified any opportunities for improvement which could strengthen the quality and/or sustainability of FIFES interventions?
- 2.4. Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?
 - 2.4.1. Has FIFES determined a “sufficient revenue” threshold for the various enterprises?
 - 2.4.2. Has FIFES specifically assessed the environmental sustainability of the harvesting practices it recommends?
 - 2.4.3. Has FIFES specifically assessed the economic viability of the marketing methods it has introduced?
- 2.5. Is there an improved enabling environment for agroforest-based business enterprises?
- 2.6. If so, is it influencing farmers’ abilities to advance their enterprise?
3. Relevance:
 - 3.1. To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?
 - 3.1.1. How does FIFES identify insitutional needs at local level? National level?
 - 3.1.2. How does FIFES identify beneficiary needs at the local level? National level?
4. Sustainability:
 - 4.1. To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia’s institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level Community Forest management groups)?
 - 4.2. Do you believe these interventions will continue after the FIFES project has ended?
 - 4.2.1. FDA capacity:
 - 4.2.2. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the FDA?
 - 4.2.3. What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of these capacity building interventions? How are they monitored?
 - 4.2.4. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the FDA?
 - 4.2.5. What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of the Technical Assistance interventions? How are they monitored?
 - 4.2.6. What system does the FDA use to monitor and report any incidents of corruption within the CFMGs?
 - 4.2.7. FTI capacity:
 - 4.2.8. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the FTI?
 - 4.2.9. What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of these capacity building interventions? How are they monitored?
 - 4.2.10. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the FTI?
 - 4.2.11. What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of the Technical Assistance interventions? How are they monitored?
 - 4.2.12. What are the planned sources of revenue for CF?
 - What data are you collecting on this?
 - 4.2.13. How often is the CF boundary information updated in the flexi-cadastre?
 - 4.2.14. CFMB /Community Assembly capacity:
 - 4.2.15. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the CFMB?
 - 4.2.16. What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of these capacity building interventions? How are they monitored?

- 4.2.17. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the CFMB?
What indicators are used to measure the impact and effect of the Technical Assistance interventions? How are they monitored?
- 4.2.18. **All:** Have forest-dependent communities suffered adverse livelihood impacts from community forestry?

Have FIFES activities creating agro & forest-based SMEs reduced the occurrence of unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Do you feel you have the appropriate technical skills to implement and monitor the activities for this program?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Is the FDA providing appropriate level of support to the CFs?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Do you believe these interventions will continue after the FIFES project has ended?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				

KII Guide: Beneficiaries

Key Informant:
Position/Occupation:
Category: B
Male or Female:
Age Group:
Email:
Telephone:
Date & Time:
Place:

Relation to FIFES:

5. Progress:

5.1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving results under FIFES?

5.1.1. How do you understand the relationship between the FIFES livelihoods activities and unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

1.1.2 Is the relationship between the livelihood and the CF clear?

1.1.3 Since FIFES began, have the agro & forest-based enterprises reduced the occurrence of unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

1.1.4 What data are you collecting on this and how is it monitored?

1.1.5 What activities are considered unsustainable? Are you collecting any data on the impact of these activities?

5.2. How have youth benefited?

5.2.1. Have FIFES activities in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged youth?

- What has been the impact of this engagement with youth?
- 5.2.2. Does it include both boys and girls/ young women and men?
- 5.3. How have women benefited?
 - 5.3.1. Have FIFES activities in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged women?
 - 5.3.2. What has been the impact of this engagement with women?
 - 5.3.3. How did women participate in CFs before FIFES?
 - 5.3.4. How do women participate in CFs now?
- 5.4. Are the appropriate technical skills available and applied to achieve results?
 - 5.4.1. Do you think you have enough technical skills to deliver your results for this program?
 - 5.4.2. What extra skills would you need to deliver the results?
 - 5.4.3. Do you think the FDA has the enough technical skills to monitor and regulate CFs (CFMAs, SAs, CFMPs, CRL)?
 - 5.4.4. Do you know the boundaries of your CF?
 - 5.4.5. Who is aware of the boundaries in your community?
 - 5.4.6. Did you have support from the FDA in boundary demarcation? Are there any issues?
 - 5.4.7. Do you have the knowledge to measure biodiversity in the CF?
- 5.5. Is the appropriate support available and applied to achieve results
 - 5.5.1. Does FIFES have sufficient support from relevant partners to achieve results?
 - 5.5.2. What additional support would FIFES need to achieve results?
 - 5.5.3. Is the FDA providing appropriate level of support to the CFs?
 - 5.5.4. Is there other support available for CFMBs not from FIFES?
 - 5.5.5. How does the CF expect to make money?
 - 5.5.6. Who will be responsible for managing this revenue?
 - 5.5.7. Who will report on this money to the wider CFMB and forest communities?

6. Effectiveness and Efficiency:

Which approaches have been most and least effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES?

- 6.1.1. What has been the best activity of FIFES?
- 6.1.2. What made it the best?
- 6.1.3. Did it look for women and youth separately?
- 6.1.4. How do you monitor and report corruption? Is it effective?
- 6.1.5. How do you manage hunting within the CF?
- 6.1.6. Is there social division or conflict between groups in your community about the CF?
- 6.1.7. How did the community manage the conflict? Did FIFES/FDA support managing the conflict?
- 6.1.8. What has helped to make FIFES activities work well?
- 6.1.9. What has made FIFES activities difficult in your community?
- 6.2. Why have these approaches been less effective and efficient?
 - 6.2.1. Has FIFES made it easier to establish and maintain community forests?
- 6.3. What are the best practices and opportunities?
 - 6.3.1. How do you think FIFES could improve their activities?
- 6.4. Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?
 - 6.4.1. Are you making more money with FIFES activities than what you were doing before?
 - 6.4.2.

Questions for the purpose of Agroforestry Enterprise Group Participants

How is your enterprise group structured?

Are you a leader or a member of the enterprise group?

How did you procure all the needed inputs to begin production?

How did you go about the planting your agroforestry crops?

Who is responsible for the daily maintenance of the crops?

Who is in charge of the marketing of the harvest commodities?

How is revenue split among the enterprise group leader versus the EG members?

On average how much revenue does each crop produce? Per acre/per hectare? How much profit is produced?

Are profits reinvested into the business?

6.4.3. What is making your agro businesses easier to manage since FIFES support?

6.4.4. Has this helped you to expand your business?

7. Relevance:

7.1. To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?

7.1.1. Are trainings customized for your community's needs? And how?

8. Sustainability:

8.1. To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level Community Forest management groups)?

8.2. Do you believe these activities will continue after the FIFES project is finished?

8.2.1. CFMB /Community Assembly capacity:

8.2.2. How is the relationship between the CFMB and the CA in your community forest?

8.2.3. Do CFMB members follow the forestry management rules?

8.2.4. What types of trainings have been given to the CFMB? CA?

8.2.5. Have the trainings been helpful?

8.2.6. What extra support is needed?

Do you think you have enough technical skills to deliver your results for this program?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Do you know the boundaries of your CF?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Has FIFES made it easier to establish and maintain community forests?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Are you making more money with FIFES activities than what you were doing before?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Has this helped you to expand your business?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				

KII Guide: Enablers

Key Informant:
 Position/Occupation:
 Organization/Company:
 Sector:
 Assigned Office Location (Monrovia/County based):
 Category: E
 Male or Female:
 Age Group:
 Email:
 Telephone:
 Date & Time:
 Location of Interview:
 Relation to FIFES:

9. Progress:

9.1. To what extent has progress been made in achieving results under FIFES?

9.1.1. What is your understanding of the relationship between introducing sustainable streams of income through FIFES activities and unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

1.1.2 Is the relationship between FIFES livelihood and the CF components clear?

1.1.4 Have FIFES activities creating agro & forest-based SMEs reduced the occurrence of unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?

1.1.6 What forestry enterprise activities are considered unsustainable?

1.1.9 Is there any difference in the ecology of the CFs now from when FIFES activities began?

1.1.10 What data are you collecting on the biodiversity health of the CF (specific indicators?) and how is it monitored?

9.2. How have youth benefited?

9.2.1. How have FIFES's interventions in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged youth? What has been the impact of this engagement approach?

9.2.2. Does your organization have a standardized system for evaluating the impact of training on youth? Disaggregated by sex?

9.3. How have women benefited?

9.3.1. How have FIFES' interventions in livelihoods and governance targeted and engaged women?

9.3.2. What has been the impact of this engagement approach?

Does FIFES have a standardized system for evaluating the impact of training on women?

9.3.3. How is FIFES identifying, addressing and monitoring the barriers to women's participation in CFs?

9.4. Are the appropriate technical skills available and applied to achieve results?

9.4.1. Do you feel you have the appropriate technical skills to implement and monitor the Biodiversity and Governance activities for this program?

9.4.2. If required, what additional skills and support would you need to deliver the results?

9.4.3. Does the FDA have the appropriate technical skills to monitor and regulate CFs (CFMAs, SAs, CFMPs, CRL)? *(FDA will not be asked this question)*

9.4.4. Did FIFES customize its agroforestry production trainings based on beneficiary needs? And how?

9.4.5. Is your organization collecting data on community awareness and capacity to monitor their CF boundaries?

9.4.6. Are the FTI and CAF-UL graduating sufficient people with requisite technical skills for community forestry related jobs and agroforest enterprise management?

- 9.5. Is the appropriate support available and applied to achieve results
 - 9.5.1. Does your organization have sufficient support from relevant partners to achieve results?
 - 9.5.2. What additional support would your organization need to achieve results?
 - 9.5.3. Is the FIFES providing appropriate level of support to the CFs?
 - 9.5.4. What support outside your organization is available for CFMBs?
 - 9.5.5. Has your organization engaged in processes such as FLEGT VPA, REDD+, land law reform, and the development of concession policies or worked only with the Community Forestry Department of the FDA?

10. Effectiveness and Efficiency:

Which approaches have been most and least effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES?

- 2.1 Do the FIFES approaches of Livelihoods and Governance gender and youth?

Is it being implemented & if so to what extent?

 - 10.1.1. What are the systems for oversight and accountability of community forestry governance bodies?

Are they effective?
 - 10.1.2. How have you addressed the issue of hunting in the context of biodiversity within CFs?
 - 10.1.3. How did your organization's activities handle differences in the power of local power elites and social divisions (e.g. between towns, men & women, new people in the community, non-resident members of the community, etc.)?
 - 10.1.4. How has your organization ensured/secured political will and buy in?
 - 10.1.5. Conflict mitigation

Have any conflicts occurred at the community level where your organization interventions occur?

How has your organization used conflict mitigation strategies to address these?
 - 10.1.6. What are the challenges in the effective implementation of project activities?
 - 10.1.7. Are there factors related to enabling environment that are hindering or helping in the achievement of your organization's project outcomes?
 - 10.1.8. Has FIFES supported your organization in resolving any of these conflicts?
- 10.2. Why have these approaches been less effective and efficient?
 - 10.2.1. Has FIFES reduced any known barriers for communities to establish and maintain community forests?
- 10.3. What are the best practices and opportunities?
 - 10.3.1. Have you identified any opportunities for improvement which could strengthen the quality and/or sustainability of FIFES interventions?

11. Relevance:

- 11.1. To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?
 - 11.1.1. How have you observed FIFES identify institutional needs at local level? National level?
 - 11.1.2. How have you observed FIFES identify beneficiary needs at the local level? National level?

12. Sustainability:

- 12.1. To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level Community Forest management groups)?
- 12.2. Do you believe these interventions will continue after the FIFES project has ended?

- 12.2.1. FDA capacity: Will not ask these questions to FDA
- 12.2.2. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the FDA?
- 12.2.3. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the FDA?
- 12.2.4. What system does the FDA use to monitor and report any incidents of corruption within the CFMGs?
- 12.2.5. FTI capacity: Will not ask these questions to FTI
- 12.2.6. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the FTI?
- 12.2.7. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the FTI?
- 12.2.8. What are the planned sources of revenue for CF?
- 12.2.9. How often is the CF boundary information updated in the flexi-cadastre?
- 12.2.10. CFMB /Community Assembly capacity: Will not ask these questions to CFMB
- 12.2.11. What types of capacity building interventions are provided to the CFMB?
- 12.2.12. What type of technical assistance interventions are provided to the CFMB?
- 12.2.13. **All:** Have forest-dependent communities suffered adverse livelihood impacts from community forestry?

Have FIFES activities creating agro & forest-based SMEs reduced the occurrence of unsustainable agro & forest livelihood activities?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Do you feel you have the appropriate technical skills to implement and monitor the activities for this program?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Is the FDA providing appropriate level of support to the CFs? Will not ask these questions to FDA	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				
Do you believe these interventions will continue after the FIFES project has ended?	1	2	3	4	5
	Weakest - -> Strongest				

FGD Instruments

- How have you benefited from the FIFES project?
- Which EG agroforestry activities (crops) do you prefer to participate in? Why?
- Would you make more money doing your preferred EG agroforestry activity or making charcoal/logging?
- Which EG agroforestry activities (crops) do you least prefer to participate in? Why?
- Which EG agroforestry activities involve you the most?
- How is the FIFES Enterprise Group structured?
- Did USAID FIFES provide all members of the Enterprise Group with training? What type of training was provided?
- Have you received financing, credit, microloans from WORTH or other organizations to support your agro-forest enterprises?
- Which additional agricultural farming activities (crops) would you like to be trained in? Why would you like to produce and sell these crops?
- Do you know the boundaries of your CF?

11. Would you like your CF to be more focused on conservation of the forests or on sustainable commercial forestry production?
12. Does your community have a CFM-P?
13. What level of input have you had into the CFM-P?
14. What type of information does the CFMB discuss with the community?
15. How frequently does your CFMB meet with the community and give information?
16. Are your needs and concerns listened to by the CFMB?
17. How does the CFMB manage forest /agro enterprises in their CF?
18. What financial sustainability arrangements does the CFMB have to manage its forestry and agro-enterprises?
19. Are you happy with how this is being managed?
20. Is corruption monitored in your CF?
21. When you have a problem happening in the CF how is it resolved?
22. Is this support effective?
23. How is the FDA supporting your community?
24. What is your opinion in establishing a contract with a timber company to log your forests?
25. What support have you received for this?

ANNEX C: EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

Evaluation Design and Methodology

Overall Approach

A mixed-methods approach was used to obtain and analyze reliable, representative data relevant to identifying findings pertinent to each evaluation questions. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from documents, key informant interviews (KIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and field observations (FOs). The data was organized and analyzed in order to identify evidence-based findings as the basis for answering the evaluation questions.

Data Sampling Strategies

Data was collected from three types of sources: documents; informants; and FOs. Data was collected in and outside of Monrovia in and around six of the eleven CFs that FIFES is assisting. Documentary data came from those documents made available and that the team judged to be the pertinent, reliable, and up-to-date. The bibliography in Annex A lists all of these documents. FOs were made within the six CFs visited and in the surrounding landscape where FIFES is assisting non-forest agroforestry enterprises.

Data from informants was collected through KIs and FGDs. Annex B provides sample interview guides for semi-structured interviews with key informants (KIs) designed to be conducted in about an hour. KI data was disaggregated by category (beneficiary/enabler/implementer) gender, age group (youth or adult), occupation and/or position and association with FIFES. The names, contact information (email, telephone) and date, time, and place of the KIs and FGDs was also recorded.

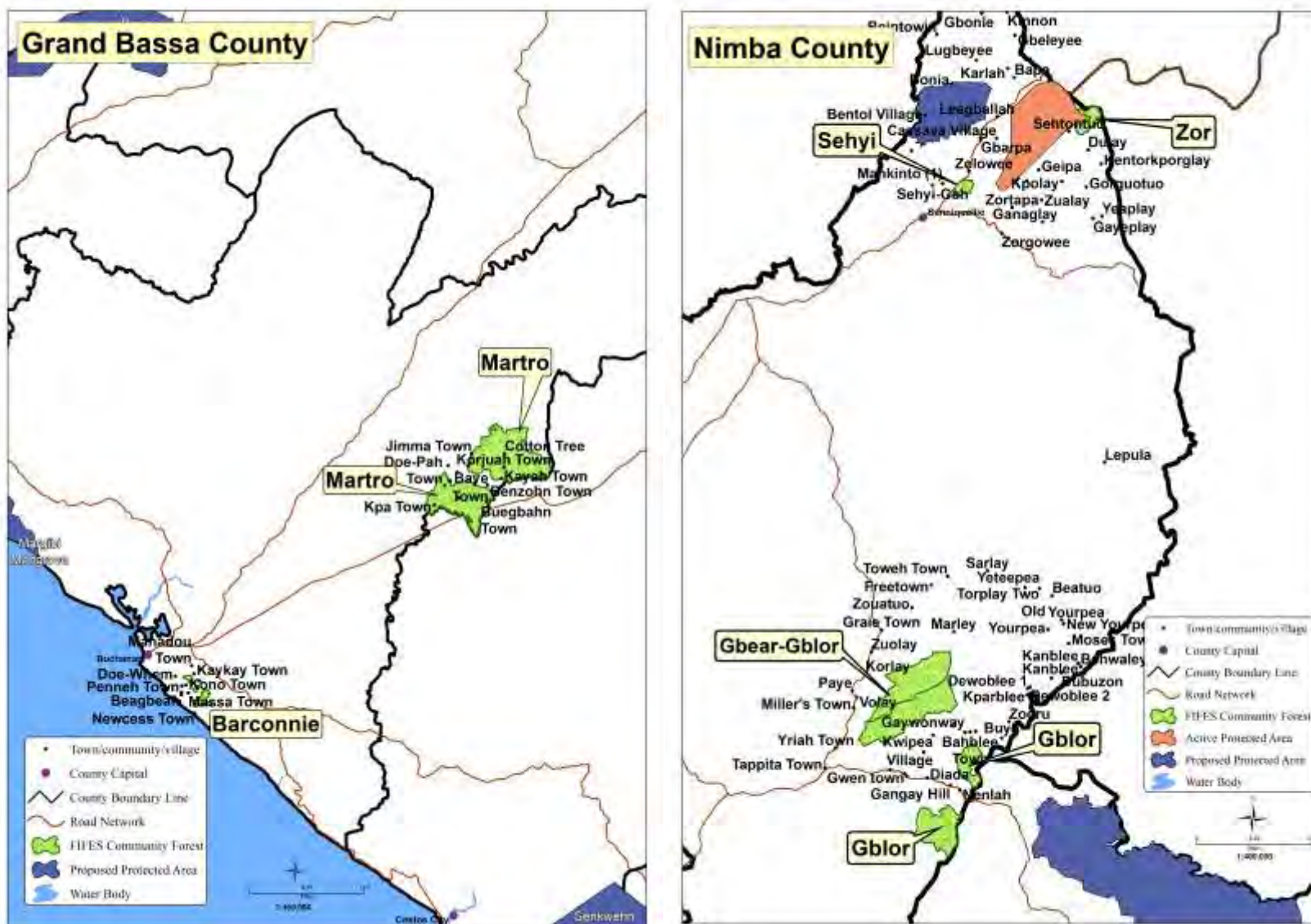
At least two evaluators were present in each KI and FGD. One of them took notes on a computer (where electricity is available and by hand where not available), while the other asked the interview questions. Both interviewers were free to ask probing questions.

In cases where the KI or FGD participants spoke English sufficiently well, the KI was conducted in English. In other cases, the interview was conducted with the assistance of a translator.

Quantitative data was collected at the end of each KI. These data measured KI perceptions and observable changes in behavior. These quantitative data provided the team with more insights about the meaning of the qualitative data, especially in relation to the validity of FIFES' theory of change (ToC) and its three pillars: biodiversity, livelihoods, and governance. KIs' perceptions were captured by asking them to give their rating on a 1 to 5 scale.

To select six out of the eleven FIFES CFs, the team asked KIs to rate the most successful and least successful CFs in each of the three FIFES regions (northern Nimba, southern Nimba and Grand Bassa). Figure 1 indicates the location of the six CFs where the team collected field data.

Figure 1: Location Map of FIFES Community Forests Interviewed



Source: LSA GIS Team

Each community has two representatives in the CA. The CAs elect five of its members to a CFMB. One of these members is required by the CF regulations to be a woman. The team conducted KIIs with two members of each of the six CFMB, one female and one male. Generally, each CFMB has only one woman, who served as the evaluation's female KI. The male CFMB KI was selected randomly from the other members. Table 2 indicates the categories of KIs and the number of KIs in each category.

Table 1 Categories and Numbers of Key Informants

Categories	Codes	Number of Individuals	
Monrovia		KIs	FG
Forestry Development Authority	E	2	0
Environmental & Rights Civil Society Organizations	E	3	0
Forest Industry	E	3	0
FIFES Central Staff	I	4	0
International Development Institutions	E	3	0
USAID/Liberia	I	2	0
TOTAL		17	0
Outside Monrovia		KIs	FG
FDA Field Staff	E	3	0
FIFES Field Staff (Field Facilitators)	I	12	0
Local Government Authorities	E	3	0
Women Community Members	B	0	6
Youth Community Members	B	0	6
Men Community Members	B	0	6
Community Forest Governance	B	6	0
Agroforestry Producers	B	0	6
WORTH members	B	6	0
TOTAL		30	24
GRAND TOTAL		47	24

In each CF, the FGDs indicated in Table 2 were organized in two communities and selected randomly from a list of all the communities associated with one of the six sample CFs. In each of the twelve communities, three FGDs were conducted, one each with women, youth, and men.

Data Collection Methodologies

FGDs were scheduled at times and in places that are convenient for the participants. Guides were prepared for each category of FGD group to effectively elicit perceptions, opinions, and shared understandings from that FG. Five to ten people participated in each FG. Discussion were encouraged among the participants themselves of the topics or issues related to the evaluation questions. Two evaluators moderated each FGD. A standard protocol was used to explain the purpose of the FGD, introduce the topics of discussion, stimulate conversation, provide direction, and prevent from the discussion from being dominated by too few participants. Participants' comments were typed into a Word document, coded, and filed electronically. A sample FGD Collection Instrument is provided in Annex B.

Qualitative information was collected about the forests and its surrounding landscapes. Observations at field sites were noted by hand. The notes were collated, coded, typed into a Word document, and filed electronically. Site observations emphasized the status of biodiversity and the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Data Analysis Methodologies

Data from the four types of sources were analyzed using a Data Triangulation and Findings Matrix. The matrix was prepared iteratively as data were collected. Through this process, findings related to each evaluation question emerged.⁷⁶ Evidence was summarized or entered into separate rows together with the source of those data (documents, KIIs, FGD, FOs). Preliminary findings emerged from the qualitative data. Triangulation between the documentary, KI, FGD, and FO data validated these findings.

Two methods were used to quantify the qualitative data. The first method was to count the number of KIIs and FGD that provided evidence for the finding. The quantitative data collected from the KIIs (described above) is the second way to quantify the qualitative data related to the perceptions of KIIs about the sustainability and effectiveness of FIFES in achieving its planned results. These data sharpened and summarized some aspects of the qualitative data that KIIs provided during the interview.

At the end of each week, the Triangulation and Findings Matrix was submitted to LSA. This methodology for data analysis provided evidence-based findings. These findings were used to draw conclusions, and the conclusions were the basis for formulating recommendations.

Plan for Gender and Social Analyses

The methodology gave special attention to collecting reliable data to provide evidence for findings related to the different effects of FIFES actions on women and youth as compared to men. The KII and FGD data collection sheets included specific questions related to the gender-differentiated roles of men, women, and youth in community forest management and in FIFES' actions to encourage community forest management.

Data from KIIs and FGDs was collected, disaggregated, and reported by male, female, and youth and non-youth categories. Data analysis thus produced findings that distinguish differences in the effects of community forest management actions on men, women, and youth.

Constraints and Limitations

Lack of Baseline Data

FIFES did not establish a baseline at its inception, limiting the ability of the team to trace the magnitude and type of result attributable to FIFES' interventions. The lack of baseline data was mitigated by: (1) designing KIIs and FGDs to capture qualitative and quantitative data that will permit partial reconstruction of baseline conditions when FIFES began its activities in a particular site; and (2) using data from reports produced by prior activities (e.g., LFSP and PROSPER) to recreate baseline conditions in institutions (e.g., FDA, community organizations) when FIFES began.

Response Bias

KIIs and participants in FGDs may have provided answers that are biased towards the answers they perceive the evaluators may prefer to hear or which may provide them with access to FIFES' potential benefits. Response bias was reduced by: (1) selecting a representative sample of KIIs; (2) explaining to KIIs and participants in FGDs the need for frank, unbiased qualitative data; and (3) asking probing, follow-on questions to confirm the knowledge and opinions of the KIIs and FGD participants.

Sampling Bias

Selection bias may have resulted from excluding from sampling communities or respondents who are more difficult to reach. This bias was mitigated by (1) developing an accurate understanding of the universe of potential KIIs and FGD participants; (2) collecting data from a representative sample of the potential KIIs and FGD participants; and (3) holding separate FGDs with women and youth.

⁷⁶ Patten, M. 2002

ANNEX D: STATEMENT OF WORK

Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) Midterm Performance Evaluation: Statement of Work

I. Introduction

This Statement of Work describes the conditions of work and terms of reference for a Performance Evaluation of USAID's Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) activity. The goal of FIFES is to develop key rural forest-based enterprises that provide inclusive, sustainable economic opportunities for rural farmers and forest-dependent communities in a way that combats deforestation, forest degradation, biodiversity loss, and reduces the threats to biodiversity. The evaluation will measure the results of the first two years of FIFES' operations and investigate the effectiveness of FIFES' technical assistance and capacity building approach to achieve the results of the activity. The USAID/Liberia Mission will use findings from this evaluation to inform future investment in the forest sector, and help inform its continued support of biodiversity directives.

II. Summary Information

Activity: Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)

Cooperative Agreement No. AID-669-A-16-00002

Activity Dates: November 6, 2015 – November 5, 2020

Funding: Total Estimated Cost (TEC) of \$22,290,239

Implementing Partner: ACDI/VOCA

Subs: Pact, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

AOR: Lisa Korte

A/AOR: Yoel Kirschner

Geographical focus: Nimba County, Grand Bassa County

FIFES is a five-year (November 6, 2015–November 5, 2020) Cooperative Agreement with a Total Estimated Cost (TEC) of \$22,290,239, implemented by ACDI/VOCA. FIFES builds on previous USG funding in Liberia's forest sector, including the Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCPF, 2007-12) and the People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER, 2012-17) activities.

FIFES addresses the primary drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss in 11 authorized Community Forests (CFs) in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties, through the USAID/Liberia 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Results Framework:

IR 2.2 Natural Resources Managed Sustainably

- IR 2.2.1 Forest Management Improved
- IR 2.2.2 Sustainable Forest-based Enterprises Strengthened

FIFES' Activity Intermediate Results (IRs) respond to its Results Framework which aims to:

1. Selected Forest Value Chains Strengthened;
2. Legal and Management Framework for Forest Enterprises Established;
3. Enhance knowledge and skills for forest enterprises and landscape management through monitoring and inventory of forest resources, youth engagement, and gender integration.

The FIFES Results Framework contributes to the larger forest policy reform goals outlined in the USAID/Liberia CDCS 2013-17 (see Annex I), particularly Development Objective (DO) 2: Sustained, Market-Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty and Intermediate Result 2.2. Natural Resources Managed Sustainably.

Results Framework

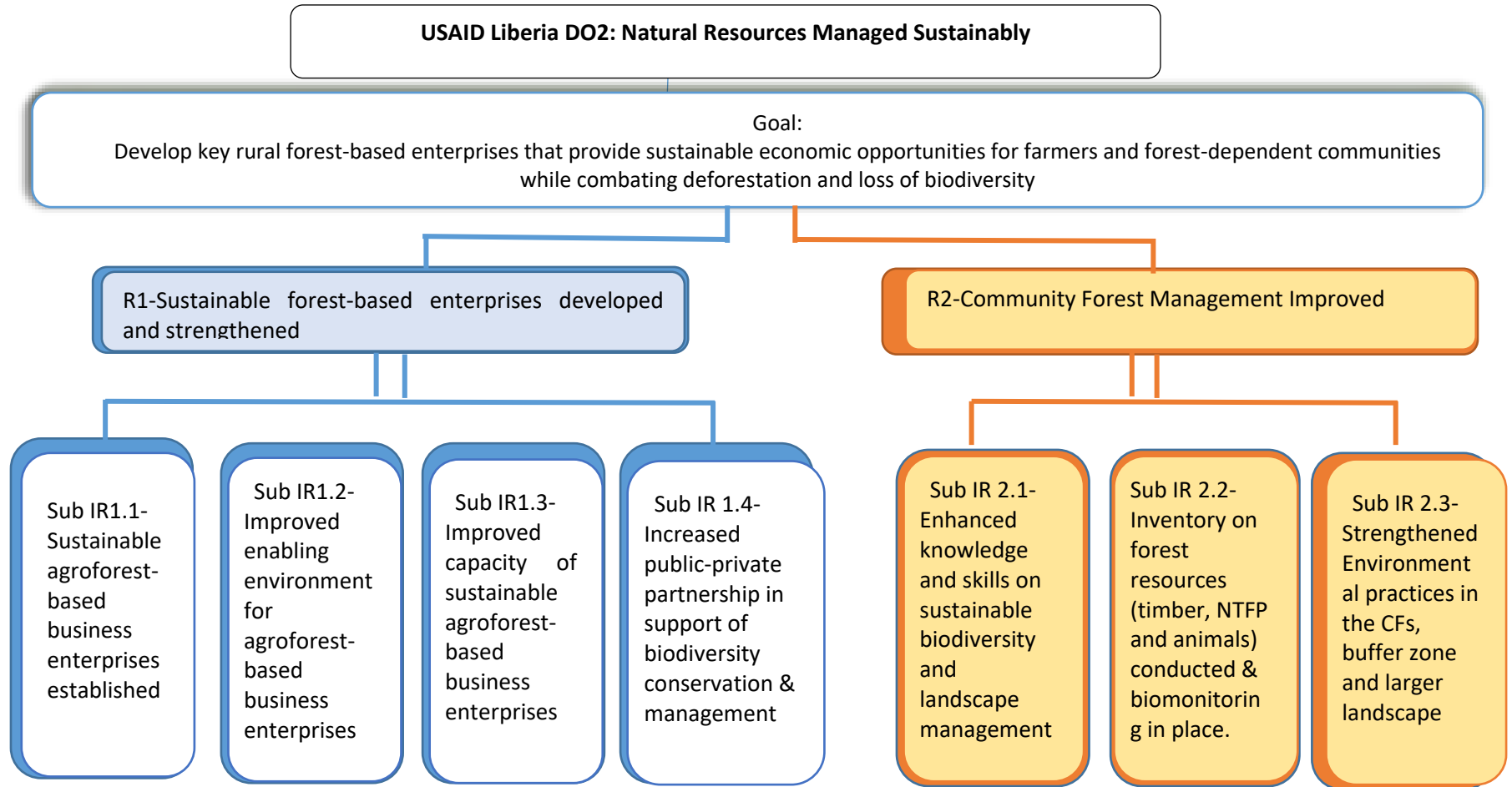
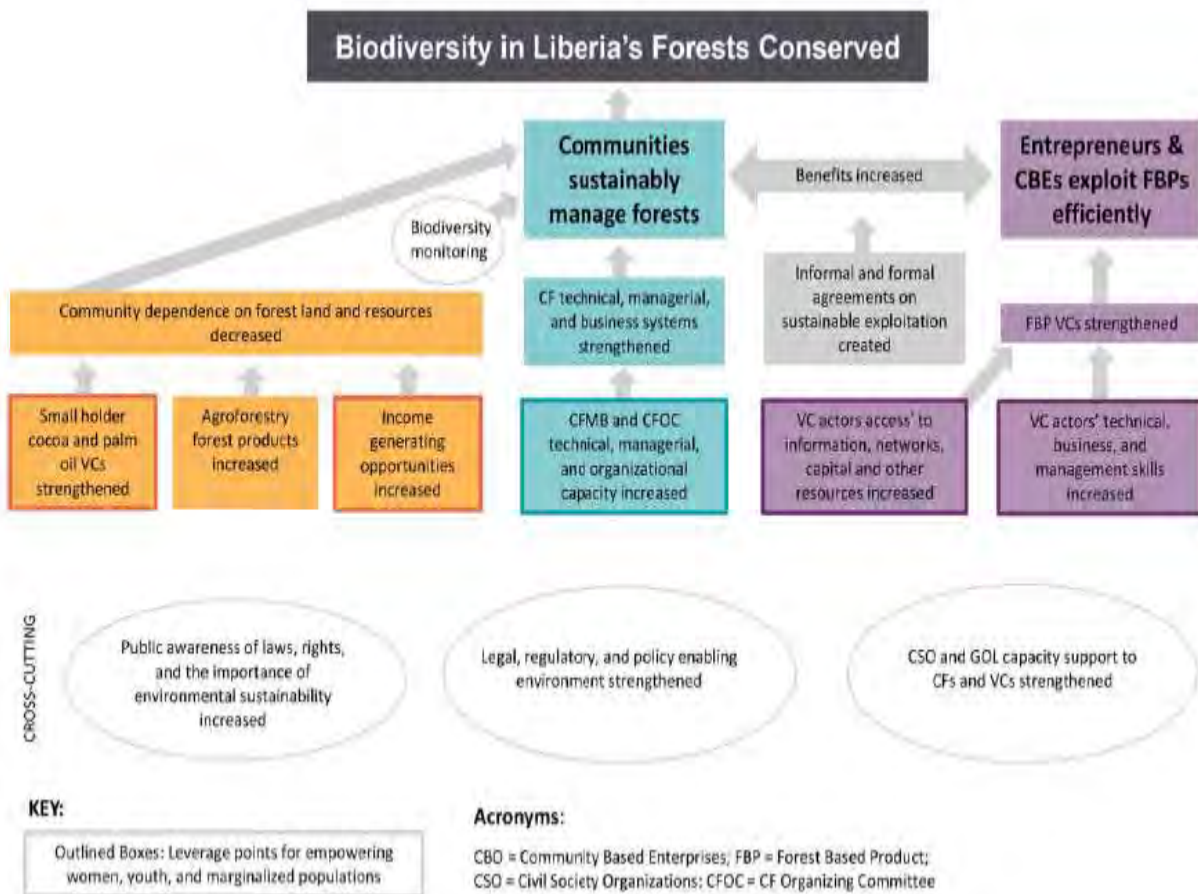


Figure 1: FIFES Results Framework

III. Program Goals and Results

Figure 2: FIFES Theory of Change Diagram



Result 1: Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Developed and Strengthened

This result aims to increase the benefits communities receive from sustainable forest management and the forest landscape. A market-systems approach supports forest landscape value chains (primarily pepper, plantain, cocoa, groundnut, cowpea), through which technical expertise is channeled to rural enterprise producers and buyers. The FIFES theory of change diagram (Figure 2) proposes that managed innovations in tree crops and other conservation agriculture practices increases the productivity of land and reduces the practice of slash and burn agriculture, thereby reducing pressure on CFs. Improved land management practices are sustained and supported through creation and implementation of CF business plans, an essential aspect of Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs). FIFES tests the theory that increased productivity leads to conservation by quantitative tracking of indicators EG 10.2-1 and EG 10.2-2, that measure land area under improved management, and shows evidence of improved biophysical conditions through a combination of field data and Landsat imagery.

FIFES Result 1 corresponds to the USAID/Liberia Results Framework by supporting DO 2: Sustained, Market-Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty, through IR 2.2: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably, Sub-IR 2.2.2: Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Strengthened.

Applicable Indicators for Result 1

PPR Indicators

EG.10.2-3 Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation activities as a result of USG assistance

EG.3.2-5 Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USG assistance

EG.3.2-19 Value of small-holder incremental sales generated with USG assistance

Custom Indicators:

1. Number of forest-based enterprises/ businesses operating more profitably (at or above cost) due to FIFES project assistance
2. Value of incremental sales attributed to project interventions
3. Number of new forest-based enterprises formed to support program-assisted value chains
4. Number of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including farmers, receiving bus. development services from USG assisted sources
5. Number of policies/regulations on natural resources and/or biodiversity adopted and enforced
6. Score, in percent, of combined key areas of organizational capacity amongst FIFES assisted forest-based enterprises
7. Value of new private sector resources contributed to USG-supported Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
8. Number of women beneficiaries receiving savings and credit technical assistance as a result of USG support
9. Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming.

Result 2: Community Forest Management Improved

FIFES works with 11 CFs to improve their ability to sustainably manage their forests, by collaboratively developing Community Forest Management Agreements and Plans (CFMA/Ps), business plans, and provide capacity building in forest governance to the existing management structures of the CFs: Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs), Community Assemblies (CAs), and Executive Committees (ECs). Following activity completion, CFs should have a better capacity to seek out informational resources, networks, and support (in civil society, government, and private sector), to negotiate the terms of cooperation on their forest lands. With input from Pact, FIFES works to ensure sound governance systems are put in place. Through its sub-agreement with CIFOR, the capacity of CFs to conduct forest inventory, biodiversity monitoring of forest areas, and maintain boundaries of areas designated as CF land is improved. FIFES' cooperation with CIFOR is a necessary part of fulfilling a primary objective of the activity—reducing biodiversity loss in the upper Guinean rainforest and tracking the progress made in a coherent way, so that it can be used as a benchmark in perpetuity.

It is through this component that FIFES engages most with the Government of Liberia (GoL) through the Forest Development Authority (FDA); the governance structures of the CFs are empowered by law with the responsibility and authority to self-organize, and co-manage the forest resource with the GoL. FIFES is therefore building institutions, whether in the form of CFMBs, or the capacity of the FDA to execute sufficient due diligence in its role as a regulatory force.

FIFES Result 2 corresponds to the USAID/Liberia Results Framework by supporting DO 2: Sustained, Market-Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty, through IR 2.2: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably, Sub-IR 2.2.1: Forest Managed Systems Improved.

Applicable PPR Indicators for Result 2:

EG.3-1 Number of individuals who have received USG supported training

EG.3.2-17: Number of farmers and others who have applied improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance

EG.10.2-1 Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved biophysical conditions as result of USG assistance

EG.10.2-2 Number of hectares of biologically significant areas under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance

Custom Indicators:

10. Score, in percent, of combined key areas of organizational capacity amongst FIFES-assisted community forest management bodies/CFOCs

11. Number of plant and animal key species monitored as a result of FIFES assistance

Cross-Cutting Gender and Youth: Improved stakeholder Engagement for Co-Management

This component coalesces all of FIFES' communication, outreach and awareness raising activities around the two previous results—to enhance knowledge and skills for livelihoods in the forest landscape and within the CFs, and for management of the CFs—and streamlines gender and youth issues into all of FIFES' activities. A variety of means are used to convey and promote retention of the technical information, including radio programs, manuals and curriculum, music, and youth events and conferences.

FIFES Result 3 corresponds to the USAID/Liberia Results Framework by supporting DO 2: Sustained, Market-Driven Economic Growth to Reduce Poverty, through IR 2.2: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably.

Applicable PPR Indicators for Cross-Cutting:

EG.10.2-4 Number of people trained in sustainable natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance

FIFES Results Framework Aligned with USAID DO 2

USAID Liberia DO2: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably	
USAID Liberia IR 2.2: Natural Resources Managed Sustainably	
CDCS Project Sub-IR 2.2.1: Forest Managed Systems Improved	CDCS Project Sub-IR 2.2.2: Sustainable Forest-Based Enterprises Strengthened
Activity R2: Community Forest Management Improved	Activity R1: Sustainable forest-based enterprises developed and strengthened
FIFES IR 2.1: Enhanced knowledge and skills on sustainable biodiversity and landscape management	FIFES IR 1.1: Sustainable agroforest-based business enterprises established
FIFES IR 2.2 Inventory on forest resources (timber, NTFP and animals) conducted & Biomonitoring in Place.	FIFES IR 1.2: Improved enabling environment for agroforest-based business enterprises
FIFES IR 2.3 Strengthened Environmental practices in the CFs, buffer zone and larger landscapes	FIFES IR 1.3: Improved capacity of sustainable agroforest-based business enterprises

	FIFES IR 1.4: Increased public-private partnership in support of biodiversity conservation & management
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IV. Purpose of FIFES Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent and in-depth examination of the overall progress of the FIFES activity in Liberia, by identifying achievements, performance issues, and constraints related to activity implementation and effectiveness. A midterm evaluation is necessary since it will inform the remaining years of implementation of FIFES, and also future investment in the sector at large. With roughly three years left in its Agreement period, FIFES can still be reshaped or redirected to better achieve its intended results at the close of activity. Considering that USAID operates in an increasingly constrained fiscal environment, the midterm evaluation will help USAID link the activity to the achievement of biodiversity objectives.

To the extent possible, there will be an emphasis on quantitative results achieved as a result of the activity, and evidence of actual biodiversity conservation or an actionable plan to implement biodiversity conservation. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be expressly shared and discussed with USAID/Liberia, ACDI/VOCA, CIFOR, Pact, and Liberian Forest Development Authority (FDA).

The following questions will be answered by considering FIFES' interventions in three key areas: Forest Governance, Biodiversity Monitoring, and Forest-Based Enterprise Development.

V. Evaluation Questions

1. **Progress:** To what extent has progress been made in achieving the results under FIFES? How have youth and women benefited?
 - Are the appropriate technical skills and support available and applied to achieve results?
2. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Which approaches have been most effective and efficient in achieving the results of FIFES? Which approaches have been the least effective and efficient, and why? Identify best practices and opportunities.
 - Specifically for enterprise development:
 - o Have the enterprises generated sufficient revenue to offset the need for illegal or unsustainable forest use (e.g., artisanal logging, hunting, mining)?
 - o What methods of connecting sellers and buyers are most effective in the long run to increase income from forest-based enterprises?
 - o Is there an improved enabling environment for agro-forest based business enterprises? If so, is it influencing farmers' abilities to advance their enterprise?
3. **Relevance:** To what extent does FIFES respond to institutional and beneficiary needs?
4. **Sustainability:** To what extent will the capacity building and technical assistance efforts to Liberia's institutions achieve the results of FIFES, (including FDA, FTI, and the local-level Community Forest management groups)?
 - Specifically for FDA, consider due diligence of proposed Social Agreements of other co-managed agreements with CFs.
 - To what extent are financial sustainability arrangements being built into CF management structures to encourage full consideration of environmental factors in development of the Community Forest Management Plan?

VI. Evaluation Methods

The evaluation is expected to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The team will conduct a desk review of available literature including activity documents (original

Cooperative Agreement, DQA Report), quarterly and annual reports. The team will also look at assessments (e.g. FAA 118/119) that were used to determine interventions. Site visits will provide qualitative data for analysis through methods such as in-depth and KIs and FGDs. The qualitative data collection will be supplemented through quantification of qualitative information, especially through participatory ranking exercises that will provide numeric insight on respondent priorities. It is expected that the team will use data provided by the IP in regular quarterly and annual reports, performance reporting, and assessments for most of the quantitative data required.

Field visits should be conducted in Nimba and Grand Bassa counties, to provide a balance of diverse challenges faced by FIFES in supporting Community Forests. The team is expected to meet with Monrovia-based staff and field staff, as well as beneficiaries including CFMBs, ECs, and Community Assembly representatives. The team should also meet with staff from FDA, and consider meeting with World Bank to understand the context of donor support for the Liberia forest sector.

The USAID/Liberia NRM team will provide additional documents when necessary for the desk review, as well as contact information for prospective interviewees. The team will be responsible for identifying and reviewing additional materials relevant to the evaluation, as well as additional contacts. Illustrative data sources include but are not limited to:

1. FIFES Award (Cooperative Agreement No. AID-669-A-16-00002)
2. FIFES Annual Work Plans
3. FIFES Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
4. Performance Indicator Database System data
5. Quarterly and annual reports
6. Data quality assessment (DQA) reports
7. Initial Environmental Examination or Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for FIFES
8. Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) 118/119 Tropical Forest and Biodiversity Assessment (2014)
9. Liberia Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment 2015
10. USAID/Liberia CDCS and PMP
11. Land Rights and Community Forestry LOP Report
12. PROSPER Final Evaluation and Final Report
13. Other related national data and reports

VII. Deliverables and Timeline

Evaluation deliverables include:

1. Evaluation Team Planning Meetings
2. In-brief with USAID/Liberia, GOL and Implementing Partner
3. Inception Report with work plan and data collection instruments
4. Debrief with USAID/Liberia, GOL and Implementing Partner
 - Present the major findings from the evaluation to USAID/Liberia and partners through a PowerPoint (or similar) presentation. The debriefing will cover preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations. The team, in consultation with USAID, should consider doing two to three presentations: one to USAID, one to partners, and one to the FDA. This will be determined by the presence of sensitive information, if any, in the report.
5. Draft Evaluation Report - A draft report (maximum 30 pages, excluding annexes) shall be submitted to Liberia Strategic Analysis (LSA) for review, and LSA must submit the draft report to USAID/Liberia within three weeks after the in-country work is conducted. The written report should clearly describe findings, conclusions, and recommendations and conform to USAID requirements outlined below. USAID will provide comments on the draft report within

ten working days of submission. LSA will also submit the draft report to the IP and GOL for comments and an opportunity to disclose a statement of difference, if applicable.

6. Final Report - LSA will submit a final report (maximum 30 pages, excluding annexes) that incorporates the USAID/Liberia, IP, GOL comments and suggestions no later than ten days after final, written comments on the draft report have been submitted by all parties.
7. Findings Workshop – LSA will facilitate a Findings Workshop one to three months after submission of the final evaluation report with USAID, FIFES, and relevant stakeholders. This will provide an opportunity to engage USAID and stakeholders in identifying opportunities for findings application. This engagement will lead to a more tailored plan on how to collaboratively apply findings and lessons learned directly to relevant decision making, including policy development, and larger sectoral assessment needs. The workshop will be a one-day session facilitated by LSA with the aim of ensuring that the findings of the performance evaluation are being used.

Timeline:

The evaluation should follow the timeline for producing deliverables outlined in the Gantt chart below.

Performance Evaluation Gantt Chart

Activity	# of days	Week 1-2	Week 3-5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13-14	Week 15-16	
USAID shares SOW with LSA	1												
LSA publishes call for CVs	14												
LSA recruits and onboards team members	21												
Desk Review	5												
Team travels to Liberia	1												
Team planning meeting - internal	1												
Submit draft Inception Report to USAID	1												
Planning Meetings with USAID and FIFES/GOL	1.5												
In-brief with USAID and FIFES/GOL	1												
Prepare for field work	2.5												
Submit final Inception Report to USAID													
Field Work and preliminary analysis	20												
Debrief with USAID and FIFES/GOL	1												
Travel from Liberia	1												
Analysis and report drafting	11												
LSA quality control and revisions	5												
LSA submits Draft Report to USAID													
USAID, FIFES, and FDA review the draft report	10												
Team incorporates comments and feedback	5												
LSA quality control													
LSA submits Final Report to USAID	5												
LSA facilitates Learning Event with USAID, FIFES, FDA, and stakeholders	1												
Prep work by Team Leader and national consultant	1												1-2 months after PE

VIII. Team Composition

The evaluation team will be composed of four individuals: team leader, two technical experts, and an evaluation specialist.

USAID/Liberia **recommends** the following staffing structure for the evaluation:

- i. An international senior-level Team Leader/Evaluation Specialist will be responsible for the overall implementation of the evaluation and ensuring that all expected tasks and deliverables are achieved on time and of high quality. S/he must have at least ten years' professional experience in evaluation management, qualitative data collection, and analysis. The candidate must have demonstrated expertise in community forestry and extensive experience implementing USAID programs, especially in West Africa and similar settings. The candidate must have exceptional organizational, analytical, writing and presentation skills. Knowledge of USAID rules, regulations, and procedures in Natural Resource Management is desirable.

The candidate must have a proven track record supervising teams in the field and producing high quality and concise reports in English. S/he will oversee the overall drafting of the evaluation framework, including methodology determinations; organization of calendar/travel/meetings; assign responsibilities for interviews, data collection, analysis process, and report writing.

- ii. An international mid- to senior-level natural resource management specialist will be the technical specialist with experience in designing and/or evaluating activities on community forestry and landscape management through technical assistance and capacity building of Government institutions and community-based governance. S/he should have a background in Community Forestry, Natural Resources Management, Non-Timber Forest Products, Remote Sensing/GIS, Forest Inventory and Biodiversity Monitoring, and working in partnership with communities to improve forest management. Experience managing or implementing research programs is preferable. The incumbent must be able to conduct interviews and analyze the resulting data. Strong American English-language speaking and writing skills also essential.
- iii. The Agroforestry Enterprise Specialist will be the sectoral specialist with experience and knowledge about the Liberian context, particularly on sustainable agroforest-based livelihood development and community forest governance. S/he should have at least five years' professional experience in forestry program management, preferably through USAID. Some experience in gender analysis and managing or implementing research programs is preferable. The incumbent must be able to conduct interviews and FGDs and analyze the resulting data. Strong American English language speaking and writing skills are also essential.
- iv. A national evaluation specialist with at least five years relevant experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The local consultant must have experience evaluating community forestry and natural resources programs and have demonstrated logistics and planning skills. He/she should have broad knowledge of Liberian forestry issues and the ability to assist in qualitative instrument preparation, key informant interviews, data collection, and analysis of collected data. Strong American English language speaking and writing skills also essential.

Collectively the team members must have experience in conducting both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Prior to their arrival in Liberia, all team members are required to familiarize themselves with USAID's Evaluation Policy, USAID's publication outlining a good evaluation report, and USAID's checklist for assessing an evaluation report. Additionally, all team members should possess a strong familiarity with the political, economic, policy, and educational context in Liberia.

USAID leaves to the offeror's discretion other necessary team members/staff for the evaluation (e.g. logistics, scheduling, translation, data analysis). Aside from the above mentioned key personnel, the offeror must decide how the evaluation team should be structured in order to successfully address the evaluation questions. All attempts should be made for the team to be gender balanced and to include local (Liberian) experts. A statement of potential bias or conflict of interest (or lack thereof) is required from each team member.

IX. Logistics and Level of Effort

The contractor will be responsible for all international and in-country administrative and logistical support, including identifying and fielding appropriate consultants (international and local). The evaluation team should be able to make all logistical arrangements including vehicle rental for travel within and outside Monrovia and should not expect any logistical support from the Mission. The team should also make their own arrangements for venues for team meetings, and equipment support for producing the report.

Evaluation team members are authorized and expected to work a six-day week. Travel over weekends may be necessary. Work should commence as soon as practicable, but no later than March 2018. For planning purposes, contractors should be aware of Liberian and US holidays during the evaluation time frame.

The evaluation should follow the illustrative schedule and level of effort given below.

Schedule and Level of Effort

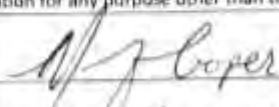
Task/Deliverable	Estimated Time (Days)		
	Team Leader	Int'l Team Member	Lib Team Member
Review background documents & preparatory work (offshore)	5	5	3
Travel to Liberia	2	2	0
Team Planning Meetings in Monrovia with implementing partners, FDA, and USAID/Liberia	2		
In-brief with USAID/Liberia and prepare for field work	4		
Submit Inception Report			
Field work: Data collection and ongoing data analysis	20 (including field travel)		
Debrief presentation with USAID/Liberia, GOL, and IPs	1		
Analysis and report drafting	11	7	7
LSA performs quality assurance check and edits draft report	5		
LSA submits draft report to USAID/Liberia	1		
USAID/Liberia, GOL, and IP provide comments on draft report	10		
Team Leader revises draft report to incorporate comments and submit final report	5	1	0
LSA performs quality assurance check and submits final report	5		
LSA facilitates learning event	1	0	2
Total time required	71		
Working days for consultants	51	42	39

ANNEX E: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Monique C. Cooper-Liverpool
Title	Natural Resource Management Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	Team Leader ☐ Team member ☒
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	AID-669-C-16-00002
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	N/A
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest (that is direct, or is significant through indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation). 3. Current or previous direct or significant (through indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project). 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	06 March 2018

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Helen Finlay
Title	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Organization	
Evaluation Position?	☐ Team Leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES)
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant through indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant through indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the partner project and organization(s) being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	16 th April 2018

Name	Mwenda Kazadi
Title	Agro-Forestry Enterprise Specialist
Organization	Social Impact
Evaluation Position?	☐ Team Leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or activities of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	N/A

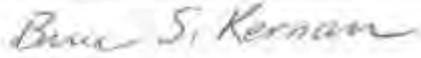
I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	Digitally signed by  Mwenda Kazadi
Date	2/24/2018

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Bruce S. Kernan
Title	Team Leader
Organization	Social Impact, Inc.
Evaluation Position?	☒ Team Leader ☐ Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	L034
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s) if applicable)	Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability Activity Midterm Performance Evaluation, Liberia
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect that information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	March 3, 2018

U.S. Agency for International Development - Liberia
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Monrovia, Liberia