

Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP) funded Jointly by Government of Liberia and World Bank International Development Association

Project Brief

A. Project Description

The project was subjected to the World Bank's normal project cycle process: i) project proposal was approved by the Board on June 5, 2012; ii) Financing Agreement was signed on July 18, 2012; iii) the Act to ratify the Financing Agreement between the Republic of Liberia and IDA was approved by the Senate and House of Representatives on April 30, 2013; and iv) Signed by the President on April 30, 2013.

The Project **development goal is 'to increase access to finance, inputs, technologies and markets for Smallholder Tree Crop Farmers in Liberia, and to develop a long term development program for the Tree Crop Sector'**.

Total project costs are estimated at around US\$23.1 million equivalent, which will be funded by an IDA credit of US\$15 million, GOL funding of about US\$1.1 million, financial institutions contribution of US\$800,000, and beneficiaries in-kind inputs of around US\$6.2 million.

The project constitutes the first phase of a longer term tree crop development program, targeting smallholders. It will test different rehabilitation, replanting and new planting models and associated implementation and financing mechanisms for revitalizing the tree crop sector.

These models will be implemented in partnerships with concessionaires/large firms, NGOs, Farmer Organizations (FOs) and financial institutions in six Counties, Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh. The project includes a strong learning component.

The project comprises of three components and six sub-components:

(i.) Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization estimated at USD 17.6 million:

- a.) **Cocoa/Coffee revitalization:** rehabilitating, replanting, and extension of cocoa/coffee farms (7,500 ha) in Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh counties; technical and management advice to smallholders and their farmer organizations (FOs); quality promotion and market linkages; enhancing access of cocoa and coffee farmers and FOs to adapted financial services; and development of small scale processing;
- b.) **Small scale Oil Palm revitalization:** revitalization of an oil palm plantation run by smallholders (in Grand Gedeh), including support to rehabilitation/replanting (600 ha), capacity building of the existing cooperative, and development of intermediate processing technologies; and promotion of an out growers scheme (600 ha) around a concessionaire in Grand Bassa County.
- c.) **Rubber revitalization:**replanting and extension of rubber farms (2,600 ha) in, Margibi and Montserrado Counties in partnership with a concessionaires and a large Liberian estate;

(ii) Institutional building and preparation of the long term program estimated at USD 3.3 million:

Strengthening of MoA's technical services (the program management unit at headquarters and County agricultural offices) and of the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA); elaboration of national strategies for FO development, of master plans for targeted tree crops; securing land use rights of targeted smallholders; support to adaptive tree crop research; and preparation of long term tree crop development program; and

(iii) Project Coordination and Management estimated at USD 2.2 million:

Project Coordination and Management. The component aims at ensuring an effective coordination, management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the project. It comprises two sub-components:

- a.) **Strategic planning, Coordination, Management and implementation support, including two main activities:** Support to Steering Bodies: project launching workshops at County and national levels; supporting regular coordination meetings at county level assembling all stakeholders; and support to the project Steering Committee (PSC); and, Support to the project Coordination Unit (PCU) attached to the MoA's PMU that will be in charge of the day-to-day project coordination; and
- b.) **M&E and Knowledge Sharing.** This sub-component will support the establishment and implementation of the project M&E system through annual participatory planning and evaluation workshops and thematic evaluations (including annual producer and value chain surveys) that will feed into the results framework and planning activities for the following year.

B. The Economic Strategic Fit

The project fits into the Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), particularly its second pillar 'economic revitalization', based on the promotion of export oriented economic growth, through consolidating the role of the private sector, while also facilitating rural development, increasing rural incomes, and contributing to poverty reduction.

The project is fully in line with the current Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the International Development Association (World Bank) and would contribute to two out of its three pillars: facilitating pro-poor growth and rehabilitating infrastructure to jump-start economic growth.

The proposed project is also fully aligned with the 2010-2020 Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment program (LASIP) developed by GOL in 2008/2009 after extensive stakeholders consultation. It would contribute to the four programs of LASIP and particularly to sub-program 1.3 (Smallholder tree crop development), 2.1 (Rehabilitation and expansion of rural roads), 3.1 (Rebuilding the MoA and improved coordination & management), 3.4 (Capacity building of farm based organizations), and 3.5 (Revitalizing agriculture research).

C. Economic Benefits

The project is expected to lead to tree crop production and value increases and would generate both direct and indirect economic benefits:

- (i.) Improved livelihoods and increased incomes of tree crop smallholders, and therefore improved food security at household level and reduction of vulnerability to external shocks, notably those related to climate change and rising food prices;
- (ii.) Reduced transaction costs-notably transport and credit costs and post-harvest losses through the rehabilitation of feeder roads and marketing enhancement;
- (iii.) Improved access to adapted financial services by farmer organizations and their members,
- (iv.) Increased value added of tree crop production , particularly cocoa, coffee, and oil palm, through marketing and FO/Coops strengthening and promotion of professional small and medium scale processing;
- (v.) Enhanced market/business opportunities and economies of scale benefiting actors of the supply chains (smallholders, transporters, marketers, agro-industries) under win-win arrangements and the promotion of public-private partnerships;
- (vi.) Enhanced bargaining power, understanding of markets and management capacity of smallholders and their organizations;
- (vii.) Incremental and off farm employment generated through the extension of area under tree crop production;
- (viii.) Foreign exchange savings through increased national production and subsequent reduction of imports; and
- (ix.) Improved social stability in the project areas. The project would also have a positive impact on women and female headed households and vulnerable households in general.

Table 1: Estimated Direct Project Beneficiaries

Crop	Number
<i>Cocoa/Coffee Revitalization</i>	
Targeted farmers/households	3,000
Section FOs supported	30
Clan FOs supported	10
District Coops supported	3
<i>Oil Palm Revitalization</i>	
Targeted farmers/households	600
Farmers' run plantation Block FOs	4
Farmers' run plantation Cooperative	1
Oil Palm Out growers FOs	6
<i>Rubber Revitalization</i>	
Targeted farmers/households	1,300
Rubber FO/Coops supported	14
Total Targeted Tree Crop Smallholders	4,900
Total Direct Beneficiaries (Household Members)	26,000

D. Project Implementation Progress

Following the declaration of Effectiveness of the Credit, the PCU organized the Official Launch of the project on June 24 followed by a technical workshop on June 25, 2013 with the aim of briefing the implementing agencies and concerned GoL departments. The official launch was chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and was attended by about 70 persons, representing the Legislature, government departments and agencies, donor agencies, other institutions and private sector firms interested in the implementation of the project, as well as representatives of the media. The MoA presented an overview of the Tree Crop Sub-Sector in Liberia as well as an overview of the Project. After the Minister of Agriculture and the Bank' Country Manager gave remarks, Hon. Josephine Francis, Chair of the Agriculture and Fisheries Committee of the House of Representatives formally declared the project launched. The technical workshop was chaired by Dr.Sizi Subah, Deputy Minister for Technical Services and was attended by about 50 persons, representing the future and potential project implementing partners. It was aimed at presenting the detailed project objectives, design, scope and components, the detailed management and implementation arrangements which are described in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM), as well as the World Bank guidelines (procurement, management, environmental and social safeguards). The World Bank mission was pleased to note the active participation of attendants, particularly the County Agricultural Coordinators (CACs), reflecting strong project ownership.



The Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Florence A. Chenoweh giving official statement at the National launch of the Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP) at Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville city outside Monrovia.



National launch Photo of the Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP) at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville city outside Monrovia.

The **County Project Launch** was conducted during the period **October 14- 22, 2013** and all the six Project Counties **Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa and Grand Gedeh** were covered. In summary, a total of over 300 participated (Senators, Representatives or their representatives, Deputy Ministers and Assistant Minister, Registrar General of Cooperatives, Director of PMU, Superintendents, Development Superintendents, County Project Planners, City Mayors, Local and International NGOs, and representatives of Farmer Organizations) took part, six radio talk shows were done and six launch programs captured on video. These videos are with the PCU to be shared and used for development assistance work.







The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) is now being managed by six technical staff members, Project Coordinator, Safeguards Manager, Project Accountant, Procurement Officer, M&E Officer, Administrative and Finance Assistant and one Driver. The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) is part of the Program Management Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture which gives overall management oversight to six projects currently housed at PMU/MoA, University of Liberia, Fendell Campus.



The Project Steering Committee (PSC) consisting of representatives of eighteen Liberian institutions are part of the National Project Steering Committee that has oversight policy responsibility of ensuring that the Project development goals are attained. The committee met on Thursday July 18, 2013 and approved Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWP&Bs) including this Project's work plan and budget as well. Following this approval, the WB/IDA

also reviewed and approved the annual work plan and budget. The first AWP&B covering the period July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 is a mobilization year intended to build a strong foundation for the successful implementation of the Pilot Phase. A little over US\$4m is allocated for the year 2013/14.



Approval been granted for the contract for an Operator to implement Cocoa/Coffee sub-component which provides investments in all steps of the value chain (production, storage, bulking, processing, financial products development, etc.,) in three of the country’s main Cocoa/Coffee producing Counties; Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh. The total target hectares of is 7,500 ha (6,000 ha for Cocoa and 1,500 ha for Coffee). Mobilization for the commencement of work will start in March 2014.

Sites identification and verification including providing GIS maps of target areas in Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh Counties have been completed. The cocoa and coffee sites identification and verification are carried out in order to comply with environment and social safeguards policies of the World Bank.

The PCU has initiated contact with the Concessionaires that were identified during Project appraisal to work with the PMU/MoA to help implement the oil palm and rubber sub-components of the Project. The PCU held a meeting with Executives of EPO LIBINCO from Grand Bassa County at the PM/MoA on February 19. On 20th of February, 2014, the PCU also met with authorities of Salala Rubber Corporation in Margibi. The meeting with MARCO was held on February 28, 2014.

The Land Commission working with other agencies has conducted a Free Prior Informed Consent(FPIC) of the citizens of Boundary town and its surrounding within the Knonbo District in Grand Gedeh. The FPIC is intended to deed the 600 hectare-Dube Plantation to the Multi-Purpose Farmers’ Cooperative. At the end of the exercise local authorities and farming communities signed a Statement of Declaration to deed the land. The Land Commission will now proceed with the next steps to deed the land. The Cooperative Development Agency working with the PCU has also conducted a feasibility study of the Multi-Purpose Farmers’ Cooperative to ascertain the viability or otherwise of the farmers’ organization.

Project Coordination Unit
February 12, 2014

