



THE SIGNING OF THE MOU BETWEEN FISSEBU AND ZALAEI COMMUNITIES IN FISSEBU, SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

USAID LIBERIA LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY (LMA)

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ACRONYMS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ARD	Alliance for Rural Democrats
AQL	Acceptable Quality Level
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BH	Boundary Harmonization
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLDMC	Community Land Development and Management Committee
CLRF	Community Land Rights Formalization
CNDRA	Center for National Documents and Records Agency
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CRSF	Community Rights Support Facility
CSI	Community Self-Identification
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSO WG	Civil Society Working Group
DO	Development Objective
DRG	Democracy, Rights, and Governance
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FO	Field Office
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
GEP	Geomatics Education Program
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GOL	Government of Liberia
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GUC	Grants under Contract
HO	Home Office
IDH	Sustainable Trade Initiative
ILRG	Integrated Land and Resource Governance
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
KM	Knowledge management
LAP	Land Administration Project
LISGIS	Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo Information Services
LC	Land Commission
LGSA	Land Governance Support Activity
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LMA	Land Management Activity
LOP	Life of Project
LRA	Land Rights Act
LRDM	Liberia reform movement
LRR	Land rights reforms
LUP	Land-use planning

MAP	Multi-Actor Platform
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Marking Plan
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NLC	National Land Conference
PDG	Peace and Democratic Governance
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheets
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
QASP	Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan
RAI	Responsible Agriculture Investment
RRF	Rights and Rice Foundation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDI	Sustainable Development Institute
STARR II	Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II IDIQ
TDS	Talking Drum Studio
TF	Tenure Facility
TOCO	Task Order Contracting Officer
TOCOR	Task Order Contracting Officer's Representative
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report provides an overview of progress made under the USAID Liberia Land Management Activity (LMA) (herein also referred to as the Project), for the period of July 19, 2021 to September 30, 2022 (FY22). The focus of the Project's first year was to set a strong foundation for **quality** implementation across the life of the Project. LMA worked consistently throughout the reporting period to nurture and develop strong working relationships with all relevant stakeholders within the Liberian land sector, in particularly the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), whose involvement is critical to the success of the Project.

LMA supported the National Land Conference (NLC), which commemorated three years of implementing the 2018 Land Rights Act (LRA). The conference brought together 344 delegates, including 124 women, to review progress made in the implementation of the LRA and look forward to improved practices in achieving impacts within the sector. LMA was officially launched during the conference by the LLA Chairman, in the presence of LLA Board of Commissioners and other Government of Liberia (GOL) development partners and officials from national and international agencies, including USAID, the World Bank, the European Union (EU), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH).

LMA, through its partners, facilitated thematic working group discussions on topics critical to the Liberian land sector, including Women and Youth, Customary Land Formalization, and Decentralization. These discussions resulted in the development of concept notes with key recommendations submitted to the LLA for policy improvements related the regulations for the CLRF process.

LMA implemented the Community Land Rights Formalization (CLRF) process through several foundational activities in Year I. The Project conducted 32 community assessments to evaluate community status in the CLRF process for in Lofa, Bong and Nimba counties and selected 27 target communities for Year I. A total of 885 people, including 345 women, participated in the assessments. The Project organized and facilitated general assemblies in four districts of Lofa county for a variety of reasons. Some of these purposes include assessing the boundary profiles and determining the status of their boundary harmonization and to reintroduce the CLDMCs and reinforce their mandate. A total of 484 community members attended these events from several communities, including 197 women. LMA also conducted public consultations in three target communities of Lofa county, resulting in the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between communities agreeing to the boundaries points and allowing the communities to move on to the penultimate stage in the CLRF process.

The Project trained 78 CLDMC members, including 35 women, on organizational development, good governance, and leadership. In addition, LMA trained 202 community members in 12 target communities of Lofa County on boundary harmonization and negotiations, and conducted awareness raising and information sharing on the CLRF process. The Project also supported the same communities to adopt alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to address boundary disputes. Seven talk radio shows, 1,500 flyers, 730 posters, and four banners on the CLRF process were developed and disseminated in all target communities.

Despite a challenging operating environment, which included conducting project start-up during the COVID-19 pandemic, ECODIT completed all start-up related administrative, technical and progress activities on **schedule** and in a timely manner. ECODIT completed the timely submission of all weekly highlights on project progress; the Annual Work Plans for both Year 1 and Year 2, Financial Accruals reports, Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, the LMA Grants Manual, and the LMA community selection and tracking tools to track community progress through the six stages of the CLRF process.

The field office (FO) and home office (HO) **management** teams collaborated with implementing partners across the Liberian land sector to effectively leverage the work of all partners supporting the Liberian land sector. LMA worked closely in synergy with the World Bank pilot Project to organize a joint Public

Consultation between Palama and Gbarline, in Lofa to resolve boundary issues. The Public consultation resulted in the signing of an MOU between the two communities, agreeing to the boundary mapped during the process and allowing both to move to the penultimate stage in the CLRF process.

ECODIT has provided significant management support from the HO throughout Year I of project implementation, both in country and remotely, to ensure sufficient leadership presence in Monrovia as required, and to continue to develop a strong working relationship with the LLA. Although the COVID-19 pandemic created constraints on travel, particularly during project start, the ECODIT HO team provided consistent support to the project, including traveling to Monrovia to support LMA. In addition, ECODIT provided significant capacity building support for local partners from the FO and HO, to build up partner capacity to manage the administrative, financial and contractual side of USAID subcontracts.

Despite the significant successes under LMA during Year I, the Project has faced **challenges**. The pace of land formalization through the CLRF process is complex and slow. Only a handful of communities have been awarded deeds in Liberia, with local sources reporting a range from zero to five. While it is the mandate of the LLA to issue land deeds, the CLRF process has received significant support from international donors. Despite such investments, LLA data indicates that a minimum of 110 communities have engaged in at least the first step of the CLRF process – the community self-identification (CSI). Of these communities, half are in the process of or have completed the fourth step – boundary harmonization – and none have advanced to the fifth step – confirmatory survey.

The CLRF process is impeded by a lack of approved regulations and guidelines for the mapping and boundary harmonization phases, resulting in CSOs applying different methods, uncertain of whether their approach will meet LLA approval. Where local dispute resolution institutions are weak or insufficient, disputes are long-standing and sometimes highly divisive. Boundary harmonization may also be a difficult and extremely slow process as many communities still face issues of boundary demarcation and harmonization. This arduous process is compounded by LLA's funding constraints which limit their ability to carry out their legal responsibilities under the LRA. Until these issues are addressed, communities will experience delays in completing the confirmatory survey that is a requisite step to acquiring deeds for communal lands. LMA's primary goal during Year I was to identify these challenges and work with communities to find solutions and expedite the process.

LMA's implementation approach is routed in USAID's localization strategy, and the Project is continuously working to build the management capacity of the three local partners. The management capacity of the partners must meet the rigor of USAID subcontracting requirements. ECODIT is investing extra time, resources, and staff into the Project to provide the necessary support to local partners to build their capacity and ensure their sustained growth and impact, including workshops, trainings and mentorship above and beyond those originally planned under the Project. An LMA workshop for local subcontractors planned to improve subcontract management capacities through reviews of deliverables and invoices, discussions of outstanding issues, and set up directives to avoid delays in invoicing and payments.

Due to poor road conditions, made worse by inclement weather during the rainy season, access to target communities, particularly in Lofa county, remains a challenge. The critically bad conditions of the roads have affected the project's ability to conduct some activities when initially planned. Many times, vehicles get stuck in the mud and for many communities, access is only possible by motorbike. In these situations, the Project has had to adapt its logistics plans to access communities. Planning, foresight, and flexibility will remain important facets for the Project to ensure we are able to continue the implementation of necessary activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

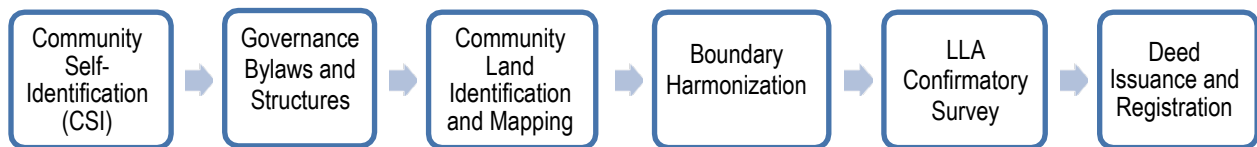
The purpose of the Liberia Land Management Activity (LMA) (also herein referred to as “the Project”) is the effective and inclusive management of communal land through the land tenure processes. Its aim is to support Liberian communities in obtaining deeds to their customary land per the 2018 Land Rights Act (LRA) and to support the improved use of customary land for sustainable, equitable economic benefit.

Issues of land ownership are central to two Development Objectives (DOs) of USAID/Liberia’s 2019-2024 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), which LMA objectives and results will support: DO 1 – Market Driven, Inclusive Economic Growth Supporting Increased Job Creation; and DO 2 – Effective and Inclusive Governance Catalyzed through Reform and Greater Accountability. The LRA presents a natural opportunity to advance these DOs, especially as the Act demonstrates a commitment to invest authority in local communities to govern the use of their own land through Community Land Development and Management Committees (CLDMC). By focusing on CLDMC development, USAID is investing in the Government of Liberia’s (GOL) vision of local governance while giving communities tools to serve their own interests. LMA is building on past USAID investments to assist Liberian communities to achieve effective and inclusive governance of their land and resources, with a focus on the following four objectives:

1. Communities obtain deeds to their communal land;
2. Communities plan and manage communal land for productive use;
3. Women, youth, and other marginalized groups participate in and benefit from communal land management; and
4. Communities utilize Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve land disputes and grievances.

The LRA includes the six-step Community Land Rights Formalization (CLRF) process of formalizing community land rights (see Figure 1) resulting in deeds issued to the communities. The LRA also includes provisions for establishing CLDMCs, inclusive governance bodies that are charged with communal land decisions and the development of land use plans.

Figure 1: The Six Steps of the CLRF Process in Liberia



The CLRF process is lengthy and complex. Few communities are capable of navigating this process alone. With the support of international donors, Liberian civil society organizations (CSO) have supported communities navigate and meet requirements for each step of the CLRF process to secure land deeds.

I.2 TARGET AUDIENCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

To achieve the above goal and objectives, LMA is working closely with the Government of Liberia (GOL), through the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), to engage with a wide range of audiences and stakeholders at the national and local levels, focusing on local communities, to achieve effective and inclusive governance and ensure gender integration in all project activities. USAID interventions are focused on six priority counties, among which LMA has selected communities in four counties to maximize the Project’s comparative advantage and ensure substantive utilization of local solutions, considerable private sector engagement (PSE), judicious use of Grants Under Contract (GUCs), and sound incorporation of environmental and climate considerations. During the reporting period, LMA supported communities in Lofa, Nimba and Bong and will expand interventions in Grand Bassa in Year 2.

During Year 1 of the Project, LMA focused support on the CLRF process to selected communities in Lofa county. In Nimba and Bong, LMA conducted assessments and provided training to eligible CBOs in grant management and proposal writing, and in Bong, we trained CBOs in gender integration. By focusing early CLRF efforts in communities in the Lofa county, LMA worked toward leveraging the CLRF facilitation previously supported by USAID's Land Governance Support Activity (LGSA), including the existing CLRF work facilitated in Lofa. LMA also capitalized on community radio stations such as Radio Zorlayea, Radio Harleyngee, Community Radio 102.5 FM, Radio Kantoma 101.1 FM, and Hot FM 107.9 in Monrovia, throughout implementation to inform communities of new land rights, and their rights and roles in implementing the CLRF process according to Liberian law.

2. ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND PROGRESS

2.1 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

LMA completed all planned cross-cutting activities during the reporting period. Key cross-cutting achievements are highlighted below:

LMA Team Building Training: [REDACTED], HO Project Director, [REDACTED], LMA Startup Specialist, and [REDACTED], a Tetra Tech Land Management Specialist, provided a team building training for LMA project staff and three local partners. The team building training was held on November 16, 2021 at the LMA office. All partners were in attendance and provided a forum to get to know one another and to reinforce LMA's "one team" approach.

Stakeholder Synergy Development Workshop: The LMA Stakeholder Synergy Development Workshop was held on November 18, 2021 at the Royal Grand Hotel. In attendance were several LLA officials, including Commissioner Jackson, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, including Mr. Gobah Anderson, program manager of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program within the Ministry of Justice, USAID, USAID implementing partners (IPs), representatives of other development partners, and CSOs supporting GOL Land Management Policy. LMA shared the project's goals and objectives and led discussions to understand other stakeholders' work in the sector. The workshop focused on identifying synergy opportunities to maximize partners' efforts to effectively implement the GOL's Land Management Policy. During the workshop, LMA's MEL Specialist also presented the key LMA indicators, highlighting the importance of and detailing the definition of each indicator presented.

Official Launch of the LMA: LMA was officially launched by Honorable J. Adams Manobah, Chairman of LLA, in the presence of the Board of Commissioners on March 2, 2022. The conference provided a venue for the LMA team to network with multiple development partners supporting the land sector in Liberia. The presence of the USAID Mission Director, the Deputy Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) Office Director, and the LMA Task Order Contracting Officer's Representative (TOCOR) gave the Project added credibility with the LLA and other sector stakeholders. The Mission Director in his speech highlighted the link between land tenure security and democracy, stating that "*land reform is critical to sustaining peace in Liberia, and is also central to strengthening Liberia's democracy and transparent and accountable institutions.*"

LLA Relationship Development: Since its inception on July 19, 2021, LMA has laid a foundation of collaboration and engagement with the LLA. LMA leadership has worked consistently throughout year one to nurture and develop a working relationship, including direct one-on-one meetings during start-up between the Program Director and Mr. Stanley Toe Executive Director at the LLA office, and with the Hon. Chairman Manobah at a breakfast meeting at the Royal Hotel. The LMA start-up team also provided the entire LLA with an activity orientation facilitated by the Start-Up Specialist, with presentations from the Program Director and the Chief of Party. Some commissioners and technical staff of the LLA attended the LMA Stakeholder Synergy development workshop held in Monrovia in November 2021 and proved to be critical contributors at this event. The LMA team continues to participate in the sectoral coordination meetings, and in LMA and LLA Quarterly Update Meetings. Overall coordination with the LLA remains challenging due in part to the LLA's anticipation of support that LMA is not designed to

provide. LMA will continue to coordinate with the LLA to ensure their participation in completing and documenting the CLRF process. USAID's support will be critical in coordinating with the LLA leadership and explaining the US Government's (USG) development approach.

Tools Development: LMA developed a community needs assessment approach, a community selection tool utilizing agreed criteria, and a tracker to account for which stages of the CLRF process have been concluded in each community where LMA is currently supporting or may support in the future. Tools approved by USAID are as follows.

- Community Tracking Tool
- Community selection criteria and methodology;
- Community selection quantification tool; and
- Community needs assessment for LLA Services.

LMA has also developed a **community entry validation tool** to validate the CLRF status of communities prior to entry. This tool supports the team to conduct its preliminary validation to know where to start in the process, and what steps in the process are remaining.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Training of Trainers (TOT):

On November 25, 2021, following the successful organization of the synergy workshop at the Grand Royal Hotel, LMA held a TOT on MEL for representatives from all three local subcontractors. The objective of this TOT was to train partners' MEL staff to ensure quality and reliability of data. The TOT focused on the following: 1) Accuracy and Precision; 2) Legitimacy and Validity; 3) Reliability and Consistency; 4) Timeliness and Relevance; 5) Completeness and Comprehensiveness; and 6) Availability and Accessibility.

All LMA data collection tools were reviewed and participants were taught how to use them effectively. All indicator definitions, PIRS, indicator cover sheets, indicator SOPs, data management procedures, and attendance sheets were properly detailed in our explanation for a better understanding and implementation by project partners. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to understand the Year I AWP as well as the details of the LMA project implementation mechanism and their roles and responsibilities throughout the process.



Figure 2: LMA MEL Specialist, [REDACTED], facilitating a session during the TOT on data Management. November 25, 2021. Photo courtesy of [REDACTED]

Capacity Building of Local Subcontractors: To advance LMA's localization approach, the Project is continuously working to build the management capacity of its three local partners. Each partner brings different expertise and are assigned different tasks. Prior to awarding their subcontracts, ECODIT met with each subcontractor to explain each organization's contractual mechanism, work planning, community entry, and the overall implementation approach under LMA.

The initial vision was that one of the local partners would operate on a cost-reimbursable type subcontract, retain long-term local personnel as a member of the LMA team, and provide overall leadership to the other two local partners in planning and scope development. Approximately six months into the first year, it became evident that the partner did not have the capacity to manage the

administrative requirements under the cost-reimbursable subcontract, nor were they able to provide the leadership in the coordination and planning of field activities. ECODIT adjusted the contract mechanism, moving to a deliverables-based Firm-Fixed-Price subcontract model. In this shift, the LMA project assumed the long-term position of Community Engagement and Communications Specialist as part of the team. It is an important lesson that must be considered. The overall management capacity of partners must meet the rigor of USAID subcontracting requirements. Time, resources and staff must be built into the project to provide the support to local partners to build their capacity and ensure their sustained growth and impact. ECODIT has provided support to its local partners through trainings and mentorship from field office and home office staff above and beyond those planned under the Project. LMA organized a work session for all local subcontractors on December 1, 2021 to improve subcontract management capacities. LMA technical staff reviewed their deliverables and invoicing processes, discussed outstanding issues by each organization, and set up directives to avoid delays in invoicing and payments. Partners agreed to have regular meetings for better coordination and follow-up actions.

Grants Under Contract: In order to strengthen public awareness for regulatory reform and to achieve formalization of community land rights, LMA launched the Grants Under Contract (GUC) process to support county-based CBOs. LMA received USAID approval for the Grants Manual on October 7, 2021, which included grantee selection criteria. The project then received eligibility applications from more than 90 CBOs. The team completed the screening process of all applications and identified 20 eligible CBOs, ten in Lofa; three in Bong; four in Nimba; and three in Grand Bassa. The Project is working progressively to award the first set of grants in the first quarter of Year 2.

The review committee finalized the selection of grantees to support the implementation of LMA in Lofa, Bong and Nimba counties in September. The committee selected four qualified CBOs: Lofa Women Network, and Volunteers United for Development in Lofa; Sustainable Health, Agriculture, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SHAPE) in Nimba; and Liberian Initiative for Developmental Services (LIDS) in Bong. A memorandum will be drafted and submitted to the LLA for informational purposes, and to USAID for approval before issuing the grants.

Reporting: LMA prepared and submitted all weekly reports, meeting minutes, and quarterly reports to USAID to provide updates on progress, opportunities, and challenges throughout the year. LMA also attended monthly progress meetings with the TOCOR and regular partners meetings organized by the Peace and Democratic Governance (PDG) Office.

Submitted Year 1 required deliverables also included the Year 1 and Year 2 Annual Work Plans (AWP), the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP); the Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan; the Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan (QASP); and the Grants Manual. The Project also shared consultants' technical materials and provided ad hoc reports as requested by USAID.

2.2 OBJECTIVE 1: COMMUNITIES OBTAIN DEEDS TO THEIR COMMUNAL LAND

Under LMA, ECODIT will support Liberia's dynamic civil society through capacity building efforts and resources to enable them to better advocate to the GOL to effectively respond to citizen demands for secure land rights; empower communities to secure legal deeds; and to operate effective land and resource governance systems that equitably serve all community members. In Year 1, the Project provided assistance to communities to complete the CLRF process; giving guidance to help them build partnerships with the private sector for potential investments; promoting participatory land planning and productive use of their lands; and provide training on conflict resolution and mitigation. Throughout implementation ECODIT incorporated Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations into all project activities and undertook specific interventions that addressed goals of inclusion to increase women, youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups into community decision making processes.

TASK 1.1: WORK WITH CSOS TO GUIDE COMMUNITIES IN FOLLOWING THE CLRF PROCESS TO OBTAIN DEEDS FOR THEIR COMMUNAL LAND

From the start of the Project, LMA met with the LLA, other donors, and implementing partners to gain information on communities that previously initiated the CLRF process, including which steps have been completed, and which steps were outstanding. The Project conducted a series of community assessments and, based on the findings, supported target communities to advance their CLRF process.

The following are key activities that Project achieved to support communities to implement their CLRF process:

Community Assessment in Lofa, Nimba and Bong: LMA completed the selection of 27 target communities in Year 1. The Project identified and conducted assessments in 17 communities in Lofa, five in Nimba, and five in Bong. The purpose of the assessments was to evaluate progress these communities made in implementing the CLRF process, determine the type of assistance they need to advance further, and enable them to acquire title deeds to their communal lands.

In each of the 27 communities, LMA met with local authorities (clan and town chiefs), the General Town Chief, CLDMC members, elders, and other town leaders for focus group discussions to collect information on the CLRF process. In general, most of these communities have completed their self-identification and have established a governance structure, with some conducting boundary walks. However, many do not have in hand any legal document to prove their status. Ongoing boundary disputes continue in many of the Project's target communities, which is not uncommon when beginning the CLRF process. LMA interventions in these communities could be lengthy, as only a few of the 27 communities assessed made noticeable progress prior to the start of LMA. Although many target communities are still at the early stages of the CLRF process and facing issues around boundary harmonization, some communities have made great progress. For example:

1. Lower Guma in Vahun has harmonized their boundary with neighboring towns in the Republic of Sierra Leone according to the CLDMC Chairperson - Mr. Poto Sawei and Chairlady - Madam Yatta Aruna.
2. Tahamba Clan, according to Mr. John N. Cooper, has harmonized their boundaries with Kembaloe, Barsor, Sangbawalee communities in Foya District and Ndambu in Tahamba Clan and Koikelahun in Lukasu Clan in Kolahun District. Nevertheless, there are a lot of unresolved boundary issues pending with Foya and Tahamba Clan.
3. Wanwoma, according to Mr. Ballah Sengbeh, a member of the CLDMC, has identified and harmonized boundary points with Popalahun, Yourmatahun, Kporkulahun, Nyewilyhun in Hassala Clan, Kolahun District. This information was confirmed by one of the District Boundary Team members, Mr. Momo Kamara, in Kolahun District.
4. Wulukoha, according to the CLDMC Chairperson, Mr. James W. Palay and Mr. Mamadee Fofana – CA, has resolved boundary lines with neighboring communities in Voinjama District and points are established.
5. In Bong County, Kpatawee community is at step four (Participatory Mapping) and Zota made progress up to step five (Boundary Harmonization).

Full access to some of the communities remains a challenge and complicates the process. During the assessments, we noted that some communities are large, with many towns and villages. For example, in Bong, Kporyorquelleh community is composed of six towns and 26 villages, while Kpatawee is composed of 19 subunits. In Lofa, the largest community is Barkedu with 20 towns, while the smallest communities are Saygbama and Sylakore, composed of five towns each. It is important to note that very few of these towns/units are accessible by vehicle or motorbike. Many of them are only accessible by footpaths – requiring walking long distances to reach the target communities.

A total of 885 community members including leaders, CLDMCs, women, youth, and marginalized groups' representatives participated in the team's assessments, comprised of 15 focus group discussions. Among participants, 345 were women. See Annex I for the most current status of communities along the CLRF process.

Community Information and Awareness Raising Activities: As part of its communication strategy to inform and increase communities' awareness of Project's activities, LMA produced flyers on boundary harmonization (BH), ADR, and confirmatory surveys, and conducted live radio talk shows in Lofa county in Zorzor, Vahun, Kolba, Kolahun, and Voinjama city, and Kolba city Kolahun. TDS Liberia partner radio stations included Radio Zorlayea, Harleyngee Community Radio (102.5FM); Radio Kontoma 101.1Fm; Vahun Community Radio Station (100.5FM); and Harleyngee Community Radio 102.5Fm. The radio talk shows gave an overview of the Project's objectives and the support it can provide to communities to advance the CRLF process according to the Land Right Act, with a focus on public consultations. The shows highlighted the communities' participation in boundary harmonization and negotiation, ADR, and underscored the importance of gender inclusion in the processes.

The talk show participants included project staff, two LLA representatives, and a community member. The talk shows were informative with interpretation provided in local dialects spoken by residents in each community. During the talk shows, many listeners asked questions and expressed their expectations and concerns. According to some callers, CLDMC members are not disseminating information to their communities to gain their consent and participation. In some instances, community members cited difficulties in identifying original boundary lines and points, and inaccurate data due to the communities' lack of equipment and tools. LMA will encourage the participation of local leaders and CLDMC members in project outreach and awareness campaigns to enforce the relevance of the information around the CRLF process.

Some members of CLDMCs and other social groups asserted their eagerness to use community radios to not only inform their communities on issues of general interest but also to gain support and collaboration in addressing land issues. In Vavala, for example, the chairwoman of the CLDMCs, Ms. Sue Kollie, asserted that they will also use community radio to inform their communities on progress they have made in the CLRF process and the challenges they are facing in order to gain everybody's support and involvement in the process.

The team distributed 1,500 flyers and 730 posters in each target community on BH, ADR, and confirmatory surveys, reinforcing its awareness activities. Most importantly, during the awareness raising activities, LMA focused on the importance of involving women, youth and disadvantaged groups in local level decision-making. Many marginalized groups are historically limited from participating in community development activities.

As a result of Project awareness efforts, women and youth have been involved in the land management decision making processes. Pastor David K. Zayzay, Senior Landlord of Zorzor District, stressed the need for active involvement of youth in the boundary harmonization process. According to him, land matters should consider the history of the locality. The participation of the different intergenerational groupings, especially clans to clans to identify boundary problems and find durable solutions should be a high priority for the project and underscored the importance of using ADR in addressing land disputes and grievances in these communities as planned under LMA.

Support Communities General Assemblies/Public Consultations: In Year 1, the Project supported and organized a series of general assemblies and consultations with local communities to introduce LMA's goal and objectives, and to discuss the community's land rights issues and the roles and responsibilities of the CLDMC in helping their community throughout the CRLF process. LMA supported public consultations for Fissebu, Vavala, Palama, and Gbalin communities.

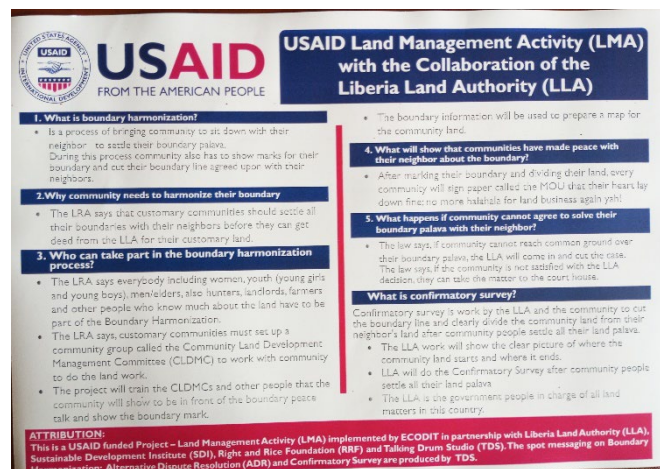


Figure 3: Design for TDS flyers and posters for awareness raising.

202 people participated in these public consultations, including town chiefs, clan chiefs, district commissioners, paramount chiefs, local and traditional leaders, and other community members such as youth, women, elderly, minority/marginalized groups, member of CLDMCs, CBOs, and LLA representatives.

During these public gatherings, the perceived legitimacy of the CLDMCs and their status with regard to their boundary identification process varied greatly. Many clans had records of incorporation and registration documents such as business registration certificates, and/or articles of incorporation. Other CLDMCs were still uncertain of their registration status, as they had not heard back from the organizations that supported the process. In some areas, some of the CLDMCs had not been introduced to the communities through the community assembly, even though training programs had previously occurred. The work of the CLDMCs in conducting boundary walks, boundary harmonization, and the collection of boundary points had stopped in many communities due to the lack of logistical support which includes protective wear, transportation, and food. In fact, in some communities, neighbors protested the traditional boundaries. This is making the process of boundary harmonization difficult.

LMA observed that many community members were not aware of the LRA and its current use. Awareness and outreach information campaigns need to spread at the community level using simple Liberian English or local dialect because of low literacy levels. Therefore, LMA developed and produced simple messages in local dialects to inform local communities and increase their understanding of the laws governing their customary land rights.

In many communities, the key remaining challenge is to support them to address their boundary disputes through the completion of boundary harmonization and demarcation. Communities have documented the various boundary issues; some are being resolved using traditional mechanisms and others are proving challenging. Some of the boundaries in question are also national boundaries that require the involvement of Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo Information Services (LISGIS) and other government functionaries. LMA's support will require more extensive work with these communities to help complete the boundary mapping and harmonization of their community lands. In addition, there is a need to strengthen their governance structures and apply all the other steps to effectively advance the completion of the CLRF process and guide them toward obtaining their land title deeds.



Figure 4: A boundary map of Wanwoma Clan completed by participants in the Kolahun District. Photo Courtesy: LMA, 2022

Governance and CLDMC Capacity Building: LMA successfully provided capacity building trainings to CLDMC members in three communities. The trainings focused on leadership, good governance, and roles and responsibilities to assist CLDMCs to understand how they should govern themselves and effectively work with and meet the needs of their communities. CLDMC members were also trained on gender integration with a focus on women's participation in land governance and decision-making and on how to develop action plans. During each of these training sessions, the LLA representatives gave presentations on their roles and responsibilities and encouraged community members to fully participate in the activities and support the work of the LMA team in their communities.

A total of 78 CLDMC members from mainly target communities in Lofa (Palama, Vavala, and Fissebu) participated in the trainings, among them 35 women. Of the female members of the CLDMCs, only a few occupy leadership positions such as Chairperson, Co-chair, and Treasurer, indicating a great need to strengthen gender equity within the CLDMCs as well as women's leadership capacities. During the training, the non-recognition of CLDMCs by the communities as their representative bodies emerged as

a challenge, affecting the functioning of the organizations, since their establishment has had little or no support from their communities' leaders.

Despite the perceived legitimacy issue for some CLDMCs, some, including those in Palama and Tahamba, remain very active and reported that they were able to resolve some of the major disputes with other communities. A key highlight from the CLDMC training in Palama was the drafting of a six-month community action plan (CAP) that will serve as a work plan to guide the activities and operations of the community through the CLDMC. LMA will continue supporting them to complete and implement their CAP.



Figure 5: Group photo of participants at the closing of the CLDMC capacity building in Fissebu. Photo Courtesy: LMA

A highlight of the training in Palama was the recommendation that LMA consider targeting a neighboring community, the Gbalin Clan. Gbalin is one of the three clans that makes up the Salayea District, which includes the Palama and Vavala Clans. As such, Palama believe that most of their boundary disputes are with Gbalin and they are not cooperating simply because they do not see themselves as part of the project. Palama residents believe that they would get the cooperation and

support of Gbalin to harmonize the boundaries if Gbalin clan is targeted by the project. LMA will consider that recommendation following the successful signing of the MOU in Palama, expected in early Year 2.

Boundary Harmonization Training: In April, LMA began providing and facilitating training sessions on boundary harmonization to CLDMC members and other CBO representatives from target communities. The Project provided boundary harmonization training to 12 communities in Lofa County. The training supported communities to review their boundary profile and organize dispute resolution meetings as needed to agree on their boundary points. We noted that in many of the communities, there were still some issues around their boundary harmonization, a prerequisite to moving to the confirmatory survey. For example, two clans in the Kolahun district – Tahamba and Wulukoha - have completed boundary walks and have resolved some of these disputes, with a few outstanding disputes remaining. The project worked with some of them to address the issues in a conflict-sensitive manner, and to make progress in advancing the CLRF process.

Boundary Harmonization Consultations: During Quarter 4, LMA supported two public consultations between: 1) Fissebu and Zelemai and 2) Palama and Vavala communities. The public consultations were successfully conducted, resulting in Agreements on Community Boundaries in Lofa County. After tense discussion, the communities of Fissebu and Zelemai successfully signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on the boundaries between their respective communities.



Figure 6: Traditional leaders and Landlords consulting to come up with some decisions about the positions of their community on the boundary issue. Alternative solutions to share in plenary. Photo Courtesy of LMA, 2022.

LMA and government partners facilitated the negotiations leading up to the signing of the MOUs. The Lofa County Superintendent, County Attorney, and Land Administrator all attended the full six days of negotiations and played pivotal roles in mediating the negotiations, ensuring final agreements. Upon final signature of the MOUs, the Lofa County Attorney said, “Fissebu and Zelemai will serve as example to the rest of Lofa communities to help ensure peace and no conflict over land in the county.”

In the run-up of the Fissebu public consultation and throughout the negotiation process, the LMA team maintained a close connection with the local traditions and customs of the area to further mitigate potential conflict. LMA also ensured that women, youth, and other marginalized groups were given the space to participate. According to one Fissebu community member, “Men used to meet amongst themselves and make decisions [on land issues]. Now, [women] have a voice in the decision-making process.”

Now that the MOUs have been signed, each community will begin preparing for the confirmatory survey, the final step in the CLRF process before legal land deeds can be issued by the Liberia Land Authority (LLA).

Grants Under Contract: During Year 1, the Project worked hard to advance the implementation process of the GUC by the beginning of Year 2. A preliminary survey form to collect information on CBOs’ and CSOs’ organizational capacities and determine their eligibility to apply for project grants was drafted and posted in the local newspapers for 30 days to allow enough time for them to fill in the form and submit to LMA.

LMA received eligibility packages from more than 90 Community based organizations (CBO). After a screening of prospective CBOs, a total of 20 eligible CBOs have been trained in how to respond to the RFA.

LMA organized a TOT followed by the successfully facilitation of two sessions on grants management and proposal writing for 20 potential CSOs and CBOs from Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties.

- **Training of Trainers in Grant Management:** In preparation of the implementation of the GUC under LMA, from April 6-8, 2022, LMA successfully conducted a training of trainers (TOT) in grant management and proposal writing. Tetra Tech, ARD, LMA’s international subcontractor, facilitated the three-day virtual training to project technical staff and representatives of all three national implementing partners. The TOT focused on 1) Overview of LMA’s Project description, objectives, and Results Framework (Indicators, M&E and Reporting); and 2) Overview of grant management [Full Application Requirements; Technical proposal writing; Budget preparation (cost principles); Application Review and Evaluation Process].
- **Grant Management and Proposal Writing Training:** Following the TOT, the LMA conducted training on Grant Management and Proposal Writing for the eligible CBOs in Lofa and Bong County. The two separate training sessions took place in May and August, 2022 in Voinjama, Lofa County and Gbarnga, Bong County respectively. The main purpose was to train eligible CBOs on grant management and the steps and key elements of writing a good proposal. The training content focused on information related to: USAID regulations and guidelines on grant management; project cycle management, defining strategic objectives, outcomes, inputs, and outputs; monitoring and evaluation, risk management and sustainability plans; the importance of addressing gender and marginalized groups; and technical activities to budget (reasonableness) relevance.

In response to the LMA’s RFA, 17 CSOs/CBOs submitted applications that proposed activities to cover the Project’s 27 communities for Year 1. The break down by county is as follows:

- Lofa: 10 CBOs targeting 17 communities;
- Nimba: 4 CBOs targeting 5 communities; and
- Bong: 3 CBOs targeting 5 communities.

Upon receipt of the RFA package, LMA put in place a selection committee composed of LMA and Local Partners’ staff to evaluate the proposals. The committee reviewed all the applications and four have been selected as qualified offerors. The final list will be shared with both LLA and USAID for their information. Upon USAID approval, LMA will issue grants to those CBOs/CSOs and will work closely with the project staff and subcontractors to support target communities.

TASK 1.2: SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ADVANCE REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS THAT ACCELERATE AND EXPAND CLRF

LMA participated and provided technical and financial support to the organization of the National Land Rights Conference and participated in various internal review sessions of critical regulations, guidelines, and procedures that have been developed by the LLA for the implementation of the LRA (2018), especially those related to the formalization of customary land. An Action Plan was drafted to finalize the regulations and guidelines. The reviewers considered the status of individual instruments with regard to CLRF, and previous inputs provided by the World Bank and its consultants and CSOs. Key instruments reviewed included:

1. Regulation for the Vetting of Tribal Certificates;
2. Boundary Harmonization Procedure;
3. Guidelines for the conduct of confirmatory surveys of customary land; and
4. National Guide for Systematic Land Titling of Customary Land.

LMA, through its local partner RRF, supported CSOs and Multi-Actor Platform (MAP) actors to begin reviewing the draft regulations, redefine their current advocacy strategy, and draft a position paper with comments and recommendations. The process was successfully conducted and draft position papers were completed and shared with the LLA.

Below are some highlights of key achievements:

Review of LRA Regulations and Guidelines: LMA, through its subcontractor RRF, supported the efforts of the Multi-Actor Platform (MAP) on Land Governance and Responsible Agriculture investment in Liberia, and the Civil Society Working Group on Land Rights, by organizing of a series of meetings to discuss and review the 2018 Land Rights Acts and make recommendations to the LLA. The groups provided technical inputs and advice and supported coordination of activities, meeting facilitation, secretarial support, and communications. LMA worked closely with the CSO Working Group (WG) on Land Rights Reform and facilitated several meetings to develop their advocacy strategy. The project supported the CSOs to finalize a coordinated advocacy messaging unique to all communities and leverage innovative channels and medium. The objective was to review and update the current CSO and MAP Advocacy Strategy on regulations and procedures for the effective implementation of the LRA. Seven organizations - Save my Future Foundation; National Civil Society Coordinating Council of Liberia; New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA); Liberia Reform Movement (LRDM); Alliance for Rural Democrats (ARD); Community Rights Support Facility (CRSF) and Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), - participated in the review sessions on LRA regulations. During the session, participants worked to reprioritize the strategic actions of the WG given the current status of the implementation process of the LRA since its enactment in 2018. The CSOs' aim is to constructively engage with the LLA, donors, and other relevant institutions to ensure a full implementation of the LRA for the benefit of all Liberians, especially customary land rights holders in rural communities.

The CSO WG continued working toward implementing their advocacy strategy to achieve the following critical outcomes:

1. Adequate and accessible institutional and regulatory structures exist across the country to enable full, timely, and effective implementation of the LRA;
2. Secured land tenure rights for communities through implementation of CLRF;
3. The principles of transparency, accountability, inclusion (*participation*), and equity in land governance are enshrined in national regulations and guidelines;
4. Community By-laws include safeguards to promote good land governance at the community level; and
5. Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the law by all actors to highlight weaknesses within the institutional and regulatory structures.

As a result of LMA support, the CSO WG drafted a position paper on the Land Rights Acts Regulations that was presented to the LLA on Tuesday August 9, 2022. These Regulations will govern the effective implementation and management of customary land in Liberia. The event brought together a cross section of 48 land-based actors and key stakeholders, including representatives from 22 organizations. Among them, 12 were female, including 3 physically challenged persons (one female and two males).



Figure 6: Group photo and overview of the participants in session.
Photo courtesy of LMA, 2022

Discussions centered around the six following topics:

- Conduct of confirmatory surveys to identify, inventory, map, probate and register the land claims of communities;
- Best practices for community negotiation over concessions;
- Discussion of Tribal Certificate and suggestions on how to strengthen the section in the draft regulations;
- The process of communities to set aside as public land a maximum of ten percent of community land in each community;
- Dispute Resolution and Judicial Review in Respect of community land;
- The inventory of government land and harmonization of its boundaries.

Representatives of participating CSOs raised issues related to: a) The non-reference of formalization steps for customary land in the validation of the Draft Regulation; b) no definition provided on government land; and c) the ownership rights of Gazetted or proposed protected land that fall within customary land. As follow-on actions, the LLA will conduct a legal review to finalize the draft Regulations. Participants cautioned that the process and regulations of the LRA shouldn't violate Article 11 of the constitution. LLA will work with the national legislature to clarify issues around Gazetted land or proposed protected land that fall within customary land. They will also work with other actors supporting the sector to discuss and resolve some of the concerns raised by the CSOs such as the roles of existing local structures managing community forests and the emerging CLDMCs and resource mobilization. The LMA project will continue to support the CSOs and CBOs with capacity building and support the implementation of their advocacy agenda to advance the effective application of the new LRA.

Consultations with the CSWG and MAP to develop a land rights advocacy agenda. In October 2020, the CSO working group (WG), with the support of the Multi Actor Platform on Land Governance (MAP), developed an Integrated Advocacy Strategy to advance the implementation of the 2018 Land Rights Act. The long-term goal of this strategy is to “secure land tenure rights for all Liberians to foster inclusive and sustainable economic development and lasting peace, and guaranteed protection for the land rights of women, youth and other traditionally marginalized groups at all levels.” This strategy was adapted from a previous Strategy designed for when the Land Rights Bill was being debated within the Liberian Parliament and served as a major tool for the WG. Through our implementing partners, LMA provides continuing support for the review, revision, and updating of this advocacy strategy.

National Land Conference (March 1-3, 2022): LMA supported the organization and execution of the National Land Conference (NLC) hosted by LMA’s partner, Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF) and the LLA, in concert with the Ministry of Agriculture and the College of Forestry and Agriculture of the University of Liberia. The three-day conference was held in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. The event was co-sponsored by 19 national and international sponsors and donors, including USAID, and was

attended by **344** delegates from civil society, development partners, academia, and government. The event was also attended by international diplomats and county and traditional leaders. The theme of the first National Land Conference was “Celebrating three years of Liberia’s 2018 Land Rights Act”.

The participation of the USAID Mission Director, [REDACTED], highlighted the USG’s long-term support to the GOL. The Mission Director urged land sector stakeholders to: 1) continue to support rural communities in the formalization process of their community land; 2) make the most of the conference by sharing lessons and best practices and incorporate them into ongoing and future efforts to fulfill the potential of the Land Rights Act to contribute to women's economic empowerment; 3) ensure inclusive participation in the management of land and natural resources; 4) assist communities to formalize the right to their land; and 5) prevent conflict and sustain peace. He confirmed that USAID, through LMA, will continue to support the Liberia Land Authority to guide local communities as they go through the legal process to acquire deeds to their community lands. To conclude, he encouraged local communities to not only become deed holders but to also utilize those deeds in ways they can transform their lives and those of their children and grandchildren.



Figure 7: Mission Director, [REDACTED], giving encouraging remarks at LMA Launch during NLC in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. Photo courtesy of LMA.

Assessment of Services Communities will need from the LLA: During this period, LMA initiated the assessment of communities’ needs that required services to be rendered by the LLA. The activity was done during various field activities such as general assessment of target communities, gender assessments and normal M&E data collections and spot checks. The following is a list of key services that communities expect the LLA to provide to advance the implementation of the CLRF process:

- 1. Land Demarcation and Mapping:** For many communities, there are too many misunderstandings surrounding boundaries. More support is needed to address the issue of boundary harmonization/negotiation and demarcations. Focus should be on community self-identification (CSI), and identifying old boundary lines before cutting new lines. For community members, the CSI process should include the requisite authority and adjacent communities who are affected by the Boundary harmonization. Therefore, they need the LLA to come and carry out demarcation so that everyone can be clear on what their boundaries are and where it’s located.
- 2. Land Surveying:** Communities would like the LLA to support them to conduct the confirmatory survey (in a timely manner) following the mapping and demarcation of their communal lands. That exercise will help them to confirm the identified boundary lines and affirm legal ownership. This will help communities to mitigate all their land conflicts.
- 3. Dispute Resolution:** Due to ongoing boundary issues, communities asserted that they need LLA intervention to help them resolve disputes related to their boundary points and limits. They think that the LLA can support them to resolve some of the disputes they are having among themselves and with their neighbors.
- 4. Investor Referrals:** Communities want the LLA to connect them with private parties to enter into business. When there are investors engaging the LLA and looking for land and communities to invest in, the communities want the LLA to recommend their land and their communities.
- 5. Land Use Planning:** The community dwellers suggested that the LLA support them in developing their land use plans. They believe that when the land use plan is developed, it will be a policy statement for how their customary land will be used in different areas of the community for both the productive development and the conservation of protected areas within their communities. They also see this process as a crucial component of development and will help prevent land-use conflicts and even reduce exposure to chemicals.

- 6. Deed Issuance and Registration:** Communities also want the LLA, upon completion of the necessary steps of the CLRF, to speed up the process of issuing deeds for their customary land in order to make it legitimate. With their deeds in hand, they can productively manage their lands and improve their livelihoods of their families and community at large. In addition, they would like the LLA to decentralize the process so that they could proceed to the registration of their communal land deeds at the county level. For them, the decentralized deed registration at county level will create great efficiency and save time.

TASK 1.3: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE LLA, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO SECURE LAND RIGHTS

From startup, the Project met with the LLA, CSOs, the director of Forestry Training Institute (FTI) and other donors supporting the land sector such as World Bank, FORUMCIV, and Lantmäteriet/SIDA land projects in Liberia to discuss synergy possibilities to support the Geomatics Education Program (GEP), initiated by USAID under LGSA.

LMA is in negotiation with USAID to come up with the best strategy for supporting the surveying profession in Liberia. LMA plans to provide support the GEP in year two.

Finalizing the plan for support to the Geomatics Education Program (GEP). Overall, USAID support of the GEP training has been a success. A total of 29 students were enrolled and 20 successfully completed the GEP training as of February 2020 through previous support provided by USAID. Among the graduates, five were women. As of today, they are all active professionals in the field working as volunteers (six); independent surveyors (three); employed by LLA at both national and county levels (eight); working for private firms (two); and taking advance graduate courses abroad (one).

- **Visit to the Forestry Training Institute (FTI):** LMA met with the management team of the FTI in March 2022 to follow up on LMA's November assessment to verify findings and begin preparation for next steps. As the GEP was established by the LGSA project in 2018, USAID is keen on sustaining this investment. The meeting between the LMA, led by the COP and that of FTI/GEP was led by its Executive Director of FTI with the following attendees:

LMA COP provided an overview of the project and how we could establish synergy and collaboration in the implementation of the LMA. Two key areas identified were: a) GEP training focusing on GIS for Land Administration and GIS for Cartography and Photogrammetry; and b) partner with FTI to use of the modern surveying equipment procured by the LGSA project for the use in confirmatory surveys of project communities.

For the FTI Executive Director, Mr. Joel Gamys, following the successful implementation of the GEP, their vision was to maintain the GEP program as an integral part of the institute's curricula. They have created a GEP Department of Geo-Information Science and Research at the Institute. He affirmed that they have the capacity to conduct In-service trainings or tailor-made trainings and, at the same time, to facilitate a short-term Education program.

Action points drawn from the meeting were that the FTI will share with LMA its brochure on the fee structure, activity plans, and academic schedule. The project will prepare for the recruitment of another cohort of candidates for a 10-month program; they will coordinate with the LLA for in-service training of a couple of staff and verify budgetary implications for such support. ECODIT will further discuss with USAID next steps.

Support LLA in Establishing a Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning Working Group: On November 10, 2021, the Thematic Working Group on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning was established. LLA aims to establish clarity on monitoring, evaluation, and learning as well as to develop the national MEL framework for the LLA. The purpose of the planning meeting was to develop an activity plan for how the working group could help achieve the objectives of the National Land Conference. The facilitator provided the overview of the conference and how it intends to address the many challenges

impeding the full implementation of the LRA, particularly the MEL section of the LLA. The thematic group was tasked to review the law that established the LLA, the LRA, the LLA 5-year strategic plan, the LLA decentralization policy, and the LLA's current monitoring tools. These documents will be shared with all partners or members of the thematic working group and will serve as a guide on how to develop the national M&E framework for the LLA. LMA was appointed as chair for the sub-thematic working group and hosted a technical session. The LMA MEL Specialist reviewed the tools and made recommendations as well as a draft framework which has been submitted to LLA.

2.3 OBJECTIVE 2: COMMUNITIES PLAN AND MANAGE COMMUNAL LAND FOR PRODUCTIVE USE AND SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Task 2.1 PROVIDE COMMUNITIES WITH LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

Development of a template/model for Communities Land Use Plan: LMA, through the technical assistance of its international subcontractor Tetra Tech, drafted a user-friendly Land Use Planning template based on LLA land use guidelines. Once the accompanying template for LUPs is completed, LMA will share both draft documents to the LLA for their review and feedback. The final products will serve as tools to collect LUP ideas from selected target communities.

Although this activity is mainly planned for Year 2, LMA has already started supporting Palama and Vavala communities in Lofa county in the development of their land use plans. The process started with information gathering from the communities and research, with the drafting of a LUP for both communities still in progress.

Participatory Rural Appraisal: In advance of LMA support to communities to help them develop land use plans and improved management of resources, ECODIT launched two trainings on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) for CSOs and CBOs in May and July 2022. The team conducted PRAs in Lofa in the Lawalazu community, Voinjama District, and in Bong in Kollita-Wolah community to prepare future grantees to understand PRA methods to gather and interpret information on target communities for a better understanding of their status (constraints, challenges, and opportunities), and the adoption of appropriate approaches to addressing their land rights, land use planning and management issues.

Through the PRA, LMA adopted a participatory approach to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. In all target communities, the project had local people play a more active role in information gathering as well as in the data analysis and activity implementation processes. The quantitative method helped generate information that were captured numerically, and the qualitative method helped in exploring meanings, processes, reasons, and communities' explanations.



Figure 8: An elderly resident of Lawalazu identifying women's interests during the mapping exercise

Of 40 participants, representatives of 20 eligible CBOs attended the two PRA trainings. LMA conducted the PRA using three main tools: the historical profile, the transect walk, and the community mapping. This suite of tools helps participants collect information on a community to access issues that may need close attention to assist in addressing their development objectives.

In Lawalazu, community members regarded conducting a PRA as a great opportunity, since it was their first experience working

with outsiders to conduct this type of research. Through the transect walk, the community mapping, and historical profile exercises, they were able to discuss and determine the geographical extent of their village and their boundaries with adjacent communities and other clans. The exercises helped to raise their awareness on the importance and different uses of their land by different social groups, such as the use of

the sacred bush by men and youth for some specific traditional activities, and special land and spaces identified by women as settings where they meet to discuss issues of concern.

Community mapping was a valuable exercise. This was the first time the Lawalazu community had constructed a sketch map or any detailed map of the town to show various resources and their locations within the village limit and its surroundings. The main resources that they identified were the forests for hunting and farming that are allocated to different sections of the village, the forests reserved for performing rituals, and traditional bush schools called **poro** (for men) & **sande** (for women).

Finally, the project educated communities on the importance of women and youth participation in the decision-making processes in Lawalazu, with specific reference to land use and management. LMA will conduct more PRA exercises in target communities and use findings to guide future programming regarding land use and planning and establishing linkages between target communities and the private sector for possible investment opportunities.



Figure 9 A sketch map of Lawalazu drawn by participants

Private Sector Engagement: LMA has conducted assessments in selected communities to collect ideas from local populations and identify potentials for private sector engagement to support their development initiatives. So far, the project approach focuses PSE activities in two of the target counties, Lofa and Bong. The Project identified and entered in discussions with two potential investors operating in the two counties – JPalm and a new social enterprise company called the Liberia Organic Cocoa & Agricultural Company. While JPalm focuses on palm oil, the Liberia Organic Cocoa and Agriculture Company focus on the production of organic cocoa.

Three communities were selected in Lofa County, Wanwoma/Kolahun district, Vavala and Palama/Salayea District, for initial assessments. In Lofa, there is the potential for forestry exploitation. The project will explore investment opportunities in this area and seek to define the possibilities. The project will identify where the communities are as well as related economic growth activities, source, the supply chain, and the different actors.

During the assessment, the team observed a lot of illegal pit-sawing and mining taking place in the forest and community members expressed interest in getting their deed for their community in order to stop these activities. Members of the community reported that the Forestry Development Authority has stopped community members from hunting within the forest to increase animals' species reproduction. They have also permitted investors to make assessments within the forest. Community members' investment ideas focused on fish farming, planting more crops, handicrafts and trainings.

The adaptation and improvement of existing practices and tools for land use planning and PSE, and designing a modular training course for CLDMCs, CSOs, and Liberian professionals will be undertaken in year two.

TASK 2.2 COLLABORATE WITH THE LLA AND CLDMCS TO ESTABLISH, IMPLEMENT, AND UPDATE LAND USE PLANS

Planned for Year 2 Quarter 1.

TASK 2.3: ASSIST CLDMCS TO ESTABLISH FAIR PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR THAT GENERATE REVENUE

Planned for Year 2 Quarter 1.

2.4 OBJECTIVE 3: WOMEN, YOUTH, AND OTHER MARGINALIZED GROUPS PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM COMMUNAL LAND MANAGEMENT.

Under this objective, LMA aims to support land disputes and grievances to be resolved appropriately through alternative dispute resolution methods. The project assessed and strengthened the capacity of CLDMCs and other established ADR institutions to mediate and conciliate land-related disputes that arise during the CLRF process, and beyond. We helped communities to identify and support effective channels for resolving disputes; and mobilize civil society to advance ADR policy and legal reforms.

TASK 3.1: ENGAGE TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND MEN FOR IMPROVED AND PEACEFUL POWER-SHARING

Engage Traditional Leaders in Public Consultations: LMA's strategy is to increase community participation in decision-making processes within target communities. During each of its public consultations, LMA ensures that traditional leaders and other social groups are invited and engaged for improved power sharing in a peaceful manner.

During that reporting period, the Project held a series of community consultations in 12 Year 1 target communities in Lofa County, specifically Wulukoha, Hassala, Hembel, Tahamba, Wanwoma, Lukusu, Lower Guma, Upper Guma, and Central Guma communities in Kolahun and Vahun Ndistricts. During these consultations, local authorities, traditional leaders, senior land lords, and representatives of women and youth groups were invited. These gatherings serve as a platform for communities to dialogue on issues of common interests and agree on strategies for sustainable development actions.

See detailed description of activity under objective – Task 1.1.

TASK 3.2: DEVELOP THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES OF WOMEN, YOUTH, PWDS AND OTHER MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Women's Leadership Development: During this reporting period, LMA provided a series of trainings on gender and land governance and women's participation in land governance. Training participants included representatives of CLDMCs, women, and youth groups. As required by law, each CLDMC should have women in leadership positions. However, although the number of women occupying leadership positions within the CLDMCs in target communities is still minimal, the few women who are members of the CLDMCs demonstrated notable leadership capacities. For example, Mrs. Bendu Moore, the co-chair of the CLDMC of Wulukoha Clan, is a committed member and role model for other women. *"Though no money is being paid for the work we do, the experience I get from the process by being part and taking on a leadership role is very important for me and my fellow women,"* she said. Mrs. Bendu Moore, in her comments, recommended that the LMA encourage CLDMCs to always involve senior landlords, chiefs, and traditional leaders when settling land matters to allow equal participation of both men, women, and youth in land disputes and boundary harmonization processes.



Figure 10: Wanwoma Clan women in a joyous spirit about their involvement in land management. Photo Courtesy of LMA

The CLDMCs have limited financial resources. This has sometimes impeded their effectiveness in meeting their roles and responsibilities. Despite this lack of finances, they often meet and try to inform communities on land issues and encourage consultations among communities to address them. The Project plans to continue supporting their efforts and will work with them to initiate ideas for internal resource mobilization to strengthen their good governance practices.

Training on Women’s Land Rights and ADR: From September 1-3, 2022 TDS conducted a gender training on Women’s Land Rights, Administration & Alternative Disputes Resolutions in Gbanga, Bong County. The training focused on increasing the knowledge of participants from each community to help improve the existing structure of gender mainstreaming in customary land formalization.

This training brought together representatives from Zota, Kporyorquellie and Kpatawee CLDMC including representatives from marginalized groups, local government officials, and focal persons from 3 community-based organization (CBOs). A total of 32 participants attended the training. Among them, 12 were women and four people with disabilities.

Gender Responsive Budgeting: During the Grants Management training in Voinjama city, Lofa County (May 9 – May 13), LMA facilitated a session on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). The purpose was to educate participants on the concept on gender and to develop their understanding on the basics of GRB when developing and/or analyzing project budgets to ensure that men, women, boys’ and girls’ interests are taken into account to provide more equity regarding access to resources. The expectation is to prepare them to submit good technical proposals with supporting budgets that are gender responsive.

The training targeted a total of 20 eligible CBOs from Lofa, Nimba and Bong with 40 participants in total.

2.5 OBJECTIVE 4: COMMUNITIES UTILIZE ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) TO RESOLVE DISPUTES AND GRIEVANCES

Although the work under these objective and corresponding tasks are planned for Year 2, during this reporting period, LMA supported communities in mitigating land disputes and grievances through ADR methods. The Project assessed and strengthened the capacity of CLDMCs and other established ADR institutions to mediate and conciliate land-related disputes that arise during the CLRF process and beyond. The Project worked closely with target communities, local authorities, and traditional leaders to identify and support effective channels for resolving disputes.

See below some highlights:

TASK 4.1: IMPROVE THE AVAILABILITY AND CAPACITY OF ADR PRACTICES

Planned for Year 2.

TASK 4.2: INCREASE AWARENESS OF APPROPRIATE ADR CHANNELS FOR RESOLVING LAND RELATED DISPUTES

LMA, through information sharing, awareness raising activities, and public consultations, already encourages target communities to adopt local ADR mechanisms to address some of their boundary issues, as resolving a local issue through a local channel could help them advance their community land formalization process. In addition, the Project successfully supported the organization and facilitation of two major District level public consultations In Lofa during the past year.

Using ADR Channels to Resolve Land Disputes: Following the successful result of the public consultation jointly supported by the World Bank, LMA supported two additional District level Public Consultations. The two events were successfully conducted in Lofa County, resulting to the signing of MOU between the local communities to resolve their longtime ongoing boundaries disputes. The following provides the details:

- A. Zorzor District (Fissebu, September 26 to 28, 2022):** At the end of the consultation that took three days of discussion and successful negotiations between Fissebu and Zelemai communities, the Elders, Youth, Women Leaders, and CLDMC representatives of both Fissebu and Zelemai Customary Land-owning Communities, situated and lying in Zorzor, signed an MOU that certifies that they have understood and agreed on the boundary points/coordinates - the generally accepted and recognized traditional boundary points - separating the customary lands of their Communities/Towns. They, therefore, agreed to

respect the below-described boundary points in line with their common customs, norms, and traditional practices.

- a. *Fissebu and Zelemai Town boundary shall commence from Wuduyea Creek running along a nd connecting Gbagayea creek running along the same creek and getting in Wulolor creek t o a point understood by all and to be clarified during the confirmatory survey.*
- B.** Salayea District (Salayea, September 29 to October 1, 2022): Like in Zorzor, representatives of communities from Palama and Vavala Clans, including Elders, Youth, Women Leaders, CLDMCs, Clans Customary Land-owning Communities, concluded their three-day discussions and successful negotiations by the signing of an MOU on October 1, 2022. The MOU certifies that they have understood and agreed on the boundary points/coordinates - the generally accepted and recognized traditional boundary points, separating the Customary lands of their two clans. They, therefore, agreed to respect the below-described boundary points in line with their common customs, norms, and traditional practices:
- a. *Palama and Vavala Clans first boundary shall commence from the main Motor Road leading to Zorzor City on a creek called Babayala running along the creek and getting to Lawokpoloryea Hill.*
 - b. *Palama and Vavala Clans second boundary shall commence from Lawokpoloryea Hill running a straight line to a rock called Tewawuguane.*
 - c. *Palama and Vavala Clans third boundary shall commence from Tewawuguane Rock running in straight line to enter St. Paul River and no more.*

The Table below is the number of participants in the two District Level Public Consultations in Lofa:

District	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
Fissebu	151	40	191
Salayea	196	55	251
TOTAL	247	95	442

TASK 4.3: ENHANCE CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN ADVANCING LAND ADR POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Planned for Year 2.

3. COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

Since its inception on July 19, 2021, LMA has laid a foundation of collaboration and engagement with the LLA. Overall coordination with the LLA remains challenging due in part to the LLA’s anticipation of support that LMA is not designed to provide. LMA will continue to coordinate with the LLA to ensure their participation in completing and documenting the CLRF process. USAID’s support will be critical in coordinating with the LLA leadership and explaining the US Government’s (USG) development approach.

3.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Liberia Land Authority Engagement: Throughout Year 1, LMA staff including the leadership, the technical staff and subcontractors, organized and attended a series of meetings with LLA and other counterparts. During the visits, we noted that the LLA still inquires as to how LMA could directly support the institution as according to the Executive Director, LLA has very limited operational financial resources that hampers their effectiveness in implementing the new land management policy. The COP once again reiterated LMA’s commitment to ensuring effective collaboration between the project and the LLA.

LMA and Its Local Partners Meet with LLA: As part of the project’s quest to establish synergy, strengthen relationships, and encourage the LLA ownership of the project and their participation in the

LMA implementation process, a meeting was held at the LLA on Thursday, March 17, under the chairmanship of the LLA, represented by the Executive Director. There were 18 attendees in total, representing the LLA and LMA. Representatives of the LLA included the Executive Director, Departmental Directors of Projects, Administration, Human Resources & Customer services, Land Use & Planning, along with other technicians and the LMA staff including the Chief of Party, the Land Administration & Management Specialist, and representatives of all three Ips (SDI, RRF and TDS).

The main objective for LMA was to build strong collaboration, information sharing, and coordination with the LLA. The meeting started with a welcome statement by the Executive Director of the LLA, followed by the opening remarks of LMA Chief of Party highlighting the objectives of the project emphasizing the need for collaboration and ownership of the project by the LLA, “This project is a Liberian project, and I am only here to give support for its implementation,” [REDACTED] stated. The COP’s statement was buttressed by the Land Administration & Management Specialist, [REDACTED], who reiterated the project’s implementation approach in terms of providing capacity building and support to communities through the CLDMCs, and CBOs. Since the project inception phase, the team has worked toward building collaboration with not only the LLA, but with other partners supporting the land sector in Liberia to ensure their active participation.

The LLA raised several technical issues that the Executive Director said had previously been raised during the meeting with the Mission Director, including their statutory responsibility to conduct the confirmatory survey, step validation and certification, and their support and participation in project outreach, awareness, and sensitization activities.

Following the intervention of the Executive Director, other LLA technical staff also discussed points related to the identification and selection of additional communities in target counties. LMA reiterated that the team will continue to share project documents with them including the draft community selection criteria, and LLA will be invited in the planning sessions of the next community entry plans. We also discussed project capacity building support with specific reference to the Geomatics Education Program at FTI. The Executive Director designated the Director of Project, Ms. Daniela Johnson as the focal point for the project.

The meeting was successful because there was a genuine feeling of the need to work together collaboratively, but at the same time, the project has to be cognizant of the complicated issues that remain. This was reiterated by the Chairman when he stated, “We need to get LMA to tell us how every dollar is being spent, or we will decide to work with the LMA or not to work with the LMA.”



Figure 11: LMA and local partners meeting with LLA Chairman and technical staff to reinforce collaboration and coordination of project activities. Photo Courtesy: SDI.

NB: Since the holding of that large coordination meeting with LLA, the LMA technical team and its local partners regularly meet with LLA technical divisions to plan and organized trainings and any Project support at the community level. LLA staff are always invited to these events. The Project aims to build LLA accountability to Liberians and reinforce trust between them and their communities, highlighting the roles and responsibilities in helping them to advance the CLRF process and ensure that local communities fully benefit their community land rights as per the new Land right Act.

LMA Attends LLA Organized Training:

LMA was invited by the LLA to participate in a regional training on the processes of CLRF held at the SDI office located in Duazon, Margibi County. The five-day training was organized by LLA in collaboration with the Swedish mapping, survey and land registration Authority (LANTMATERIET), with support from SIDA.

Participants were from the five counties of: Montserrado, Bomi, Cape Mount, Gbarlolu and Margibi. Training focused on topics such as introduction to gender concepts and women and youth land rights; facilitating community self-identification processes; community engagement and awareness raising; and documenting and reporting the CLRF process.

Meeting with LLA to Support LMA on Boundary Harmonization and Confirmatory survey:

In preparation of the boundary harmonization and confirmatory survey in LMA target communities in Lofa, the Project's LAM specialist met with LLA project Director Mrs. Daniela Gray-Warner, Assistant Director of Surveys and Mapping Dr. Mamoud Solomon, and Vice Chairman for Administration and Customer Service Hon P. Bloh Sayea. During the meeting, discussions centered around the use of the draft guidelines for the Confirmatory Survey pending its approval; the technology to be used; confirmatory survey training scope, schedule, and outline. We hope that the LLA will consider the recommendation put forth by LMA so that the time gap between BH & Negotiation and the conduct of the Confirmatory Survey is reduced or, ideally, the two steps are undertaken simultaneously. These steps could be combined if the LLA would provide a checklist of information to be collected by the BH team when conducting BH. The information would then serve as a reconnaissance survey to inform the Confirmatory Survey exercise. As requested by the Vice Chairman, LMA will provide technical assistance to the LLA to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for registration of Statutory Customary Deed. That we be provided in Year 2.

Also, to ensure effectiveness, the LMA team expressed the need for LLA to:

1. Follow the draft Guidelines for Confirmatory survey while conducting the survey;
2. Reduce the gap or wait time between Boundary Harmonization and negotiation so that the Confirmatory Survey is immediately done upon completion of the latter;
3. Participate in facilitating the training for the Local LLA Surveying team and lead the process for selected LMA target communities.
4. Use existing technology/equipment for carrying out the surveys.

LLA and LMA decided to put in place a confirmatory survey committee to implement the above.

However, no confirmatory survey has been conducted and collaboration and planning with LLA is continuing in an effort to schedule dates for LLA to assist target communities which are ready to conduct their confirmatory survey.

Meeting with IDH: LMA met with IDH and EU to discuss the project's support of their previous communities working on the CLRF process. Following the meeting, seven of the nine IDH communities have been confirmed for the takeover process, while Mr. Silas Siakor indicated that he would be discussing with Parley that was funded by Tenure Facility to turn over the remaining two communities of Lukasu and Hembeh.

Coordination and Synergy with World Bank: To further coordination efforts, the Project worked closely with the World Bank under their Land Administration Project (LAP) - Piloting of Customary Land Rights Formalization to support Palama and M'Garlin communities from Lofa country to address their boundary issues. Both projects are working with these two communities in Lofa (Palama targeted by LMA and GBarline by World Bank).

The two-day Public Consultation between the Palama and GBarline communities, was held in Salayea from August 5-6, 2022. More than 100 people attended the public consultation. Among them were traditional leaders including clan chiefs, land lords, representatives of CLDMC members, and women and youth groups from both communities, and county-level officials. The discussions were facilitated by the LLA representative from both the National (Chairman) and County level, and the Superintendent of Lofa County who played a tremendous role to make the process successful.

The two communities agreed on five boundary points and discussions were still ongoing regarding nine boundary points – covering about a total of 27,792.69 acres. Of that total, 13,195.75 acres are in the forest – a great potential for natural resources. Also, worth noting is that two villages (one from each community) claim that they belong to different clans. After tough discussions and a series of internal consultations among the two communities' representatives, the Public Consultation ended successfully. The Palama and GBarline communities coming to an agreement on boundaries claims led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) representing the agreements reached in the boundary discussions. It is important to mention that the disputes were resolved through a traditional mechanism referred to as “Cousin – Nephew” relationship between the two communities.



Figure 12: A view of community members during the public consultation in Salayea, Lofa County. Photo courtesy of LMA, August 2022.

As a lesson learned, LMA will continue providing support to target communities to address their boundary disputes through ADR mechanisms that are relevant to the communities.

Meeting with JPalm Liberia: In a prelude to engaging with the private sector to support target communities' income generations efforts, the LMA team met with JPalm Liberia CEO Mr. Mahmoud Johnson and another colleague to introduce LMA (objectives and target counties) and learn about JPalm's business orientation and geographic coverage. LMA's main objective was to see if JPalm Liberia would be interested in working with women and youth groups in some of the project's target counties and helping communities benefit more from the use of their lands and the exploitation of the natural/forestry resources. The CEO expressed their interest in collaborating with LMA and indicated that they will cover two of the project intervention counties (Bong and Nimba). In Bong County, they will work with 51 communities with the plan to extend to Nimba county, but with an extension in 30 additional communities in Bong.

He also informed us that the main focus of JPalm is to work with communities that already have demarcated their land, meaning that the communities should have a deed, as some sort of protection for the community. For LMA, there are some synergy opportunities with JPalm and we will hold follow-up meetings with them to materialize concrete actions.

3.2 SPOT-CHECK PROJECT SITES

From June 16 to 20, 2022, the LMA COP and Land Management Administration Specialist conducted a joint field trip with USAID DRG Director and LMA COR in Lofa County. The purpose of the trip was to facilitate USAID's spot-check visit in Fissebu and Palama - two of the project's target communities in the county of Lofa.

The team had a series of meetings with: 1) with the LLA Land Administrator; 2) the Palama communities in Salayea City, and 3) the Fissebu community in Fissebu Town. The team met with participants including traditional leaders (town/clan chiefs), CLDMCs, women and youth groups, and landlords. Seven landlords attended the Palama meeting while five attended the meeting in Fissebu. The purpose of ensuring landlords attended the meeting was to also assess the relationship between the landlords and the CLDMCs, the legitimacy and acceptance of the CLDMCs by the local/traditional leaders, and whether or not they all understood the roles/responsibilities of the CLDMCs.

All meetings were followed by debriefs between the USAID team and the LMA team. The team organized meetings with residents and had open discussions followed by questions and answers on progress made on the CLRF process (i.e., steps completed, challenges they are facing, alternative solutions and next

steps), the roles and responsibilities of the CLDMC members, the work relationship between them and the LLA representative at the county level, and USAID/LMA support and challenges.

All communities assessed by the Project during this reporting period are stuck at the Boundary Harmonization and Negotiation step and have not started preparing for the Confirmatory Survey. Regarding CLDMCs, there is a serious gap in funding and resource mobilization for CLDMCs to carry out their functions, which include holding regular meetings and making trips to defend their communities' interests.

According to residents, disagreements around boundary harmonization resulted from many circumstances such as how the towns originated and differences regarding which town was established first; where the traditional boundaries were; how and to what extent the boundaries had been recognized with the use of where bushing ended for each town; where soap trees were planted; and which creek, stream or river was perceived as the traditional boundary. Some of the spokespersons were not quite detailed on where the traditional boundaries were, and kinsmen indicated that there was a need to have others help in explaining or providing the boundary descriptions.

Palama: There are serious boundary disagreements between Gbarlin clan and Palama clan and between Palama clan and Vavala clan. These issues have not been resolved even after the involvement of the joint LLA, WB & LMA teams where they all agreed to settle issues in Kpeteyea (a traditional peace building town).

There are other boundary issues around Gbarlin and the towns of Telemue and Tinsu (Palama clan). However, these issues around Ganglota have all been resolved and they are ready to conduct the boundary walk and collect data points.

Fissebu: All boundary issues between Fissebu and adjacent communities have been resolved and are now awaiting walk and collection of points, except for in Kabata and Zelemai communities:

- The boundary situation between Yellah and Bokessa still remains unclear.
- Kabata, a community within Fissebu, maintains that there is a 1967 deed of Fissebu and this needs to be verified. LMA will provide some assistance with this.
- Kabata refuses to agree on the boundary identified by Zelemai (their uncles) for fear of losing farm villages, crops, etc.

The issues in these communities reinforce the fact that there are still disagreements and/or ongoing boundary conflicts. This is a result of the fact that the community's historical profile and sketch map has not been conducted in the first step of the CLRF process. If a reliable community historical profile and sketch map are conducted during the CSI step, issues could be identified earlier and the project and communities could have a clearer understanding of the issues before activities around boundary harmonization and negotiation begin.

It is noted that boundary issues/disagreements exist due to delays and the time gap between boundary harmonization and negotiations and confirmatory surveys. Projects that had previously provided assistance have since closed and communities that relied on this assistance could not continue the boundary harmonization and negotiation process without external financial support.

In addition, influences of Monrovia or foreign-based kinsmen of these communities have also impacted some of the disagreements and positions taken by some of the towns/communities. Communities consult with some of their kinsmen outside of the communities to make major decisions and some suggestions come from kinsmen who do not live within the communities but still remain relevant stakeholders.

The following are some recommendations for follow-on actions to help communities advance their CLRF process.

- CSOs or institutions conducting formalization process must relinquish all maps to the communities for spatial visualization as engagements and boundary discussions proceed.

- Make available maps produced from CSI and previous boundary harmonization attempts during subsequent meetings.
- Increase communities' awareness and sensitization on addressing boundary disagreements and control external influence from kinsmen to agree on their boundary issues and move forward their CLRF process thereby obtaining deeds to their community lands.
- Hold public consultations around specific thematic areas such as boundary harmonization & negotiations and ADR (both traditional methods and conventional), ensuring the involvement of key stakeholders including superintendents, district commissioners, representatives of line agencies, kinsmen from Monrovia, and other local and traditional authorities. Public consultations could lead to a collective approach to identify difficulties and discuss and agree on alternatives solutions to progress in the CLRF process.
- Continue to establish synergies with other organizations implementing CLRF, but more specifically with those whose target communities that share boundary/boundaries with LMA project communities.

Next Steps: At the end of the meeting, stakeholders developed steps to ensure that Fissebu boundary issues are resolved in the coming months and Fissebu could obtain deed by end of September 2022. The community, LMA, LLA, and USAID each committed to work in collaboration with the following commitments:

- The community: Ensure that the boundary issue with Kabata and Zelemai is handled and that Zelemai, their uncles (as required by tradition) identify the boundary on which they agree, and that the traditional relationship is not disrupted so that Kabata can continue to work on the land they have already developed so they won't lose their crops or farms.
- LMA: Support the community; facilitate boundary meetings; conduct boundary walks, ADR process, collect boundary points; and coordinate with LLA to ensure their full participation and completion of Fissebu's boundary harmonization and advancement towards the next steps.
- LLA: prepare for validation and follow up after boundary harmonization and negotiation to issue the certificate of completion and then follow with the confirmatory survey. The local office in Lofa will coordinate with headquarters in Monrovia to get the deed completed, signed, and registered.
- USAID: participate in the official presentation of the deed to the community, publicize and post the presentation on the USAID website, and ensure that the activity is shared with Washington.

NB: *These commitments were successfully completed with the organization of the two districts. The Public Consultation resulted in the signing of MOUs between target communities. See details under task 4.1.*

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 PROGRESS ON ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This section provides an analysis of each indicator with respect to the annual target set in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan. It explains the relationship between the target and the actual data, and presents the reasons why LMA fell short, met, or exceeded annual targets, and lessons learned.

Intermediate Result (IR 1): Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land

EG.10.4-5 Number of parcels with relevant parcel information corrected or incorporated into an official land administration system (whether a system for the property registry, cadaster, or an integrated system) as a result of USG assistance

Although LMA had not planned on reporting on this indicator until Year 2 of implementation, the Project was able to successfully resolve parcel issues across four communities in Lofa county, namely Palama, Vavala, Fissebue, and N'Garlen. LMA will continue to work with LLA to ensure these communities are incorporated into LLA's official land administration system.

1.1.1: Number of land surveyors successfully completing certification from the Geomatic Education Program (GEP) the Forestry Training Institute (FTI)

Project support to GEP training is under review with USAID and will be collected by counting the number of individuals receiving certificates in surveying technology with confirmation from the FTI. We expect the support to start in Year 2 of the project (per pending contract modification).

1.1.2: Number of steps in the six-step CLRF process completed by communities (total number of steps across all communities supported)

LMA supported four communities (Palama, Vavala, Fissebue, and N'Garlen) to move from the BH step to the confirmatory survey step.

Individual community assessments are conducted on a rolling basis, rather than through a baseline survey, to validate their status in the CLRF process.

1.1.3: Number of regulations or guidelines drafted or advanced with the LLA to guide communities and CSOs through the steps of the CLRF process

Although LMA is required to begin reporting on this indicator in Year 2, LMA, through its local subcontractor Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), supported LLA in reviewing the draft regulations and guidelines on the CLRF process in Quarter 3. At this stage, the validation process for the regulations and guidelines by the LLA has been validated, finalized, and awaiting LLA commissioners' approval.

1.1.4: Number of CSOs and CBOs trained to support communities in the CLRF process

LMA trained and supported 20 CBOs in grants management and implementation, including modules on the CLRF process, in Lofa (10), Bong (3), Grand Bassa (3) and Nimba (4) counties to advance in the implementation of their CLRF process in the project-supported communities during Quarter 3.

Intermediate Result (IR 2): Communities Plan and Manage Customary Land for Productive Use

2.1.1: Number of CLDMCs with land use plans that are actively implemented and regularly updated.

Reporting on this indicator is planned for Year 2.

2.1.2: Number of CLMDCs that have increased revenue

Reporting on this indicator is planned for Year 2.

2.1.3 Number of individuals provided training, information, and/or legal advice with respect to negotiating contracts and agreements with the private sector.

Reporting on this indicator is planned for Year 2.

3.1.1: Number of CLDMCs in which women, youth, and other marginalized groups hold leadership positions

All the CLMDC's supported by LMA have women, youth, and other marginalized groups as members. However, very few CLMDCs have women in leadership positions.

Lesson Learned: Moving forward, LMA needs to identify women leaders more effectively amongst the beneficiaries to promote as pillars of sustainability, identify the skill sets and activities that will provide them with an opportunity to have a positive impact on CLRF processes. Equally so, LMA needs to strengthen outreach to marginalized group and youth to solidify long-term achievement of objectives.

3.1.2: Number of CLDMCs that prioritize agreements with private sector entities specifically with women- and/or youth-led community enterprises or associations

Reporting under this indicator is planned for Year 2 and data will be collected from CLDMC bylaws and LMA internal records reviewed.

Intermediate Result (IR 4): Land Disputes and Grievances Resolved Appropriately through Alternative Dispute Resolution

4.1.1: Number of CLDMCs that have a grievance resolution mechanism

Reporting under this indicator is planned for Year 2

EG 10.4-3 Number of disputed land and property rights cases resolved by local authorities, contractors, mediators, or courts as a result of USG assistance

While reporting under this indicator is planned to start in Year 2, LMA successfully facilitated signing of MOUs that resolved three boundary disputes, one between Fissebu and Palama, one between Palama and Vavala, and one between Pamala and N'Garlen.

Cross-Cutting: Number of meetings or other forums held between CSOs/CBOs and the GOL with the purpose of advancing policy, legislation and/or regulations on ADR

In March 2022, LMA supported the National Land Conference in Buchanan Grand Bassa County with Government of Liberia officials from the Ministry of Justice and Liberia Land Authority. The thematic working group on ADR held one meeting in Q2 to discuss policies around ADR. LMA's partners RRF conducted two separate meetings in Q4 at the LLA office in Monrovia between the Multi-Actor Platform and the LLA focusing on the CLRF process and its regulations, inclusive of ADR. Over FY2022, LMA conducted three meetings relevant to this indicator.

Cross-cutting: Number of public awareness raising activities on land management issues and community land rights

To ensure continual information sharing with the public, the LMA team raised 28 community awareness activities through its subcontractor TDS within the project supported communities. The team helped address any concerns about CLRF processes at the community level. Additionally, LMA used radio programming and messaging as a means of reaching out to every town, village, and the larger landscape of the target communities on land management issues and community land right in the project supported communities.

4.2 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLE

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Result Measured by Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Source & Collection Method	Baseline (Source) Date / Value	Year 1 Target	Year 1 Achievement	Percent of Achievement	Life of Project / End-line	Comments
Standard	EG.10.4-5: Number of parcels with relevant parcel information corrected or incorporated into an official land administration system (whether a system for the property registry, cadaster, or an integrated system) as a result of USG assistance	IR 1: Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land	Annually	Collected from land agencies' database annually, CLDMCs, or organizations who report to the LLA with clear evidence of formalized land rights in hard copies or electronic forms	0	0	4	N/A	TBD	<i>The Project successfully resolved parcel issues across four communities in Lofa county, namely Palama, Vavala, Fissebue, and N'Garlen. LMA will continue to work with LLA to ensure these communities are incorporated into LLA's official land administration system.</i>
Custom	I.1.1: Number of county-based land surveyors successfully completing certification from the Geomatic Education Program (GEP) the Forestry Training Institute (FTI).	IR 1: Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land	Annually	Individuals receiving certificate in surveying technology with confirmation from the FTI.	0	10	0	0%	50	<i>Pending USAID modification, will contribute to this indicator in Year 2</i>
Custom	I.1.2: Number of steps in the six-step CLRf process completed by communities (total number of steps across all communities supported).	IR 1: Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land	Annually	Baseline Survey required LMA technical staff monitoring visits and spot checks. Field reports from IPs and LLA working with communities	0	TBD	4	N/A	TBD	<i>Palama, Vavala, Fissebu, and N'Garlen have signed MOUs signifying the completion of their boundary harmonization but they still need to have their boundaries certified by the LLA. They are ready to move onto the confirmatory survey step.</i> <i>Individual community assessments are conducted on a rolling basis, rather than through a baseline survey.</i>

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Result Measured by Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Source & Collection Method	Baseline (Source) Date / Value	Year 1 Target	Year 1 Achievement	Percent of Achievement	Life of Project / End-line	Comments
Custom	1.1.3: Number of regulations or guidelines drafted or advanced with the LLA to guide communities and CSOs through the steps of the CLRF process	IR 1: Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land	Annually	LMA activity reports and LLA records; copies of proposed, drafted or adopted guidelines	0	0	1	N/A	4	<i>Project Exceed Target. Though the Y1 target was 0, LMA supported LLA in Q3 in reviewing draft regulations and guidelines on the CLRF process.</i>
Custom	1.1.4: Number of CSOs and CBOs trained to support communities in the CLRF process	IR 1: Communities Obtain Deeds to their Customary Land	Quarterly	Completed participants attendance forms, attendance records. Records from IPs. Annual reports from CSOs. Direct observations by LMA staff.	0	10	23	200%	70	<i>Exceed Target. Training module on the CLRF process included in the grants management training to CBOs/CSOs.</i>
Custom	2.1.1: Number of CLDMCs with land use plans that are actively implemented and regularly updated.	IR 2: Communities Plan and Manage Customary Land for Productive Use	Quarterly	CLDMC and IP records collected by LMA staff	0	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	15	<i>LAM initiated a review process of community in which CLDCs have already some draft LUP and also initiated the collection of LUP ideas from some target communities in Lofa. Process will continue thought year two.</i>
Custom	2.1.2: Number of CLMDCs that have increased revenue	IR 2: Communities Plan and Manage Customary Land for Productive Use	Annual	CLDMC financial record review conducted by LMA staff	0	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	10	
Custom	2.1.3 Number of individuals provided training, information, and/or legal advice with respect to negotiating contracts and agreements with the private sector.	IR 2: Communities Plan and Manage Customary Land for Productive Use	Quarterly	LMA training and other activity records. Completed participant attendance forms.	0	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	150	

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Result Measured by Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Source & Collection Method	Baseline (Source) Date / Value	Year 1 Target	Year 1 Achievement	Percent of Achievement	Life of Project / End-line	Comments
Custom	3.1.1: Number of CLDMCs in which women, youth, and other marginalized groups hold leadership positions	IR 3: Women, Youth, and Other Marginalized Populations Participate in and Benefit from Customary Land Management	Annually	Baseline Survey Required CLDMC elections, LMA staff collected records	TBD	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	TBD	<i>Throughout Project planned trainings we noticed that there are a few numbers of women and youth who occupy leadership positions as CLDMC members – some women vice presidents and youth as general secretaries mainly men. See narrative on CLDMC capacity building.</i>
Custom	3.1.2: Number of CLDMCs that prioritize agreements with private sector entities specifically with women- and/or youth-led community enterprises or associations.	IR 3: Women, Youth, and Other Marginalized Populations Participate in and Benefit from Customary Land Management	Annually	CLDMC bylaws and LMA internal records reviewed	0	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	12	
Custom	4.1.1: Number of CLDMCs that have a grievance resolution mechanism.	IR 4: Land Disputes and Grievances Resolved Appropriately through Alternative Dispute Resolution	Annually	CLDMC bylaws and LMA internal records reviewed	0	0	<i>Not planned for year one</i>	N/A	12	
Standard	EG 10.4-3 Number of disputed land and property rights cases resolved by local authorities, contractors, mediators, or courts as a result of USG assistance	IR 4: Land Disputes and Grievances Resolved Appropriately through Alternative Dispute Resolution	Quarterly	LMA/IP records that report on ADR efforts. CLDMC-level meetings that mention ADR activities.	0	0	3	0%	TBD	<i>Exceed Target. LMA-supported MOUs have settled three boundary disputes, one between Fissebu and Palama, one between Palama and Vavala, and one between Pamala and N'Garlen</i>
Custom	Cross-Cutting: Number of meetings or other forums held between CSOs/CBOs and the	Cross-Cutting	Quarterly		0	3	3	100%	12	<i>GOL representatives participated in the LMA-supported National Land</i>

Type of Indicator	Indicator	Result Measured by Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Data Source & Collection Method	Baseline (Source) Date / Value	Year 1 Target	Year 1 Achievement	Percent of Achievement	Life of Project / End-line	Comments
	GOL with the purpose of advancing policy, legislation and/or regulations on ADR									Conference, which included a thematic working group on ADR. Partner RRF held two meetings between the MAP and LLA on the CLRF process and its regulations, inclusive of ADR.
Custom	Cross-Cutting: Number of public awareness raising activities on land management issues and community land rights	Cross-Cutting	Quarterly	LMA Activities	0	5	28	560%	55	

4.3 FY22 PROGRESS NARRATIVE

Learning Questions

During year one the project began using a qualitative methodology called “Learning Questions” to collect data that will provide an in-depth analysis and learning opportunity on project activities. The questions are intended to inform the impact of the project, affect decisions, and test assumptions. Information gathered will be used to analyze the status of achieved results.

Per the approved MEL Plan, the following questions were developed:

- **LQ1: To what degree do adults perceive their tenure rights to land is secured?**
- **LQ2: Do communities have access to and are they utilizing land management planning resources? Has the land use plan been used for private sector engagement?**
- **LQ3: To what extent do women, youth, and other marginalized group members perceive themselves to be fully participating in their CLDMC?**
- **LQ4: Do the target communities meaningfully engage community ADR practitioners? How are they accessing them? What other methods of dispute resolution do they rely on (traditional leaders, community fora, CSO approaches, etc.)?**
- **LQ5: What specific risks and context factors are having an impact on target communities in achieving CLRF process steps, and how have communities mitigated these risks?**

During Year 1, data was collected in Quarter 2 and Quarter 4.

In Quarter 2, LMA collected data on LQ 3 and 5 related to 1) women’s participation and leadership positions in their communities; and 2) specific risks and context factors that may have negative impacts on implementing the CLRF process steps and how target communities mitigated these risks. The team held focus group discussions with a total of 149 participants from the nine LMA targeted communities in Lofa county. Among them, 29 were women. As previously reported, women are elected as members of CLDMCs in all nine communities and are consulted in the decision-making process. For LQ5, the group discussions revealed that the main factor that is slowing down the CLRF process in these communities is the ongoing disputes around boundary harmonization. It was revealed that traditional mechanisms were often used to address boundary disputes between communities. Based on these preliminary findings, as planned, LMA will plan to reinforce the capacities of target communities in adopting approaches to mitigate the risks in effectively implementing all six steps of the CLRF to attain project objectives.



Figure 13: Administering the Learning Questions to selected beneficiaries in Popalahun, Lofa County

As a follow up to the initial data collected in Quarter 2, in Quarter 4, LMA traveled to six additional target communities in Lofa to collect data on all five of the learning questions. In this Quarter, the project administered six FGDs with approximately 30 people in each group, for a total of 180 respondents (male-90 female-90). The following explains the details of the data collected in Q4.

Q2 Communities in Lofa County	
Wulukoha	Telemu
Tahamba	Gbanway
Wahuma	Popalahun
Hassala	Bolahun
Lukasu	Ngokorhun
Lukambeh	Fissebu
Upper Guma	
Central Guma	
Lower Guma	

LEARNING QUESTION 1: To what degree do adults perceive their tenure rights to land is secured?

Respondents were asked about their perception of their rights to the land they live on. The responses revealed that all the participants believed that they owned the land themselves. This indicates ownership as prescribed by Article 5 of the Land Right Act 2018.

In relation to land security, when asked about how people perceived their inherited land rights, a majority (67%) of the participants mentioned family conflict as the most prevailing issue that affected land rights they inherited. The rules around land inheritance are not clear and a few respondents stated that having deeds to the land would help lend clarity to these issues.

On the question of how land tenure affects local agriculture, most of the discussants said site rotation for farming was an issue affecting local agriculture.

LEARNING QUESTION 2: Do communities have access to and are they utilizing land management planning resources?

In response to this learning question, the majority (67%) of discussants indicated that they were aware of land management planning resources and 33% said they were not aware of these resources. The respondents who reported awareness of the land management planning resources were located in the two communities (Vavala-Gbanway and Wanwoma-Bolahun) that actually had land use plans in place. These land use plans were developed by local NGO Parley through community meetings and in community consultation. The respondents agreed that neither community is actively using its land use plan and neither plan is supporting private sector engagement. The other four communities don't have land use plans in place so as such, they could not provide answer to the land use plan.

LEARNING QUESTION 3: To what extent do women, youth, and other marginalized group members perceive themselves to be fully participating in the CLDMC?

All respondents reported that their communities had CLDMCs. Respondents also shared that on average, there are three or four women in the CLDMCs. It should be noted that the CLDMCs are required by law to have equal representation between women and men. Community members participating in FGDs were asked whether there was CLDMC structure in their various communities; all the participants (180) said that there is a structure and they all further mentioned that there were women in the various structures. On average, there are three to four women in the CLDMC and their voices are heard.

On youth participation in the CLDMC, all the discussants (180) agreed that there are young people participating in the committees and that their views are recognized in decision making.

For future assessments, LMA will include additional sub-questions relating to the ages of respondents and seeking to identify where minority groups may be at a disadvantage relating to land tenure rights or representation in CLDMCs.

LEARNING QUESTION 4: Do the target communities meaningfully engage community ADR practitioners?

Community members participating in FGDs were asked whether there were ADR practitioners in their communities; all the participants (180) said that there is an ADR committee specifically intended to address land issues. They all further mentioned that there were male and female committee members in these ADR committees. On average, there is a three to two male to female ratio in the ADR committees. There were few instances where ADR committees in the communities used traditional methods (i.e. involving local chiefs, community elders, or other local societies in mediation) to resolve boundary disputes. It should be noted that the ADR committees and traditional methods often work in consultation.

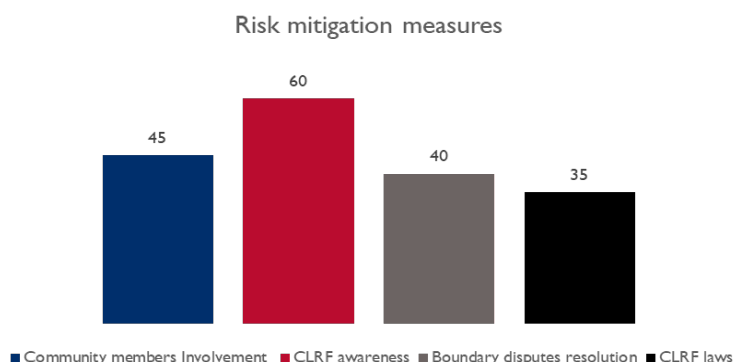
No.	Community	Boundary disputes	Community	Resolved	Method used
1.	Palama	Yes	Vavala	Yes	Traditional methods
2.	Yeala	Yes	Kpaiyea	Yes	Traditional methods
3.	Yarpuah	Yes	Gorlu	Yes	Traditional methods
4.	Nyandiana	Yes	Gbelahun	Yes	Traditional methods
5.	Kpangahamba	Yes	Healihun	Yes	Traditional methods
6.	Wuhalahun	Yes	Ngokorhum	Yes	Traditional methods
7.	Zelemai	Yes	Fessibu	Yes	Traditional methods

LEARNING QUESTION 5: What specific risks and context factors are having an impact on target communities in achieving CLRF process steps, and how have communities mitigated these risks?

The responses revealed that there are several factors that are slowing down the CLRF process in their communities, such as: boundary disputes among neighboring communities and clan. All the participants in the FGDs from the six communities mentioned that boundary disputes are mostly resolved by means of traditional methods. The norms and culture in Lofa county are highly respected by community dwellers.

Farmers raised concerns that, due to the boundary formalization process, these boundaries could potentially be in conflict with community members’ traditional site rotation practices for farming.

When asked about ways to mitigate these risks, the majority of respondents agreed that awareness of the CLRF process is an important mitigation measure. Similarly, respondents cited the importance of community members’ involvement throughout the CLRF process.



5. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Accreditation of ECODIT: The accreditation process of ECODIT, Inc Liberia as an INGO in Liberia is still ongoing. All documents have been reviewed and accepted by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. The challenge with obtaining the Accreditation is a Sectorial Clearance from the

Liberia Land Authority. ECODIT has engaged Bropleh and Associates to obtain the sectorial clearance on behalf of ECODIT to finalize the process.

Staffing: LMA leadership analyzed the current staffing situation and made some adjustments for more effective project implementation. Below is the updated list of current LMA staff members.

Table 1: LMA Staffing Plan

NAMES	POSITIONS
[REDACTED]	Chief of Party
[REDACTED]	Land Management and Administration Specialist
[REDACTED]	Gender, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist
[REDACTED]	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
[REDACTED]	Community Engagement Specialist
[REDACTED]	Private Sector Engagement Specialist
[REDACTED]	Senior Operations and Grants Manager
[REDACTED]	Grants and Subcontracts Manager
[REDACTED]	Accountant
[REDACTED]	Driver
[REDACTED]	Driver

6. ANNEXES

ANNEX I: LMA COMMUNITY CLRf TRACKER

Table A: Land Management Activity Status on Customary Land Formalization Process in Communities										
Community	Current Implementers	Previous Program/ Donor if any	LMA Comm. (Y/N)	Community Self-Identification	Activity Progress for Customary Land Formalization					
					Draft By-laws*	CLDMC Formation*	Participatory Mapping	Boundary Harmonization	Confirmatory Survey	Community Title Registered
Bong County										
Kpatawee		LGSA/USAID/ Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started
Kporyorquelleh		LGSA/USAID/ Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started
Gwilapolu Clan	Potentially LLA	LGSA/USAID		Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Kpaiquellie Clan	Potentially LLA	LGSA/USAID		Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Zota Clan		EU/CAFOD	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started
Lofa County										
Palama Clan	SDI/RRF/TDS	LGSA/USAID/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Vavala Clan	SDI/RRF/TDS	LGSA/USAID/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Fissebu	SDI/RRF/TDS	LGSA/USAID/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Lukasu		IDH/TF/Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Hassala		IDH/Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Tahamba		IDH/Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Wanwoma		IDH/Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Wulukoha		IDH/Parley	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Upper Guma		IDH/SESDev	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Lower Guma		IDH/SESDev	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Central Guma		IDH/SESDev	Y	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Ongoing or initiated	Not started	Not started
Saygbama Clan		EU/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Womama Clan		EU/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Sylakore Clan		EU/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started

Table A: Land Management Activity Status on Customary Land Formalization Process in Communities										
Wangolodu Clan		EU/SDI	Y	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Barkedu Township?		EU/SDI	Y?	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Nimba County										
Zolowee	GAI	ILRG/USAID/GAI	N	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Yolowee	GAI	ILRG/USAID/GAI	N	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Gbassa	GAI	ILRG/USAID/GAI	N	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Zortapa	GAI	ILRG/USAID/GAI	N	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started
Gbosua–Gbeleyee Blein	GAI	ILRG/USAID/GAI	N	Completed	Completed	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started	Not started

Legend:

* Draft by-laws and CLDMC election combined in LLA steps

Status:	Not started	CSO completed	Completed	Validated by LMA
	Ongoing or Initiated	Validated by LLA	Check status	may mean outstanding boundary conflicts



ANNEX 2: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SURVEILLANCE PLAN TRACKING

DELIVERABLE/SERVICE REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	AQL	PRIMARY METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE	FREQUENCY	STATUS	COMMENTS
Project Management Deliverables						
Annual Work Plans	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Annually, or when revised	Submitted	
Environment Monitoring and Mitigation Plan	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Annually, or when revised	Submitted	
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Annually, or when revised	Submitted	
Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan (QASP)	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Annually, or when revised	Submitted	
Quarterly Progress Reports	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Quarterly	Submitted	
Annual Progress Reports	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Annually	In progress	
Accrual's report	Submitted on time	100%	Submission email	Quarterly	Submitted	
Annual Inventory Report	Submitted on time	100%	Submission email	Annually		
Reporting on Foreign Taxes	Submitted on time	100%	Submission email	April 16 of each year		
Short-Term Consultant Reports, Technical Reports and Other Developed Materials	Deliverables, as needed, submitted on time	95%	Document review	Quarterly	Submitted	Community Selection Criteria and Methodology
Demobilization/ Disposition Plan	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Six months prior to contract end		

DELIVERABLE/SERVICE REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	AQL	PRIMARY METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE	FREQUENCY	STATUS	COMMENTS
Final Report	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	Contract completion		
Technical Deliverables (TO Section F.4.2)						
Grants Manual	Deliverable submitted on time	100%	Document review and approval	90 days after award, or when revised	Submitted	
Objective I: Communities obtain deeds to their customary land						
Criteria for the selection of target communities completed	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Document review and approval	Year 1	Completed	
Guide for the registration of customary land (prepared under LGSA) updated	Guides updated, adhering to current land legislation and GOL guidance documentation, including forms and/or templates	95%	Deliverable reviewed and approved	By Year 3		
One costed plan for communities prepared to outline cost for completing the CLRFP per community.	Deliverable approved	95%	Deliverable reviewed and approved	By Year 3		
Training Manual finalized to outline procedures along each step of the CLRFP. The manual will be a living document and will be updated as new trainings are identified.	Scheduled as described in approved work plans(s)	95%	Project records / reports	Quarterly or annually	Planning in process	
Comprehensive evidence-based tools and processes to guide communities to complete all steps for CLRFP finalized	Scheduled as described in approved work plans(s)	85%	Deliverables reviewed/ project records / reports	By Year 3		
Organized system to track and/or store information for registered communities established (e.g., written profiles on the history and makeup of the community, governance bylaws, land use plans, maps, etc.)	Scheduled as described in approved work plans(s)	85%	Deliverables reviewed/ project records / reports	By Year 2, and updated as needed		

DELIVERABLE/SERVICE REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	AQL	PRIMARY METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE	FREQUENCY	STATUS	COMMENTS
Advocacy plan concluded with CSWG and the MAP	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Deliverables reviewed/ project records / reports / direct observation	Year 1	In process	
Work with CSOs, grantees, and LLA to finalize a coordinated messaging unique to all communities including advocacy messages and leverage innovative channels and medium	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Project records / reports	Year 1 – 4 <i>*Replicated as new communities are on ramped to the activity</i>	Ongoing	
Methods and procedures for the recruitment of new cohorts or surveyors at the GEP established.	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Deliverable reviewed/ project reports / direct observation	Year 1	Ongoing discussions with USAID	
An up-to-date needs assessment for services that communities will need from the LLA at county and national level conducted	Deliverable submitted one time. Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	95%	Assessment report/ Deliverable review	Year 1	Draft Completed and submitted to USAID for approval	
100 New surveyors trained in modern land surveying technology from the GEP at FTI.	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	# of surveyors trained/ project records/ reports	By Year 4		
100 customary communities registered, and deeds obtained, or deeds at final step ready for LLA to issue	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Deeds issued by LLA/ Status report of communities CLRF process/ project records/ reports	By Year 4		
Objective 2: Communities Plan and Manage Customary Land for Productive Use						
Template/model for Communities Land Use Plan finalized	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	100%	Deliverables reviewed/ project records/ reports	Year 1	Planning is in process	
In collaboration with the LLA, review and update the Land Use Plan Template, relying on key lessons learned from implementations at the early stages of the program	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Deliverables reviewed/ project records/ reports	Year 3		
Produce/revise/finalize community by-laws with a clear outline on mechanism to update and enforce communities land use plans.	Scheduled as described in approved work plan(s)	85%	Project records/ reports	Year 1- 4	Currently being drafted	

DELIVERABLE/SERVICE REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	AQL	PRIMARY METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE	FREQUENCY	STATUS	COMMENTS
						<i>*Replicated as new communities are on ramped to the activity</i>
Produce a guide to layout strategies on how CLDMCs can negotiate and engage with the private sector.	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Deliverable reviewed/ project record/ reports	Year 1	Planning is in process	
Develop a model business plan on how communities will transact with their land to the benefit of members.	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Deliverable reviewed/ project record/ reports	Year 2		
Produce a report on the legal and political feasibility of tax incentives for companies partnering with communities on an equitable basis	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Deliverable reviewed/ project record/ reports	Year 2		
Objective 3: Women, Youth, and Other Marginalized Populations Participate in and Benefit from Customary Land Management						
A gender / inclusion analysis developed to assess the impact of implementation on marginalized populations, including women and youth	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Deliverable reviewed/ project record/ reports	Year 3		
An institutionalized knowledge sharing platform established for women and youth serving on CLDMCs to share experiences	Quality and accessibility of KM platform; number of people accessing the platform	95%	Monitoring platform use/ project record/ reports	Year 2		
Objective 4: Land Disputes and Grievances Resolved Appropriately through Alternative Dispute Resolution						
In collaboration with the LLA, conduct an assessment of local ADR capacity in the counties of operation and recommend a model for dispute resolution	One Deliverable per County selected	85%	Review of deliverables/ project records/ reports	Year 1 – 4	Planned for next quarter	<i>*Replicated iff/when new counties are on ramped to the activity</i>
Standard operating procedures on dispute resolutions produced in collaboration with the LLA.	Deliverable submitted on time	85%	Review of deliverables/ project records/ reports	Year 2		

DELIVERABLE/SERVICE REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	AQL	PRIMARY METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE	FREQUENCY	STATUS	COMMENTS
In collaboration with the LLA and CSOs, support the adoption of a revised Land Dispute Resolution Policy that is consistent with the LLA.	Number of consultative meetings held to discuss draft policy; participation of CSOs/stakeholders	85%	Project records/ reports	Year 2		
Drafting and supporting the adoption of a national ADR legislation.	Number of consultative meetings held to discuss draft policy; participation of CSOs/stakeholders	85%	Review of deliverables/ project records/ reports	Year 3		
Finalize report documenting disputes presented to CLDMCs and the number of those resolved, including dispute resolution success story.	Deliverable submitted on time	95%	Review of deliverable/ project records/ reports	Year 4		



ANNEX 3: ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

[REDACTED]

ANNEX 4: COMPARISON OF ACTIVITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERSUS OBJECTIVES

See Monitoring and Evaluation Section in report narrative above (Section 4).

ANNEX 5: ACTIVITY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Technical Products

Community selection methodology
Advocacy Manual – *in process*
Land Use Plan Template – *in process*
Guidelines and Process for Land Use Planning
Participatory Rural Appraisal Manual
Participatory Rural Appraisal Guidelines
Private Sector Engagement Strategy
Private Sector Engagement Research Template
Subcontractor Monthly Reports
CLDMC Governance Training Module
Grants Training Module

Contractual Products

FY22Q1 Quarterly Report
FY22Q2 Quarterly Report
FY22Q3 Quarterly Report
Weekly reports
Year 2 Annual Work Plan
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan
Grants Manual
Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan

ANNEX 6: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

Specialist Name	Duration	Purpose	Achievements/Problems
[REDACTED]	July 26, 2021 – December 31, 2022	Rolling consultant agreement to support various points in implementation. The first task was to oversee start-up as the COP had a delayed mobilization. [REDACTED] traveled to Liberia to oversee administrative and technical start-up, supporting registration, on-boarding of staff, subcontractor scopes of work and subcontractor training, developing QI technical deliverables and helping to facilitate the Stakeholder Synergy development workshop. Additional extensions to the consultancy provided for continued support with local subcontractor’s capacity, and development of detailed implementation plans including tools and trackers for the CLRF process.	[REDACTED] has in-depth knowledge of Liberia’s land sector, having served on multiple USAID programs in Liberia, most notably as the DCOP on the LGSA program. She also brings a strong working relationship with the COP having been on a governance program as the COP’s deputy in Mali. Achievements were numerous, including but not limited to securing the office location, COP housing, hiring of staff, liaising with stakeholders and government counterparts, and providing oversight and direction to the application of the MEL and implementation plans. No problems were identified.
[REDACTED]	September 22 – 30, 2021	[REDACTED]’s technical support contributed to the strategic development and finalization of the M&E Plan and its implementation and management approach throughout the life of the project, including developing data collection and analysis techniques and tools; conducting an analysis of LMA’s indicators; and developing a database to collect data and track progress on indicator targets.	Finalized the LMA M&E Plan in collaboration with [REDACTED] and developed data collection and analysis tools for collecting and measuring LMA indicators.
	February 7 – April 30, 2022	[REDACTED]’s consultancy was to orient the new M&E Specialist and provide support in establishing the Project’s M&E systems.	Orientated the LMA M&E Specialist to the Project’s M&E systems.
[REDACTED]	September 7 – October 29, 2021	[REDACTED] was responsible for supporting the program team develop the M&E Plan, including reviewing and providing technical input to a drafted M&E Plan, ensuring the draft took into account standard indicators, the Mission’s M&E Plan, the CDCS, and the current trends within Liberia’s land sector.	Finalized the LMA M&E Plan, in collaboration with [REDACTED].
[REDACTED]	December 15, 2021 – March 3, 2022	[REDACTED] supported LMA’s partner RRF to organize and conduct the National Land Conference. This work included some administrative, logistical, and technical support to RRF leading up to the NLC and during the event itself.	Successfully held the National Land Conference.

<p>[REDACTED] July 26 – December 31, 2022</p>	<p>[REDACTED] was brought on as STTA to support the junior PSE staff member to develop and strengthen engagement between targeted LMA communities and the private sector through relevant value chain development, market outreach, and developing market linkages. This engagement was intended to specifically target and support communities that have developed or are developing sustainable Land Use Plans, and have a functioning CLDMC.</p>	<p>Supported the development of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy, which is still in progress at the time of this report.</p>
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ANNEX 7: LIST OF WORKSHOPS

Training/Workshop	Date	Location	# Participants
Team Building Workshop	November 15, 2021	Monrovia	16
Stakeholder Synergy Development Workshop	November 18, 2021	Monrovia	35
M&E Training	November 25, 2021	Monrovia	8
National Land Conference (NLC)	March 1-3, 2022	Buchanan, Grand Bassa County	344
Palama Public Consultation	March 2022	Telemu Town	65
Vavala Public Consultation	March 2022	Gbarneway	65
Fissebu Public Consultation	March 2022	Fissebu	65
Grants Management TOT	April 6-8, 2022	LMA Offices	12
Grants Management, Gender Responsive Budgeting, CLRF, and Proposal Writing General Assemblies	May 9-13, 2022	Voinjama City, Lofa County	10 CBOs
CLDMC Capacity Development Training	May 2022	Kolahun & Vahun Districts	484
CLDMC Capacity Development Training	April 2022	Fissebu	31
CLDMC Capacity Development Training	April 2022	Palama	25
CLDMC Capacity Development Training	April 2022	Vavala	24
Gender Sensitive Participation in CLRF	April 12-20	Fissebu	41
Gender Sensitive Participation in CLRF	April 12-20	Palama	55
Gender Sensitive Participation in CLRF	April 12-20	Vavala	19
Boundary Harmonization Training	April 15, 2022	Palama	60
Boundary Harmonization Training	April 18, 2022	Vavala	45
Boundary Harmonization Training	April 17, 2022	Fissebu	47
CSOWG & MAP Land Rights Reform	May 18-19, 2022	Monrovia	28 participants from 7 organizations
Advocacy Strategy Development Workshop			
PRA Training	July 2022	Lawalaza	40
Boundary Harmonization / Public Consultation	August 4-5, 2022	Salayea District Lofa County	174
Training on Women's Land Rights and ADR	Sept. 1-3, 2022	Gbarnga, Bong County	32

ANNEX 8: EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

DESCRIPTION	PURCHASE DATE	INITIAL ACQUISITION (USD)	LOCATION
Conference table for 10 persons	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Opiplex intel core DeskTop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Acer Projector 4,000 lumens DLP	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Acer Projector 4,000 lumens DLP	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Canon Printer IR2520	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
HP Laserjet Printer M227 DW	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
HP Laserjet Printer M227 DW	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
HP Laserjet Printer M283FDW DW	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Asus Zenbook Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
HP Laptop	10/01/21	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Toyota Land Cruiser	10/20/21	Donation from USAID LGSA	Liberia LMA Office
Toyota Land Cruiser	06/18/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Honda Motorcycle XR-150L	06/18/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Honda Motorcycle XR-150L	06/18/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Honda Motorcycle XR-150L	06/18/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Honda Motorcycle XR-150L	06/18/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office
Dell Laptop	07/29/22	[REDACTED]	Liberia LMA Office

ANNEX 9: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION INPUTS TO THE DRAFT REGULATIONS ON THE LAND RIGHTS ACT

Inputs of Civil Society to the draft Regulations on the Land Rights Act (LRA) of 2018

Introduction

The Liberia Land Authority (LLA) shared with the CSO-Working Group on Land Reform (CSO-WGLR) draft regulations for the implementation of the Land Rights Act (LRA) of 2018.

The CSO-WGLR in turn consulted some relevant stakeholders including its international stakeholders and organized a series of technical working sessions for members of the CSO-WGLR, through which it reviewed the draft regulations.

The document contains the comments on the draft regulations that resulted from the consultation and the working sessions.

Appreciation

The CSO-WGLR acknowledges with deep appreciation the spirit of consultation and participation in decision-making on land sector governance, which the LLA has exhibited by sharing with stakeholders (particularly the CSO-WGLR) for review and input the draft regulations, which will define how the LLA will implement the LRA. Not only that, the CSO-WGLR also noted with appreciation that the LLA did a good job in covering almost all of the relevant issues that needed to be considered in regulations to ensure proper implementation of the LRA.

General Comments

The reviewed the draft regulations and make these comments on them on the basis basic principles and fundamental ground which are outlined below.

Definitions

Except for (new) words or terms not already defined in the LRA, any definition of a word or term already defined in the LRA should be verbatim – exactly as it is defined in the LRA. The definition of said word should not in way be changed or modified.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

The overarching and overriding principle with which the CSO-WGLR reviewed and commented on the regulations in the principle of FPIC. The principle is that, and because it is guaranteed in and by the LRA, since the coming into (legal) force of the LRA, there is not supposed to be any interference by any person(s), group(s), institution(s) nor even the Government with the surface or use of customary land without the FPIC of the community(ies) that own the land. (LRA Article 33.3) except on two grounds:

- One, if it is a right – concession, permit, award or the like – **already granted** in the land by the Government prior to the LRA coming into force; and
- Two, if it relates to the Government’s right to extract Mineral Resources from beneath the land.

With the exception of these two conditions, any act or attempt by anyone to interfere with, use, transfer, change the status of, and/or take customary land for whatever reasons without the FPIC of the community constitutes land grab, a violation of the rights of the community(ies) to their customary land(s), and a clear breach of the law.

REGULATION 5. REVOCATION

Except as to a statute or other provision of law, upon coming into force, these Regulations shall supersede any previous Regulations, Manuals, Guidelines, Policies, Instructions, or Directives of any governmental entity in respect of land in Liberia, which are inconsistent with these Regulations, to the extent of that inconsistency.

Where any provisions of these regulations shall be found inconsistent with provision(s) of the LRA, the said provision(s) of the LRA shall supersede that/those of the regulations.

REGULATION 6. DEFINITIONS

The CSO-WGLR strongly suggests that the regulations do not repeat definitions contained in the LRA, and instead only need to define terms that are NOT already defined in the LRA. Article 6 can simply state that the LRA is relied on for definitions. This would – for example – prevent the regulations from repeating the mistaken definition of Government Land as including Proposed Protected Areas (PPAs)

However, where it is seen as necessary to define certain terms in the regulations, which are already defined in the LRA, then the definition should be stated verbatim, exactly as defined in the LRA. Where a definition for a term included in the regulation differs from the definition in of the same term in the LRA, the LRA definition SHALL take precedence and the different definition in the regulation shall be considered null and void.

“Community Land” means the land owned by a community and used or managed in accordance with customary practices and norms, which may include, but is not limited to residential land, wetlands, communal forestlands, and fallow lands.

This definition should be changed to what the LRA Article 2 definition: “Means Customary Land owned by a particular Community.”

“Community Member” means a Liberian citizen irrespective of age, gender, belief, or religious background who was (i) born in the community; or (ii) whose parent(s) was born within a community; or (iii) who has lived continuously within the community for at least seven years; or (iv) a spouse of a community member, both of whom reside in the community.

The community should be left with the responsibility to define in their by-laws who their community member is provided said definition shall be consistent with both their customs and tradition and does not violate the law.

“Concession” means a person who has been granted a concession by the Government.

Can a community grant to a person concession on their customary land? If not? And how does a land that community grants to a person for commercial or business operations for a specified period of years called?

“Customary Land” means Community Land owned by a particular Community.

The LRA defines the term (see LRA Article 2) as: “Means the land owned by a community and used or managed in accordance with customary practices and norms, and which include, but is not limited to residential land, farmland, communal forestlands, and fallow lands. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the term ‘Customary Land’ in this Act is inclusive of all categories set forth in Article 38(1) of this Act (i.e. LRA)”

For consistency, if the term is already defined in the LRA, the LRA definition should be used verbatim

“Days” means calendar days; however, where the day for doing an act falls on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the days shall extend to the first following day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday.

In light of this definition, what is the implication if the community or an NGO/CSO exclusively or jointly carry out an act or conduct an activity (or act) on a Saturday or Sunday, for example?

“Deed of Community Lands” means the final deed that is presented to a community by the Authority to evidence community ownership of Customary Land.

In light of this definition, are there various types of deeds of which the ‘final deed’ is one type? If so, what are the different types of deeds and differentiate one from the other?

“Government Land” means land owned by the Government, including but not limited to lands on which are located: the offices of Ministries, Agencies, and Parastatal bodies; military bases; roads; ports; airports; public schools and public universities; public hospitals and public clinics; public libraries and public museums; public utilities; ports; as well as Protected Areas and Proposed Protected Areas as of the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians.

PPA on customary land remain customary / community land.

Refer to the LRA definition of Government Land. But more than that, it should be noted, that while Protected Areas – that is, land(s) gazetted prior to the effective date of the LRA – are considered as Government Land, if lands were only proposed as Protected Areas but were not gazetted prior to the coming into force of the LRA, there is no basis on which they should be excluded from the community land estate. Left alone, this article would be an arbitrary deprivation of customary property, and therefore unlawful and unconstitutional. PPA on customary land remain customary/community land.

It will be a clear act of violation of the communities' right to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guaranteed in the LRA (see LRA Article 33.3) that

"Any interference with or use of the surface of Customary Land requires the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the Community" with two exceptions: 1) Concessions, contracts, permits and other rights previously granted in Customary Land by the Government prior to the Effective Date of this Act; and 2) subject to the Government's Constitutional right to extract all Minerals Resources, found below the surface of the land. PPAs are not rights granted by the Government prior to Effective Date of the Act nor are they Mineral Rights. PPAs are neither concessions granted prior to the LRA no Mineral Resources and therefore qualify under these exceptions. Therefore, to declare PPAs as Government Land is tantamount to land grab and a clear contravention of the LRA and violation of the protection of customary land provided for in the LRA.

“Lease” means to grant to a person or group of persons, for a term of years, the right to possession and use of the land of another in exchange for rent or other consideration.

Change the term of years to a specified period of time.

“Proposed Protected Area” has the meaning ascribed to it in the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006.

See the comment above under Government Land concerning Proposed Protect Area.

Besides, an explanation is needed regarding how the communities' rights to their customary land including right to exclude others, to possess and use, to manage and improve, and to transfer portion provided under LRA Art. 32.2. I, ii, iii, and iv and the right to FPIC (LRA Art. 33.3) will be protected and respected in automatically turning their Customary Land to Government Land.

Protected Areas (Pas) and Proposed Protected Areas (PPA)

Regulations 19.23, 19.24 and 19.25.

19.23 All lands gazetted by the requisite government ministry, department or agency as Protected Areas before the Effective Date of the Act shall not form part of Community Land.

19.24 All lands designated by the requisite government ministry, department or agency as Protected Areas, but which were not gazetted as such before the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, shall be considered as Protected Areas.

19.25 The relevant government ministry, department or agency may negotiate with a community the conditions under which the lands in Regulation 19.24 may be gazetted as Protected Areas.

- If a land was gazetted before the LRA, then it “shall not form part of Community Land” (Regulation 19.23)
- But if the land was only designated (proposed) as Protected Areas, but which was not gazetted as such before the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, the it shall be considered as Protected Areas. (Regulation 19.24)
- The government may negotiate with a community the conditions under which the lands in Regulation 19.24, the land which were not and have not been gazetted may be gazetted as Protected Areas.

Because a community even has the right to establish a protected area on their land (LRA Art. 38.1.f), the conditions under which community customary lands may be taken from them and turned into government land by turning them into protected area must be clearly laid out in these regulations and shall be required to comply with the rights of the community as reference above:

- LRA Art. 32.2. I, ii, iii, and iv
- LRA Art. 33.3
- LRA Art. 38.1.f, among others

“Public Land” means the land which is not presently used by the Government for its facilities and operations and is also neither private land nor customary land.

The definition of public land is a confusing and a recipe for contestation, if not conflict. Even here, the regulations do not define public land as it is defined in the LRA Art 6:

“Public Land: Means land which is not Government Land, Private Land or Customary Land.” The term therefore needs open, free and frank discussion for clarity. For now, the LRA definition should suffice.

“Spouse” means a person who is married to a Community Member under a civil, religious or customary union, or a person in any other union recognized under the marriage laws of Liberia.

It is the understanding that since a Community Member is (must be) a Liberian citizen, a spouse can only become or be considered a Community Member if s/he is a Liberian citizen. Otherwise, clarity is needed on the matter.

“Statutory Deed of Community Lands” means the instrument issued by the Liberia Land Authority to communities after the completion of a Confirmatory Survey.

Clarity is needed on whether there is a difference between a Statutory Deed of Community Lands and a Final Deed or not. (See **Deed of Community Lands above**)

I. COMMUNITY SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Regulation 7.3 The self-identification process shall cover:

- i. number of clans or other divisions;

This should be rephrased to read “number of villages, towns, clans or other divisions” as a community can be any one or groups of these units.

7.4 A person is a Community Member where that person is a Liberian citizen irrespective of age, gender, belief or religious background:

- d) is a spouse of a Community Member, both of whom reside in the community.

See comments above relating to spouse and community member.

7.8 A person who acquires membership of a community shall have the same rights, privileges and

responsibilities of an ordinary member of the community according to the category in which they are.

By the use of 'ordinary members' of the community, is regulation suggesting there are other types of community members who are not ordinary? If so, it needs to be clarified and stated what the other types are and what rights and limitations do they have in relation to ordinary members. If there are no other types of community members, then the use of the description ordinary member is not necessary and should be deleted.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY LANDS

8.2.b The members of the community have exercised exclusive possession over the land for a period of not less than 50 years, including through farming, hunting, fishing, and other cultural, religious, social and economic activities;

The LRA Art. 32.3.ii talks about exclusive or continuous use or possession and not just only exclusive possession. So, the omitted descriptive words should be included in this regulation 8.2.b.

10. COMMUNITY SOCIAL MAPPING

10.5 The Committee shall execute the mapping exercise at minimal cost using community resources and Community Members for the exercise.

Under this regulation 10, it would be good to specify that it's not the CLDMCs job alone to conduct mapping, but that instead the CLDMC should be playing a facilitating role to ensure that mapping is done in an inclusive and participatory way, one that involves as many members and sections of the community as possible.

The idea of 'minimum cost' could be subject to different interpretations and even result to abuse or exploitation

11.9 The Authority shall execute the Confirmatory Survey and Mapping exercise and shall bear the cost of the exercise.

This is good, if necessary, effort is made to enable and ensure that it is done accordingly.

12.3 A person who has a claim or interest in a Community Land, which is the subject of an intended registration or transaction, may lodge a caveat in a form specified by the Authority.

The word caveat as used in the regulations should be defined for the ordinary person to understand.

13.2 The Authority shall issue a unique identification number in respect of every Community Land, the subject of a Statutory Deed.

The numbering system should be designed such that it will be easy to identify each land by the community, clan, and county, at the minimum.

14.1 Within 14 days of the enactment of these Regulations, the Authority shall publish a notice in at least three newspapers, radio or television stations of national coverage, the website of the Authority, and the Gazette, requiring all holders of Tribal Certificates to submit their certificates to the Authority for validation within a specified period.

It should be made clear for the specified period for submission of tribal certificate to not exceed six months, at the most.

14.2 The Authority shall ensure that the notice in Regulation 14.1 is additionally circulated by the County Land Boards in all communities within their jurisdiction and employing the means ordinarily used by each community for the dissemination of comparable information.

This is good, but it must be considered whether the County Land Boards will have been established and functional in all the counties by the time the Regulations come into force, and if not, how the circulation be conducted.

14.5 The Authority and the relevant Community Land Development and Management Committee shall conduct a thorough validation process for each Tribal Certificate, including:

What will happen if the community whose land is affected has not self-identified and/or does not have a CLDMC in place? How will the vetting of the Tribal Certificate be done? How will the community participate?

14.5.b Ensuring that the Tribal Certificate was not obtained by fraud, duress or other unconscionable means;

If it is established that the tribal certificate was acquired through fraud and/or that forgery occurred, the land should revert to the community and the Criminal Conveyance Law and/or any other relevant law(s) should be invoked to prosecute the perpetrator of the fraud/forgery.

14.7 The input in Regulation 14.5 shall be generally representative of the community and shall have representation from women and other disadvantaged groups, and members of the community shall be allowed to freely voice their opinions about the Tribal Certificate.

Include youth as well as to read “representation from women, youth and other disadvantaged groups.”

14.13 For the purposes of the validation of a Tribal Certificate, development means any improvement on the land after the grant of a Tribal Certificate such as buildings, structures, commercial, and industrial or other activities that predate the coming into force of the Land Rights Act, provided that this cutoff date shall not apply to Tribal Certificates granted after the coming into force of the Land Rights Act.

First, the other activities should be specified to include life crop, life tree, cash crop. Second, it should be noted that provided the tribal certificate was not issued while the moratorium on the issuance of tribal certificates was still in force. The lawyer(s) should research the facts surrounding this issue.

15.1 A community shall hold an advertised meeting, in the way in which community meetings are ordinarily held, at which a Committee shall be selected to draft by-laws for the community, utilizing a process agreed by the community at the meeting and in accordance with the Land Rights Act and any Regulations and Guidelines issued by the Authority.

If the community meets according to their ordinary means, they could meet on Saturday or Sunday. So, what will happen in light of the definition of “Days”? What if the meeting is held with and/or organized by a CSO/NGO?

15.4 The Committee shall be representative of the community and shall have representation from minority and disadvantaged groups, including women, for whom certain incentives may be established to ensure their full and equal participation in the decision-making process.

Incentives here needs to be defined or explained now or at some point in a guideline or so in order to avoid misinterpretation, exploitation or raising of unreasonable expectations

16.3 The Committee shall be the highest-decision making body of a community in respect of land and any other matter as provided for under the community by-laws in accordance with Article 36.2 of the Act.

This provision contradicts LRA 36.2, which provides that it is the community members acting collectively that are the highest decision-making body, and not the committee. Therefore, this 16.3 should be better clarified to agree with the LRA and remove inconsistencies and ambiguity about who is the highest decision-making body.

16.7 Every allegation of misconduct made against a member of the Committee shall be inquired into by a subcommittee of the Committee established for this purpose, which shall give the member an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to confront any accusers, and shall issue a report to the Committee.

Investigation of member(s) of the committee should be established by the community members acting collectively in line with LRA 36.2.e to avoid conflict of interest

16.8 The subcommittee referred to in Regulation 16.7 may recommend the suspension or removal of the member, or other course of action to the Committee:

- a) where the member is in violation of these Regulations or the community by-laws; or
- b) where the member has engaged in corruption, has been negligent or incompetent in the discharge of their duties; or
- c) any other reasons provided in the by-laws.

See comments under 16.7 above in relation to LRA Art. 36.2.a

16.10 The functions of the Committee shall include:

- k. taking decisions in respect of the Community Land in accordance with the customs, traditions and practices of the community;

Provided said customs, traditions, and practices conform to the LRA, and are captured or referenced in the community's by-laws to ensure predictability and fairness

16.11 All decisions of the Committee shall be by consensus.

The by-laws should define what is meant by consensus by or for the community.

16.12 Members of the Committee may not be compensated for their services to the community, save for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the ordinary conduct of the business of the Committee.

The by-laws should define what reimbursement of reasonable expenses mean

17. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

17.3 The training program for the community shall cover matters including but not limited to the following:

18. COMMUNITY LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT

18.1 A Community Land Development and Management Committee shall perform various land use and management functions including:

- a) allocating land for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and mining use, cultural shrines and heritage sites, protected areas, forest land, and any other uses the community may deem appropriate, as provided for in the LRA;

18.4 Notice of each meeting shall be given at least four times each week before the date of the meeting, using the local language of the community between the hours of 8am and 6pm and employing the means ordinarily used by the community for the dissemination of comparable information.

The time (i.e. for giving notice for meeting) should left to each community to decide according to their customs and traditions and referenced in their by-laws

18.6 The Committee shall at the first meeting, discuss generally the purpose of the meeting and begin to identify the parameters for arriving at the decision to reserve up to a maximum of 10 percent of Community Land to be held as Community Public Land depending on the size of available land.

Add the word, phrases and/or conditions added and colored blue.

18.7 No later than one month after the first community meeting, the community shall convene in various ward-based and identity groups, including women, youth, and persons with disability, to discuss and arrive at a general consensus on the various parameters for reserving 10 percent of Community Land to be held as Community Public Land, including:

It should state, “No later than one month after the first community meeting, the community shall convene in various ward-based and identity groups, including women, youth, and persons with disability, to discuss and arrive at a general consensus on the various parameters for reserving up to ten percent of Community Land to be held as Community Public Land”. Because the LRA specifies 10% as a maximum, and the community can therefore specify less than 10%, including none (0%), if they so decide.

- h) the suitability of the site, including consideration for natural hazards such as flooding, earthquake, cyclone, subsidence, slip, drainage, and erosion, etc.;

18.10 At the close of the final meeting referred to in Regulation 18.9, the consensus arrived at by the community shall serve as the basis for the reservation of 10 percent of Community Land to be held as Community Public Land.

Should say “At the close of the final meeting referred to in Regulation 18.9, the consensus arrived at by the community shall serve as the basis for the reservation of up to a maximum of ten percent of Community Land to be held as Community Public Land”

19. CATEGORIES OF COMMUNITY LAND USE

Community Mining Lands

19.17 No government ministry, department or agency shall authorize any person to conduct mining activity on Community Mining Land without prior consultation with the community.

No government ministry, department, or agency shall authorize any person to conduct mining activity on Community Mining Land without the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the community.

Community Protected Lands

All lands gazetted by the requisite government ministry, department or agency as Protected Areas before the Effective Date of the Act shall not form part of Community Land.

Comments on Regulations 19.23 – 19.30 on Community Protected Lands need serious amendment, not least because most of it adds little or nothing to the LRA itself. Of particular concern:

Regulation 19.23 is **not** needed in the LRA regulations. Headline statements on tenure types and what they include and what they do not include is the job of the LRA, **not** its regulations.

If some version of Article 19.23 is insisted on by the LLA, then the need to ensure constitutionality dictates that there should be scope for communities to contest the lawfulness of the assumption that the gazettement of those protected areas extinguished all pre-existing customary property rights, because that assumption is not necessarily safe in all cases. It would be unconstitutional to prevent a community from defending a legitimate property right in or interest over any land, gazetted or otherwise.

This approach is supported by the general public policy that the LRA represents, which is that protected areas should be considered a land-use type that can be supported on community, private or government land, and therefore should not be specific to any single tenure type. i.e. there’s no longer public policy basis for the legal contention that protected areas should be government land, as it is accepted that community land can contain community protected areas – see article 19.29 of the regulations for example.

As such, if this is included at all, it would have to say something like: “All lands gazetted by the requisite government ministry, department, or agency as Protected Areas before the Effective Date of the Act shall not form part of Community Land, except for areas where pre-existing customary rights of communities were not lawfully extinguished by the act of gazettement.

19.24 All lands designated by the requisite government ministry, department, or agency as Protected Areas, but which were not gazetted as such before the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, shall be considered as Proposed Protected Areas.

Regulation 19.24 is arguably unconstitutional: “All lands designated by the requisite government ministry, department, or agency as Protected Areas, but which were not gazetted as such before the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, shall be considered as Protected Areas.” **This must be deleted.** If they were not gazetted, there’s no basis on which they should be excluded.

This provision of the regulation (for example 19.24) is trying to elevate PPAs to the status of PAs without due process, particularly the principles FPIC of affected community/ies, thereby violating the LRA by ignoring community’s customary rights to their lands. LRA 33.3 requires the FPIC of communities for any interference with the surface or use of community customary land, save for rights already granted prior to the LRA’s coming to force in Government’s right to Mineral Resources.

19.23 The relevant government ministry, department, or agency may negotiate with a community, the conditions under which the lands in Regulation 19.24 may be gazetted as Protected Areas.

Should read: The relevant government ministry, department, or agency shall negotiate with the relevant community(ies) the conditions under which the lands in Regulation 19.24 or Proposed Protected Areas shall be gazetted as Protected Areas subjected to the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The reason is that since the passage of the LRA, communities have rights to their customary lands and that right must be protected under the law as such.

20. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Regulations 20.1 – 20.76 is mainly about concessions, and seems strangely rooted in the pre-LRA concession model, whereby rights in land were granted by the government. Is the intention of the regulation to ‘regulate’ only new concessions on community land, or also concessions that were granted before the LRA? It’s not precisely clear.

Post-LRA, the situation should be that it is for communities to decide whether to lease their land to private companies or not, and if so, instead of the regulation speaking of compensation and benefit sharing, it should be referring to land rental and other terms and conditions negotiated and agreed by the community with the company in the form of a lease.

Information on Impending Concessions

20.1 A Community Land Development and Management Committee shall at all times liaise with all relevant governmental entities involved in the grant of concessions for any information related to their Community Land.

Should continue from the end – Land – to add: provided the relevant government entities shall first publicize the information about the pending concession in relevant newspapers, radio stations, and public notices with coverage in and accessible to and in the relevant communities and through relevant websites.

20.4 The subcommittee may co-opt any number of experts, as may be needed to assist the subcommittee in all of the processes leading up to the community negotiation positions, and for the purposes of negotiations with the concessionaires.

What will happen if and when the need for expert(s) arise(s) but the community cannot afford the cost of bringing such expert on board and no CSO/NGO is working with the community to provide or play such an expert role, what will the LLA do to assist the community with necessary expert advice (e.g. similar to how the Public Defender system works in court process) so that they can be properly guided to assist them make informed decisions on the issue at hand.

20.9 At the start of the public hearing, the subcommittee, with the assistance of such experts as the subcommittee deems necessary, shall present to the meeting in simple, effective, non-technical language, the essence of the key provisions in the concession agreement, and in particular the economic, social,

environmental, cultural, and other impacts on the community of the undertakings implicated by the concession.

Replace concession agreement with **impending concession** to show that the concession in question is a proposed and NOT a concession already signed.

20.10 The community shall freely deliberate on the presentation of the subcommittee, assess the terms of the concession, and possibly revise the community negotiation position

Should be stated as “The community shall freely deliberate on the presentation of the subcommittee, assess the terms of the impending concession, and possibly revise the community negotiation positions. Basically, qualify the concession by the description impending for the same reason stated above under regulation 20.9.

GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

20.12 The subcommittee shall, based on the revised community negotiation positions, and having regard for the best interests of the community, negotiate on behalf of the community, an agreement with the concessionaire which shall include:

- n) a minimum of five percent carried interest collectively owned by the community;

The regulation needs to say clearly what the 5% undiluted free carried interest means, how it will be determined overall and per community and at what frequency or point and/or manner it will be provided to the community (LRA Article 48.3)

Also, add (y)) 20.12.y) after the x) to the following: Concessionaire policy, investor policy, and other national and international standards applicable to the concessionaire

The free, prior and informed consent of the community shall be sought by the concessionaire before the commencement of concession activities and shall in particular:

20.13 The free, prior and informed consent of the community shall be sought by the concessionaire before the commencement of concession activities and shall in particular:

- a) be obtained without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, fraud or bribery;

Undue influence should be added to read: be obtained without coercion, undue influence, intimidation, manipulation, fraud or bribery;

20.15 Where a community lacks the expertise to effectively negotiate the agreement, the concessionaire shall provide financial or other resources for the procurement of the necessary expertise in a timely and effective manner and the concessionaire shall not determine directly or indirectly the experts for the community, in order to avoid conflict of interest.

The free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the communities as provided for in the LRA should take precedence in the case of disagreement between a pending concessionaire and the community.

Based on the above, Regulation 20.15 should read “Where a concessionaire and a community fail to arrive at an amicable agreement the concessionaire shall respect the decision of the community and will not proceed with any activities on the customary land in question” in keeping with their right to FPIC.

21. ESTABLISHMENT OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION SUBCOMMITTEE.

21.1 A Community Land Development and Management Committee shall establish an alternative dispute resolution body called a Dispute Resolution subcommittee, which shall be reflective of the community, and shall have the requisite balance of representation along the lines of gender, disability, and traditionally underrepresented groups.

Add age after gender

21.2 The subcommittee shall have jurisdiction to receive, hear and determine any dispute in respect of the Community Land.

Add the before the community

22. COMPOSITION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

22.2 The subcommittee shall comprise the following persons:

a) Chairperson;

Safeguards needs to be put in place to ensure that women are able to serve in such other capacities or positions as chairperson and/or secretary and not just be mere members or treasurer as the case was predominantly in the forestry sector/CFDC?

Additionally, enabling conditions need to be created or promoted that women are able to head some of the subcommittees that the community will set up so that if only the heads of subcommittees are called to a process/event (e.g. training or meeting)s, at some women can be to be at the table, and not an all-men headed subcommittees

22.5 A person shall only be eligible for appointment as a member of the subcommittee if that person:

a) is above the age of eighteen years;

If above 18 years is the minimum age a community member must attain in order to qualify for appointment as a member of the subcommittee, is there another situation where a community member 18 years or less is eligible to participate in the activities of the CLDMC or the collectivity of the community for decision making? Or is not being more than 18 years an automatic disqualification for participation in the community's land matter? In other words, what is rational for stating more than 18 years as a precondition for a community to be appointed to the subcommittee?

23. QUORUM OF MEETINGS

23.3 The subcommittee shall, as far as practicable, arrive at decisions by consensus, and where the subcommittee is unable to arrive at a decision by consensus, they shall decide it by a simple majority vote

Why not by significant majority and why not apply said principle to other areas of decision making (e.g. other committees, the CLDMC, and the collectivity of the community members, that is, across the board)?

23.4 Where there is a tie in a vote, the Chairperson for the time being shall have a casting vote, in addition to the original vote of the Chairperson.

See comments above under 23.3

25. SUBMISSION OF DISPUTE

25.3 Where the complainant confirms the record, they shall place their mark thereon, such as a signature or thumbprint, evidencing verification of the contents.

Where the complainant is non-literate, to ensure that what s/he is placing his/her mark on is correctly what the secretary has read, provision should be made to allow the complainant to request a literate member of the community or trusted other to also read and confirm it and append his/her mark on it as well as a witness

25.5 The complaint shall set forth clearly:

d) the names and particulars of witnesses the complainant intends to call to testify in support of their case; and

There is a possible risk that if the person complained is a powerful person and s/he gets to know the identity of the witnesses well in advance of hearing the complaint, s/he (they) could temper with the

complainant(s) to back off. Why not withhold the identity of the witness(es) until when they are needed to testify?

26. HEARING OF DISPUTES

26.1 In resolving disputes, the subcommittee and its members shall:

- e) generally, comply with the principles and protections enshrined in national and international human rights instruments such as;

The capacity building training for the community and/or CLDMC should cover these principles and protections to equip the committee and the communities in the proper understanding and application of said instruments

27. DETERMINATION OF DISPUTE

27.1 The subcommittee shall use the applicable customary law of the community in the determination of a dispute

As referenced in the community's by-laws should be added to read as follows: The subcommittee shall use the applicable customary law of the community, as referenced in the community's by-laws, in the determination of a dispute

Appeals from Dispute Resolution subcommittee of the Community Land Development and Management Committee to County Land Dispute Resolution Officer

27.9 The subcommittee shall keep a true and faithful record of all proceedings of the subcommittee and transmit copies to the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer after a decision is reached on each case.

The subcommittee should transmit/submit copies to the CLDMC and for the CLDMC to in turn transmit copies to the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer

28. RIGHT TO APPEAL

85.5 The appeal shall ordinarily be made in writing, but where a person is unable to write out their appeal for submission, they may present their appeal orally to the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer, who shall write down in detail the entire appeal, and read back, translate and explain the contents of the appeal as recorded so that the person lodging the appeal may confirm, deny or correct the record.

There should be safeguard to ensure that what the CLDR Officer reads, translates and explains to the person making the appeal is exactly what is written by the officer. (See comments under 25.3 above: Where the complainant is non-literate, to ensure that what s/he is placing his/her mark on is correctly what the secretary has read, the complainant shall have the right to request a literate member of the community or trusted other to also read and confirm it and appendix his/her mark on it as well as a witness)

29. COUNTY LAND DISPUTE RESOLUTION OFFICER TO HEAR APPEAL

29.4 At any stage of hearing the appeal, the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer may on his or her own, or at the request of a party to the appeal, summon any person to attend to give evidence, or to produce any document in his or her possession.

Add s to the person.

29.8 In hearing the appeal, the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer shall:

- a) apply the relevant customary law;

Add at the end: as indicated or referenced in the by-laws of the community

- d) recuse himself or herself where he or she has an interest in the proceedings;

If s/he recuses himself/herself, then who sits in his/her stead?

q) generally, comply with the principles and protections enshrined in national and international human rights instruments such as: I - ix.

The qualification for the CLDR Officer should include education, knowledge and/or relevant experience in the relevant national and international human rights instruments

30. DETERMINATION OF APPEAL

30.4 The County Land Dispute Resolution Officer shall communicate his or her decision to the parties in a language and manner understandable to the parties, and shall make available to the parties the record of proceedings, if they so wish

For the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer to make available to the parties the records of the proceedings should not be if the parties wish, but an obligation for the officer to provide same to them.

32. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

32.2 The Committee shall comprise:

and

- f) at least two other persons, and where applicable, no more than half of whom shall belong to the same gender, and who will serve as members of the Committee

There should be provisions for the committee to include civil society representative(s) or slot(s)

37. COMMITTEE TO HEAR APPEAL

Where will the committee hear the appeal? Ideally, it should be in the county from where the appeal originates to avoid logistical and/or other hindrances to appearing of persons cited and/or visits to the land or community in question. Ideally, the hearing should be held as close as possible to community the appeal concerns.

JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECISION OF THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERIA LAND AUTHORITY BY THE CIRCUIT COURT

39. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECISION OF THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERIA LAND AUTHORITY BY THE CIRCUIT COURT

39.2 A person shall ensure that they have exhausted all administrative processes for the resolution of their case within the Liberia Land Authority, before making an application for Judicial Review.

It should be added to the above, after the Review: provided that the administrative processes are those described herein including the appeal to the Authority's Dispute Resolution Committee.

39.3 A person may bring an application for Judicial Review of a decision of the Committee on the following grounds:

- f) unjustified denial of an opportunity to give evidence;

The idea of unjustified denial vs justified denial needs to be defined and/or explain to be clear and subjected to individual interpretation and abuse.

39.4 A person seeking Judicial Review of a decision of the Committee shall a Petition for Judicial Review within one month from the date of the decision against which the Review is sought

Change the 'for' to file.

41. APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT FROM A DECISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT ON JUDICIAL REVIEW

41.2 The Authority shall monitor disputes and dispute resolution processes, generate learning from these and feed the results in the policy reform for the purpose of preventing and minimizing disputes, and to improve dispute resolution processes

Delete the ‘the’ before policy reform to read: The Authority shall monitor disputes and dispute resolution processes, generate learning from these and feed the results in policy reform for the purpose of preventing and minimizing disputes, and to improve dispute resolution processes.

PART III- INVENTORY OF GOVERNMENT LANDS

42. IDENTIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT LANDS

42.1.1 For the purposes of this Regulation, Government Land includes:

e. lands identified as Protected Areas or those used or set aside for parks, reserves for flora and fauna, forests and watersheds, and other areas necessary to maintain ecological balance or environmental protection, as determined and certified by the relevant government agency

Regulation 42.1(e) is problematic for similar reasons, which states that Government Land includes: “lands identified as Protected Areas or those used or set aside for parks, reserves for flora and fauna, forests and watersheds, and other areas necessary to maintain ecological balance or environmental protection, as determined and certified by the relevant government agency”.

While there is a legal argument that Protected Areas may be Government Land (though as above, there should be a route for contesting this where gazettement did not lawfully extinguish pre-existing customary land rights and interests). The working group doesn’t think there is any legal basis for the rest of this sub-article which could lead to ambiguity – what areas of land were used or set aside in those ways and which were not gazetted as protected areas?

The definition of Government Land should be in sync with the LRA definition of Government; for example, 42.1. f, (e.g. lands used for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, cultural in and/or by communities or local or national NGOs) cannot automatically qualify and be considered as Government Land

It might be useful to insert something like the following although not really material for a Regulation -

The Forest Development Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shall work closely with communities to formulate and institute basic conditions under which Liberian communities are encouraged and assisted to identify important natural resource areas within their community lands or customarily associated public land areas to be designated as Community Protected Areas, and subject to monitoring by the appropriate state authority.

42.3 Within one month of the coming into force of these Regulations, the Authority shall request all government ministries, departments and agencies to provide a detailed report on all Government Lands within their mandate and as defined in Regulation 42.1.

What if by this time some of the communities whose lands might be affected by this exercise had not been self-identified? How will they participate in this exercise, for example, in challenging any of the claims, where necessary?

42.5 The report shall be submitted to the Authority within three months of the request, unless an extension is granted by the Authority.

The Authority should be required and able to publish and disseminate the report so that the respective counties and communities can access them as a safeguard to ensure transparency.

43. SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT LANDS

43.1 The Authority shall conduct a survey to confirm the data on the lands identified by the government

ministries, departments and agencies under Regulation 42.4.

See comments above under 42.5

43.7 The Authority shall make announcements in English and in at least two local languages on radio stations with national coverage and on local radio stations, to the effect that the details of Government Lands surveyed are available at the local County Land Board for assessment by the public

Add to the provision after the 'radio stations', and before the 'to' "provided no major local language spoken in the county of concerned is left out"

44. PROBATING, REGISTRATION AND DEEDING

45.4 The Government of Liberia shall, on behalf of the government ministry, department or agency to which ownership and control has been assigned by the Authority, have the same rights and responsibilities for the land as a private land owner.

Add at the end, after 'owner' the following: "provided government land remains as it is defined in the LRA."

ANNEX 10: CIVIL SOCIETY INPUTS TO THE SEVENTH (7TH) AND FINAL DRAFT OF LRA REGULATIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY INPUTS TO THE SEVENTH (7TH) AND FINAL DRAFT OF LRA REGULATIONS

Liberian civil society organizations (CSOs), under the auspices of the CSO-WGLR, reviewed the 7th and Final draft of the Regulations for the implementation of the Land Rights Act (LRA) of 2018 of Liberia.

These inputs are the result of the review. They include comments, concerns, and suggestions or recommendations to ensure alignment of the regulations with the letter and spirit of the LRA with particular attention to full recognition, respect and protection of the customary land rights of indigenous and/or local communities as per the LRA.

General overview

Apart from the preamble, the draft regulations consist of the following:

- Three (3) parts;
- Forty-five (45) regulations, each with sub-regulations or sections
- Part I: General Provisions – comprises of 6 regulations, from 1 to 6
- Part II: Community Lands – comprises of 35 regulations, from 7 to 41
- Part III: Inventory of Government Lands – comprises of 4 regulations, from 42 to 45

The six (6) regulations that part one, General Provisions, focuses on are: (1) Citation; (2) Purpose; (3) Commencement; (4) Coverage; (5). Revocation; and (6) Definitions

The 35 regulations that part, Community Lands, focuses on are clustered under x thematic areas:

- **Survey, Mapping and Registration.** Eight (8) regulations are covered under this thematic area, from regulations 7 to 14: (7) Community Self-Identification; (8) Identification of Community Lands; (9) Determination of Community Boundaries; (10) Community Social Mapping; (11) Confirmatory Survey and Mapping; (12) Investigation; (13) Probating, Registration and Deeding; (14) Tribal Certificates.
- **Governance, Management and Administration.** Three (3) regulations are covered under this thematic area, from regulations 15 to 17: (15) Community By-Laws; (16) Community Land Development and Management Committees; and (17) Community Education and Capacity Building.
- **Land Use and Management.** Three (3) regulations are covered under this thematic area, from regulations 18 to 20: (18) Community Land Use and Management; (19) Categories of Community Land Use; and (20) Community Management of Natural Resources
- **Dispute Resolution and Judicial Review in Respect of Community Lands.** Seven (7) regulations are covered under this thematic area, from regulations 21 to 27: (21) Establishment of Dispute Resolution subcommittee; (22) Composition of the subcommittee; (23) Quorum of Meetings; (24) Tenure of Members; (25) Submission of Dispute; (26) Hearing of Disputes; and (27) Determination of Dispute.

- **Appeals from Dispute Resolution subcommittee of the Community Land Development and Management Committee to County Land Dispute Resolution Officer.** This thematic area covers three (3) regulations, from 28 to 30: (28) Right to Appeal; (29) County Land Dispute Resolution Officer to Hear Appeal; and (30) Determination of Appeal.
- **Appeals from County Land Dispute Resolution Officer to Dispute Resolution Committee of the Authority.** This thematic area covers 8 regulations, from regulation 31 to 38: (31) Establishment of Dispute Resolution Committee; (32) Composition of the Committee; (33) Quorum of Meetings; (34) Tenure of Members; (35) Right to Appeal; (36) Lodging of Appeal to Committee; (37) Committee to Hear Appeal; and (38) Determination of Appeal.
- **Judicial Review of Decision of the Dispute Resolution Committee of the Liberia Land Authority by the Circuit Court.** This thematic area covers 3 regulations, from regulation 39 to 41: (39) Judicial Review of Decision of the Dispute Resolution Committee of the Liberia Land Authority by the Circuit Court; (40) Appeal to the Supreme Court from a Decision of the Circuit Court on Judicial Review; and (41) Training on Dispute Resolution and Judicial Review in respect of Community Lands.

Finally, the last and third part of the regulations, titled ‘Inventory of Government Lands’ comprises of 4 regulations, from ranging regulations 42 to 45: (42) Identification of Government Lands; (43) Survey of Government Lands; (44) Investigation; and (45) Probating, Registration and Deeding.

The committee that worked on document made a total of 30 general comments that include recommendations, requests, concerns, and/or questions for clarity. The committee placed each comment immediately under the regulation it is related to. The comments are blue font to easily distinguish them from the draft text of the regulation(s) that the comments are related to in the document.

The comments highlight with orange background requires further reflection for a bit of clarity and/or strengthening.

To keep the document brief, we can delete the regulations themselves and keep the comments since each comment names or references the particular regulation it speaks to. We could also, for the very reason, delete or remove the number of the comment but keep the number of the regulation such as:

- Change **Comment 1 on R 2** to **Comment on R 2**
- Change **Comments 2 on R 4** to **Comments on R 4**
- Change **Comment 7 on R 11.1** to **Comment on R 11.1**
- Change **Comment 8 on R 11.5** to **Comment on R 11.5**

By keeping the regulation number, it makes it easy to refer to specific regulation in the draft.

- I. **Regulation 2:** Purpose. “The purpose of these Regulations is to provide for the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018.”

Comment 1 on R 2¹: To provide what? Standards, Guidelines and/or Procedures? It is suggested that this regulation states what is provided because it seems unclear or incomplete as stated.

2. Regulation 4: Coverage.

“These Regulations cover the conduct of Confirmatory Surveys to Identify, Inventory, Map, Probate and Register the Community Land Claims of Communities; the process for Communities to Set Aside as Public Land a Maximum of Ten Percent (10%) of Community Land in each Community; Best Practices for Community Negotiations over Concessions; Dispute Resolution and Judicial Review in respect of Community Land; and the Inventory of Government Land and Harmonization of its Boundaries.”

Comments 2 on R 4:

- 2.1 This regulation should also mention or add to list of areas covered by the regulations other key areas or steps in the formalization of customary land including, notably, community self-identification (CSI) and participatory land use planning.
- 2.2 For the sake of clarity and consistency, any provision of the regulations that mentions or talks about the customary land that a community may decide to set as a Public Land should always include ‘depending on the amount of available Customary Land’ and up to a maximum of ten percent (10%) to be sure it is consistent with LRA at article 37.3.

3. Regulation 6: Definitions

- 3.1. **“Affected Persons”** “means a person or group of persons to be resettled under a Resettlement Plan, or otherwise affected by the operations of a concessionaire.”

Comment 3 on R 3.1: The regulation should not reflect or talk about only those affected by concession operations, but also other equally relevant issues, for instance, such as those affected (and/or may be affected) by eminent domain, protected area, etc.

- 3.2. **“Benefit Sharing Plan”** “means the plan by which all benefits to the community arising from concessions are allocated to members of the community.”

Comment 4 on R 3.2: The regulation should not be limited to concessions but also other environmental and natural resources use and/or management (i.e. carbon credits)

3.3 “Government Land” “means land owned by the Government, including but not limited to lands on which are located: the offices of Ministries, Agencies, and Parastatal bodies; military bases; roads; ports; airports; public schools and public universities; public hospitals and public clinics; public libraries and public museums; public utilities; ports; as well as Protected Areas and Proposed Protected Areas as of the Effective Date of the Land Rights Act of 2018, and must be conserved and managed for the benefit of all Liberians.”

Comment 5 on R 3.3: A Proposed Protected Area (PPA) not yet gazetted cannot and should be equated to the status of Protect Areas that were already prior to the Effective Date of the LRA. All and any portion of PPA that falls on and within the limits of the Customary Land of a community should be treated as part of the Community Land until gazetted and the process of gazetting such land should process in according with the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to seek and obtain the consent or FPIC of the affected community.

This will be consistent with the LRA, Article 33.3 which provides, verbatim:

“Save for Concessions, contracts, permits and other rights previously granted in Customary Land by the Government prior to the Effective Date of this Act, and subject to the Government’s Constitutional right to extract all Mineral Resources found below the surface of the Land, **any interference with or use of the surface of Customary Land require the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the Community.**”

¹ R 2 stands for regulation 2. Going forward, the use of R followed by a number means the regulation number (e.g. R 5 meaning regulation 5, R 7.12 meaning regulation 7.12 and so on)
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Proposed Protected Areas do not clearly fall into the category of Concessions, contracts, permits and other rights previously granted in Customary Land by the Government prior to the Effective Date of this Act (i.e. LRA) neither do they fall within the category of Mineral Resources.

Therefore, PPA should be removed and/or deleted this regulation as part of land that qualify as Government Land.

4. Regulation 10: Community Social Mapping

Regulation 10.15: “The Authority shall issue guidelines on how a Committee is to make a record of all Community Lands in Regulations 10.3 and 10.4.”

Comment 6 on R 10.15: A reasonable timeframe within which the guidelines mentioned above should be specifically stated in months. For example, the timeframe can be stated as two (2) months or (3) months as of the coming into effect of these regulations. Otherwise, it will be subject to the Authority’s discretion with not tangible basis of holding the Authority accountable for delaying the issuance of said guidelines and it could adversely affect the performance and accountability of the Committee.

5. Regulation 11: Confirmatory Survey and Mapping

Regulation 11.1. “The Authority, in collaboration with a Community Land Development and Management Committee, shall conduct a Confirmatory Survey and Mapping exercise for all Community Lands in order to confirm the community social mapping exercises conducted by communities under Regulation 10.”

Comment 7 on R 11.1: Who pays the cost for the confirmatory survey and mapping exercise of the communities? Even though Regulation 11.10 provides that these exercise(s) will be at no cost to the communities except contribution of their participation, it is still recommended that for any activity the cost will be borne by the Authority, it should be plainly and unambiguously stated at the appropriate place within and throughout the regulations in order to avoid ambiguity, guess work, abdication of responsibility, and/or the exercise of undue discretion on the part of the Authority.

6. Regulation 11.5: “Upon the determination of Community Land boundaries and the conduct of a Confirmatory Survey and Mapping exercise, the Authority shall produce a detailed map of the Community Lands within two months of the Confirmatory Survey.”

Comment 8 on R 11.5: Is the timeframe of two months realistic? Will the authority have the required resources including financial, technical, human and/or logistical to perform this task within the timeframe stipulated? And, as a follow-up, what happens if the Authority fails to fulfill this responsibility within the timeframe? It is suggested that realistic timeframes be provided for activities that will be implemented, taking into account the required resources including political will as well as what should happen if the Authority reneges or simply does not do its duty within the time provided for.

For example, in the case of concession agreements that the Government of Liberia has signed with concessionaires, the agrees that its failure to do certain things within certain time grants the concessionaire(s) the right to move ahead with its part of the obligation. In the case of resettlement, for example, if a concessionaire or

“Investor by Notice to the Government request that certain settlements be relocated if Investor can demonstrate to Government’s reasonable satisfaction that such existing settlement and its inhabitants would impede Investor’s development of the Concession Area and would interfere with Investor Activities, Government’s satisfaction shall be conclusively deemed if within 90 days of submission of such Notice, Government has not indicated a decision to withhold approval of such resettlement by Notice pursuant to the Agreement.” (Article 4.3, Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) Concession Agreement (CA), September 2, 2010).

7. Regulation 11.7: “The Committee shall participate in the Confirmatory Survey and Mapping by the Authority and shall certify the output before it is lodged in the paper-based and digital inventory.”

Comment 9 on R 11.7: What is the mechanism by which the Committee (CLDMC) shall ‘certify’ the output of confirmatory survey? The regulations should provide for said mechanism for the sake of clarity and certainty.

8. Regulation 11.8: “The Authority shall not effect any change in the results of the Confirmatory Survey including but not limited to ownership, interest in, demarcation of, or use of the land, without prior consultation with the relevant Committee.”

Comment 10 on R 11.8: Rather than leave this to a relevant Committee to handle and decide, it is recommended that said consultation be held with and meet the consent of “**the community acting collectively.**” The rationale is to make sure that critical decisions that a committee will make on behalf of the Community meets to approval of the Community as a whole and as may be prescribed in their By-laws and Constitution.

9. Regulation 11.10: “The Confirmatory Survey and Mapping exercise shall be at no cost to the communities, although they shall contribute their time and participation to the”

Comment 11 on R 11.10: Add to the end of the statement to read as ... ‘although they shall contribute their time and participation to the **exercise(s).**’

10. Regulation 12: Investigation.

11. Regulation 12.4: “The Authority shall not accept the caveat unless the caveator has made an undertaking in a form specified by the Authority, verifying the truth of the claim stated in the caveat.”

Comment 12 on R 12.4: This assumes the prevalence of legal or paralegal technical expertise available in all parts of the country; or the presence of the Authority, i. e. the county land boards? This could be problematic where such expertise may either not available at all or not sufficient in some cases.

12. Regulation 12.6: “The County Land Dispute Resolution Officer shall conduct a hearing to determine the caveat and shall submit a report to the County Land Administrator, who may affirm or disaffirm the recommendations of the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer, with or without emendations.”

Comment 13 on R 12.6: Who is the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer (CLDRO)? Who appoints him/her? What are the criteria for appointment of the CLDRO?

13. Regulation 12.7: “An appeal from a decision of the County Land Dispute Resolution Officer shall lie to the Dispute Resolution Committee of the Authority.”

Comment 14 on R 12.7: Do we have a Dispute Resolution Committee at the county land offices? Or only at the Head office of the Authority? If so, we might be creating a bureaucracy whereby some 15 Officers or cases arising from them are stuck in one central office.

14. Regulation 13. Probating, Registration and Deeding

15. Regulation 13.1 “The Authority shall prepare and issue a Statutory Deed of Community Lands in the name of the community within one month after the publication of the detailed map under Regulation 11.5, or within one month of the termination of an investigation process.”

Comment 15 on R 13.1: Again just to clarify to what extent is this process going to be decentralized? Or centralized? And also, about whether the reasonableness of timeframe has been well thought through, considering the bureaucratic, logistical and other things that can affect the timely performance of government-related agencies.

16. Regulation 13.9: “The Deed of Community Lands shall be in a form specified by the Authority and shall be signed in triplicate by a majority of Commissioners of the Authority, including the Chairperson of the Commission, or in the absence of the Chairperson, a person acting in the stead of the Chairperson.”

Comment 16 on R 13.9: What does ‘majority of commissioners of the Authority’ here means? Simple majority or a two third majority? It might be helpful to state or define exactly that the majority or type of majority means here.

17. Regulation 14. Tribal Certificates

Comment 17 on R 14: How is this section TC in line with the previously referred to as an earlier Consultancy on validation and vetting of TCs – just for reference?

18. Regulation 14.1: “Within fourteen days of the coming into force of these Regulations, the Authority shall publish a notice in at least three newspapers, radio or television stations of national coverage, the website of the Authority, and the Gazette, requiring all holders of Tribal Certificates to submit their certificates to the Authority for validation within a specified period.”

Comment 18 on R 14.1: Will the 14 days apply nationwide simultaneously or by phases or regions as earlier suggested in the validation and vetting of TCs. If this is going to be nationwide at the same, has the capacity of the Authority with respect to meeting the resource requirement and logistical challenges to collect and document all TCs in all counties at the same time within the specified 14 days been considered? It is better to promulgate regulations that are realistically implementable than to do so only to start given excuses upon excuses on account of factors that should be well considered based on experience and realities. *Better under-promise and over-develop than over-promise and under-development.* Accountability will be demanded based on expectation raised.

19. Regulation 14.6. “For the purposes of assisting with the validation of Tribal Certificates, a Community Land Development and Management Committee shall summarize the key provisions of every Tribal Certificate submitted for validation; effectively communicate the summarized information to members of the community; collate views, reactions, comments, queries and other input from the community in respect of a Tribal Certificate; and transmit all the inputs to the Authority to assist in the validation of the Tribal Certificate.”

Comment 19 on R 14.6: The tasks here assigned to the CLDMCs sounds very comprehensive and may entail some costs: as there is no regulations or provisions – known to us – for funding of the CLDMCs and their work – how will the cost of their operations – stationery for recording of TCs for example, be mobilized and/or provided?

20. Regulation 14.8. “Authority shall, where the terms of the Tribal Certificate have been validated, issue a Deed covering the said Certificate.”

Comment 20 on R 14.8: Within what timeframe after validation of the TC will the deed be issued? It is recommended that a timeframe be stated within which the TC will be issued when it has been validated.

21. Regulation 14.13: “For the purposes of the validation of a Tribal Certificate, development means any improvement on the land after the grant of a Tribal Certificate such as buildings, structures, commercial, industrial or other activities that predates the coming into force of the Land Rights Act, provided that this cutoff date shall not apply to Tribal Certificates granted after the coming into force of the Land Rights Act”

Comment 21 on R 14.13: It is recommended that the following condition also be added to this regulation: “Provided also that the Tribal Certificate was not issued or acquired during the time the

moratorium on the sale of community land was in force.” The rationale for this is to prevent the validation, but rather the nullification, of TCs acquired and/or signed during the period of when the issuance or acquisition of said land documents was illegal, for example when the moratorium(s) was/were in force.

22. Regulation 14.14: “Where the holder of a Tribal Certificate is unable to obtain a valid Deed, the land, the subject matter of the Tribal Certificate, shall revert to the relevant community and become Community Land.”

Comment 22 on R 14.14: There should be a timeframe or a cutoff point after which it the TC holder shall be deemed by the Authority to be unable to obtain a valid Deed and therefore as of which the said land shall revert to the relevant community and become Community Land.

23. Regulation 15: Community By-Laws

24. Regulation 15.1: “A community shall hold an advertised meeting, in the way in which community meetings are ordinarily held, at a time and in a place and manner which ensures the full and active participation of women, youth, persons with disability and other marginalized groups, at which a Committee shall be selected to draft by-laws for the community, utilizing a process agreed by the community at the meeting and in accordance with the Land Rights Act and any Regulations and Guidelines issued by the Authority.”

Comment 23 on R 15.1: It is recommended to include or add to the participants “all community members including men,” for the regulation to read in part as “...participation of **all community members including men**, women, youth, persons with disability and other marginalized groups...”

25. Regulation 15.2: “A community shall use mediums for advertising the meeting which have the capacity to reach as many members of the community as possible, including marginalized and disadvantaged persons and groups, with no gender being less than forty percent.”

Comment 24 on R 15.2: What if this benchmark is not reached? What next? The regulation should include the provision that “all reasonable measures including awareness raising, capacity building and other relevant strategies such as gender-sensitive approaches should be employed and/or supported by all stakeholders, the Community included, to promote equal and equitable participation of all, including particularly marginalized and disadvantaged groups such as women, youth, and the physically challenged.

26. Regulation 16. Community Land Development and Management Committees

Comment 25 on R 16: It is great to acknowledge that all the actions to be taken by this CLDMC shall be taken in close collaboration of the community acting collectively.

27. Regulation 16.4: “Subject to the provisions of the Land Rights Act, these Regulations, and any Guidelines issued by the Authority, the by-laws shall determine the composition, eligibility and tenure of office of the Committee, provided that the composition shall consist of representation of men, women, youth and other marginalized groups democratically elected, chiefs as *ex-officio* members, and of not less than forty percent of each gender.”

Comment 26 on R 16.4: Why not 50% per gender? Any rationale for lowering the bar to 40%?

28. Regulation 19. Categories of Community Land Use

29. Regulation 19.32: Community Cultural Shrines and Heritage Sites shall include:

“(a) lands used for many years by a distinct group of Community Members, including women, youth, persons with disability and other marginalized groups for the practice of cultural or traditional rites;”

Comment 27 on R 19.32: It is recommended to add or include men for the regulation read in part as “... including **men**, women, youth, persons with disability...”

30. Regulation 20. Community Management of Natural Resources

31. Regulation 20.6: “The Committee shall formally communicate the community negotiation positions on each of the issues to all governmental entities involved in the grant of concessions and request for those entities to address the issues with the prospective concessionaire before the grant of the concession.”

Comment 28 on R 20.6: Add to for the regulation to read in part as “A “The Committee shall formally communicate **to** the community...”

32. Regulation 20.13: “The free, prior and informed consent of the community shall be sought by the concessionaire before the commencement of concession activities and shall in particular:

d) represent the consent of a significant majority of the community.

Comment 29 on R 20.13: Who determines or what constitutes significant majority of the community? It is recommended that the term or phrase be defined or explained for the avoidance of doubt or dispute of interpretation when it comes to its application.

33. Regulation 20.14: “The agreement in Regulation 20.11 shall take into account the unique circumstances of the concessionaire and the community, and the issues to be addressed in the agreement may include:

d) assistance with the creation, development and support of small-scale and micro enterprises; special programs which benefit women;

p) land access

Comment 30 on R 20.14:

- Add to the regulation e) before special programs which benefit women to read as “**e)** special programs which benefit women”
- Add to the regulation as f) people with special needs to read as “**f)** **people with special needs**”
- Add to p), land access of the regulation ‘and control’ to read as p) “land access **and control**”

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