

Environmental Impact Assessment
and
Environmental Management Plan

Date June 30, 2021

CEPF Small Grant

Skills and Agricultural Development Services - SADS

*Sustainable Development of Non-Timber Forest Products in Wonegizi Proposed
Protected Area*

Lofa County, Republic of Liberia

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization: Skills and Agricultural Development Services (SADS)
2. Grant title: Sustainable Development of Non-Timber Forest Products in Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area
3. Grant number: N/A
4. Grant amount (US dollars): \$24,943.62
5. Proposed dates of grant: 1st of July to 31st of December 2021
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Wonegizi, Lofa County, Liberia
7. Summary of the project: The objective of the project is to support community based NTFPs primary users (especially women and youth) in 6 communities around Wonegizi PPA (Zigida, Donola, Kabata, Barwhen, Tuzu and Litusu) to be trained in best harvesting practices and management of NTFPs (rattan, bush pepper, bitter kola, country spice and walnut) by December 2021.
8. Date of preparation of this document: June 30th, 2021

9. Status of area to be impacted

The project will be implemented in the Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area (PPA) which is to be designated by law as a Multiple Sustainable Use Reserve (MSUR) with a strict core zone following the National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management Law of Liberia, 2016 and will be co-managed by the Liberia Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the communities.

For the establishment of the demonstration sites, the communities will be clustered into two; cluster one will be comprised of Tuzu, Barwhen and Litusu while cluster two will be comprised of Zigida, Donola, and Kabata. For each cluster, a site within the secondary forest (or agricultural zone where people are allowed to carrying farming activities for livelihood) will be selected for the establishment of the demonstration sites. This process will be carried out with the consent of the communities' leaders and local population.

10. Approach

The project is aimed at supporting community based NTFPs primary users (especially women and youth) in 6 communities around Wonegizi PPA (Zigida, Donola, Kabata, Barwhen, Tuzu and Litusu) to be trained in best harvesting practices and management of NTFPs (rattan, bush pepper, bitter kola, country spice, and walnut) by December 2021. To achieve this goal, SADS will work in close partnership with key stakeholders throughout the implementation of the following activities: consultation, training, stakeholders' engagement, hosting of radio shows for awareness raising among others.

The demonstration sites will be used for training purposes for the target beneficiaries where they will be taught by SADS's Agriculture Technicians how to domesticate and harvest NTFPs such as *Xylopia*, Bitter Kola, and Bush pepper. When the beneficiaries learn how to domesticate these NTFPs, they will be able establish their own farms and stop the reliance on the forest for collection. The sites will be selected in consultation with the leaders of the communities and the targeted beneficiaries (ie. trainees).

11. Anticipated impact

Bush pepper (*Piper nigrum*) and bitter kola (*Garcinia kola*) will be planted on both demonstration sites. At least about a thousand (1,000) seedlings of the bush pepper (*Piper nigrum*) will be planted while about two hundred fifty (250) seedlings of the bitter kola (*Garcinia kola*) will be planted. SADS' Agriculture Technicians with support from the consultant and communities' leaders will ensure that the demonstration sites are established in the Agriculture zone of the WPPA where farming and other agricultural practices have limited impact on the wild populations of flora and fauna species in the WPPA.

12. Mitigation measures

Six (6) communities closed to the Wonegizi PPA will be trained to develop sustainable harvesting practices of NTFPs and build enterprises around NTFPs; thereby, contributing to the conservation of the biodiversity in the area. SADS will build-up on its previous experience in training vulnerable communities' groups on the establishment of two NTFPs market enterprises (including production centers for Kombo nut butter and rattan furniture) to successfully implement the proposed project in 6 communities around the Wonegizi PPA (Zigida, Donola, Kabata, Barwhen, Tuzu and Litusu). During the project, 30 beneficiaries will receive training on biodiversity friendly practices while establishing the demonstrating sites. This will be accompanied by other environmentally friendly production practices that assist in the upgrading of ecosystem.

13. Actions to ensure health and safety

Target beneficiaries will receive a dedicated training session on work-related health and safety measures to reduce or prevent any risk of accidents during the implementation of the activities. Other safety and sanitary materials (rain coats, rain boots, hand washing soap, buckets etc.) will be provided to the beneficiaries to respond to any event or incident and minimizing the impact on their health.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will be monitored at all levels by SADS and FDA's agents to assess the quality and the effectiveness of the project performance as well as the project outcomes through consultations, focus groups, performance assessment and monthly visit in each targeted community.

The supervision of the training will be done via regular visit by SADS through its Project Manager and other stakeholders during the course of the project while the maintenance of the demonstration sites will be collectively done by the farmers (beneficiaries) and SADS's Agriculture Technicians.

15. Permission of the landowner

The leaders of the communities will be consulted during the project for the provision and selection of the area for the demonstration sites and the local farmers who also own the land will help in deciding where the pilot sites will be located.

16. Consultation

During the project design phase, SADS Program Manager based in the landscape (LOFA) as well as the Executive Director led the engagement process and have since maintained a dialogue with stakeholders including FDA, EPA, local authorities and the local communities (beneficiaries) in order to share the project idea with these relevant stakeholders. These engagements were through person-to- person while others were done through phone calls among others. As the result of the consultations, the communities and other key local actors were able to show their consent by endorsing the implementation of the project implementation.

During the project implementation, SADS will address the limited knowledge on the importance of NTFPs within the 6 targeted communities benefiting from the project by conducting awareness-raising activities to motivate communities and encourage interest in the project activities. More precisely, SADS will be engaged with all the key stakeholders including Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Local authorities (Clan Chief, District Commissioners, and Paramount Chiefs) and communities' members through regular meetings and consultations to keep them informed on the activities' progress.

Focused group discussion (at least one in each community) will also be organized targeting mainly the primary harvesters (women and youth). However secondary harvesters (hunters, farmers, etc.) will also be considered during these sessions as an on-going process during the project. This will involve the holding of groups meetings (youths, women, elders, etc.) in the 6 targeted communities, to share basic information related to the project and its design and methodology as well as implementation at the beginning of the project.

In parallel, SADS will work with at least 3 radio stations in the Wonegizi landscape (Radio Life, Alternative Youth Radio and The Voice of Lofa) to have a talk-show once every two months on the importance of sustainable harvesting and management of NTFPs. These talk-shows would not only reach the 6 communities targeted by this project but also the other communities in the county.

17. Disclosure

The environmental management plan will be discussed with the targeted communities and a hard copy of the plan will be provided to them at the beginning of the project (July 2021). Any update of the management plan will be communicated and shared with the targeted beneficiaries.

Based on SADS previous experiences, a leadership will be setup among the farmers (trainees) which will be comprised of a Chairperson, a Co-chairperson, and a Secretary. The secretary will be responsible to keep all documents pertaining to the project.

18. Grievance mechanism

During this project SADS will provide people within the 6 communities particularly the Town Chief and the Clan Chief, along with the community members who will be selected for the training program and other interested stakeholders with the means to raise a grievance with SADS by communicating it through SADS Executive Director (+231886687330), the CEPF Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. Ensuring that the Town Chief and Clan Chief have the details of the grievance mechanism, will help to ensure that anyone within the local communities who does not have access to a phone or email will be able to state a grievance should they need to.

SADS will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office