

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: Fauna and Flora International

Project Title: Intensification of the Liberia Forest Reassessment Project to Create New Conservation Areas in Liberia

Date of Report: June 2003

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

This project was prepared in response to the signature of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Liberia (GoL) and Conservation International (CI) in January 2002 pledging, among other things, the creation of four new protected areas and the expansion of one national park within six months of the signature date. Because of the tight time frame of the commitments, the lack of any other institutional home to carry out the work in the time frame and the overlap in objectives between the Liberia Forest Re-assessment project (LFR) and the MOU, the LFR management committee chose to offer that its staff and office intensify its activities to assist in the realisation of some of the MOU's commitments.

The LFR is a collaborative initiative between the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the National Environmental Commission of Liberia and the Department of Statistics of the Liberian Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs on the one hand, and Fauna & Flora International and Conservation International on the other. It is funded for 3.5 years (2001-2004) principally by the European Commission and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF).

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *To generate the required information and prepare the required reports for the creation of three new protected areas in Liberia (Grebo National Park, Cestos-Senkwehn National Park, Nimba Nature Reserve) and for an expansion of Sapo National park. In close collaboration with CI-Liberia, the LFR office will organise rapid biological surveys of the proposed Grebo Natl. Park (from Cote d Ivoire as well as Liberia), the proposed Cestos-Senkwehn Natl. Park, and the proposed Nimba Nature Reserve (currently Nimba East National Forest). It will undertake rapid socio-economic surveys of the proposed Grebo and Cestos-Senkwehn National Parks. Liberians will be trained in appropriate methodologies for both types of survey. In addition to the individual survey reports (which may not be finely polished), this project will prepare 4 reports, including draft legal gazettlements, proposing the creation of Grebo and Cestos-Senkwehn National Parks, Nimba Nature Reserve and an extension to Sapo National Park. These reports will integrate the results of the rapid biological and socio-economic surveys of each proposed area, plus the detailed vegetation maps being prepared by CI*

for the LFR, and the consultations with logging concessionaires and other line ministries active or with intent to operate in the areas. They will recommend precise boundaries of the proposed protected areas and make initial management recommendations for management of the areas. They will contain draft legal decrees for declaring the areas protected. (See supplementary materials for report outline.) These reports will be presented to the FDA for onward transmission to the President's Office and later to the Liberian Congress for enactment as law. As part of the LFR, geo-referenced information above will be loaded into the GIS database under preparation by the LFR and by regular LFR staff, but for reasons of staff availability it will probably not be input by the end of this intensification project's lifespan.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
1. Officially published announcements creating Grebo National Park, Cestos-Senkwehn National Park and Nimba Nature Reserve, as well as expanding Sapou National Park	Gazettement decrees were prepared for an extended Sapou National Park, Nimba Strict Nature Reserve, and draft decrees without the final metes and bounds for Cestos-Senkwehn, Cestos-Gbi and Grebo National Parks. However none had been voted into law or signed as presidential decrees.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

The project did not meet its intended impact objectives within the project life-span of securing the gazettement of five new or expanded protected areas targeted in the MOU between the Government of Liberia and Conservation International. Whereas it did succeed in collecting the basic information needed to define realistic boundaries for these areas and to begin addressing management questions, the political will and financial remuneration to create these areas formally, taking them out of commercial forestry, were insufficient. Subsequent to project completion, efforts to have these areas legally protected have continued and may result in Sapou Park being expanded and the Nimba Strict Nature Reserve created in mid-2003.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Two impacts were not initially expected. First, the project was to target the proposed Cestos-Senkwehn National Park only although due to an ambiguity in the GoL-CI MOU, confusing the proposed Cestos-Senkwehn and Cestos-Gbi National Parks, both of these were surveyed within the original budget.

Second, the initiative revealed that the two main partners of the MOU held unrealistic expectations and were unable to deliver on their respective commitments. In particular GoL did not discuss the creation of protected areas with the relevant logging concessionaires, nor did it impose a moratorium on the activities of these logging concessionaires in identified, proposed protected areas. While CI agreed a 6-month deadline for the implementation of the short-term MOU activities, it was unable to mobilise with its partners the needed resources quickly enough to allow completion of these activities within the agreed timeframe. Thus, the impact achieved by this project

did not occur within the agreed MOU timeframe. However CI did eventually mobilise resources, and it held additional funds in readiness to support the establishment of the proposed Grebo National Park, once this was approved by GoL. GoL proved particularly focused on the long-term economic and financial benefits of conservation discussed by CI during MOU negotiations. Thus, these negotiations created unrealistic expectations that have hindered its successful progression.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: See table below.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Output 1: Rapid biological assessments of the targeted proposed protected areas undertaken</p> <p><i>1.1 Rough reports from the rapid biological surveys of the targeted proposed protected areas</i></p>	<p>Surveys were carried out for all the areas targeted, plus Cestos-Gbi, with the exception that the Nimba Nature Reserve's biological survey was cut short due to security concerns. A single report bringing together all surveys was completed within the lifespan of the project, and is to be refined and posted on the web (FFI and CEPF) after polishing.</p>
<p>Output 2: Rapid socio-economic assessments of the targeted proposed protected areas undertaken</p> <p><i>2.1 Rough reports from the rapid socio-economic surveys of the targeted proposed protected areas</i></p>	
<p>Output 3: Additional consultations with the main economic stakeholders of the targeted areas, apart from those consulted in the socio-economic surveys, such as with logging concessionaires and line ministries with operations or plans to operate in the areas.</p> <p><i>3.1 Notes from the consultations</i></p> <p><i>3.2 References to the consultations in the summary reports (see Output 4).</i></p>	<p>Consultations were held in-depth with Sapo Park stakeholders through a co-financed park management planning process, and are available in the workshop report. However neither for Sapo Park nor for any other proposed area did such consultations occur with logging concessionaires. The FDA preferred to handle all consultations, but these were not undertaken, resulting in new or continued logging in every one of the proposed protected areas. During the life span of this project, a few target areas were significantly degraded (western extension of Sapo Park, Cestos-Senkwehn National Park). In the project's final quarter, LFR partners took the initiative of contacting logging concessionaires with rights in the proposed protected areas. These discussions should bolster post-project efforts to get the areas gazetted.</p>

<p>Output 4: Preparation of 1 summary report per proposed protected area, 4 in total, synthesizing the information from the biological and socio-economic rapid assessments (outputs 1 & 2), other stakeholder consultations, and the detailed vegetation maps (prepared by CI in parallel as part of the LFR). The reports will include overall threat and impact analyses for the protected areas, as well as recommendations for creating the areas and accompanying draft legal documentation (see Output 3 and attached draft guidelines for the report in Supporting Materials). Transmission of summary reports to the FDA for revision and onward transmission to the Executive Mansion and the Liberian Legislature.</p>	<p>Due to the workload of conducting surveys (which extended into early February 2003) and analysing data, summary reports were not prepared during the project lifespan but are being prepared post-project with funding from the LFR. However the basic socio-economic information was combined in the LFR GIS lab with forest cover data to prepare preliminary maps of the target areas, which were circulated to relevant GoL agencies (principally FDA), who have yet to comment on them. These maps, are to be refined for Cestos-Senkwehn, Cestos-Gbi and Grebo National Parks with the results of the revised biological survey reports (expected June 2003).</p>
<p>4.1 4 written reports, one per proposed protected area</p>	
<p>4.2 Official response(s) of the FDA (and subsequent Government agencies) to the reports</p>	
<p>Output 5: Preparation of 4 draft legal gazettelement notices with clear geographical specifications for the proposed areas boundaries.</p>	<p>Precise gazettelement decrees were prepared for an enlarged Sapo National Park, and the Nimba Strict Nature Reserve. Draft decrees were prepared for Cestos-Senkwehn, Cestos-Gbi and Grebo National Parks, but the precise metes and bounds need to be refined in light of biological (& socio-economic) survey results, and consultations with stakeholders such as concessionaires.</p>
<p>5.1 4 draft legal gazettelement notices, annexed to the summary reports (Output 4)</p>	
<p>Output 6: 15 (or so) Liberians trained in socio-economic and biological rapid assessment techniques</p>	
<p>6.1 People-weeks of training dispensed (mostly by Ekki Waitkuwait and Charles Hopkins) and number of trainees</p>	<p>PRA training was carried out just prior to this initiative (funded by GEF) during one week for 15 FDA and LFR staff (15 person-weeks of training received). 8 FDA/LFR staff trained in rapid biological survey methods during a 2-week field test to the proposed Cestos-Gbi National Park (16 person-weeks of training received).</p>
<p>6.2 Written manuals of procedures, protocols, other training and reference materials, etc.</p>	<p>Written manuals for PRA procedures were prepared as part of the Sapo Park socio-economic report, and the rapid biological assessment methodology were prepared and published in the Report on the First Year of Operation of a Community-Based Biological Monitoring Programme at Sapo Park.</p>

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

The project was largely successful in preparing the intended outputs, although outputs were often not delivered on time. The original time frame was over-ambitious in trying to respond to the over-ambitious MOU. However after extending the initiative 5 months to allow for the last of the socio-economic and all the biological surveys to be done during the dry season, the technical work of the project was done to an acceptable standard, and a fifth protected area (Cestos-Gbi NP) was added to the survey list at no additional cost.

The lack of consultations with commercial stakeholders, in particular logging concessionaires, is a notable shortcoming of the project. Recognizing the delay in conducting this activity by the FDA, FFI and CI initiated direct talks with concessionaires

as an interim measure. These informal consultations did not progress much before the current civil crisis (May 2003) superseded all other concerns.

The LFR office was advised against preparing detailed, thoroughly researched, technical proposals for submission to GoL, as originally planned in Output 4. These are unlikely to be read or to influence significantly the debate on creation of the target areas. More effort was placed on map preparation during the initiative, which visually summarises the conclusions from the detailed analyses, while preparation of summary reports has been done in a manner to provide a kick-start to launching management activities once the areas are created.

Training was adequate, and although refresher training would have benefited the FDA-LFR staff, it would have been logistically difficult to organise given the workload of LFR management staff in Monrovia.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

The non-delivery of certain outputs did not alter the overall impact of the project, which was determined mostly by the political will of GoL. If GoL's political will had been different, the project team would have modified its activities and produced the required reports, maps, metes & bounds or whatever else was needed within the time frames required. Less emphasis would have been put on analysing the raw data looking forward to establishing management presences in the target areas.

While not all deliverables were achieved, the project represented an intensification phase of a longer-term project, the LFR. Thus the LFR office will continue to pursue the objectives of this project, as well as specific outputs, beyond the end of this particular grant.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

The original proposal stated "While this initiative will not cause any disruption itself, it may lead eventually to creating protected areas which could disrupt human activities in and around the protected areas. These will be assessed via this project's socio-economic rapid assessments, which will target primarily local stakeholders, mostly subsistence farmers and hunters. Mitigatory measures will be proposed in the summary reports to minimise any negative impacts on local populations, and the drawing of protected area boundaries will take into account human needs as much as possible, without unnecessarily compromising the ecological integrity of the protected areas."

For Sapo National Park, detailed compensatory measures were defined along with a process of legal empowerment of local communities over traditionally used forests through the creation of "communal forests". For the other areas, this project identified the types of community outreach and development support required at each site to

render each proposed protected area socially feasible; but did not define specific programmes as at Sapo Park.

Protected area boundaries were drawn so that they excluded settlements or areas of significant traditional local use. In odd cases where it was impossible to exclude an area of traditional use from a protected area, compensatory and mitigatory measures were suggested to address the problem. This situation was unusual, however.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

The project was designed to respond to over-ambitious targets, and thus was unable to meet the time deadlines. This was particularly true in that the surveys were all to have occurred during the rainy season, when logistics are the most difficult. However flexibility on CEPF's part to extend the project at no additional cost allowed this issue to be overcome.

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

Given the financial importance of forestry to the Liberian economy, forest management is quite politicised in Liberia. By depending upon GoL's commitment to conservation, the project took a risk. The most effective way to get lasting conservation gain in Liberia, backed by Government, is when GoL's political interests overlap with conservationists'.

In spite of the international publicity about GoL, technical-level staff have proven dedicated and competent. Bringing together members of NECOLIB, MPEA and FDA in the LFR, including in the GIS lab, has resulted in the total being more than the sum of the parts given their complementary skills, and they have provided an excellent means to collect, analyse, computerise and manipulate data collected.

Finally, security concerns over-ride all technical work. The project was lucky to have completed its field work about a month before hostilities became widespread in 2003. However the sustainability of the impacts of this project depend upon civil stability in the target areas; otherwise this project's results will not be sustained.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CEPF's flexibility in granting an extension and reallocating between budget lines according to over-spend and under-spend was very important in the project achieving what it did. The sustainability of project accomplishments is exponentially enhanced by the project being grafted onto another, larger-scale, longer-term project that could accommodate an intensification phase, sharing the same objectives as the CEPF-

supported grant. Thus any unfinished business will be carried to completion by normal LFR operations after this project's closing date.