

LIBERIA NATIONAL FPIC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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proforest



Acknowledgements

Several institutions have contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan. The plan has benefited from the initiative and hard work of the Liberia Environmental Protection Agency with support from Proforest Initiative Africa. The participation key institutions: Environment Protection Agency (EPA), (FDA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) at stakeholder engagement workshops was instrumental in the development of the strategy. Their commitment to volunteering their time to private meetings to review the strategy document is deeply appreciated. the government of Liberia has shown consistent support for the value of having a communications strategy on FPIC since the adoption of the FPIC Guidelines in 2019. This commitment to strategic planning, and the task of implementation, shows strong and progressive leadership on behalf of the Government of Liberia.



Special thanks to the media who availed themselves to critique the strategy and helped improve the quality of work and contents to make the work easier.

Finally, the EPA on behalf of the Government of Liberia wishes to express its profound gratitude to all stakeholders and partners, particularly Proforest for the technical and financial support towards the development of this strategy. The overwhelming support from SESDev as partners of Proforest in Liberia is duly recognised and appreciated. It is the hope that this Strategic Plan will contribute to the country's progressive effort in ensuring Free Prior Informed Consent of the people of Liberia.



Prepared by: Proforest Initiative Africa, for and on behalf of the Government of Liberia




Foreword

Liberia is cognizant of the full participation and respect for the rights of all in the sustainable management of its natural resources; and has made several efforts in this direction. The Liberian constitution mandates that the management of the natural resources of the country in such a manner as shall ensure the maximum feasible participation of Liberians under conditions of equality as to advance the general welfare of the people, and the economic development of the country. Additionally, this Constitutional mandate sets the basis for many national legislations outlining the inclusive and extensive participation and respect for the rights of all including the communities in sustainable natural resources management.

The Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML) of 2002, Environmental and Social Impacts Assessment (ESIA) Procedural Guidelines of 2006, the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006, the Land Rights Act of 2018, and other related policy and legal instruments combined to this Constitutional mandate support the Constitution. These instruments make specific emphasis on participation and the 'Free, Prior, Informed and Consent (FPIC) of community's concern with a given natural resource management. Internationally, Liberia ratified several conventions, protocols, and treaties bordering on "Free, Prior, Informed and Consent" of locals and communities in the management of natural resources that affect them. Some of the above reference documents include the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACPHR), The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), etc. Additionally, to ensure compliance with the above provisions, a National Guidelines on Community Consultation in Natural Resources Management known as "Liberia FPIC" was developed in 2019 outlining the approaches, procedures, steps, and definitions for consultation and FPIC. To effectively socialize the FPIC Guidelines, an FPIC Communication Strategy has been developed. This strategy is intended to reduce the information and communication gap on FPIC in Liberia, where there are clear indications of low levels of awareness and understanding of FPIC and its applicability among key stakeholders. The communication strategy is based on key principles geared toward creating awareness, disseminating information and knowledge, building capacity, and ensuring inclusiveness and involvement of all stakeholders.

The strategy is based on the guiding principles of sharing accurate and relevant information, using the most effective communication channels, capacity building of local communities and other key stakeholders, promoting inclusiveness and relevant government entities concerned with the FPIC Guidelines and its Communication Strategy know that these instruments provide information and procedures but are not legally enforceable and therefore need regulations.

It is the Environmental Protection Agency's ardent anticipation that all institutions concerned along with partners, investors and project proponents will embrace and support this communication strategy to ensure compliance with national laws on FPIC.

Sincerely,

Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh
Executive Director/CEO
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Contents

Introduction	4
1.1 Background.....	5
1.2 Why is this Strategy on FPIC guidelines important?.....	6
1.3 Communication Goal and Objectives	6
1.4 Scope of Communication Strategy	6
2 Approach and Methods of Communication	7
2.1 The National FPIC Guidelines	7
2.2 The issue	7
2.3 Methods of Communication.....	8
3 Stakeholder analysis	8
3.1 National level (Legislature, Judiciary and Executive)	9
3.2 Local government	12
3.2.1 County/District	12
3.2.2 Local communities.....	12
3.3 Private sector.....	12
3.4 Development partners	12
3.5 Civil Society Organizations and NGOs	13
3.7 Champions	13
3.8 Research and Academic Institutions	13
4 Core communication principles	14
5 Implementation strategy	15
5.1 Key areas and activities	15
5.2 Key messages.....	16
5.3 Communication platforms.....	22
5.4 Target audiences	22
6 Financial support and Budget for plan implementation.....	23
7 Monitoring the Impact of Communication.....	24
8 Conclusion.....	24
8 Communication plan	26

Executive Summary

This communication strategy presents a realistic set of actions aimed at achieving specific objectives toward the effective communication of Liberia's national FPIC Guidelines to the public. The strategy has been developed to minimize the information and communication gap on FPIC in Liberia, where there are clear indications of low levels of awareness and understanding of FPIC and its applicability among key stakeholders. The communication strategy is based on a development communications approach, with key principles geared toward creating awareness, disseminating information and knowledge, building capacity, and ensuring inclusiveness and involvement of all stakeholders.

Guiding Principle 1: Sharing accurate and relevant information

Delivering relevant communications on FPIC that is tailored towards the stakeholders' needs at both local and national level in appropriate forms and languages. Producing communications messages that are designed on fact-based information as prescribed in the national FPIC guidelines and delivered openly, regularly and in a straight-forward manner.

Guiding Principle 2: Using most effective communication channels

The strategy aims to create maximum awareness of the existing FPIC guidelines through innovative and most effective communication channels and techniques that are easily accessible to all stakeholders including the most remote rural and local communities.

Guiding Principle 3: Capacity building of local communities and other key stakeholders

The strategy aims to: empower local communities and other stakeholders on their rights to consultation and participation in decision making and promote a culture of knowledge sharing and learning; and the private sector, government institutions and NGOs/CSOs on usage of the existing guidelines.

Guiding Principle 4: Promote Inclusiveness and involvement

The strategy enhances inclusiveness and involvement among key target groups at all levels (local and international) including youth, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities in Liberia.

Guiding Principle 5: Promote principles of good governance and accountability

Communication related decisions are in line with government approved policies and fit within existing standards and legislations. This strategy is in line with Liberia's laws and clearly signifies the government's pledge to uphold and maintain the democratic values of good governance and accountability.

Introduction

The government of Liberia and major stakeholders in the forestland sector have developed FPIC guidelines to facilitate engagements of the private sector, CSOs/ NGOs with rural communities to accept or reject concessions targeted for their lands. The guidelines spell out how communities can exercise their rights to give or withhold their consent to any concession on their land. The draft was prepared through a project led by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), funded by the Liberia Forest Sector Project, and carried out by LTS International in 2019.

Liberia's communities' right to consent is a constitutional right as well as a right guaranteed by laws governing forestry, land, and the environment. The idea was to establish consistency in how people interpreted FPIC and to inform on the ground implementation.

Liberia over the years has faced land grab related clashes in Grand Cape Mount with Sime Darby, Nimba with ArcelorMittal, but the most infamous of all has been in Sinoe County with Golden Veroleum. Persistent conflicts with locals have seen the Roundtable on Sustainable Oil Palm (RSPO) reprimand GVL over reported land grab in places like Butaw and Tarjuwon and led the company to withdraw and readmitted to the global oil-palm certification scheme. A national FPIC guidelines could have prevented the loss of lives and properties over communities-concessionaires clashes if one had been developed and communicated effectively among all stakeholders.

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is a means of ensuring that people's rights are respected when developmental projects at local and national level are established in developing countries.

In its implementation, FPIC is often interpreted as “the establishment of conditions under which people exercise their fundamental right to negotiate the terms of externally imposed policies, programs, and activities that directly affect their livelihoods or wellbeing, and to give or withhold their consent to them. However, the extent to which people can exercise their rights and influence decision-making, and the ways in which messages are communicated in a country depend on the national political setting and the local context. Therefore, understanding the political environment in which FPIC is operating is crucial. In addition, there will be a difference between whether the right to FPIC, the result of its acknowledgment of international laws and standards or part of existing domestic legal frameworks is simply or included in legal reforms that countries may carry out as part of project implementation.

Example of bad practice/govt interventions in the past that has affected FPIC process

In Liberia, the government obstructed the FPIC process set out by Sime Darby by pressuring the company to cancel planned meetings with local people and urging the communities involved to withdraw their complaints against the company (Colchester and Chao 2013).

Specific rules and regulations can also hamper or promote FPIC processes. For example, in Indonesia, palm oil companies have to plant within two years after obtaining a license from the government. This limits the time available for an FPIC process.

1.1 Background

The development of this Communication Strategy on FPIC is the result of a collaborative effort between the Government of Liberia, represented by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), National Investment Commission (NIC), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA); other line ministries, agencies and Commissions; CSOs/CBOs/NGOs and development partners. The main development partner involved in the development of this strategy is DFID, UK AID through its FGMC Production Landscape Programme in Liberia, implemented by Proforest Initiative Africa. The strategy outlines a realistic plan for engaging different stakeholders effectively to enhance a better understanding of the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process in Liberia. This communication strategy is aimed at providing short, medium and long-term guidelines on how the government can use communications strategically and effectively to support FPIC processes in Liberia. The strategy draws from wide-ranging consultations with key government stakeholders in Liberia to make it an inclusive and realistic guide that will support the communication of Liberia's FPIC guidelines.

In Liberia, one of the objectives of Proforest's Production Landscape Programme is to support the MOA and other relevant ministries, private sector and community representatives, on how to apply principles of FPIC in the context of the existing 2018 Land Rights Act. Earlier discussions with key stakeholders presented the need for Proforest to support with dissemination and capacity building of the existing FPIC guidelines among key stakeholders including communities through the development of a national communication strategy. This is one of the national/ subnational processes of Proforest's Production Landscape programme which helps to align private sector actions to improve sustainable production and identify needs for awareness raising and capacity building. This strategy and its principles apply to all implementing partners and their communication activities relating to Free Prior Informed Consent.

This strategy is geared toward a clearly defined roadmap for effective communication of the existing FPIC guidelines in Liberia. The strategy seeks to further emphasize the following aspects:

- What information needs to be disseminated, when and where
- The key audience that the Government of Liberia needs to address
- The most effective messages and channels of communication to be used
- What capacity is needed for effective usage of the FPIC guidelines

The sharing of communications-related responsibilities by different government actors is necessary to foster better internal and external coordination. This strategy builds on the EPA and other relevant stakeholders' ongoing efforts in communicating about social and environmental issues coupled with best international practices in incorporating strategic communications into FPIC processes. This strategy is essential for creating awareness and fostering coordination in tackling issues related to proposed developmental projects in the natural resource sector. The strategy is to facilitate an exchange of information among the key stakeholders; the private sector, Government, NGOs/CSOs, CBOs and local communities. The strategy recognizes the diversity in the different sectors and emphasizes that a collaborative effort is needed to effectively communicate these guidelines to all stakeholders. Finally, the strategy seeks to clarify the role that strategic communication play in awareness creation and identify a variety of communication tactics that would be utilized by the Government of Liberia to successfully achieve its national adoption of the FPIC guidelines.

1.2 Why is this Strategy on FPIC guidelines important?

The Liberia National FPIC guidelines is a guide for engagements¹ between communities and investors and would-be investors who would want to invest on communities' land such as mining, agriculture, fisheries and sustainable forest management (Logging, community forests, conservation, etc.), etc.

The FPIC Guidelines ensure that land-based investment complies with the Liberian Constitution (Article 7), Environmental protection and management law 2002, National Forestry Reform Law 2006 (Regulation 102-07), Wildlife protection and protected area management law 2016, Community Rights Law (CRL) of 2009 and Land Rights Act 2018. These guidelines and its communication and awareness strategies will assist the country's uptake, conform to international best practices, and help standardize community consultations involving the use of land and its resources. This is the first time Liberia has developed a national FPIC guidelines for community consultation.

1.3 Communication Goal and Objectives

The main goal of the strategy is to: bring consistency into how FPIC is being interpreted and implemented on the ground; to facilitate government's effort in trying to give clarity to regulatory bodies, concessionaires, investors, companies, CBOs/CSOs/NGOs and communities on Free Prior and Informed Consent. This would be achieved through effective communication activities that ensure consistency of messaging across all levels to increase awareness, education, and training. This strategy provides the framework for future communications plans and campaigns.

Specifically, the strategy seeks to;

- Raise visibility and accessibility of the national FPIC guidelines among stakeholders in Liberia
- Ensure that all stakeholders are informed, educated, and sensitized about Liberia's FPIC guidelines through innovative and existing communication channels and techniques
- Promote understanding of Free Prior and Informed Consent among all stakeholders, particularly, local communities through awareness creation and capacity building

1.4 Scope of Communication Strategy

This FPIC Communication Strategy is developed for the Government of Liberia, in collaboration with key stakeholders through a multistakeholder engagement process. The consensus amongst actors for the need of awareness is geared towards enabling people and communities to advance sustainable natural resources and environmental management. Nonetheless, the implementation of this strategy rests with the Environmental Protection Agency. It paves the way for EPA's active engagement in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of its strategic plan to communicate relevant and available information on FPIC to all stakeholders.

The appropriate scope for the FPIC guidelines has been examined with the conclusion that, the greatest need for effective communication that clarifies how government expects the national legal requirements for FPIC to be implemented and socialised well among all stakeholders in Liberia. This in turn will provide clarity to developers and communities on their rights and responsibilities.

¹ Liberia: Voluntary National Review on the Implementation Status of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2020 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26287VNR_2020_Liberia_Report.pdf

2 Approach and Methods of Communication

The implementation of this strategy will take the form of multi-stakeholder approach and the use of various communication methods and media, not limited to electronic, print, popular media, social media, etc. This communication strategy is therefore developed to support the implementation of the national FPIC guidelines.

2.1 The National FPIC Guidelines

The FPIC guidelines are prepared for the Government of Liberia and its implementation is led by the Environmental Protection Agency and funded by the Liberia Forest Sector Project. The guidelines are advisory, with the aim of clarifying the requirements for FPIC and improving implementation. It is intended to help fill this gap by both establishing clear guidelines on how developers could implement FPIC and how regulatory agencies could verify compliance. The way in which FPIC is carried out will depend on the community and context. Guidelines and good practices on how to conduct FPIC in different setting already exist in Liberia and are featured in a Toolkit that accompanies these guidelines, which provides detailed steps as outlined below. Developers, communities, and those supporting communities are expected to follow some typical steps and actions based on practices established in Liberia and internationally. By following and documenting a proper process for FPIC, those responsible will be able to demonstrate that they are compliant with laws, regulations, and best practices.

2.2 The issue²

Although the national FPIC guidelines were adopted in 2019, their implementation remains a challenge. There is limited information dissemination, public education, and awareness in the public space on the need of FPIC.

This communication strategy is therefore developed to ensure that the FPIC guidelines are widely disseminated for better appropriation (understanding) by stakeholders. There must be more consistency and harmonization in the content of messages to be delivered on issues related to natural resources and environmental management.

Issues of oil palm plantations development without FPIC in Liberia

- *Non-compliance with the NPP such that FPIC had been poorly implemented.*
- *No participative consultation was conducted and plantation development on local people's land took place without their prior consent,*
- *Participatory mapping was lacking*
- *Company did not provide local people with information about its planned operations*
- *Cases of coercion and intimidation of villagers were reported.*

² Crucial issues on which FPIC fall short include lack of participatory mapping, lack of inclusion of affected people (Chao 2012) Colchester and Chao (2013)

2.3 Methods of Communication

2.3.1 Working in Partnerships

The FPIC Communication Strategy will be implemented in close partnership with other relevant organisations. These include private sector; government ministries, agencies, and commissions; international and local NGOs; local community stakeholders and beneficiaries. This can be done through the participation and coordination of their established networks, working groups and committees.

In situations where communication on FPIC requires partnership with institutions to deliver key messages to local and national level stakeholders, there is the need to develop a term of reference and have a contract in place. The local partners can employ one or more of the approaches and could partner with community and local based organizations and other institutions who have the capacity to create awareness.

As a way of sharing FPIC related information with the public, contracts or MoUs must be signed with media outlets (radio, newspapers, television, GSM companies). These contracts and MoUs must have specific timelines and Terms of Reference.

2.3.2 Channels/Means of Communication

- Jingles
- Theatre
- Print and electronic
- Social media
- Town hall meetings
- IEC materials
- Phone calls, etc.

2.3.3 Establishing social media platforms

One of the easiest ways of connecting with a wider audience at a minimal cost is through the establishment of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, e-communication etc.

2.3.4 Designing Plans

Most of the actions in this strategy is to enable effective communication on FPIC to all stakeholders as outlined in the detailed plan in the **Annex**.

3 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder mapping for this strategy was identified during inception activities and engagement meetings as part of Production Landscape Programme (PLP) activities in Liberia which informed the preparation of this strategy. These stakeholders comprise of the legislature, judiciary, executive (see section 3.1 for list), local communities, agro-commodity and timber growers, development partners and civil society organizations. This stakeholder groups are very important in policy formulation, implementation and sharing of the national FPIC guidelines. These stakeholder groups are responsible for major aspect of national and local decision-making on resource use and management and who the beneficiaries are.

There is therefore the need for local and national level policy and decision makers to be aligned properly on issues and actions on FPIC within the national context and natural resources management in the agricultural and forestry sectors. This strategy leverages on the existing dialogical forums of various stakeholders including the EPA, providing platform for interaction between and the policy makers and the Agency. In addition, policy briefs and other forms of media programmes along with any other analytical tools that emphasize the link between natural resources, environment, and development would be used to improve informed decision-making which is key to the FPIC process.

3.1 National level (Legislature, Judiciary and Executive)³

Line ministries, agencies and commissions are those with specific mandates in the implementation of policies on environmental and natural resources management issues. They include:

3.1.1 Legislature

The Legislative branch is responsible for making laws, exercise oversight and represent the Liberian people. The Legislature of Liberia is the bicameral legislature of the government of Liberia. It consists of a Senate – the upper house, and a House of Representatives – the lower house.

3.1.2 Judiciary

The Judicial branch is entrusted with interpreting and applying the laws of the nation through the Supreme Court and other subordinate courts that are established by the Legislature. The judicial branch decides the constitutionality of national laws and resolves other disputes about national laws. However, judges depend on our government's executive branch to enforce court decisions.

3.1.3 Executive

The Executive branch carries out and enforces laws. It includes the president, vice president, the Cabinet, executive departments, independent agencies, and other boards, commissions, and committees. The below listed MACs have specific roles relative to the FPIC:

3.1.4 Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs

The Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs coordinates activities from the President's office with various line ministries, agencies and commissions. This ministry is very important since it coordinates issues associated with concessions negotiations, agreements, treaties signing, accession and ratification with all the stakeholders including that of the National Legislature and foreign partners. The ministry further plays a pivotal role in the executive branch's legislative agenda \programs with all the key players.

3.1.5 Environmental Protection Agency

The Agency is responsible for governing the requirement for FPIC for bio-prospecting. It also has oversight of community engagement and social impact assessment through the ESIA process. Its core mandate is the principal authority on Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The key instrument to hold actors and stakeholders accountable is the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) regime in place to hold stakeholder accountable for their environmental obligations. The EPA as the Designated National Competent Authority of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) is charged with the responsibility to mainstream international and regional MEAs into national

³ Republic of Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Communication Strategy July 26, 2018

legislations, policies and development plans and programmes. Sections 30 and 31 of the Agency Act require environmental planning at the national, county, districts, clan and community levels in supporting sustainable development drive. Regarding access to information, education and public awareness, Sections 101 and 102 of the same Agency Act, call for access to information, education and public awareness to stakeholders to make informed decisions about resource and environmental management. The EPA is the national institution mandated by the second Republic constitution to ensure clean environment and sustainable management of natural resource.

Since its establishment in 2003, the Agency has struggled to carry out these responsibilities (public information dissemination, education and awareness) with limited financial resources. As a result, the Agency has been constrained to limit its role to establishing environment units in line ministries and agencies, environment clubs in select number of secondary schools and communities; and conducting stakeholder workshops, and seminars while conventional media approach remains unattended to. Given these circumstances, informed decision-making on environmental issues continues to be a great challenge. This communication strategy on FPIC forms a central driving force of public awareness, information dissemination and education process. It complements efforts by the agency in raising awareness on environmental issues provided for in Sections 101 and 102 of the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia.

3.1.6 Forestry Development Authority

The FDA by law is the national entity responsible to manage the affairs of forestry practices at the national level. The FDA carries its activities on three (3) levels (commercial, conservation and community forestry). The authority is the principal authority for conservation activities and community forestry which basically deal with management of forest and NTFPs products. The Authority is at the same time responsible for the execution of round log exploitation.

(FDA) supports and verifies FPIC in the process of forming community forests and developing community forest management plans. It also upholds the requirement for FPIC in commercial forestry concessions and for any developments affecting community forest resources. The FDA regulates the establishment of Protected Areas for conservation, including High Conservation Value Forest within palm-oil and other agricultural concessions.

3.1.7 Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Agriculture oversees the requirement in agricultural (palm oil) concessions that follow RSPO rules on FPIC. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the implementation of the government's agriculture programs and acts as a bridge between farmers and research institutes working to come up with new planting materials and other techniques. Agricultural activities, especially subsistence farming and plantation agriculture whether oil palm or rubber, have some of the greatest impacts on the environment. This ministry is further responsible to lead national programmes for food security and sustainable production of agriculture products and livelihood. The long-standing sustainable management of agricultural biodiversity as require by Liberia's treaty obligations under the CBD and Environmental and Social Impact Assessment treaties is yet to be answered well in the activities of this ministry's programmes. Also, it is this ministry that is largely in contact with the largest proportion of the population involved in subsistence agriculture and having the responsibilities to carry out extension education for small holder farmers and serve as regulator for agricultural policies, laws and technical instruments and guidelines.

3.1.8 Liberia Land Authority

The Liberia Land Authority is responsible for land management in the country. This entity is among the newest institutions created under the governance reform programme of the government of Liberia to ensure accountable leadership of the state as defined by the 1986 Constitution. The legislation giving birth to this new entity classified land in four categories: Public land, community land, state land and private land. Land management is among the many issues that has resulted into unsustainable resource and environmental management. Prior to the passage of this law, existing practices violated the Constitution of 1847 and 1986. While particularly the 1986 Constitution guarantees tenure right, practices by stakeholders denied stakeholders particularly local people tenure rights which is one reason for unsustainable practices in resource use etc.

3.1.9 National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)

The NBC has a technical support role on the preparation of concession agreements and subsequent monitoring. It ensures compliance and provides technical support to FDA for commercial logging concessions (FMCs and TSCs) and the FPIC requirements and to MoA for the RSPO FPIC requirement in palm oil concession contracts.

3.1.10 Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts and improves local government through supervision and direction of activities of the political sub-divisions and the central Government to manage and resolve all tribal issues.

3.1.11 National Investment Commission(NIC)

The National Investment Commission oversees the implementation of investments, and seeks to encourage, promote and assist in the development of Foreign Direct investment (FDI) in all sectors of the economy in which it is allowed.

3.1.12 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is responsible for policy formulation, coordination and monitoring and evaluation of Gender, Children and Social Protection issues within the context of the national development agenda. This will lead to the achievement of gender equality, equity, the empowerment of women and girls, promoting the survival and development of children, thus ensuring their rights.

3.1.13 Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP)

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has the mandate to formulate, institutionalize and administer economic development, fiscal and tax policies for the promotion of sound and efficient management of financial resources of the country. The MFDP also has a responsibility to prepare national development plans, strategies, annual budget etc.

3.1.14 Inter-Ministerial Concession Committee

The IMCC has the mandate to update Concession Procurement Plan; approve concession bid documents; approve report of the evaluation Bid Evaluation Panel including the Due Diligence report and award of the concession.

3.2 Local government

Liberia is a unitary state divided into 15 counties. The counties are subdivided into 73 political districts. The county districts are divided into chiefdoms, chiefdoms into clans, and clans into towns or villages. The central government appoints the county superintendents while the districts are headed by commissioners. There are also paramount, clan, and town chiefs. Cities elect their own mayors and councils. Local government plays pivotal role in natural resource management and customary dispute resolution.

3.2.1 County/District

Liberia is divided into fifteen first-level administrative divisions called counties, which, in turn, are subdivided into a total of 90 second-level administrative divisions called districts and further subdivided into third-level administrative divisions called clans. The fifteen counties are administered by superintendents appointed by the president. The Constitution calls for the election of mayors and various chiefs at the county and local level.

3.2.2 Local communities

The rights of local communities to their customary lands in Liberia must be respected in an FPIC process. The country's legislation recognizes and gives customary land the same standing as private land in Liberia. Therefore, full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular local communities is key to a successful FPIC implementation.

3.3 Private sector

Another level of stakeholders are concessionaires and producer companies with direct interest in the use of environmental resources such as forest and agricultural products.

3.3.1 Concessions and Companies

There three land concessions in Liberia which include mining (Iron ore, gold diamond etc.) , agriculture (oil palm, rubber etc.) and forestry (Commercial, Conservation and Community).

3.3.2 Public Private Partnerships

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a partnership between the government and the private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or a service traditionally provided by the government. PPP is applicable to the conservation and management of natural resources. In Liberia, PPP are typically found in electricity, port management, tourism, manufacturing, infrastructure development and so forth.

3.3.3 Financial institutions

Commercial banks in Liberia are the principal financiers of most of the private sector investment in the agricultural, mining and forestry sectors in the form of loans. Some of the leading commercial banks are Eco-Bank, AFRI land Bank, International Bank of Liberia Limited, Access Bank etc.

3.4 Development partners

Development partners in Liberia include regional, international organizations and diplomatic missions. They are important because they provide research and develop projects that can be replicated on a wider scale to promote sustainable development. They engage in development interventions. The multilateral organizations active in the promotion of sustainable resource and environmental related activities include World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, Global Environment Facility (GEF), USAID, EU Commission, FAO, GIZ, ECOWAS, AU Commission, UKAid and SIDA.

3.5 Civil Society Organizations and NGOs

Natural resource management is supported by several NGOs, CSOs and CBOs such as Proforest, IDH, Landesa, Forest Peoples Programme, Rights and Resource Initiative, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Farmer Association to Conserve the Environment (FACE), Save My Future (SAMFU), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Conservation International (CI), Environmental Justice Foundation, SESDev, Green Landscapes Initiatives (GLI) etc. and media-based research centers.

3.6 Media

Media organizations are important for raising public awareness and are a key stakeholder in the implementation of this strategy. The Liberian media have grown in number somewhere from few dailies and radio stations to several newspapers and over seventy (70) national and community radio stations spread across the country. Television stations have also grown in number, though with impact in urban centers especially in Monrovia. Based on consultations, radio remains the dominant outlet for communication, information and education in the country given that it has no barrier (language and distance). Currently, there are several radio stations with wider coverage: Liberia Broadcasting Corporation (ELBC), ECOWAS Radio, Spoon FM, Truth FM, KOOL FM, OK FM, Fabric FM etc. ELBC is the only national radio and television network. These outlets conduct vibrant current affairs, information and education programmes with large audiences though with limited environmental content. These outlets can be turned into a greater asset when the communication plan is rolled-out.

There are also several media organizations and associations in Liberia to include the Press Union of Liberia (PUL), Sports Writers Association of Liberia (SWAL), Reporters Association of Liberia (RAL), Publishers Association of Liberia (PAL), Female Journalist Association (FeJAL). These entities could be very useful in helping achieve the overall goal of the strategy.

3.7 Champions

Champions are individuals (or in some cases, organizations) who occupy a special place in society, play an advocacy role or who would normally have passion for particular cause(s). They can be used as partners in promoting sustainable natural resources, poverty reduction, and environmental messages. The most important qualities of a champion are commitment, passion and drive. In addition to this is the ability for the “champion” to have an impact and influence at all levels of society, including at the community level. Champions will be very important to the implementation of this strategy by playing an advocacy role in sensitizing stakeholders on the relevance and importance of the FPIC Guidelines.

3.8 Research and Academic Institutions

Universities, community colleges, technical learning institutions, and Central Agricultural Research Institute are involved in research and publication on topical issues associated with natural resource management and development. They are therefore relevant to this strategy and its implementation.

4 Core communication principles

The FPIC Communication Strategy will be guided by these underlying principles:

a. Sharing accurate and relevant information

Delivering relevant communications on FPIC is tailored towards the stakeholders' needs at community, local and national levels in appropriate forms and languages. Producing communication materials that are designed on fact-based information as prescribed in the national FPIC guidelines and delivered openly, regularly and in a straight-forward manner.

b. Using effective communication channels

The strategy aims to create maximum awareness of the existing FPIC guidelines through innovative and appropriate communication channels and techniques that are easily accessible to the rural communities and local people.

c. Capacity building of local communities and other key stakeholders

The strategy aims to empower local communities and other stakeholders on their rights to consultation and participation in decision making and promote a culture of knowledge sharing and learning.

d. Promote Inclusiveness and involvement

The strategy enhances inclusiveness and involvement of key target groups at all levels (local, national) including youth, women, the elderly, and persons with physically challenged in Liberia.

e. Promote principles of good governance and accountability

Communication related decisions are in line with government's approved policies that fit within existing standards and legislations. This strategy is in line with Liberia's laws and clearly signifies the government's pledge to uphold and maintain the democratic values of good governance, accountability and sustainable natural resource management.

5 Implementation strategy

The Strategy is expected to be implemented in two phases:

1. Focus on the development of simplified video animations and flyers in appropriate forms and languages that introduces the idea and concept of FPIC to the public. This would be shared across appropriate platforms that are easily accessible by all.
2. Focus on the implementation of key messages to the respective audience.

Note, the choice on the proposed tools would be modified subsequently based on time and resource availability. The EPA would be responsible for the awareness creation, training, and capacity building of all stakeholders, with support from relevant stakeholders. The implementation of this plan will depend on commitment from all stakeholders as well as available resources and support from Government of Liberia.

5.1 Key areas and activities

Communication on FPIC to stakeholders is guided by the legal provisions of Liberia and certification requirements governing the forestry and agro-commodity production sectors. Key areas of communication on agricultural and forestry sectors will follow guidelines provided by the RSPO⁴, FSC, VPA/FLEGT Chain of Custody complementing activities outlined in the national FPIC Guidelines document⁵.

To achieve these objectives, this strategy outlines the following core areas that will be implemented throughout the year. They include:

Key message

- *RSPO principles, criteria and procedures refer to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in relation to plantation expansion and development of new plantations, and in relation to conflict resolution and compensation. Specific regulations on FPIC apply to uncertified operations of RSPO members.*

5.1.1 Maintaining quality, consistency, and adherence to institutional standards enshrined in regulatory requirements, policies, and procedures in disseminating information shared to public domain and other stakeholders.

To ensure successful communication and to maintain public confidence in the government and key institutions in managing natural resources, it is imperative to adhere to existing corporate communication standards set forth by the EPA communications bureau, and other manuals and communication documents of relevant institutions. Adherence to such standards ensures consistency, quality and accuracy of information disseminated to the public.

⁴ RSPO guide to FPIC sets out the procedures to be followed as required by the generic RSPO Principles and Criteria, Indicators and Guidelines. The Guide includes both binding requirements derived from the Principles, Criteria and Indicators and advice on how companies can comply with these requirements.

⁵ Refer to D3 National Guidelines on Achieving Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with Respect to Communities and Forest Resources for list of activities that requires FPIC

5.1.2 Strengthening the existing ties with media organizations and news outlets and keeping the media and all stakeholders informed on FPIC related work in the country.

Positive media coverage shapes the public perception towards an organization. Therefore, it is essential to build strong and close ties with the local media organizations.

5.1.3 Enhancing the visibility of projects and initiatives.

Enhancing the visibility of projects and initiatives, communication strategies and messages should be informative and composed of varieties of media products to include proposals, results, ongoing projects and messages through interviews, programme reports, factsheets/case studies, brochures, articles, website stories, informative videos, amongst others.

FPIC, which is a continuous process, is imperative to have both internal and external communications that specifically relate to ongoing project activities.

5.1.4 Utilize social media channels to further expand the FPIC awareness creation and to disseminate messages, guidelines, and proposed activities.

Utilizing social media networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter etc. if possible, to relay information to local communities would allow easy access to information sharing and reach the wider national and local audience.

5.1.5 Development of specific communication activities to support participation and capacity building.

Key activities such as workshops, community meetings and trainings, land formalization processes compliance monitoring and enforcement of regulatory requirements of policies and procedures forms part of the communication plan to guide planning and executing of programme and project interventions.

5.2 Key messages

Information detailed in this communications strategy is aligned with the National FPIC guidelines. The Communication Plan identifies and clarifies FPIC values and issues for communication. This document establishes the core messages to be conveyed (refer to the FPIC guidelines document for activities that requires FPIC in Liberia) to facilitate clear and consistent Government Communication of messages on FPIC to the stakeholders, when and how messages should be communicated.

Most messages for communicating about FPIC should be basic and simple as possible. Therefore, depending on the audience, the communication strategy on FPIC would focus on the following questions, with easy-to-understand responses.

Key message:

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.

5.2.1 What is FPIC⁶

Free = consent given voluntarily and absent of coercion, intimidation, or manipulation such as undue influence through cash donations to influential community members popularly referred to as “Brown envelop”.

Prior = consent is sought sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities.

Informed = Informed refers mainly to the nature of the engagement and type of information that should be provided prior to seeking consent and as part of the ongoing consent process. Information should be complete, and simplified in the language that is understood by the project community.

Consent = to the collective decision made by the rights-holders and reached through the customary decision-making processes of the affected peoples or communities. Consent must be sought and granted or withheld according to the unique formal or informal political-administrative dynamic of each community.

5.2.2 Who has the right to FPIC

All Peoples have the right to self-determination and therefore the people who are or in or associated with those in the project affected community has the right to FPIC. It is a fundamental principle in international law, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The FPIC Guidelines for Liberia are informed by the country’s Constitution and enabling legislations, and other national, regional, and international principles and practices related to local communities. The Constitution obligates the state to provide for adequate representation of “marginalized groups” in all levels of government and promote the use of local languages and the free expression of traditional cultures and values.

5.2.3 At what level is FPIC applied

FPIC is applied at the community level, prior to and during the implementation of the project. FPIC process is concerned with potential impacts of projects on a specific community, that requires

Key message: A view on the need to apply FPIC to all communities (by Action Aid)

I. FPIC is an essential tool/approach to protect the rights (human, environmental, land and customary) of all affected communities, especially the most vulnerable ones.

II. Prior to project implementation, FPIC ensures that the identification of affected communities, using participatory assessments to understand and document the socio-demographics, and the historical, political, and cultural dynamics of the area.

III. The FPIC process guarantees the equal consideration of the various perspectives held within affected communities, through inclusive decision-making processes.

⁶ FPIC definition, RSPD “Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is the right of indigenous peoples and other local communities to give or to withhold their consent to any project affecting their lands, livelihoods, and environment”

communities' agreement or disagreement. FPIC is a continuous process and applied throughout the lifespan of the project.

Key message: Required for...

- *land acquisitions,*
- *expansion on new or owned land,*
- *new activities or operations,*
- *reissuance of boundaries,*
- *ongoing land conflict,*
- *remediation processes for past grievances,*
- *relocation of local communities from their lands,*
- *removal of cultural, intellectual, religious, and spiritual property,*
- *large-scale development projects impacting on the lands and survival of local communities (for example, the flooding of traditional territories and sacred sites from the construction of a dam)*

FPIC applies to both land where new operations will take place as well as land and resources which will be indirectly affected by operations.

Assume that if local communities are in or around the project area then FPIC will be required

5.2.4 When should FPIC be obtained

FPIC is required **prior to (before)** the approval and/or commencement of any project that may affect the **legal and customary rights, lands, resources and livelihoods of local communities**

5.2.5 Why is FPIC required

FPIC in local communities is required because matters of fundamental importance for their rights, survivability, dignity, and well-being are very critical to any development.

Key message: Critical tool for

- *self-determination,*
- *promoting community participation in decision-making*
- *mitigating the risk of social conflict around natural resource projects.*

5.2.6 What are the FPIC benefits and consequences

	Local community	Developer	Government
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects the livelihood of local communities. Safeguards and preserve ancestral heritage Ensures that communities can meaningfully participate in decision making processes and that their concerns, priorities, and preferences are accommodated in project design, indicators and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better investment opportunities. Reduced operational cost. Improved 'social license to operate' Improved financial performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger support from constituencies due to greater transparency Improved investment climate Stable operating environment.
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement measures. Capture by elites (from within or outside the community) Decreased production of food locally, creating food security risks and deepening poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diminished productivity & material losses. Credit rating risk. Litigation damages & fees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instability & civil unrest. Environmental costs. Arbitration damages & fees.

5.2.7 Who initiates FPIC

The FPIC process is usually initiated by the developer i.e. either Government or Private; however, local communities can initiate the process when they feel that they will be directly or indirectly affected by the project but are yet to be consulted.

5.2.8 How long the FPIC process takes

The FPIC process lasts throughout the duration of the project on local communities' land. The FPIC process ends with the closure of the project.

5.2.9 Understanding Tenure, Rights and Participatory Decision-making

It is important that tenure and tenure claims are understood and clarified in an FPIC process to all stakeholders. It is also important that local communities understand FPIC values, challenges and the linkages between them to provoke thinking and discussion, making sure that supporting values are seen in relation to FPIC and not as stand-alone issues (*refer to Liberia FPIC document for guidelines on FPIC concept, framework and principles*).

Clarity of tenure is internationally recognized already as a potential constraint or challenge for developers, and in Liberia forestry and agro-commodity producers and concessionaires are no exemptions. Without clarity and security of tenure, there is unlikely to be sustainable natural resource management. There are often overlapping claims in terms of rights and it will not be adequate in the context of any development to understand patterns of formal rights and ownership. In many areas, local people and forest-dependent communities have had customary rights over areas for centuries and have an invisible map of their own rights systems that have been the foundation on which the forests have been protected and managed.

It is these rights holders from whom FPIC is required to ensure that they have given consent and are not adversely affected by the initiative. This may involve more than one individual or could even be a group of individuals depending on the type of tenure. It may even involve neighbouring communities. Overlapping claims to the resource may also have a negative effect in the long run if not clarified and may also influence the quality of the FPIC process when relevant.

5.2.7 Recognizing right holders

Stakeholders need to understand the difference between a stakeholder and a rights holder (customary and formal) and their different roles in the context of FPIC. The linkage between local people and forest-dependent communities to the term 'rights holders' is crucial because there may be examples of groups that might be a stakeholder but not necessarily a rights holder.

This message emphasizes that a process to respect the right to FPIC requires clarity on who holds what rights in the area of the proposed project. This will define who has the right to be consulted and which rights holders can give or withhold consent. Stakeholders need to know that tenure security is becoming one of the key requirements for any secure investment in natural resources (including REDD+).

As a result, while informal recognition of rights within the FPIC process is essential, obtaining formal recognition can assist in securing long-term investments. In summary, local communities need to know in relation to their rights within an FPIC context:

- Implications of participating in a process where their rights to land/resources are not legally recognized nationally, i.e., decisions may not be upheld or may be subject to recourse
- Good faith negotiations need to clearly spell out the rights a project proponent can and will uphold
- The importance of continuing to advocate for land/resource rights
- How communities can identify national support structures (such as legal aid, civil society support)
- Their right to consult with third parties not directly involved in the project

Key message: Ascertain the legal status of the land

This is not linked with the rights to FPIC, and is particularly relevant where customary rights are not recognised and where multiple rights holders, both formal and informal, have claims on the same land. The legal status should be examined for all parts of the targeted project area as well as bordering zones as this might impact the project. So its more about who has rights over the targeted area of the project both in state and under customary rights law.

Informal recognition links closely to the value of inclusive participation and effective communication, in that the project is likely to fail if unrecognized rights holders are not respected in the FPIC process. Formal recognition goes one step further and can be facilitated through the regulatory framework and access to national advocacy structures.

5.2.8 Participatory Decision-making

A key supporting value of FPIC is inclusive decision-making. In other words, meaningful participatory decisions where different interest groups have an opportunity to raise ideas, interests, and concerns. This will promote shared ownership and accountability of the decision and is more likely to be beneficial to project implementation than a decision taken by just a few.

Stakeholders must be able to differentiate between the levels of decision making in a process to seek FPIC and identify different levels of participation in decision making within a community and relate it to their own context. At any point of engaging stakeholders on FPIC processes, it is important to emphasize that they have understood the difference between the decision to give consent at the community level and between the developer and the community, as these will likely be different processes.

FPIC itself gives the privilege to the community or rights holder to maintain the right to say yes or no themselves. However, among the community, some people or rights holders may be more powerful than others and may be used to making decisions without consulting others. There are other tools and resources that can help organisations understand and document FPIC throughout the process. (*refer to FPIC 360 tool developed by....*). **Every project developer must design its own participatory communication plan ⁷and carry out interactive discussions through which project information will be disclosed in a transparent way.**

5.2.9 What are the benefits of the FPIC process

Key message: Participatory communication plan must include

- *Information needs*
- *Communication channels and media (ranging from traditional/local media to ICTs), and communication activities.*
- *Design the communication activities of the FPIC process.*
- *Ensure timely provision of materials in formats and languages accessible and intelligible to the local People, preferably in their own language*
- *Respect of traditional and customary protocols and dynamics, including norms for both verbal and non-verbal communication.*

FPIC provides incomparable benefit for all stakeholders involved in any given project intervention. Inclusive participation throughout all stages of a project helps to maintain consent, minimizes risks⁸, and allows building of a trust-based relationship, informs project managers on how to better target beneficiaries' needs and expectations, and strengthens possibilities for future collaboration. For local communities and peoples, FPIC is a tool to ensure that their priorities are considered. The process allows them to be well informed about all aspects of the project that will affect them, to exercise control and manage their land and other resources to command respect for their cultural identities and values especially regarding their right to development.

⁷ Liberia: Voluntary National Review on the Implementation Status of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2020 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26287VNR_2020_Liberia_Report.pdf

⁸ Risks such as (such as disputes and other forms of conflict, harm to Indigenous Peoples and their territories, or damage to the reputation of the implementing organization)

The below are some benefits:

- It provides companies with a 'social license to operate
- It ensures companies respect communities' wider rights to lands and resources and to choose their own representatives
- It means companies cannot be accused of 'land grabbing'
- It secures good relationships with local communities, important for smallholder partnerships and trouble-free employment
- It results in a negotiated agreement binding on both the company and the communities
- It helps companies avoid being embroiled in land conflicts
- It helps companies avoid costly litigation, work stoppages or lost access to plantings resulting from land disputes.

5.3 Communication platforms

Mode of communication may vary depending on the target group and may include but not limited to web-based through training portals, project/programme reporting, workshops and meetings, audio/visual/ radio, print and promotional materials (banners/ billboards etc). In addition, documentaries of successful FPIC processes may also be developed over time as well as interview with beneficiaries. District's/County's action plans and communication materials would also be explored to ensure that new platforms complement existing ones.

5.4 Target audiences

5.4.1 Government officers⁹ (National, County, District, Local)

To ensure successful and general understanding, strong communications is essential for ministries department, and agencies (MDAs), and partner institutions in natural resources programme design and implementation to be sensitized on the FPIC guidelines to share the same quality of information. A major stakeholder is the forest managers of the Forest Protection unit, and businesses that use forests as a primary resource.

FPIC communication and awareness would only work well if the efforts to implement FPIC guidelines are understood and abided by the forestry sector. As such, this is another audience that needs to be targeted with awareness raising materials regarding FPIC.

5.4.2 International Community, Donors and Development Partners

Key focus for communication with this audience segment is for resource mobilization and for partnering in implementing programmes. As potential funders of the communication plan, the international community, particularly donors, must be included as a key audience of this communication strategy. Any progress or lessons learned needs to be conveyed to the international community. Boosting awareness of FPIC in Liberia, such as through media coverage, would be used to reinforce acceptable FPIC values and practices and well as lessons learned to donors. Dissemination of lessons learned presentations, documents, brochures, and videos would also form part of communication means.

⁹Government officers in the natural resources sector needs to understand FPIC and be able to lead sensitization in communities with partners involved in investment processes to effectively apply FPIC to: Facilitate the right kind of investments, which operate responsibly and support sustainable development, Increase business confidence by fostering a stable and participatory investment environment, Comply with international law and align approval processes with industry standards and best practices, Avoid and mitigate financial, political, and legal risks, Manage potential conflicts that risk violating human rights and damaging business operations and the national interest.

5.4.3 Civil Society (NGOs, CBOs)

NGOs and Community Based Organizations in the natural resources sector have a strong footing on the ground having closer ties to the communities and grassroots stakeholders. They influence community debates and help in shaping opinions of the communities they are based in. By establishing proper communications, CBOs and NGOs can act as key partners in transmitting information and advocating for the rights of local communities to be respected in FPIC processes.

5.4.4 Local communities

The local forest communities, where in most cases project implementation takes place, are another audience that must be provided with strong and engaging communications. The success of any project implementation in pilot communities will be determined by the level of informed consent given beforehand. As such, a great deal of effort must be made in communicating and educating this audience. This should include training local village facilitators, who are chosen by their respective communities (e.g., village leader, teacher, family heads etc). As much as possible, awareness raising materials would be delivered in the ethnic language of the communities. An effort would be made to strengthen networks in the communities and districts between interested and relevant stakeholders so they can share information about FPIC and what individual action they need to take to support any project implementation. Community composition include specific groups such as women¹⁰, youths, and marginalized groups.

5.4.5 General Public/Others

The public can be difficult to define; effort needs to be made to communicate this guideline amongst the public in Liberia. This includes conveying the contribution of forests to mitigating climate change to urban audiences and others that may not encounter forests in their day-to-day lives. This is not just as an end, but it reinforces the importance of eliminating land related conflicts in Liberia. Since the media play a cardinal role in conveying messages about FPIC to the public. It is important that strong and lasting contacts are made across media landscape. This strategy further seeks to engage with Liberia youth, women, and religious bodies about the FPIC guidelines.

6 Financial support and Budget for plan implementation

The development of this strategy is supported by Proforest through its Production landscape programme in Africa, with financial support from FGMC DFID, UKAID. The communication plan however needs the technical and financial support from all stakeholders including the government of Liberia and development partners to ensure successful implantation on the ground. The plan details proposed activities and budget subject to modification depending on available funds and resources for implementation.

¹⁰ Women may often be less likely to participate in consultative processes due to local gender norms, household responsibilities, or social hierarchies. Bolster women's participation by identifying local gender champions to support the sensitization and awareness creation of the FPIC guidelines. This may include having women-only meetings, which are led or co-led by women, to encourage their participation, as well as calibrating outreach and educational efforts to actually reach women at the locations and the times that suit them best.

7 Monitoring the Impact of Communication

In close collaboration with the EPA, monitoring of uptake will measure the success of the Communication Plan in collaboration with relevant institutions and stakeholders. All activities to ensure the socialisation of the FPIC guidelines document among stakeholders must be carried out according to schedule. It is crucial to be flexible yet consistent with the overall goal of the strategy to ensure its successful implementation.

8 Conclusion

This document is a living document and therefore lives beyond the lifespan of this project. The revision of this document is of Five (5) years. However, relevant adjustment required to meet current or changing realities and circumstances would be carried out, thus the need for continuous review. We will be happy to receive your feedback to help us do this. This is important because we live in a fast-changing world with new and emerging issues taking center-stage. I believe that a good strategy should be flexible enough to take on board such new issues as they occur.

With strong commitment of the Government of Liberia to FPIC, there should not be a lack of interest in the work of FPIC implementation given resource availability and stakeholder collaboration. While there are overlaps in how the key audiences will be targeted, there are also specific channels that would work best for certain groups. For example, most Government officials (national, county, district) would receive their knowledge through conferences, training, and workshops. For local pilot communities, direct messaging through village or community meetings, information centres, and posters would be preferred. The mass media and television will be the best way to inform the public about FPIC. While for the international community, a suite of lessons learned materials will be developed for dissemination at international conferences and forums. If properly implemented, it should raise awareness about the FPIC Guidelines in Liberia - across government ministries, within local pilot forest communities, the media spaces, and the public.

On behalf of the Republic of Liberia, with thanks to Proforest, partners and the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme of the UK FCDO.



Timeline – Awareness raising and Communications Strategy (2022-2023)

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Generate list of activities and align with FPIC guidelines	Discuss with TV stations, local radio stations for broadcasting	Start discussing with like-minded organisations like local NGOs/CSOs to support training and capacity building	Start producing materials for awareness raising	Share progress during high level government meetings		Roll out training and capacity building	Roll out training and capacity building	Roll out training and capacity building	Document lessons and experiences
Start reviewing formats, language etc for awareness raising posters, videos etc for local communities	Start developing scripts and training materials		Finalise video/radio, flyers, posters etc for broadcasting	Facilitate meetings in local communities					Begin to share lessons and experiences in different formats (reports, documentaries etc)
Generate media list and start making contacts with them				Begin planning for national level capacity building					
Make contacts with partner institutions including donors for implementation				Begin planning for local level capacity building					

8 Communication plan

The EPA with support from the MACs is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this plan and roll out of capacity building activities. This should be done in collaboration with private sector, CSOs, communication practitioners, among others.

Activity		Target audience	Schedule of communication	Medium of communication	Lead organization	Implementing partner	Proposed Budget
Content development	<i>This should include video, flyers, presentations, training material etc that can be easily disseminated and also used by facilitators for awareness and training</i>	Government officials Donors Media General public	Throughout the project lifespan	IEC, Face-to-face meetings and workshops, Sensitization through ppt presentations, video animations, flyers print and promotional materials Institutions website	EPA	Relevant MACs	TBD
Assessment of awareness-raising needs, groups and opportunities	<i>Consultations ongoing to with Government officials to develop this strategy and plan, FPIC process not yet piloted in any programme/project therefore no insights into the communication needs of local communities. climate change initiatives in Viet Nam</i>	Donors and development partners		Face-to-face meetings Emails Sensitization through ppt presentations, video animations, flyers print and promotional materials	EPA		

<p>Preparation of awareness-raising materials such as posters, pamphlets, radio programmes, etc.)</p>	<p><i>Announcement - TV and Radio –</i></p> <p><i>Short video -Make one for a general audience and a more specific one for local communities. Make copies of announcements to disseminate to local communities and national and local government officials</i></p>	<p>General public; Government; Local communities; media; forest sector</p> <p>NGO’s and CBO’s</p>		<p>Sensitization through ppt presentations, video animations, flyers</p>	<p>EPA</p>		
<p>Organization of awareness-raising events</p>	<p><i>Fair???</i></p> <p><i>Community meetings</i></p> <p><i>Training of local stakeholders</i></p> <p><i>Conference, trainings, workshops presentations</i></p> <p><i>Websites</i></p>	<p>All</p>		<p>Face-to-face meetings and workshops,</p> <p>Sensitization through ppt presentations, video animations, flyers</p> <p>print and promotional materials</p>	<p>EPA</p>		

		Local communities and champions or local facilitators	Face-to-face community meetings and workshops, video animations through WhatsApp platforms other social media platforms, flyers and promotional materials		EPA		
		Media	Face-to-face meetings and workshops, Sensitization through ppt presentations, video animations, flyers print and promotional materials		EPA		



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