‘No deforestation’ commitments in West Africa

Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness at a production-level. *In-depth report.*

March 2018
Information

Proforest is an independent mission-driven organisation working in the field of natural resource management and specialising in practical approaches to sustainability. Our expertise covers all aspects of the natural resources sector, from biodiversity conservation, sustainable forestry and agricultural commodities production to responsible sourcing, supply chain management and investment.

Proforest works to transform commodity production as well as supply chains and sectors through developing awareness about sustainability, helping to generate commitment to better practice, supporting implementation of these commitments in practice and working with the wider community to increase the positive impact.

Proforest Ltd provides direct support to companies implementing responsible production, sourcing and investment for agricultural and forest commodities.

The Proforest team is international and multilingual and comes from a wide variety of backgrounds, including industry, academia and civil society. This allows us to work comfortably with diverse organisations in a range of cultures. We have in-house knowledge of more than 15 languages, including English, Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese, Mandarin, French and Spanish.

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No deforestation in West Africa
Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

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1 Introduction

Timber and agricultural commodities are important economic drivers in West Africa, and sustainable production of these commodities can lead to social, economic and environmental benefits. As part of a growing shift towards more sustainable commodity production, many multinational consumer goods companies (CGCs), commodity traders and even producer companies have made commitments to eliminate deforestation from their global supply chains. These commitments cover wood products, oil palm, and other commodities such as cocoa, that are produced in West African countries.

Effective implementation of these commitments will require collaboration between different stakeholders, including government and private sector. And yet, most discussions about ‘no deforestation’ have so far been held with CGCs and downstream actors. It is vital that stakeholders in West African countries, including producer companies, governments and civil society organisations (CSOs), are engaged with these discussions to ensure that ‘no deforestation’ commitments are aligned with local and national priorities and to make sure they are alert to changing buyer expectations and market trends.

As part of its Africa Legality Programme, funded by DFID’s Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) Programme, the Proforest Initiative has developed a programme of research and capacity building to support wider discussion of ‘no deforestation’ commitments in West Africa. The programme has Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia as focal countries and focuses on the palm, forestry and cocoa sectors.

1.1 Objectives

This document represents one of the outputs produced under the Africa Legality Programme (ALP). The objectives of this component of the ALP are to:

- Improve understanding of synergies and gaps between legal requirements and private sector ‘no deforestation’ (ND) commitments,
- Raise awareness amongst producer companies, CSOs and governments about downstream companies’ ND commitments, and of the High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) approaches,
- Provide guidance to producer companies on how to ‘go beyond’ legality to comply with supply chain actors’ commitments,
- Provide guidance to governments in producer countries on how to streamline legal requirements and voluntary commitments,
- Communicate implementation challenges faced on-the-ground to international stakeholders, and
- Promote improved collaboration between existing voluntary and legal initiatives to address the implementation gap.

This programme consisted of the following activities for the three countries, designed to meet the above objectives:

1. Legal reviews to compare legislation with the HCV and HCS approaches,
2. Stakeholder interviews to understand awareness of ‘no deforestation’ commitments and the HCV and HCS approaches, and overlap with other initiatives,
3. Literature review,
4. Capacity building workshops on ‘no deforestation’, HCV and HCS, and
5. Dissemination activities to share results.

This report summarises the activities conducted and key findings of the legal reviews, stakeholder interviews and literature review. It also links readers to other more detailed outputs from the programme where relevant.

1.2 Who is the target audience for this document?

It is aimed at a range of stakeholders, but with a primary focus on international actors interested in the responsible sourcing and production of West African cocoa, palm and timber. It is particularly relevant for participants in multi-stakeholder processes relevant to the implementation of ND commitments, international NGOs, consumer governments, service providers and mid-downstream companies sourcing.

This report is one of the more detailed outputs for those wanting to get a more complete picture, readers should refer to the executive summary for high-level findings.
2 Methodology

To understand barriers to implementing ND commitments in Ghana, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, the following activities were conducted:

1. Legal reviews to compare legislation with the HCV and HCS approaches,
2. Stakeholder interviews to understand awareness of ‘no deforestation’ commitments and the HCV and HCS approaches, and overlap with other initiatives, and
3. A literature review to understand the context and identify existing initiatives in each country.

2.1 Legal reviews

Legal reviews were conducted in all three countries to understand the extent to which key aspects of ND commitments were already met within all national legislation, and specifically the extent to which legal requirements align with requirements of the HCV and HCS approaches.

The legal reviews were conducted primarily for producer companies and government representatives in the three countries to:

1. Provide guidance to producer companies explaining how they can build on legality to meet additional ND commitments, therefore simplifying compliance with these additional ND commitments, and
2. Support government policy and law-makers in understanding and strengthening the alignment between legislation and requirements of international companies and investors with ND commitments. This can support government actors in strengthening the enabling environment in order to attract investment in sustainable agriculture.

Although not a primary audience of the legal reviews, international stakeholders are also considered a target audience, because of the need to understand implementation barriers in West Africa and to ensure that ongoing initiatives or investments in the region are cognisant of and build on the existing legal frameworks. For these reasons, a summary of the legal review methods and findings are presented in this report.

Legal reviews were conducted by the following experts:

1. Côte d’Ivoire: Dr Raphael Kra (independent legal expert & ClientEarth Associate),
2. Ghana: TaylorCrabbe Initiative, and

Full details of the methods are provided in the legal synthesis reports.

2.2 Stakeholder interviews

A selection of relevant stakeholders from the private sector, government and private sector (producer) companies were interviewed either in person or
remotely via phone/teleconference. The selected stakeholders were chosen based on the relevant sectors in each country, with forestry and palm prioritised in Ghana and Liberia, and palm and cocoa stakeholders for Côte d’Ivoire. Stakeholders were identified from existing Proforest networks and recommendations of partner organisations in country. Interviewees were selected as the most relevant actors for sustainability and deforestation in these sectors.

The interviews focused on the following four, broad categories aimed at understanding the current level of awareness amongst stakeholders about ‘no deforestation’ commitments and barriers to the implementation of commitments on the ground:

- **Uptake and awareness**: To what extent are stakeholders in country aware of commitments and tools to implement them? Are existing initiatives or policies already in place to tackle deforestation?
- **Implementation barriers**: If awareness is there, how effectively is this will implemented in practice?
  - Pre-establishment: Barriers faced by actors prior to establishing new developments, e.g. in the land allocation process or availability of degraded land,
  - Post-establishment: Barriers that inhibit effective implementation after developments are established, e.g. ineffective monitoring of forest areas, encroachment into set-asides, and
- **“Impact”**: Barriers related to other deforestation drivers or topics not captured in this review.

Interviewees identities have been kept anonymous but a summary of the types of stakeholders interviewed is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Côte d’Ivoire</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct interviewees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 x private sector (palm, cocoa)</td>
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<td>3 x CSOs (palm, cocoa)</td>
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<td>2 x government</td>
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<td><strong>Contributors during validation meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 x CSOs (palm, cocoa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 x private sector (palm, cocoa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 x government</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 x researcher/academic</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ghana</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct interviewees (&amp; validation meeting attendees)</strong></td>
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2.3 **Literature review**

A review was conducted of relevant white and grey literature to understand the social, environmental and policy context in the three countries, as well as to identify existing initiatives already tackling deforestation. This included reports and studies identified through online searches and recommended by stakeholders during interviews. A full bibliography is provided at the end of the report.
3 Global context

3.1 ‘No deforestation’ commitments

Support for sustainable production has been on the agenda for decades but has gathered pace particularly in the past five years with high-level pledges (e.g. the New York Declaration on Forests) by diverse stakeholders to reduce and eliminate deforestation. Following these high-level pledges, numerous private sector actors have made ambitious responsible sourcing commitments with ‘no deforestation’ a key component. These commitments have been made by retailers, consumer goods companies, commodity traders and some producers, particularly in the ‘deforestation risk’ sectors of palm oil, beef, soy and pulp & paper (Figure 1).

Of particular relevance to West Africa are private sector commitments in the palm, timber and pulp, and cocoa sectors. The palm, timber and pulp sectors are leading the way in terms of the number of companies making commitments, in large part due to the major international attention on past deforestation associated with these commodities in Southeast Asia.

Commitments in the cocoa sector are much newer, with elevated interest since March 2017 on the back of a high-level meeting convened by the Prince of Wales’ International Sustainability Unit (ISU) focusing on deforestation in the cocoa sector. This meeting led to the creation of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, and commitments by major cocoa traders and consumer goods companies such as Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Olam, Mars and Mondelez. As of November 2017, the governments of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire also committed their support and frameworks for action have been developed.
3.2 The HCV and HCS approaches

The HCV and High Carbon Stock approaches are commonly used as tools to implement ‘no deforestation’ (ND) commitments, and are commonly referred to in company commitments, e.g. “No conversion of HCV or HCS areas”.

In brief, the HCV approach is a tool for the identifying, managing and monitoring areas of ecological, biological, social or cultural importance in companies’ developments. It covers different ecosystem types, providing for the protection of particularly valuable examples of those ecosystems that meet one of the six HCV categories. Not all forest is considered HCV and definitions of HCV differ depending on the national context. More information can be found here.

The HCS Approach is a methodology to implement ND in practice, by identifying viable forest or HCS forest to protect and ‘degraded’ or non-HCS areas that can be developed. Because it is designed to implement zero gross deforestation, the HCS Approach sets a fairly strict threshold of ‘viable forest’ based on carbon stock, forest structure and species composition. It is designed for use in fragmented, moist tropical forest landscapes. More information can be found here.

4 Regional context

4.1 Environmental context

4.1.1 Ghana

Land cover

Ghana is located at the eastern end of the Upper Guinea west forest ecoregion, that stretches from western Togo to Sierra Leone. On the basis of climatic factors, notably rainfall, the country is broadly divided into three main ecological zones (Figure 2); the High Forest zone (HFZ) in the south, the Transitional Zone (TZ) in the middle, and the Savannah Zone (SZ) to the north. The Sudanian type climate in the north has a short rainy season, whilst forested Guinean and Guineo-congolian Regions in the southwest is characterized by a high rainfall regime (>2000 mm p.a). Currently, around 2.6 million ha of forest reserves are dedicated to timber production, with an additional 2 million ha of crop land that also produce timber. About 500,000 ha is unreserved forests.
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Figure 2. Land cover of Ghana in 2013. West Africa: Land Use and Land Cover Dynamics. Taken from: https://eros.usgs.gov/westafrica/land-cover/land-use-land-cover-and-trends-ghana.

Deforestation rates & drivers

Ghana lost over 60% (2.7 million ha) of its forest cover from 1950 to the turn of the last century, at a deforestation rate of approximately 2% per year (135,000 ha/year). The deforestation rate between 2005 and 2010 was estimated at 2.19% per annum; the sixth highest deforestation rate globally for that period. The direct and indirect economic, political and demographic drivers of deforestation in Ghana is illustrated by the Ghana REDD+ programme (Figure 3).

The principal drivers of deforestation in Ghana are agricultural expansion, logging, fuelwood/charcoal production, wildfires, infrastructural development and mining/sand winning. The deforestation pathway in Ghana takes the form of incremental, rather than frontier, degradation; that is, process has primarily been on degradation caused by multiple drivers rather than one major industrial driver.

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Figure 3. Direct and indirect drivers of deforestation in Ghana. Source: Ghana REDD+ Strategy, 2016.

The forest sector is the fourth largest contributor to Ghana's GDP; logging accounted for the fourth highest foreign exchange earner for the country in 2014, when a total of about 249,846 m³ of timber (worth €98.5 million) was exported in the first three quarters of the year.

Agriculture-driven deforestation in Ghana takes the form of (smallholder) cocoa production, which targets the tropical forest regions of the country. Emerging cash crops over the past decade are oil palm and rubber, which either replacing existing plantations, or pushing for new forest frontiers. Subsistence agriculture (which directly and indirectly employs about 60% of the population) is characterized by shifting cultivation as a soil nutrient management strategy; this leads to the targeting of primary and regenerated forest cover for conversion. Agriculture land increased by 96.5% from 31,552 km² in 1975 to 61,998 km² in 2000. Cutting of forest cover for fuelwood and charcoal are also increasing due to a population growth rate approaching 3%.

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1 http://www.euflegt.efi.int/ghana


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[Image of the page content, including a table and a diagram, but the text is not visible in the image.]
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Mining activities occur mostly in the Ashanti, Central, Western, Eastern and Brong Ahafo Regions, where about 70% of the nation's tropical rain forests are found. A combination of surface mining over large tract of land, even by large companies, and alluvial gold mining (locally called "gallamsey mining"), causes severe damage to the nation's forest resources.

A rapid expansion of the urban areas settlements from 1975 (2,560 km²) and 2013 (3,830 km²) shows a 161% increase over just 38 years.

Biodiversity and protected areas

Ghana ranks among the high biodiversity countries in the world. This could be attributed to it straddling three key bio-geographic zones:

- the Guineo-Congolian zone, in the south west,
- the Guineo-Congolian/Sudanian transition zone, in the middle belt;
- the Sudanian zone, in the northern-tip of the country.

Currently, about 2,974 indigenous plant species, 504 fishes, 728 birds, 225 mammals, 221 species of amphibians and reptiles have been recorded. Three species of frogs, 1 lizard, and 23 species of butterflies are endemic. Biodiversity richness is highest in the southwestern forests.

Some of the Upper Guinea ecoregion’s most threatened and iconic species present in the country include, elephants, African lion, chimpanzees, Geoffroy’s pied colobus, olive colobus; white-nape mangabey, African grey parrot, and African mahogany,

Largely as a result of deforestation activities, Ghana’s biodiversity and forest cover are currently concentrated in forest reserves, national park and other protected areas scattered across the country, especially in the HFZ in the southwest. The distinct outline of these forested areas are discernible even in course resolution satellite imagery (Figure 4).


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4.1.2 Liberia

Land cover

Liberia contains nearly half of the remaining Upper Guinea ecoregion. The country’s 4.3 million ha of lowland tropical forest comprises 43% of forests of the ecoregion extending from Guinea to Togo. Liberia is the most forested country in West Africa, with forest covering two-thirds of the land surface in 2013 (Figure 5). Out of the around 4.2 million hectares of forested land, which constitutes to 43.4% of the total land area, 4.2 million hectares are primary or otherwise naturally regenerated forest, and around 8 thousand hectares are planted forest. The national forest cover is concentrated in two expansive forest areas, including evergreen lowland forests, in the southeast and the semi-deciduous mountain forests in the northwest. The land cover is broadly distributed as: degraded forest (44%), agriculture (13%) and savanna (11%). Smaller land cover classes include: thicket (3%), gallery forest (2%) and plantations (1.5%). Other land cover classes each occupy less than 1 percent of the land surface. Approximately 37% of all forested land in Liberia is contained within commercial concessions or designated


for conservation as Protected Areas; however, most of the concessions are yet to be developed, and most of the protected areas are yet to be designated.

Figure 5. Land cover of Liberia in 2013. Taken from: https://eros.usgs.gov/westafrica/land-cover/land-use-land-cover-and-trends-liberia.

Deforestation rates & drivers

Despite the extensive forest cover in Liberia, less than 5 percent is considered primary forests (with no clearly visible indications of human activity); the vast majority are regenerated forests (native species, but with indication of human activity). The annual rate of deforestation in Liberia has been variously estimated at 0.2% in 1986–2000 (Figure 6) to 0.35% in 2000–2006. Between 2000 – 2014, Liberia lost an estimated 20% of its forested area (Figure 7). The current annual deforestation rate is estimated at 30,000 ha. Conversion for agriculture and mining are the main drivers. However, uncontrolled logging is a significant cause of forest degradation.


Figure 6. Distribution of forest and forest clearance in Liberia from 1986 to 2000. Source: Christie et al, 2007.

The principal drivers of deforestation in Liberia are agricultural expansion, logging/pit-sawing, fuelwood/charcoal production, urbanization and rural settlements.

Biodiversity and protected areas
Liberia is regarded as one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world. The large expanse of the remaining Upper Guinea ecoregion contains a diversity of plants and animal species, including a high proportion of endemics. Over 2200 vascular plant species, 600 bird species, 75 reptile species, and 150 mammal species have been recorded14.

14 Liberia National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan-II.
Liberia serves as a flyway for migratory birds and a home for many resident bird, including the critically endangered Liberian Greenbul, and the endangered Rufus fishing-owl. The country also harbours charismatic conservation species such as the western chimpanzee, pygmy hippopotamus, forest elephant, zebra duiker

Despite Liberia’s recognition as a global biodiversity hotspot, only two actively protected areas (Sapo National Park and the East Nimba Nature Reserve) and eight forest reserves are actively protected (Figure 8). This conservation goal, however, competes with extractive economic activities.
Figure 8. Distribution of Liberia’s Protected Areas Network. Source: Conservation international (2017). To a country on the edge of development, what is nature worth?

4.1.3  Côte d’Ivoire

Land cover
Côte d’Ivoire (CI) is part of the Upper Guinea forest ecoregion that stretches from Sierra Leone to Ghana and Togo in the east. However, in Côte d’Ivoire, as across much of the ecoregion much of the forest cover has been cleared over the past few decades due to agricultural expansion and a growing population.

Today, the forest cover represents 2.5 million hectares\(^{15}\) (Error! Reference source not found.). Remaining forest is mainly in protected areas and classified forest where the deforestation rate is 4.3% per year\(^{16}\). Today, Côte d’Ivoire is a mosaic of

\(^{15}\) http://www.euflegt.efi.int/cote-ivoire

\(^{16}\) Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMW au nom du programme ONU REDD, 2017
secondary forests, agricultural planting, forestry plantations, subsistence crops and fallow lands.


Deforestation rates & drivers
Between 1975 and 2013, forest cover in CI decreased from 33% to 21% of the country, whilst agricultural land rose from 12% to 22%, and plantation cover from
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2% to 5%.\(^{17}\) Furthermore, less than 2% of primary forest remains.\(^{18}\) According to recent study done for CI’s REDD+ program, deforestation was higher between 1990 and 2000 with a rate of 480,000 ha/year, compared to the period 2000-2015 with a rate of 95,000 ha/year\(^{19}\) (Figure 10).

![Forest cover change in Côte d’Ivoire between 1990 and 2015](https://eros.usgs.gov/westafrica/land-cover/land-use-land-cover-and-trends-cote-divoire)

**Figure 10.** Forest cover change in Côte d’Ivoire between 1990 and 2015 taken from Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMC au nom du Programme ONU REDD, 2017

Much of the deforestation over the past 30 years has occurred in classified forest, with forest cover in classified forest declining from 2 million ha in 1990 to less

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18 USDA Forest Service. Côte d’Ivoire, Biodiversity and Tropical Forests: 118/119 Assessment

19 Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMW au nom du programme ONU REDD, 2017
than 900,000 ha in 2015\textsuperscript{20}. There was also significant forest degradation with the undegraded forest cover dropping from 12 – 5% over the same period.

Today, deforestation in Côte d’Ivoire is still driven mainly by agriculture expansion, especially cocoa, rubber and palm, but also logging, firewood and charcoal production, development of infrastructures (habitat and transport), mining and bush fires. There are also indirect economic, political and demographic drivers. This is well illustrated by research conducted for the REDD+ programme (Figure 11).

![Figure 11](image.png)

**Figure 11.** Direct and indirect drivers of deforestation in Côte d’Ivoire, figure taken from Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMC au nom du Programme ONU REDD, 2017.

**Biodiversity and protected areas**

As well as having a high deforestation rate, Côte d’Ivoire is also one of the most biodiverse countries in the region with high plant diversity and endemism (Figure 12), as well as populations of some of the region’s most threatened and iconic vertebrates, including pygmy hippopotamuses, elephants and chimpanzees.\textsuperscript{2} However, due to the high recent deforestation, the vast majority of CI’s remaining forest is found in the Tai National Park, with only small, largely degraded pockets of forest remaining elsewhere in gazetted forests, along the coast and in small patches near the Ghanaian border in the east.

\textsuperscript{20} Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMC au nom du programme ONU REDD 2017
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Figure 12. Potential threatened species richness (CR, EN, and VU species according to the IUCN list) taken from Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMC au nom du Programme ONU REDD, 2017.

In terms of the protection status of CI’s remaining forest and natural ecosystems, there are nominally 244 protected areas\(^{21}\) covering 22.9% of the land area.\(^{22}\) The majority (231) of these are classified/reserved forests with only 13 national parks.\(^{7}\) Two of the largest and most important are the Taï National Park, formed of tropical forest in the southwest, and the savannah and grassland Comoe National Park in the northeast.

There are major problems of forest degradation and encroachment into CI’s protected areas, for example, of the 14,500 sq km of reserved forests 70% were

\(^{21}\) Maukonen et al 2017

\(^{22}\) https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/CI
deforested in 2013.¹ Although Tai National park and N’zo fauna reserve remain mainly intact, small protected areas like Mont Peko, Azagny and Marahoué national parks have lost almost all of their forest since 1990. This is mainly due to increasing local population and migration after the politico-military crisis in 2000.²³ Côte d’Ivoire’s state forestry company (SODEFOR) also estimated encroachment into gazetted forests at 50% in 2014. Perhaps the biggest driver of encroachment and deforestation now is expansion of, often illegal, smallholder cocoa, which poses a particular threat to the Tai National Park.

4.2 Socio-economic context

4.2.1 Ghana

Economic context

The economy of Ghana, at the time of independence from Britain in 1957, appeared stable and prosperous. As the world’s leading producer of cocoa, Ghana boasted a well-developed infrastructure to service trade, and enjoyed a relatively advanced education system. The 1960s witnessed an economic diversification and expansion based on using cocoa revenue as security to move the country from a primarily agricultural economy to one of mixed agriculture and industry. The global cocoa burst, followed by a cycle of military coups saw the country undergoing an economic downturn with negative GDP until 1983 when, following a severe drought, the government accepted stringent International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank loan conditions and instituted the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) ²⁴. This progressively led to Ghana recording about 5.2% annual average growth between 1984 and 2010 and becoming a lower middle income country. The country’s annual average growth was 8.3% between 2007 and 2012.²⁵ The discovery and commercial production of oil in 2011 contributed 5.4 percentage points (oil-GDP) to the 15.0% real GDP growth in that year, making Ghana the six fastest growing economy in the world that year.²⁶ There is, however, concern that these recent economic growth trends do not translate into employment, equality and general improvement in the livelihood of the populace.

Ghana’s population is estimated at 29 million as of March 2018, up from official 2010 census figure of 24.2 million, and at an annual growth rate of 2.58%, population density of 129 /km².²⁷²⁸ The economy is market-based, with relatively few policy barriers to trade and investment in comparison with other

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²³ Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMW au nom du programme ONU REDD, 2017

²⁴ http://countrystudies.us/ghana/63.htm


²⁷ http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ghana-population/

²⁸ http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population/
countries in the region. The country is well-endowed with natural resources, including gold, timber, and oil. Agriculture accounts for about 20% of GDP and employs more than half of the workforce, mainly smallholders. Gold and cocoa exports, and individual remittances, are major sources of foreign exchange. It is currently the second largest economy of the ECOWAS sub-region, behind Nigeria, accounting for 10.3% of total GDP.

The number of people living below the poverty line in Ghana decreased from 31.9% (2005/2006) to 24.2% (2012/2013) representing a 7.7 percentage point reduction in poverty.

Agriculture is the backbone of Ghana’s economy. However, performance of agriculture sector in Ghana declined from 51 per cent to 36 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past decade, with the rural poor now accounting for about three-quarters of all Ghanaians living below the poverty.

Suitable land agriculture for large-scale plantations is becoming increasingly scarce in Ghana. This is mainly attributable to three key factors: i) land tenure system, ii) population growth, iii) a shortening of the traditional fallow period in the shifting agricultural practices. The main form of land ownership and use is customary tenure, where ownership, use and /or decision-making are held by stools, skins, families or clans; and usually held in trust by the chief, head of family, clan, or land priests for the benefit of members of that traditional group. It is estimated that 80 percent of the land is governed by traditional rulers. Private land can be acquired through a grant, sale, gift or marriage; whilst public lands are acquired and vested in the president for public use.

For private companies, reduction in soil fertility due to shortening of fallow periods, reduced size of land holdings, and expansion of settlements all contribute to a great reduction in the availability of contiguous land for large-scale plantation agriculture. A proliferation of long-standing land litigation resulting from chieftaincy and (extended) family succession also affects the ability of companies to engage successfully with the right allodial title holders for land acquisition and subsequent corporate responsibilities.

Smallholder agriculture

29 https://www.indexmundi.com/ghana/economy_overview.html


As of 2014, about three-quarters (75.5%) of the population 15 years and older were employed, 1.7 % are unemployed and 22.8 % are economically not active. Irrespective of sex, the population in rural areas (81.7%) is more likely to be employed than those in urban areas (69.9%)\textsuperscript{34}.

About 80 per cent of total agricultural production is attributed to smallholder farmers Ghanaian agriculture is dominated by smallholders, who account for about 80% of the total agricultural production. About half (51.5%) of households in Ghana own or operate a farm, and 82.5 percent of rural households are involved in farming. Households involved in agricultural activities in the rural savanna, forest and coastal areas are 93%, 81.3% and 64.7%, respectively. Smallholders produce mainly maize, cocoa, maize, and cassava (often in mixed cropping systems). Farm land holdings increase from south (avg. 2.3 ha) to north (avg. 4 ha), but this increase is accompanied by lower land productivity in the north. Over 70% of smallholder farms are 3 ha or smaller in size\textsuperscript{35}.

Land availability for the smallholder is not generally a problem, but the tenure system poses many challenges. Smallholders acquire land for agriculture through inheritance, lease, and private ownership or hiring. Land is mostly acquired by indigenous/locals without any payment, but settlers are more likely to acquire land through either sharecropping and/or a fixed rent basis. The main types of sharecropping are the “abunu” (half of the crop produced are given to the tenant farmer and half to the landowner) and “abusa” (two-thirds of the produce is given to the farmer and one-third to the landowner)\textsuperscript{36}.

Cocoa, cassava and plantain are the three most important cash crops grown in the forest zone, accounting for 62% of total harvest value of crops. Households in the forest zone account for more than half of the crops harvested and value of sales (55% of harvest and 58% of sales respectively)\textsuperscript{37}.

There is a growing trend of smallholder conversion from prevailing cash tree crops, such as cocoa and citrus, to oil palm due to perception that oil palm offers a better and steadier (therefore reliable) source of income at the end of the year. This is in addition to the option for local consumption of oil palm product as an alternative to (government) regulation of prices for cocoa, or risk of losing harvest for the highly perishable citrus.

**Social conflict**

The Ghanaian population is composed of the Kwa and Gur subfamilies of the Niger-Congo language group. The approximately 100 linguistic and cultural groups at the time of Ghana’s independence in 1957, still persist in present times. The Ghanaian society is further divided into major ethnic groups, including: the Akan


\textsuperscript{36} Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA). [http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=6174](http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=6174)

(47.5%), Ewe (13.9%), Mole-Dagbane (16.6%), Ga-Adangbe (7.4%), Guan (3.7), Gurma (5.7%), Grunshi (2.5%), Mande (1.1%) and other (1.4%). Their subdivisions share a common cultural heritage, history, language, and origin, which contributed to state formation in the precolonial period. Competition to acquire land for cultivation, to control trade routes, or to form alliances for protection also promoted group solidarity and state formation38.

The social organization consists of matrilineal, patrilineal, and double-descent systems, which are based on locality, kinship/family, and clan structures. The relative homogeneity of cultural groups, languages, and traditional authority structures has not necessarily led to political unity. For example, the most important conflicts of the Akan in pre-colonial and colonial times, were with other Akan groups; for reasons of internal regulation, and defence of its component members39.

Unlike some neighbouring countries, Ghana has not been affected by national civil conflict, although some relatively low-level ethnic tensions remain often related to the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities40.

The key causes of social conflict today are:

- Land tenure and boundary litigation between and within tribes. This is mostly a result of disputed delineation of land boundaries, as well as growing pressure on land resources;
- Struggle for intra- and inter-tribal paramountcy and autonomy, with a growing influence of religious and political interests;
- Religious conflict; and
- Partisan political differences, with a growing leaning towards the two major parties (New patriotic Party, NPP; and National Democratic congress (NDC).

Consequently, land conflict underlies virtually all agricultural commodity development efforts, and the government has no control over the tenure rights of land title holders.

4.2.2 Liberia

Economic context
Liberia’s principal exports are iron ore, rubber, diamonds, and gold. Palm oil and cocoa are emerging as new export products. The country was a major exporter of iron ore on the world market, with the commodity accounting for >50% of export earnings in the 1970s and 1980s, which propelled the country to peak earnings in 1979. The country witnessed a steady economic decline in economy associated with the military coup of 1980 and the subsequent 14 years civil wars in the 1990s.
and early 2000s GDP was reduced by an estimated 90% between 1989 and 1995, marking one of the fastest declines in history.\(^{41}\)

The civil wars destroyed much of the national economy, leading to the flight of capital and businesses. Proceeds from the country’s natural resources, notably timber, gold and diamond, was said to have been used to fuel the conflict. With the conclusion of fighting and the installation of a democratically elected government in 2006, businesses that had fled the country began to return. The country achieved high growth during the period 2010-13 due to favourable world prices for its commodities.\(^{42}\)

In 2014/15, Liberia’s economy suffered from the combined effect of the Ebola virus outbreak and the global economic slump in commodity prices, which had a negative impact on fiscal revenue, inflation, exchange rate stability, and poverty rate. This also coincided with the government having to take full responsibility for security following UNMIL’s major drawdown in June 2016, which ended in March 2018. Despite these challenges, GDP growth picked up from -1.6% in 2016 to 2.6% in 2017. Limited employment continues to undermine the welfare of Liberians in both urban and rural areas. Following a peaceful political transition in late 2017, there is a more positive medium-term outlook, but the robustness of Liberia’s recovery will depend on the effective diversification of the economy, development of strong institutions. Real GDP growth is projected to recover driven by improvements in agriculture and services, and to some extent mining (particularly gold production). Growth is estimated to reach an average of 3.6% by 2019. However, the current account deficit is projected to remain at 26% of GDP over the medium-term due to the anticipated decline in official transfers of money into the country.\(^{43}\)

Sector contribution to GDP in 2017 were: agriculture (36.1%), from rubber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava, palm oil, sugarcane, bananas, sheep, goats; industry (10.5%), from mining (iron ore and gold), rubber processing, palm oil processing, diamonds; and services (53.4). The labour force in 2017 was 1.677 million, with 70% in agriculture and 8% in industry. Estimated unemployment (in 2014) was 2.8%. Timber and rubber have been the main post-conflict commodity exports; other products include iron, diamonds, cocoa, coffee; with earnings at USD$ 202.1 million in 2017 and USD$ 169.8 million in 2016. The key export countries in 2016 were Poland (18.5%), Switzerland (9.7%), UAE (9.4%), Netherlands (8.9%), Germany (6.1%), USA (5.9%), South Africa (5%), China (4.4%), Ghana (4.2%). Imports stood at USD$ 1.247 billion in 2017 and USD$ 1.21 billion in 2016. The key import commodities were fuels, chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment,


\(^{42}\) https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/liberia/liberia_economy.html

manufactured goods; foodstuffs; the major source countries were South Korea (38.3%), Singapore (18%), China (15.9%), Japan (10.9%)\(^44\).

Currently, Liberia relies heavily on foreign assistance (mainly from the UN, USA, Japan, UK, France, Italy, Germany, China, Libya and Romania) and the diaspora. The private sector is largely controlled by foreigners, mainly Lebanese and Indian, and a growing Chinese presence as well.

**Smallholder agriculture**

Over 70% of the Liberian population is involved in farming; and the majority of smallholder farmers in Liberia are women. Smallholders constitute over 80% of the farming population. With an influx of donor-supported interventions after the civil war, there has been a steady improvement in agricultural production. However, the country remains in food-deficit, and depends heavily on imports. Farmers generally have limited storage, processing and marketing capacity. This lack of infrastructure makes it difficult for farmers to access major regional markets. The few viable cooperatives do not have access to the financial services needed to effectively manage the agricultural value chain\(^45\). About 55% of the population falls under the poverty line, particularly in rural areas. This has been attributed to a failure to increase smallholder farmer production\(^46\).

From the commodity perspective, especially oil palm and rubber, there are several different smallholder production models in Liberia, that can be broadly categorised as\(^47\):

- **Independent farmers or groups of farmers**—who manage their own lands without any direct support from, or market obligations to, either government or private companies;
- **Supported smallholders**—who manage their own farms with some support from government or private sector. They generally receive government agency or private company technical assistance and inputs of seed stock, fertilisers and pesticides, access to finance, etc.
- **Managed smallholders**: whose land is fully managed by the company, including land preparation, planting, maintenance and harvesting activities. All production on smallholder lands is typically sold to the company.

Smallholders are engaged in production of four main export commodity crops: rubber, cocoa, coffee and palm oil. Rubber is the most important cash crop for

\(^44\) Ibid


\(^47\) FFI (2014). Review of Smallholder Models: Liberia and Sierra Leone
households and one of the dominant generators of state revenues accounting for nearly 34.6 percent of the total export receipts in 2016; an estimated 30,000 people are employed by commercial rubber farms and up to 60,000 smallholder households are involved in growing of rubber trees.48

There is limited data on palm oil production, especially by smallholders, but estimates are that about 220,000 smallholders contributed to an estimated 50% of Liberia’s crude palm oil (CPO) production of 42,000 metric tonnes in 2010. Liberia’s net import of palm oil was about 12,000 metric tonnes.50 Rubber is Liberia’s most important export commodity crop, with 63MT produced in 2011. About two-thirds of the 200,000ha of land is under rubber production, are by medium and small-size private farms (<40ha) (IDA, 2012). There were 36,952 households with oil Palm; and 49,377 with rubber in Liberia in 2008.49

Challenges faced by smallholders include:

- Lack of access to financial services and support, even when in cooperativities
- Persistently low productivity, with cereal yields estimated at around 1.5 metric tons per hectare, compared to the regional average of over 2.0 t/ha and the potential yield in excess of 5.0t/ha52.
- Inefficiency of technical and organizational skills.

Several donor-driven initiatives, such as the World Bank sponsored Smallholder agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P), seek to address these challenges, with the aim of laying the foundation for sustainable and inclusive agricultural development that will help transition smallholders from subsistence to commercialized systems.53

Social conflict
There are 17 ethnic groups in Liberia, constituting about 95% of the total population. The largest groups are: Kpelle (20.3%), Bassa (13.4%), Grebo (10%), Gio (8%)Mano (7.9%), Kru (6%), Lorma (5.1%), Gola (5.1%) and Kissi (4.8%). Others (20.1%) include the Vai, Krahn, Dey, Mende, Americo-Liberians. There are also groups form neighbouring countries, such as Fula and Fanti. The Bassa, Gio and Kru are often engaged in fishing; Grebo and Mangingo are often into trade and transport; most of the remaining groups are into agriculture54.

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48 https://www.export.gov/article?id=Liberia-Agricultural-Sectors
52 World Development Indicators, WDI, 2016
54 ibid
Liberia enjoyed relative peace and stability for more than one 130 years after becoming an independent state in 1847. The civil wars in the 1990s-2000s was considered to have been the result of the economic and political exclusion policies implemented from the founding of the nation. The wars left a trail of massive destruction of the country’s productive capacity and socioeconomic infrastructure, including the death of up to 6 percent of the Liberian population and the displacement of nearly two thirds of the survivors.

Agricultural output, deteriorated dramatically between 1989 – 1993, as both commercial and small-holder production came to a virtual standstill, but recovered significantly thereafter. Forestry output, however, stayed relatively constant during the early 1990s, accelerated between 1990 – 2000, leading to a forest loss of >760,000 ha, and declined in the post-conflict period in response to UN mandated sector reforms.

### 4.2.3 Côte d’Ivoire

**Economic context**

In the 1960s and 70s, Côte d’Ivoire was a relatively affluent country on the basis of a thriving plantation and agricultural industry. This changed when coffee and cocoa prices dropped in the 1980s and 90s which led to political and economic unrest. Still a relatively densely populated country with a population of 23 million, CI is now relatively poor and has a human development index (HDI) of 0.47, placing it 171/188 ranked countries. Although this HDI rank places CI higher than neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, it is significantly lower than its neighbours to the east of Ghana and Nigeria. This is in large part the result of civil war at the turn of the century followed by political unrest and sporadic violence that meant the first presidential election, where Ouattara was elected, only took place in 2010. The poverty rate also rose from 37 to 49% from 1995 to 2008. More recently tensions between the government and military have also stirred, suggesting stability is still not assured.

Côte d’Ivoire’s economy has picked up significantly since 2012, with GDP growth averaging between 8-10% from 2012-16. GDP contributions consist of 17.4% from agriculture, 28.8% from industry and 53.8% services. This makes...
agriculture still a crucial part of the economy and particularly in terms of employment with up to 68% of the workforce employed in the sector.\textsuperscript{6}

The key agricultural cash crops in CI are coffee and cocoa, with palm oil, coconut, bananas and rubber lesser contributors. Côte d’Ivoire is the world’s leading cocoa and cashew producer. Crops for exportation cover 73% of agricultural areas and subsistence crops cover less than 23%.\textsuperscript{62} All of these crops are grown primarily in the wetter south of the country and are primarily export commodities. It should be noted also, that there is currently minimal processing capacity in country and most of these commodities are exports as raw products.\textsuperscript{2}

The forestry sector was formerly an important part of the economy in CI, but due to overharvesting has now declined to contribute an estimated 1.7% of GDP in 2011.\textsuperscript{63} This contribution is increasingly from timber plantations, such as teak (the main export species) and softwoods like gmelina, due to depletion of native species in the country’s 230 state-owned classified forests. In comparison to the agriculture sector, where smallholder production dominates, the forestry sector is dominated by state-owned natural forest operations and private sector plantations.\textsuperscript{64}

**Smallholder agriculture**

The majority of agricultural production in CI is from smallholders, especially for cocoa production. In average, Ivorian cocoa smallholders own 3 or 4 ha of land, but no reliable statistics are available\textsuperscript{65}. The main problem cocoa smallholders face is the sub-optimal productivity and low yields. Indeed, most of cocoa trees are old, there is a widespread occurrence of pest and disease, and farmers do not have access to the best inputs and agricultural practices. Moreover, access to finance can be a barrier to implementation of better practices. In 2013 a study revealed that 37% of smallholders households live on less than $1.25 per person per day and 80% on less than $2.50 a day\textsuperscript{66}.

The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) recently made a survey about 3,000 smallholder households and found that they work in an ‘informal ecosystem’\textsuperscript{67}:

- 87% sell their crops and livestock outside of any contract

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\textsuperscript{62} Cartographie des bénéfices multiples de la REDD+ en Côte d’Ivoire. Rapport d’étude préparé par UNEP-WCMW au nom du programme ONU REDD, 2017

\textsuperscript{63} ITTO Cote d’Ivoire country profile: [http://www.itto.int/sfm_detail/id=12310000](http://www.itto.int/sfm_detail/id=12310000)

\textsuperscript{64} Marius Wessel, P.M Foluke Quist-Wessel, 2015, Cocoa production in West Africa, a review and analysis of recent developments

\textsuperscript{65} IFC and Ecom interviewed more than 2,000 farmers in the Upper and Lower Sassandra regions of Cote d’Ivoire between July and September 2013, [http://www.cgap.org/blog/learning-smallholder-supply-chains-c%C3%B4te-%E2%80%99ivoire](http://www.cgap.org/blog/learning-smallholder-supply-chains-c%C3%B4te-%E2%80%99ivoire)

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- 98% are paid in cash
- 16% have the possibility to pay the suppliers on a differed basis
- 26% belong to an agricultural organization
- Côte d’Ivoire’s smallholder farming population is older than 40 and that current dynamics may pose challenges for the future of the agricultural sector

Most smallholder production in CI uses an extensive production model which requires large planting areas. There is a growing need to both intensify production and increase the resilience of the farming system as land becomes scarce and climatic stress increases. This is exacerbated by a lack of land security that further drives deforestation and land conflict.

Social conflict
There are four main ethno-linguistic groups in Côte d’Ivoire: Akans (42%), Mandes (27%), Kru (13%) and Voltaiques/Gurs (18%). The Krous live primarily in the more forested central and southwestern part of the country. Both the Akans and Krous are most involved in the plantation industry, including cocoa.68 The thriving plantation industry of the 1960s and 70s also attracted a significant migrant workforce.

During the periods of political and economic unrest that started in the 1980s, the plantation industry began to suffer as commodity prices dwindled along with government support. This led to rising unemployment and combined with political narratives that caused divisions between migrants and ‘native’ Ivorians to cause the unrest to spread into rural CI as agriculture and plantation sectors became politicised and land conflict rife.9

To this day, the still high rural population density and relatively brittle economic situation means that land rights and access to land remains an issue, including in the forestry, cocoa and palm oil sectors. Examples include:

- Encroachment of smallholder farmers into classified forest has been widespread in recent years, due largely to an unavailability of land and secure tenure. In the southwest, this encroachment was perhaps also driven by the fact that the cocoa sector has endured as one of the more stable means of securing a livelihood in the country and so attracted further migration into the cocoa belt. Evictions and displacement of farmers (often migrants such as the Burkinabé) in one part of the country also often just results in the encroachment or settlement elsewhere in the country – explaining why unpopulated state reserves or national parks are often more targeted.
- More recently, an emerging issue relevant to both the forestry and cocoa sector has been government eviction of illegal cocoa farmers from classified forests and national parks, such as Mont Péko. There have been

allegations of extortion and violence during these evictions, and reports of the evicted farmers and their families being left without land, food and water.\(^{69}\)

- There have also been conflicts between companies and communities. For example, in Abiosso there was a violent conflict in 2005 between local communities and PALMCI palm oil company. Causes of the dispute included disputed ownership after the state-owned plantation was privatised, allegations of water pollution and a sense in the communities of inadequate benefit-sharing.\(^{9}\) Similar conflicts have also been reported between forest concession holders and local communities.\(^{8}\)

- Another emerging social issue relates to declining living conditions in some cocoa communities with overmature, low productivity plantations.\(^{70}\)

### 4.3 Policy context

#### 4.3.1 Ghana


**Targets to reduce deforestation**

Ghana has made the following commitments on deforestation, including, the **TFA 2020 Marrakesh Declaration** for Sustainable Development of the Oil Palm Sector in Africa, in which African governments pledged to shift towards sustainable palm oil production.

Ghana supplies about 20% of the world’s cocoa. Primarily due to unsustainable expansion of cocoa and other agricultural crops, the country has one of the highest deforestation rates (3.2 % per annum) in Africa. To help reduce this rate, the government recently (March 2018) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mondelez International for a USD $5 million five-year funding of Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP), which aims to significantly reduce the

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\(^{70}\) 2017. UNDP. Forest Friendly Cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire.
high rate of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as their associated greenhouse carbon emissions, from cocoa farming within Ghana’s High Forest Zone\textsuperscript{71}.

In response to the challenges of environmental degradation, a number of national programmes have been developed to stop and reverse deforestation rates in the country and take steps to increase the national forest cover. The key interventions are the Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Programme (NREG) and the National Forest Plantation Development Programme (NFPDP). Furthermore, in recognition of the social and economic impacts, and the development challenges arising from, climate change, the government developed a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF), which eventually led to REDD+ and other initiatives within the forestry sector as measures to promote low carbon growth\textsuperscript{72}.

The REDD+ Strategy is the main anti-deforestation strategy of the country, and has been under development since 2008\textsuperscript{73}. There is no direct support from UN-REDD for its national programme, but in 2011 Ghana joined as a Partner Country (UN-REDD Programme, 2011).

Ghana has currently transitioned from REDD+ readiness to an intermediary stage where the final phase of readiness, REDD+ demonstration activities (under the Forest Investment Programme) and development of Ghana’s first sub-national REDD+ programme (i.e. the cocoa forest REDD+ programme) are being jointly undertaken\textsuperscript{74}. As a Pilot Country to the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), Ghana has developed an Investment Plan.

The REDD+ Strategy implementation is to be carried out at both the national scale as well as a series of concerted actions and activities at sub-national landscape scales. Over a five-year period (2017-2021) three priority jurisdictional programmes for the implementation of the national REDD+ Strategy is indicated in Figure 13.

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\textsuperscript{71} https://www.businessghana.com/site/news/general/159717/Forestry-Commission-commits-to-reduce-emissions-in-cocoa-forest-landscapes


\textsuperscript{74} Ghana’s National REDD+ Strategy final draft 2016.
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1. Ghana’s Emission Reductions Programme for the Cocoa Forest Mosaic Landscape
   • **Strategy intervention**: Improving land use & socio-economic dev in the High Forest Zone and cocoa growing area
   • **Level**: Sub-national
   • **Eco-Zone**: High Forest Zone (moist semi-deciduous (NW & SE), moist evergreen & wet evergreen forest types)
   • **Commodity**: Cocoa, oil palm, other tree crops
   • **Drivers**: Cocoa expansion, sun cocoa, other tree crop expansion, illegal mining and illegal logging

2. Ghana’s ER Programme for the Shea Landscape of the Northern Savanna Woodland
   • **Strategy intervention**: Addressing wood harvesting and agric. practices in the savannah woodland landscape
   • **Level**: Sub-national
   • **Eco-Zone**: Savannah woodland
   • **Commodity**: Shea nut, cashew, yams
   • **Drivers**: Charcoal, illegal logging, agricultural expansion, illegal mining, wildfire etc.

3. Ghana’s REDD+ Program for Policy & Legislative Reforms on Tree Tenure & Carbon Rights
   • **Strategy intervention**: Policy and legislative reforms to support REDD+ and sustainable forestry
   • **Level**: National
   • **Focus**: Addressing indirect drivers from tree tenure and lack of carbon rights via legislative reforms
   • **Leverages**: National interventions like FIP, VPA-FLEGT, Cocoa Sector Strategy

Figure 13. Priority jurisdictional programmes for the Ghana REDD+ Strategy. Source: Ghana National REDD+ Strategy 2016.

A complementary initiative is the Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy (2016-2040). It outlines plans by the government, private sector and rural communities to restore degraded landscapes through the development of commercial forest plantations, smallholder plantations, enrichment planting of degraded forests and to provide support for the incorporation of trees within farming systems75. Its four Strategic Objectives are:

- **Strategic Objective 1**: Establishment and management of planted forests, which includes enrichment planting of commercial tress and the promotion of trees on farms;
- **Strategic Objective 2**: Forest plantation investment promotion (establishment and management), including the development of legislations such as the Forest Plantations Development Fund (FPDF) Act 583 of 2000;
- **Strategic Objective 3**: Employment creation and sustainable livelihoods;
- **Strategic Objective 4**: Investments in research and development, extension, training and capacity building for forest plantation development; and
- **Strategic Objective 5**: Governance, including the development of institutional structures for the strategy.

**Targets for biodiversity conservation**

Ghana’s policies for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable utilization of biological resources are guided by the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), (which it signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994):

- the conservation of biological diversity;
- the sustainable utilization of biological resources; and
- the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

A National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was formulated (2000) and updated (2016) to mainstream biological resources in national development and protection in all the ecological zones. Over a 25-year (2026-2040) timeframe, the NBSAP put systems in place to value, conserve and restore the country’s biodiversity, ecosystem services and ensure benefit sharing. The four key components of the NBSAP are:

- **Component 1**: Addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society. This includes conservation of biodiversity in agricultural and forestry areas;
- **Component 2**: Improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. This includes conserving 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas through systems of Protected Areas;
- **Component 3**: Enhancing the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services. This includes ecosystem restoration, and operationalizing a benefit-sharing mechanism for biological resources; and
- **Component 4**: Enhancing strategy implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building. This includes respect for traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities and their customary use.

Approaches being used with some success for biodiversity conservation include the Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas (GSBAs) approach, which are in 29 Forest Reserves, and seek to protect habitats of globally-significant biodiversity from exploitation; Important Bird Areas (IBAs), which uses birds as important bio-indicators and operates in 36 in forest and wildlife reserves covering 11.494 km² (about 4.8% of the total land area of Ghana); and Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA), which devolves management and user rights for wildlife resources to communities bordering protected areas.

**Existing initiatives tackling deforestation in Ghana**

The main initiatives tackling deforestation from the agriculture and forestry perspectives in Ghana are:

**Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI)**: the Governments of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana and 22 cocoa companies signed a Framework for Action in 2017, under which they commit to promoting sustainable cocoa production, social inclusion, and forest protection. The Ghana Framework developed for the initiative includes the

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updating of maps on forest cover and land use for degraded forest reserved and off-reserve lands by end of 2018. It also includes land and tree tenure reforms, strengthening of public sector forest law enforcement and governance.

**TFA2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI):** Ghana is a TFA2020 partner country since March 2015, and is a member of the APOI. The Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI) focuses on sustainability of palm oil in West and Central Africa. The objective is to make oil palm a sustainable driver of long-term and low carbon development through 3 phases: engagement, development, implementation. Ghana is one of the most advanced countries in the APOI, having developed national principles for sustainable palm oil development, an action plan and now progressed to the ‘implementation’ phase. The current focus is on securing ‘high-impact partnerships’ and implementing jurisdictional projects.

**FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA):** Ghana was the first country to conclude negotiations and ratify a VPA with the EU, in 2009. She is currently implementing commitments to sustainably manage all types of forest, to provide a legal framework aimed at ensuring that all timber product imports into the EU from Ghana have been legally produced. Ghana is close to securing its FLEGT licence.

### 4.3.2 Liberia

Liberia is signatory to the following international environmental agreements / conventions: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); UN Convention to Combat Desertification/Land Degradation (UNCCD); The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP); and The Paris Climate Change Agreement in 2016. The lead governmental institution managing these is the Environmental protection Agency (EPA).

**Targets to reduce deforestation**

Liberia is also one of the leading signatories to the TFA2010 Marrakesh Declaration in March 2015, under the APOI. Currently, the country is at the Implementation Phase. The country has currently adopted a zero net deforestation approach to address the TFA 2010 goal of reducing tropical deforestation associated with the commodity production.

In September 2014, the Government of Liberia (GoL) and the GoN signed a partnership through a Letter of Intent (LoI), in which Norway will provide USD$150m funding for (a) supporting the development and implementation of Liberia’s REDD+ strategy to ensure significant net reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from D&FD; (b) contributing to sustainable development in Liberia through protecting natural forests, restoring degraded

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78 http://www.epa.gov.lr/?q=content/meas-projects
lakes, and developing Liberia's agricultural sector; and (c) collaborating to support progress on global efforts regarding climate change and sustainable development in general and REDD+ in particular. The overall goal of this programme was to halt deforestation by 2020\(^79\). This funding is contributing to the US$37.5 million proposed Liberia Forestry Support Project (LFSP) currently in advanced stage of initiation. Liberia has also pledged, at the Paris Climate Summit in December 2015, to restore 1 million hectares of degraded forestlands, as part of the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative\(^80\).

The primary mechanism to address deforestation in Liberia is the National REDD+ Strategy, which was adopted in 2017. It has a time scale of 2030, in line with the national long-term strategy Vision 2030. Since first engaging in the REDD+ readiness process in 2007, with funding from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have led the country’s effort to complete the REDD+ readiness phase of the FCPF process. The first phases of the Norwegian REDD+ funding (USD $37.5 million through the LFSP) are for preparation and demonstration of REDD+ interventions; whilst the final phase, from 2020 onwards, is for payments for verified emission reductions. There are five strategic priorities under the Liberian national REDD+ Strategy:

• **Priority 1:** Reduce forest loss from pit sawing, charcoal production and shifting agriculture, by restricting the expansion of pit sawing, charcoal production and shifting agriculture, particularly into >80% canopy cover forest.

• **Priority 2:** Reduce impact of commercial logging, by promoting the practical implementation policies and regulations for sustainable forestry.

• **Priority 3:** Complete and manage a network of Protected Areas, from the current 3% to around 18% of the total forested land in Liberia (forest canopy cover ≥30%). This will contribute to the long-term target of 30% proposed by the 2006 Forestry Reform Law.

• **Priority 4:** Prevent or offset clearance of high carbon stock and high conservation value forest in agricultural and mining concessions. This seeks to limit the amount of forest land that is permitted for development (i.e. clearance) to 5% of the total national forested area. It further limits deforestation to less dense forest in conformity with Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) standards for conservation of High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) forest.

• **Priority 5:** Fair and sustainable benefits from REDD+; which seeks to establish a natural resource economy that supports equity and

\(^79\) Letter of Intent between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway on “Cooperation or reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) and developing Liberia’s agricultural sector.” New York, 23 September 2014.

‘No deforestation’ in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

sustainability, by prioritizing options for distributing REDD+ benefits fairly, and for investing REDD+ income so that the benefits are sustainable.

Targets for biodiversity conservation

Under the 2009 Forestry Reform Law and re-affirmed in the Norway-Liberia Letter of Intent (see above), Liberia has proposed a network of 13 Protected Areas as part of a government policy to create a Protected Areas network of forest land by up to 30% by 2020. Three of these are already established: the Sapo National Park, the East Nimba Nature Reserve, and the Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve, located in the southeast, northeast and southwest, respectively. These currently account for only 3% of total land area; and even in these the capacity to enforce conservation laws is very limited. A further 3 (the Gola National Forest, Grebo-Krahn National Forest, and Wonegizi) PAs are close to being gazette. It is expected that the government will continue the existing practice of co-management arrangements between communities and the government and/or leading NGOs. Land ownership is also a critical factor for the expansion of the PA network, because much of the land in proposed PAs is likely to be recognized as community owned, under the pending Land Rights Act. Forest set aside in forestry and palm oil concessions, and potentially other concessions, such as HCV-HCS areas, are also expected to expand the PA network.

Existing initiatives tackling deforestation in Liberia

In addition to the ongoing REDD+ programme described above, the following represent the main relevant initiatives tackling deforestation in Liberia.

Rubber Renovation Program: The Global Agricultural and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) are jointly funding (US$25 million) a long-term (from 2016) financing to about 600 rubber farmers emerging from the Ebola crisis in Liberia, for the replanting and renovation of 5,000–8,000 ha of aging rubber plantations. IFC will finance farmers through a local financial institution. Firestone Liberia, Inc. (‘Firestone’) will identify potential eligible outgrowers, offer technical advice, and provide an offtake agreement.

TFA2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI): Liberia has been a partner of the TFA2020 and APOI since March 2015. Liberia is currently at the implementation phase of the APOI, having developed national principles for sustainable palm oil development, and an action plan.

FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA): As part of the post-conflict reform of the forestry sector Liberia signed the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) in May 2011. Liberia is now developing necessary systems to monitor and control trade of legal timber.

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82 http://www.gafspfund.org/content/liberia

Mano River Union Forestry Conservation Project: An African Development Bank-funded initiative that seeks to achieve sustainable management of the transboundary forests in the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem straddling the Mano River Union states of Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. It includes components for capacity building for institutions and communities to benefit from emerging global programs such as REDD and providing support for climate change interventions at the local levels.

4.3.3 Côte d’Ivoire

CI has ratified the main international conventions related to environmental protection, including CITES, Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Ramsar convention. Many of these conventions have been at least partially translated into national law with legislation for the formation and management of protected areas and protection of species. A full analysis of the legislation relevant to protection of natural habitats, species and social rights is provided in the legal analysis (accessible here).

Targets to reduce deforestation

Côte D’Ivoire’s government has made a number of high-level commitments on deforestation, including:
- Signing the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) in 2014, which aims to cut natural forest loss in half by 2020 and to end it by 2030. At the same UN summit, CI also pledged to produce “zero deforestation cocoa from 2017”.
- CI has also enacted a new Forest Code with the ambition of restoring forest cover up to 20% of the national territory by 2030,84 and
- “Zero deforestation” agriculture is also a key pillar of Côte d’Ivoire’s INDC for the UNFCCC to reduce GHG emissions by 28% by 2030 compared to 2012 levels.

Côte d’Ivoire has had a REDD+ programme since 2011. CI has developed a REDD+ Readiness Plan and established a REDD+ National Committee (CN-REDD+) in 2012. The REDD+ process is led at the national level by the REDD+ Secrétariat Exécutif Permanent (SEP-REDD+), within the Ministère de la Salubrité, de l’Environnement et du Développement Durable85, and supported by an

84 Law number 2014-427 of 14 July 2014
85 http://www.environnement.gouv.ci/; Ministry of Sanitation, Environment, and Sustainable Development
interministerial Technical Committee on REDD+ (CT-REDD+). In November 2017, the Ivorian government validated the national REDD+ strategy which is made up of 8 strategies to address deforestation and forest degradation drivers in Côte d’Ivoire:

1. **No deforestation agriculture** in public-private partnerships: the target is to decrease deforestation for agriculture by 80% by 2030.
2. **Sustainable domestic energy from agricultural biomass.**
3. **Sustainable management of forest, conservation of protected areas and sacred forests:** this strategy aims to ensure protection of conservation areas and restoration of degraded areas, through implementation of more participatory and inclusive management.
4. **Afforestation/reforestation and restoration of forest and degraded land:** the target is to restore 3.2 million hectares of rural land by 2030.
5. **Mining respectful of the environment:** The target is to decrease by 70% deforestation caused by mining by 2030.
6. **Incentives scheme, such as Payments for Environmental Services (PES):** this strategy aims to involve smallholders and local communities in implementing activities related to the national REDD+ strategy. The objective is to provide income to smallholders and local communities enabling them to invest in reforestation, agroforestry and conservation.
7. **Land use planning and land security.**
8. **National planning and structural reforms for the transition to a green economy:** the objective is to foster development and orientation of national policies towards sustainable development objectives and consistent with Côte d’Ivoire’s commitments.

*Côte d’Ivoire is* now discussing how to build from these strategies into its REDD+ national investment plan (IP).

*Côte d’Ivoire’s strategy for zero deforestation agriculture* is outlined in a policy position paper from 2015, drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Health and Sustainable Development as well as the Ministry of Water and Forests, together with industry bodies AIPH, APROMAC and Le Conseil du Café-Cacao. This paper identifies the following core elements of this strategy, to be implemented through sectoral and area-based approaches:

1. Intensify production in the rural domain,
2. Protect national parks and reserves, classified forest and specific forest types such as sacred forest,

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86 http://www.euredd.efi.int/cotedivoire
87 https://news.abidjan.net/h/625874.html
88 http://www.euredd.efi.int/cotedivoire
89 Agriculture Zero Deforestation en Côte d’Ivoire. Note D’Orientation Politique. 2015
3. Restoration of forest cover,
4. Ensuring resilience of agriculture to climate change, and
5. Respects the rights of local communities to improve their livelihoods.

The strategy also identifies various specific intervention activities designed to put the policy into place, with HCV and HCS featuring as central components. The strategy also identifies three pilot projects that are the focus of initial efforts:

1. A project in the periphery of the Tai National Park led by the Secrétariat Exécutif Permanent REDD+ (MINESUDD), which has some World Bank funding,
2. A second project, a Public Private Partnership (PPP), in the Bianouan zone (Nord Appouasso and Songan), between MINESUDD and chocolate company CEMOI with some funding from the French Development Agency (AFD), and
3. Cocoa Life Programme in Aboisso and Diégonéla. Mondelez has established this programme and is integrating zero deforestation into the scope in these two supply base areas. The programme is in partnership with Conseil du Café-Cacao, MINAGRI, MINESUDD and SODEFOR/MINEF.

**Targets for biodiversity conservation**

The Ivorian government has targets to decrease biodiversity loss through its protected area programme (Programme Cadre de Gestion des Aires Protégées; PCGAP), which started in 2002 and is to run until 2027 with support from the World Bank and Agence Francaise de Développement (AFD). PCGAP enabled the creation of the Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (OIPR) in 2002 and the Fondation pour les Parcs et Réserves de Côte d’Ivoire in 2003 which finances PCGAP’s projects. PCGAP’s objective is to conserve a representative sample of national biodiversity, and to maintain ecological processes in protected areas in a sustainable way. PCGAP aims to extend the protected area network from 6% to 11% of National territory.

Côte d’Ivoire also published its ‘Stratégie et plan d’action pour la diversité biologique nationale 2016-2020’ and set up the following objectives to reach by 2020, selected targets relevant to agriculture and forestry are also shown:

1. **Conservation of natural environments, of their functions and services**
   - At least 50% of ecosystems and habitats in rural areas are protected
   - 50% of inland, marine and coastal waters are protected
   - Priority habitats and ecosystems are restored

2. **Preservation of species and genetic diversity**;
   - The status of protected species at national level is improved and their disappearance is stopped as far as possible
   - Conservation measures are implemented for 100% of priority species

90 http://www.oipr.ci/
91 These figures take into consideration classified forests and some rural areas
92 République de côte d’ivoire, Ministère de l’environnement, de la salubrité urbaine et du développement durable, Stratégie et plan d’action pour la diversité biologique nationale 2016-2020
3. **Strengthening infrastructure for conservation;**
   - 100% of ecosystems and habitats are represented in the protected areas network
   - 100% of protected areas are managed in an effective manner

4. **Promotion and sustainable use of biological diversity;**
   - Agriculture is economically viable, socially acceptable and respects biodiversity
   - Forest exploitation is compatible with national biodiversity conservation targets
   - Sustainable management system of medicinal and other useful plants
   - Sustainable management of bushmeat and wild fauna is ensured.
   - Biological diversity supports poverty alleviation initiatives
   - Access to genetic resources, knowledge, and practices relevant for biological diversity, is subject to benefit-sharing mechanisms

5. **Citizen mobilization and dissemination of knowledge about living organisms;**

6. **Strengthened national coordination and international cooperation.**

**Existing initiatives tackling deforestation in Côte D’Ivoire**

The following represent only a selection of particularly relevant initiatives tackling deforestation in Côte D’Ivoire, many of which overlap with Ghana. They are additional to the ongoing REDD+ programme described above.

**Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI):** As a key part of the CFI, the Ivorian Ministère des Eaux et Forêts has developed an updated forest classification for classified forests, to identify more intact through to degraded forests with a high proportion of cocoa farms. This basemap will be used to develop and implement its action plan of targeted sustainable intensification of cocoa production, forest restoration and protection in the different zones.

**TFA2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI):** Côte D’Ivoire has been a TFA2020 partner country since March 2015, and is a member of the APOI. CI is one of the most advanced countries in the APOI, having developed national principles for sustainable palm oil development, an action plan and now progressed to the ‘implementation’ phase. The current focus is on securing ‘high-impact partnerships’ and implementing jurisdictional projects in the San Pedro landscapes.

**FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA):** Côte d’Ivoire is involved in the FLEGT process and is in the process of negotiating a VPA.

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94 http://www.euflegt.efi.int/
### 4.4 Sector overviews

**Ghana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Oil palm</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic focus of sector</strong></td>
<td>The main oil palm production areas in Ghana are located in the southern forest belt, with a bi-modal rainfall pattern producing &gt;1200 mm/annum(^95). Land under oil palm cultivation in 2015 was 425,600 ha(^96) (up from 336,000 ha in 2010), representing 43% of the 1 million ha of suitable land as identified by the Ministry of Agriculture. Specific regional distribution in 2010 was: Eastern (32%), Western (28%), Central (16%), Ashanti (10%), Brong-Ahafo (10%) and Volta (4%)(^97, 98).</td>
<td>Ghana’s forest is mainly located in the High Forest Zone (HFZ) in the southern part of the country. There are 216 state-managed forest reserves with a total area of 1.7 million ha within the HFZ. Forest cover in the off-reserve areas is estimated at about 400,000 ha, and is spread across an area of 5 million ha(^99). About 2.6 million ha of Ghana’s forests are under protected areas (forest reserves and national parks)(^100). Forest reserves in Ghana are owned by the customary authorities (stool land), but managed in trust by the government (Forestry Commission). About 715,000 ha (45%) of the forest reserves have been dedicated to natural timber production, with the remainder under protection and plantation development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the sector expanding?</strong></td>
<td>Palm oil production in Ghana was smallholder-based, and a leading foreign exchange earner for the country from the mid-1800s, until 1960 (when they contributed 93% of total production). Starting from 1960, the government commenced the promotion of large-scale production. Due to failure to attract adequate foreign investment,</td>
<td>The sector remains the 4(^{th}) largest contributor to GDP, with the main exports going to the EU. The sector continues to play an important economic role but has struggled in recent years due to market prices dropping and squeezing margins. Export volumes decreased from 2016-17.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^{99}\) [https://theredddesk.org/countries/ghana/statistics](https://theredddesk.org/countries/ghana/statistics)

development was spearheaded by the government. Since then, production has expanded through the establishment of 4 state plantations (Prestea, Sese, Kwamoso and Asesewa) by 1987; the establishment of Benso Oil Palm Plantations Limited (BOPP), Ghana Oil Palm Development Corporation (GOPDC) and Twifo Oil Palm Plantations Limited (TOPP). Most of the state plantations were divested to the private sector between 1993-2007.

Overall, production area more than doubled from 142,000 ha in 1960 to about 336,000 ha by 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of producers (e.g. large Vs smallholders)</th>
<th>Actors range from large-industry plantations to small-scale farmers (who may or may not be organized into cooperatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areas under smallholdings have always exceeded those of plantation estates. Since the government embarked on industrialization of the sector in the 1960s, smallholdings increased from about 80,000 ha to about 300,000 ha in 2010.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary actors are logging companies who harvest from concessions (forest reserves) and mostly own mills as well to process into export products.

In 2013, there were 60 valid Timber Utilization Contracts (TUC) (or concession”) or an area of 3 million ha in and off reserve.

The key concessionaires/millers include: John Bittar Company Ltd, Samartex Timber & Plywood Company Ltd, Logs & Lumber Ltd, New star Ghana Ltd, and Pok and U Company Ltd.

There is also informal timber harvest by artisanal producers off reserve, this may

102 [http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=10244](http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=10244)
106 Implementing the Ghana-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement: Annual Report 2012
### Economic value of sector (GDP etc)

The country has always been a net importer of palm oil. In 2005, an export of 87,000 mt and import of 151,000 mt yielded a net import of 64,000 mt. The average annual net import from 2005-2010 was 41,000 mt.\(^1\) The production rose from 0.5 million mt in 2016-17 to 0.52 million mt in 2017.\(^2\)

The contribution of the CPO industry to GDP in 2010 was estimated at about 1%. The timber industry is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner after minerals, cocoa and oil exports. Primary wood and processed products account for 89% and 11% of timber exports respectively.\(^3\)

In 2000, export of timber and other forest products was 11% of Ghana’s export earnings, and 6% of the GDP. This changed to 9-12% of export earnings and 4% of GDP in 2012. It increased to 10.4% in 2015.

### Employment overview (Jobs in the sector)

The industry reportedly employs over 2 million people, especially in rural areas.\(^4\)

The sector supports the livelihoods of nearly 15% of the population. The formal forestry sector employs about 120,000 Ghanaians, predominantly in log processing industry.\(^5\)

### Main markets (import Vs export)

2016 production was 243,852 mt of CPO, with a local consumption of over 295,000 mt annually, indicating a deficit. Over 30,000 mt CPO is imported annually from Asia (US$300 million).\(^6\)

The first three quarters of 2017 recorded an import of 213,000 tonnes (US$149.1 million) of palm oil from Malaysia, representing more than 70 percent of total imports of the commodity within the period. Malaysia is the main market for forest (timber) products from Ghana are the European Union; the Middle East/Mediterranean; regional (ECOWAS) countries; and Asia (with China as the lead market) and the Americas.

Export products in high demand include sliced veneer, plywood, rotary veneer and kiln dried lumber. Other timber exports include curl veneer, boules, furniture parts and air dried lumber.\(^7\)

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1. USDA 2011. World Agricultural Production
2. USDA 2018. World Agricultural Production
targets up to 300,000 tonnes (US$210million) by 2018.\textsuperscript{113}.

| Production statistics (CPO, timber volume) | Smallholders (from 268,800 ha) produce 80 % CPO. Estimated cropped area and production in 2015 were 436,300 ha and 2.53 million mt, respectively. CPO production from the top private companies (GOPDC, BOPP, TOPP, NOPL and Ameen) was 79,444 mt; that from medium-scale mills and smallholding was 466,525 mt, totalling 545,969 mt \textsuperscript{115}. | In 2015 roundwood production was estimated to be 2.1 million m\textsuperscript{3}.\textsuperscript{116} Export earnings for 2017 was €190 million, from exported volume of 339 million m\textsuperscript{3}. This was a decrease in value (€224,958,215.86; 15.59%) and volume (396,991,530 m\textsuperscript{3}; 14.55%) from 2016 \textsuperscript{117}. The average annual illegal logging for 2000-2011 was estimated at 0.78 million m\textsuperscript{3} (104\% of the legal harvest)\textsuperscript{118}. |

**Liberia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Oil palm</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic focus of sector</td>
<td>Smallholder production is primarily focused on the northern and north-western parts of the country. The large concessions are concentrated in the southern parts\textsuperscript{119}.</td>
<td>Due to differences in land cover classification types, various acreages of forest cover have been assigned to the country, including 35% (3.4 million ha) and 43.39% (FAO in 2015), of which 1 million ha has already been logged\textsuperscript{120}. Of this, approximately 1.4 million hectares is considered production forest.\textsuperscript{121} Natural forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{113} https://thebftonline.com/economy/imports-of-malaysian-palm-oil-hit-us150m-in-9-months/


\textsuperscript{116} http://www.timbertradeportal.com/countries/ghana/

\textsuperscript{117} Forestry Commission, 2017. Export of Timber and Wood Products for December 2017.


\textsuperscript{121} http://www.itto.int/partner/id=12340000
comprises 99% of production forest, with the remainder plantations\textsuperscript{122}. Dense forest cover (tree cover ≥30%) is concentrated in the eastern and western halves of the country, with the central axis between Monrovia and Ganta mostly covered by tree densities of <30%.\textsuperscript{123}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the sector expanding?</th>
<th>Since the end of the country’s civil war in 2003 almost 10% of the country has been set aside for agricultural plantations. Currently, the government has promised about 870,000 hectares of land — close to five percent of the country — to four palm oil companies in Liberia. These developments are poised to lead huge growth in the sector although most development is on hold at the moment, except for replanting of former government plantations. Until allocation of these concessions most palm oil was produced from wild dura palms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial logging activities began in the 1950s. Since its creation in 1976, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) regulated timber concessions and promoted export of timber from Liberia. The timber industry accounted for a third of Liberia’s export earnings up to the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{124} It was considered to have fuelled the civil war (1989-2003). Forestry production decreased after the imposition of sanctions on timber export by the UN in 2006. The forest growing stock is estimated at 684 million $m^3$ and an average of 158 $m^3$/ha on forest land, and huge concessions were awarded in 2008-9, indicating likely continued growth in the sector.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of producers (e.g. large Vs smallholders)</th>
<th>About half of Liberia’s palm oil is produced by over 220,000 smallholders (from farms and wild groves)\textsuperscript{125}. The rest comes from more than 70,000 hectares of former state-owned plantations which started to be established in the 1970s. The huge, new concessions are allocated to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| All forests are owned by the state, except that which is planted on private lands or deeded lands. Timber may be sourced from:\textsuperscript{126}  
• Forest Management Contract (FMC): state owned land |

\textsuperscript{122} https://www.nepcon.org/sourcinghub/timber/timber-liberia  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{125} http://www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_mar10/p12_liberia100318.html  
\textsuperscript{126} https://www.nepcon.org/sourcinghub/timber/timber-liberia
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- Golden Veroleum, ~240,000 ha in Sinoe, Grand Kru and Maryland counties.
- Sime Darby, ~180,000 ha in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount and Bong counties.
- Equatorial Palm Oil, ~169,000 ha in Grand Bassa, River Cess and Sinoe counties, and
- SIFCA – Maryland Oil Palm Plantations, 8,800 ha.

There is a projected establishment of out-grower schemes on approx. 15% of the total developed area. As of 2013, an estimated 30,000 ha of industrial oil palm plantations exist in these concessions.

\[
\text{Economic value of sector (GDP etc)}
\]

| Economic value of sector (GDP etc) | Oil palm production accounts for over 10% of total employment in Liberia’s agriculture sector. Much of this relates to informal dura palm harvesting at present. Of the 29,080 households engaged in oil palm production in the sector, 23,860 households (82%) are headed by males, and the remaining 5,220 households (18%) by females. The economic value of the sector is anticipated to grow hugely when development in the four large concessions starts. | The forest sector contributed US$159.7 million (approximately 15.2% of the GDP) to the economy in 2011. Most of the timber consumption is domestic. Timber exports is mainly to China; the remaining goes to other Asian countries and to Europe. Estimates of the forest sector’s contribution to real GDP shows that the domestic market contributed three or more times more than export of timber from 2010-2014. |

127 MoA/Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geoinformation Services (LISGIS) statistics for 2010-2011.
128 Global Forest Watch.
’No deforestation’ in West Africa  Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Revenue from forestry sector in 2016</strong></th>
<th><strong>Current viable jobs and livelihoods at 37,700 which is projected to generate a total of about 156,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue from forestry sector in 2016 was US$88 million, representing 9.8% of the real GDP (US$891.9 million). Round logs output also expanded by an estimated 72.5%, to 192,814 m$^3$ in 2016, up from 111,785 m$^3$ in 2015, driven by a rise in the international market price of the commodity. Charcoal production and trade is an important economic activity, with a domestic consumption estimated at 130,000 tons per annum (approx. equivalent to 1.5 million m$^3$ wood).</td>
<td>Current viable jobs and livelihoods at 37,700 which is projected to generate a total of about 156,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030. Concession holders are expected to create 70,000 new jobs while the manufacturing of goods in which the oil is used as a main ingredient, such as soap and cosmetics, may offer employment to another 10,000 depending on the level of ‘value-added’ processing capacity that is developed. Smallholders are supporting 30,000 households on 70,000 hectares of plantations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Employment overview</strong> (Jobs in the sector)</th>
<th><strong>Estimates for the number of employees in the forestry sector vary, with one estimate of 7,000 in 2002.</strong> The illegal chain saw milling industry is a major source of employment, particularly in rural areas. There is an estimated &gt; 15,000 chainsaw operators, traders and domestic timber dealers nationwide, with attendant indirect employment for thousands more, including cooks, transport workers, etc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current viable jobs and livelihoods at 37,700 which is projected to generate a total of about 156,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2030.</td>
<td>Estimates for the number of employees in the forestry sector vary, with one estimate of 7,000 in 2002. The illegal chain saw milling industry is a major source of employment, particularly in rural areas. There is an estimated &gt; 15,000 chainsaw operators, traders and domestic timber dealers nationwide, with attendant indirect employment for thousands more, including cooks, transport workers, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main markets</strong> (import Vs export)</th>
<th><strong>A lack of capacity for producing processed timber products such as plywood and sawn timber means that</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most palm oil is consumed domestically and internal consumption exceeds production. Nearly US$30 million was imported in 2012, primarily from Indonesia and Malaysia.</td>
<td>A lack of capacity for producing processed timber products such as plywood and sawn timber means that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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132 Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geoinformation Services (LISGIS), 2008
133 adeanet.org/adeapmp/sites/default/files/.../inception_report_oil_palm_liberia_0.pdf
134 http://www.itto.int/partner/id=12340000
135 http://www.forestlegality.org/risk-tool/country/liberia
Informal cross-border trade (ICBT), especially with Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire via markets in Nimba County, is currently the most important market for the Liberian smallholder value chain.

Smallholder producers supply to local markets, cities, or via semi-organized export to diaspora markets across West Africa and beyond (mainly in the USA, and UK).

The top three markets for Liberia’s palm oil are Portugal (58.9%), the United States and Cameroon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production statistics (CPO, timber volume)</th>
<th>the timber industry has been based overwhelmingly on log exports. The timber industry has traditionally concentrated on a few primary species favoured by the European market; the opening of large Asian markets since the lifting of sanctions has turned attention to secondary species.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Almost half of the 35,000 tons of OP produced in 2007 was from wild groves. The majority of production in the post-war years has been concentrated in the smallholder sector. The large concessions have largely yet to develop with only about 30,000 ha of productive plantation at present. A total of 3,021 metric tons of CPO was produced in 2016.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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137 http://www.forestlegality.org/risk-tool/country/liberia
138 ITTO, 2005
140 ITTO (2015).
141 http://www.timbertradeportal.com/countries/liberia/
Côte d’Ivoire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Oil palm</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
<th>Cocoa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic focus of sector</td>
<td>Mostly in the southern and central parts of the country.</td>
<td>In the past, most of the timber harvest occurred within the state-owned classified forests that counted for 40 percent of the total dense forest of the country (14,500 sq km). The most productive forests were in the humid south of the country.(^{143})</td>
<td>Fairly widespread across the southern half of Côte d’Ivoire, as far north as Daloa, Bouafle and Bengouanou. However, a number of studies have predicted that climate change will lead to a major reduction (broadly southwards) in the land area suitable for cocoa, and yields are already being affected by variable weather.(^{144})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the sector expanding?</td>
<td>The 3(^{rd}) largest producer of CPO in Africa, after Nigeria and Ghana. Palm was identified by the REDD+ programme as the 3(^{rd}) most important agricultural driver of deforestation in CI over</td>
<td>Timber production from natural forest harvesting continues to decline but production from plantations is increasing due to</td>
<td>Although the sector has suffered periodic declines in response to the price of cocoa, production increased by 67% from 0.9 million tonnes in 1995 to 1.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{143}\) [http://www.itto.int/sfm_detail/id=12310000](http://www.itto.int/sfm_detail/id=12310000)

\(^{144}\) Laderach et al 2013
‘No deforestation’ in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of producers (e.g. large Vs smallholders)</th>
<th>the past decades. Anecdotally, palm is often not considered a major current driver of deforestation, however, the National Agricultural Investment Program (PNIA) had the objective of increasing national CPO production from 400,000 tons in 2016 to 600,000 tons in 2020. Furthermore, REDD+ activities still consider palm an important part of the agricultural mix driving deforestation.</th>
<th>reforestation using species like, teak, black afara and gmelina. In general, agriculture has taken on a much larger economic significance than forestry over the past 50 years.</th>
<th>tons in 2011. The sector has continued to grow since 2011, reaching 1.7 million tonnes in 2016. Yields remain generally low, and much of this increase is due to expansion and extensification.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60% of palm production is from smallholders, typically with plots of 3-5 ha, and the</td>
<td>Previously focused almost exclusively on the 4.2 million hectares of state-owned classified forest, the majority (up to 90% by some sources) is now produced from concessions outside classified forests</td>
<td>All cocoa production is done by smallholders, and there are thought to be about 700,000 cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire. Farms are on average only 4.9 ha in size, and the average age of farms is 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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145 [http://www.agrici.net/huile-de-palme/](http://www.agrici.net/huile-de-palme/)

146 Salvaterra 2014

147 [http://www.euflegt.efi.int/cote-ivoire/](http://www.euflegt.efi.int/cote-ivoire/)

148 Wessel and Quist-Wessel 2011

remaining 40% by large industrial operations.\(^{150}\)

The large plantations were originally state-owned, but after privatisation in 1997 the plantations were sold to three companies: PALM-CI, SIPEF-CI and PALMAFRIQUE. Today the main palm oil producing companies in Ivory Coast are PALM-CI (70% of the national CPO production), SIPEF-CI (12%), SOGB (7-8%), PALMAFRIQUE (7%) and Dekel Oil.

In terms of smallholder production, FENACOPAH-CI was created in 2003 and covers 33 cooperatives and unions of cooperatives, in total ca.36,500 smallholders with 167,500 ha across the three main palm oil producing regions: South East (Bonoua Aboissa), Centre South (Divo, Sikensi, Irobo), and the South West, for a total annual FFB (in the *domaine rural*). Virtually all production is from private sector-run management units (>3,000 ha in classified forest and >70,000 ha in the *domaine rural*), although processing units are relatively small. Community forests account for only 15,000 ha. years – widely recognised as a major challenge in the sector.\(^{152}\)

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\(^{150}\) Oxford Business Group

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| Economic value of sector (GDP etc) | Production of approximately 800,000 metric tons.  

151 Proforest 2013  

153 https://www.indexmundi.com/agriculture/?commodity=palm-oil  


157 Conseil du café-cacao Côte d’Ivoire 2016 |
|---|---|
| | Côte d’Ivoire is the third largest producer of palm oil in Africa.  

153 Palm oil is an important export commodity, but export of crude palm oil makes up only 1.1% of Côte d’Ivoire’s export value and is dwarfed by other agricultural products such as cocoa, coffee and cashew.  

154 Nonetheless, the palm oil sector, according to local figures, brings £825 million to the Ivorian economy.  

156 The forestry sector contributed 1.7% of GDP in 2011.  

157 Côte d’Ivoire is the largest cocoa producer in the world, and the sector contributed 14% of GDP and between 38% of export earnings in 2015.  


157 Conseil du café-cacao Côte d’Ivoire 2016 |
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| **Employment overview** (Jobs in the sector) | The sector is reported to provide more than two million jobs, largely as a result of the smallholder dominated production. \(^{158}\) | The forestry was reported to account for 33,000 jobs in 2011. Social benefits of forests remain high but come largely in the form of informal fuelwood collection and, cultural benefits from sacred forests (of which 37,000 ha are legally registered). \(^{159}\) | There are approximately 700,000 cocoa farmers and more than 5 million people have jobs in the cocoa sector. Many cocoa farmers are still considered poor in Côte d'Ivoire with reports of average daily wages of 570 CFA (approximately $1). \(^{160}\) |

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\(^{155}\) [https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/analysis/poised-growth-government-and-private-support-should-see-palm-oil-industry-expand-coming-year](https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/analysis/poised-growth-government-and-private-support-should-see-palm-oil-industry-expand-coming-year)

\(^{158}\) Ibid 152

\(^{159}\) Ibid 143

\(^{160}\) Ibid 152
### Main markets

| Import Vs Export | The domestic market consumes 45% of national production, with the remaining 55% exported regionally to WAEMU (West Africa Economic and Monetary Union) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) countries. | 90% of roundwood production is used domestically and 10% exported. Although approximately 40% of sawnwood is exported. | Cocoa accounted for 38% of all export earnings in 2015, and exports continue to increase. 50% of cocoa exports are to European Union, 23% to North America and the rest is divided between Asia, Australia and Africa. |

### Production statistics

| National production is reported to be 400,000 tonnes of CPO per year, from total FFB production of about 1.8 million tons. | In 2014/2015, Côte d’Ivoire produced 1.796 million tonnes of cocoa, with forecasted production of 2.01 million tonnes in 2016-7. According to FAOSTAT the harvested area was about 2.9 million ha in 2016, and |

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161 Ibid 152


164 Conseil du café-cacao Côte d’Ivoire 2016

165 Ibid 152

### ‘No deforestation’ in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

| **Average estimated yield** was 516 kg/ha. | **Yield** is reported to have not changed during the last 20 years, and other sources report lower average yields of 435 kg/ha. |
| **Government programmes** do exist to improve the quality of and intensify cocoa production, including through re-planting, although some have questioned the effectiveness and speed of implementation to date. |

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168 Wessel and Quist-Wessel 2015


170 Conseil du café-cacao Côte d’Ivoire 2016

171 E.g. Salvaterra 2014
5 Summary of interview findings

This section summarises the major findings from the stakeholder interviews in the three countries, separated by company, CSO and government perceptions and divided into the four main subjects: ‘Uptake’, ‘Pre-establishment’, ‘Post-establishment’ and ‘Impact’.

5.1 Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>CSO</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uptake</td>
<td>Awareness: Companies are generally aware of HCV, mostly through: • RSPO/FSC certification courses • interactions with CSOs/NGOs (especially Proforest and national initiatives such as Sustainable West Africa Palm Oil Programme and Trainings by Proforest &amp; TFT)</td>
<td>Awareness: The international NGOs interviewed are well aware of ND commitments, and HCV/HCS through: • RSPO, FSC, SAN, • Sustainable West Africa Palm Oil Programme and • Trainings by Proforest &amp; TFT</td>
<td>Awareness: Government is fully familiar with HCV, and has incorporated it components in national initiatives as indicated by CSOs. The HCS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| REDD+ seminars/meetings, and in the process of meeting certification standards (FSC/RSPO). | • TFA2020  
• The REDD+ programme  
• Cocoa and Forests Initiative  
• Private sector initiatives |
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCS is barely known to both forestry and agro-industries.</td>
<td>Interviewees were generally more familiar with HCV than HCS, mainly through their involvement with RSPO and FSC training and certification. The HCS is hardly known.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Almost all oil palm companies use HCV assessment/management practices as part of certification requirements and ND commitments. Very rare for forestry sector, but there is a growing demand for it. | Respondents further observed that:  
• there is lack of clarity on the “deforestation”, “forest”, ND and the practical outcome of HCV-HCS. This is suspected to breed a conflict between company commitments & local expectations.  
• there seems to be more attention (by CSOs and Govt) focused on the forestry sector and deforestation, especially under VPA (perhaps due to funding), at the expense of agricultural sector and ND commitments. |
| Companies see clear benefits from making ND commitments, mainly because it will contribute to the ecological and economic sustainability (long-term resource availability and financial viability) of their operations. | concept is also known, but yet to be explicitly incorporated. |
| Generally, companies are not aware of government targets for reducing deforestation. The major mechanism, REDD+, is either unknown or poorly understood. | The Forestry Commission (FC) is the lead agency for deforestation issues. It has been implementing various initiatives which have culminated in the current REDD+ programme, which strategies include a High forest zone – public private cocoa programme; and adoption of a Zero Net Deforestation policy under the TFA 2020. |
| Companies quite aware of challenges they would encounter in ND commitments, including | |
complexity of land and forest resource tenure, customary rights, poor law enforcement regime and high cost of HCV-HCS assessments.

Companies are likely to be alone in making ND commitments if it is not extended to and adopted by the rest of the country/system (laws, policies, etc) to ensure cohesiveness.

Solution to challenges lies in a general awareness creation for CSOs, private sector, etc; followed by moving a further step with appropriate legislations.

**Deforestation Drivers:**

All interviewees listed major drivers as:

- Smallholder agriculture, especially from cocoa; recently diverting into oil palm and rubber
- Subsistence food crop production (mixed cropping of cassava, maize, plantain); associated with shifting cultivation
- Logging (timber concessionaires) and chainsaw operations
- Infrastructural development, especially settlements and roads
- Mining, at all scales; recently exacerbated by alluvial gold mining (“galamsey”)
- Charcoal production, largely subsistence
- Bushfires (mostly in the middle-belt), resulting from land preparation for farming activities, grazing and hunting.
### Implementation: pre-establishment

**Environmental:**
EIAs do not specifically lead to species protection. For existing plantations/concessions, EIAs are not required; only Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) are needed. This does not specifically address species/biodiversity conservation.

Environmental issues/compliance are mainly seen from the perspective of pollution, waste disposal, water bodies, emission of noxious substances, erosion, etc. These are the focus areas of EPA; biodiversity/ ecosystem issues are left to the Forestry Commission (FC).

EPA is now gaining some interest in riparian buffer issues. This is also accounted for in EMPs. Unfortunately, this does not translate into actual practice when EPA gets down to monitoring.

**Political/legal:**
Direction for environmental/socio-economic policies and laws seem to be based more on political manifestos than on a holistic sector development/interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation: pre-establishment</th>
<th>Environmental:</th>
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<td>EIA &amp; SIA are only required for conversion beyond 40ha. For existing plantation and concessions, only EMPs are required.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental issues/compliance are mainly seen from the perspective of pollution, waste disposal, water bodies, emission of noxious substances, erosion, etc. These are the focus areas of EPA; biodiversity/ ecosystem issues are left to the Forestry Commission (FC).</td>
<td>In forest concessions, two levels of protection in forestry: higher level protection zone and then finer level species level protections.</td>
<td>Companies provide their own security on their plantations/concessions to protect their assets. The effectiveness of their security operations depends on the complementary role of state agencies, which is often not effective at the prosecution stage.</td>
<td>However, there is poor coordination amongst government sector agencies. Companies lead in the provision of the necessary protection measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA is now gaining some interest in riparian buffer issues. This is also accounted for in EMPs. Unfortunately, this does not translate into actual practice when EPA gets down to monitoring.</td>
<td>Protection of HCV-HCS areas, such as riparian buffers and steep slopes are often more in the form of policies than a law. In the forestry sector, there is an on-going process to consolidate such requirements under a holistic law.</td>
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<td>There is a Government policy under the REDD+ Strategy to reduce deforestation by 40%. But there is no target for plantation afforestation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On the other hand, government has always committed to agricultural expansion; this is likely to be a threat to forest cover, and poses a challenge for REDD commitments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Ministry of Food and Agriculture does not have any laws regarding land clearing plantation development, but relies on other state agency laws, such as FC and EPA, to lead legal/policy requirements.

EIA s do not adequately cover all relevant areas under HCV-HCS. There is more room for improvement, especially with regard to the sustainability of commodity industries and their needs for expansion.

**Social:**

Community engagement (via SIA/SRA, etc) is mostly undertaken by companies. It generally seeks to clarify communities:
- Interest in the development project
- Awareness
- Extent of involvement
- Negative impact and benefits expected from the project.

However, SIAs do not actually address stakeholder/community consent. They ask only about community involvement.

In addition to the many of the same general barriers by the companies, CSO respondents also identified the following:
- Land ownership and resource tenure lies with traditional authorities, communities and individuals. However, government influences pricing of agricultural and forestry commodities. In the absence of enabling legal regime that favours voluntary retention of HCV-HCS by tenure holders, such as compensation for forest patches, will make company commitments challenging (see legal review summary for more information).
- Lack of a mechanism, such as cooperatives, to consolidate smallholders to facilitate both environmental and organizational cohesion in implementing HCV-HCS. Government should do more to promote coops
- Pricing: need an OP regulatory board to ensure standard pricing.

**Social:**

Under the national land tenure system, government manages a network of forest reserves and protected areas on behalf of communities as landowners. Timber resources on off-reserve is also manged by FC, but farmers are the de-facto decision-makers on what/if forest remains there.

Government has promoted the inclusion of social issues in commodity development, mostly through EIAs and SRAs. However, payment of royalties for timber resources, and for SRAs is focused on payments that often goes to chiefs but not to community on the ground. This does not favour the voluntary retention of forest areas by farmers and other land users.
Overall, the entire EIA/SIA process is often rather spearheaded by government (as a shareholder, regulator).

In the agriculture sector, no state institutions assist in company/communities’ mediations; the FC typically assists in company/communities mediations in the forestry sector.

**Smallholders:**
Smallholders virtually receive no support (technical, financial, etc) from state agencies, except in the rare situations of state/donor funded projects.

Small size of farm/plantations, unfavourable tenure arrangement, and poor financial/technical challenges are disincentives to adopting ND practices.

**Capacity:**
There are significant challenges with company implementation capacity for ND commitment (technical skills and assessor availability), especially with regard to:
- Identification of ND issues

**Social:**
Almost all land is community land, even FRs held in trust for community. Conflict is often burning in the background with compensation not going to communities.

SRAs are required in forestry. But process is not very effective. No manuals for implementation – so highly variable – only now with VPA that this has recently started to improve.

There is a national benefit sharing mechanism for naturally-grown trees on and off-forest concessions. However, efforts to legislate private ownership of trees planted or retained outside FRs is not yet successful.

**Smallholders:**
Respondents observed that:
- Farm fallow period is decreasing in Ghana so regenerating forest patches may not reach HCV-HCS requirements. Since agricultural commodity can only secure land outside forest reserves, the

**Smallholders:**
About 80% of total agricultural production is attributed to smallholder farmers. With government promoting increase in crop production, all available land is in great demand. There is no safeguard mechanism for HCV-HCS currently under implementation, as smallholders take independent decisions on their holdings.

Support for (forest) plantation development does not adequately target smallholders.

**Capacity:**
Government provides technical support for food crop to smallholders. But support for cash crops (cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber) is sporadic, often.
### ‘No deforestation’ in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial: Companies face severe challenges in funding ND commitments, especially in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Cost of assessors and technical advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cost of assessments and management of ND issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Govt does not support companies with implementation cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government only provides in-kind support for development of cash crops; cocoa receives the major attention (mainly for rehabilitation). Financial support for forest plantations has achieved limited success.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial: Companies face severe challenges in funding ND commitments, especially in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cost of execution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability of qualified assessors in-county</td>
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</table>

However, companies may receive technical support via the various applicable agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on smallholders by ND commitments may compel commodity (e.g. oil palm) companies to switch to other commodities. Many smallholders are already switching from old cocoa to rubber, and not so much oil palm, based on such perceptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HCV-HCS does not yet have a national or jurisdictional interpretation to make it locally relevant.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key challenges for smallholders include:

- **Complicated and expensive ND and HCV-HCS processes:** such as under the RSPO certification (but RSPO’s RSSF is highly commended for its practicality).
- **Land title & land ownership:** most farmers have user rights but RSPO doesn’t always accept user rights (even though they are mentioned in the NI). Depends on CB interpretation.
- **Commodity prices:** Smallholders get a similar price selling to certified company mills as they do selling to artisanal mills (which are very common and often facilitated under political party manifestos (e.g. Presidential Special Initiatives), rather than a sustained programme.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>more accessible). This means not much leverage for mills to affect behaviour/practices of independent smallholders.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Domestic market</em>: main market for commodities is domestic and even regional (ECOWAS), so RSPO/FSC/SAN, etc, may not really be needed. The absence of a price premium does not encourage smallholders to sell to mills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Impracticality of implementing such requirements as buffer zones for small holdings.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capacity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no clear mechanism for acquiring land for concession. Companies have to use their own process. The stipulated EPA threshold of &gt;40ha does not necessarily prevent forest clearance. Sectoral mandates may even permit the Forestry commission to release convalescence forest reserves for conversion to plantation forestry or agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation: post-establishment</td>
<td>Political/legal:</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government agencies do not coordinate effectively outside their sectors. Inside FRs, it is only FC. Outside FR it is only land owners and private investors – EPA only involved if EIA needed or FC for tech support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs also identified the high cost of conducting HCV/HCS assessments. They suggested the possibility of tax breaks by government, of other financing mechanism to assist their efforts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social:**

CSOs reiterated company concerns about the ineffective implementation of legal frameworks, stemming mainly from lack of harmony among laws and policy guidelines, and from changing political orientations.

**Political/legal:**

There are ongoing changes in legal framework (e.g. policies, laws, and political party manifesto). Companies generally find these confusing or conflicting. Available legal and political frameworks are considered mostly ineffective. Although they provide guidelines and procedures, compliance largely depends on company policy and action.

**Social:**

There are good guidelines for addressing social issues, mainly SRA and CSR agreements by companies. Under REDD+, government is setting up a feedback and grievance mechanism to allow community-level disputes to be channelled upwards even to the
**No deforestation** in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government agencies provide very little help, even in conflict resolution.</th>
<th>Social:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fringe communities exert intense pressure for employment and social amenities, often despite companies already honouring corporate social responsibility agreements.</td>
<td>• Financial:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Occasionally, protracted/resurrected land tenure issues destabilize operational schedules.</td>
<td>Some companies still owe on their financial commitments on leases for TUCs (Timber Utilisation Contracts), making it even more difficult to expect them to honour ND commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encroachment and theft can be serious.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social:**

- Fringe communities exert intense pressure for employment and social amenities, often despite companies already honouring corporate social responsibility agreements.
- Occasionally, protracted/resurrected land tenure issues destabilize operational schedules.
- Encroachment and theft can be serious.

**Smallholders:**

Companies identified smallholders to be prone to:

- unable or unwilling to adopt HCV-HCS approaches, given the small sizes of their holdings (mostly <2 ha)
- financial and technical challenges in adopting HCV-HCS approaches
- difficulties in adopting BMPs
- false/unrealistic expectations on yield and revenue

commitments, their implementation largely depends on the effort of companies. Government support is often in the form of intervening in situation of escalated conflict. Grievance mechanism are not clear, so companies could get away with non-compliance.

**Financial:**

- Financial: Some companies still owe on their financial commitments on leases for TUCs (Timber Utilisation Contracts), making it even more difficult to expect them to honour ND commitments.

national level where necessary. No similar mechanism currently exists for the agriculture sector.
The national threshold of at least 40ha legally places the about 90% farm holdings <2ha agricultural holdings in the country beyond reach of EIA requirement in Ghana.

**Financial:**
Companies experience costly financial responsibilities from various corporate/social responsibility arrangements, especially from fringe communities (e.g. from Community Revenue Sharing schemes); and District Assemblies.

There is virtually no financial support from government, e.g., tax incentives, infrastructural development, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wider impact &amp; other barriers</th>
<th>Companies identified the following as wider barriers to effective implementation of commitment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• lack of capacity on implementation tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• lack of understanding of legal measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• poor institutional collaboration within and across commodity sectors (cocoa, rubber, timber and palm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A mis-match of expectations between local communities and companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For smallholder settings, government extension services are no longer effective; should be replaced with a ‘Rural Service Centre’ model. It is working well for cocoa, and address multiple issues, including rural labour scarcity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many of the actors interviewed mentioned the need to implement cross-cutting programmes on deforestation, encompassing also shifting cultivation to avoid leakage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**‘No deforestation’ in West Africa** Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness

| • Lack of awareness amongst customer base about the challenges of delivering on ND commitments | Tools for ND, HCV - HCS approaches need to demonstrate simplicity and practicality for smallholder farmers. There is little or no effective consumer-driven demand for company compliance with ND commitments in Ghana. In addition, current Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism does not have any focus on environment and until this is revised the community complaint mechanisms can only rely on existing justice system. This is also challenged by the inability of communities to adequately pay for legal services (free legal services do not cover the whole country). |

### 5.2 Liberia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>CSO</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uptake</td>
<td>Awareness:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Companies</strong></td>
<td><strong>CSOs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Companies are aware of both HCV and HCS, but more of the former than the latter. Awareness was acquired through:  
  - Membership of, and participation in RSPO/FSC certification processes and courses.  
  - Company policies/ND forestation commitments; as well as those of investors.  
  - Some have participated in HCVRN courses and interactions with CSOs/NGOs (especially Proforest and national initiatives such as REDD+ seminars/meetings, and in the process of meeting certification standards) FSC/RSPO).  
  - Membership of national Working Groups, such as the HCV-GHG WG.  
  Companies see biodiversity conservation as the principal benefit of ND commitments. However, they perceive a potential payment of premium prices for ND-sourced commodities.  
  Companies were aware of national ND targets, including the use of HCV-HCSA approaches, such as the REDD+ Strategy (and the Forest Sector Support CSO stakeholders acquired awareness of HCV-HCS through the same means as their company counterparts. They further indicated that:  
  - Generally, awareness of HCV-HCS depends on the type of stakeholders and the commodity sector involved. A forestry sector initiative will focus on FDA, not much on MoA or depts that are involved in agric. Understanding and buy-in from these depts is very limited.  
  - Some government agents are actively resisting HCS, e.g. because oil palm concessions are almost all HCS. See this as hindering social/economic goals.  
  | CSOs mainly focused on FPIC and community rights. Focus on legal rights of concessions given that communities own the land legally. Some communities also therefore oppose HCV and HCS as it should be community decisions to make. Less resistance to HCV because it includes social more explicitly.  
  | Government stakeholders acquired awareness of HCV-HCS through the same means as CSOs and companies. They had the additional advantage of regulating the implementation of company ND commitments, integrating HCV-HCS into appropriate aspects of their institutional mandates.  

Project funded by the World Bank); but were not certain of how these targets will be applied effectively in the landscapes, especially in the high forest landscape in the south east.

The national agenda of REDD+. And the setting aside of 30% of land area to remain covered in forest is yet to be implemented; they are perceived as high level policy and strategy without clear plans to implement on the ground.

They generally do not consider the legislation framework, policies or the enforcement to be effective.

**Deforestation Drivers:**

Major drivers of deforestation in Liberia were listed as:

- Smallholder agriculture, especially from rubber and oil palm; recently reviving a pre-conflict cocoa farming
- Subsistence food crop production, predominantly rice; associated with shifting cultivation
- Large-sale agricultural concessions, led by rubber and oil palm
- Logging (timber concessionaires) and pit-saw (now chainsaw) operations
- Infrastructural development, especially settlements and roads that are re-opening after the civil conflict
- Mining, at all scales
- Charcoal production, largely subsistence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation: pre-establishment</th>
<th>Environmental:</th>
<th>Environmental:</th>
<th>Social:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companies considered that availability of degraded land (land without significant forest cover) depends on area within the country; but was certainly an issue to get economically viable contiguous degraded land in most parts of the country – especially in areas allocated to oil palm companies. Companies rigorously perform EIA/HCV assessments as far as is practicable, as there are strict national as well as RSPO/HCVRN requirements. The main limiting factor is the availability of suitably qualified consultants to undertake the ESIA/HCV assessment, and subsequent management and monitoring plans. Companies are generally perceived as proxy for government in situations where they have no expertise, no legal mandate and no moral authority to act. Species and habitat protection for all areas other than very small biomes is a landscape level issue and almost impossible to coordinate as an agricultural concession working in isolation (except for riparian buffers, which tend to be within</td>
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<td>Political/legal: The Land Authority and Land Rights bill recognises that land is owned by communities. Until it is passed, government continues to control land allocation, with huge challenges for the FPIC process. However, its passage into law will trigger numerous claims and litigation. There is concern about how changes in government would imply for policy and political manifestoes, relating to forest resources and concession development.</td>
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</table>
concession areas and therefore easier to set up, manage and audit).

**Political/legal:**
There are no clear indications of how the national ND targets will be achieved, led by the FDA.

There does not seem to be enough control of the national deforestation process. For example, FDA has noted that there are no legal logging concessions in the south east of Liberia. However, there are clear signs of commercial logging, such as the log yards in and around Greenville.

It is clear from the operations of the Oil Palm Sector Technical Working Group (OPSTWG) that government departments and agencies are not coordinated properly with regards to concessions, although efforts are now under way to change this.

State institutions, including the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) is not properly resourced to provide oversight for companies’ compliance with concessions lease requirements.

**Social:**
Depending on the landscape setting, some companies do not have access to land; or there are prohibitive costs to identifying problem-free land for development, despite government ownership of land.

**Smallholders:**
Most SHs produce for local and regional (Mano River and ECOWAS) markets, and ND is not relevant.

Oil palm outgrowers do not have a traceability mechanism to prove the oil palm is deforestation-free. Development needs to be on existing agriculture or degraded land for which some communities have enough but some not enough.

There is no mechanism to support outgrower schemes.

**Capacity:**
State institutions and companies have limited capacity.
There are some disagreements on the practical implementation of FPIC- and SIA guidelines as applied to the field.

Companies can achieve FPIC for areas they intend to develop, but communities often dislike having to agree not to deforest areas that cannot be developed for oil palm. As development pressures increase and confidence in their own ability to manage large scale oil palm development improves (this may take a couple of decades) there is the significant risk that communities will decide to convert their forest areas regardless.

For communities with no development land, FPIC is not the solution: there is nothing to engage them with in regards to development where it is possible to set out conservation conditions in parallel.

For availability of land without community land claims or other community-related issues, even in the majority of areas where community consent has been formalised through signed agreement, boundary disputes and internal community conflict has arisen (from intra- and inter-community disputes).

**Financial:**
Costly to implement HCV and HCS, sometimes even to get to the field.
On resolving/addressing land conflict, companies noted that government promise of conflict-free land in Concession Agreements has never been the case in practice. The Land Rights Act has the potential, when made into law, to settle boundary disputes through a legal community self-identification of land process, but this is likely to be a drawn-out affair which may have its own impacts on compliance.

Companies encounter the following challenges:

- Farming of communities in buffer stripes
- Making of gardens in buffer areas
- Carrying out of chain saw logging in concession areas
- Hunting and farming in concessions areas
- Burning of charcoal in concession areas

**Smallholders:**

Currently there are no smallholder schemes of any scale in Liberia.

There are no current proposals for serious considerations to prevent deforestation by independent smallholders.
### Capacity:

There is a shortage of local qualified, affordable assessors for HCV and HCS.

Legal advice is not readily available to communities to assist in the FPIC/negotiation process in an affordable manner. Some form of organised assistance in this would help.

The government does not provide any support to companies for HCV-HCS related activities, other than the relevant agencies playing their respective roles.

### Implementation: post-establishment

**Political/legal:**

Demonstrating compliance with the Concession Agreement falls largely on the concessionaire, and often in response to third party claims about failures of compliance.

There is no effective monitoring and enforcement of species and habitat protection by Government within concession areas. There is some control on an administrative basis from the concession, but the lack of effective monitoring and enforcement.

**Financial:**

Except for riparian areas, companies are not motivated to establish set-asides because they tend to greatly reduce the net concession size (development areas). Some community areas, e.g. sacred sites may be enclaved in oil palm sites – so often get abandoned, thereby rendering them redundant for their original purposes.

**Capacity/legal:**
capability means that this control is exercised more by negotiation with communities to seek their cooperation rather than by any specific enforcement action.

The EPA undertakes some environmental and social monitoring in its (annual) compliance inspection, but much of this is self-policied by the concession. For very practical reasons (erosion management, water quality monitoring), it is in the concession’s interests to maintain riparian buffer zones.

**Social:**
Community complaints/grievances are almost exclusively addressed by the concession company, even when a complaint or concern is reported through an elected representative or a public official. Grievance management process currently in place by companies are being promoted with communities as part of the regular MOU implementation committee meeting agenda.

Many communities oppose earmarking areas for companies’ voluntary set-asides for conservation, as they would like maximum development to increase

Companies don’t want set-asides as they do not have technical experience nor legal mandate; they see high reputational risk (difficult to conserve large areas) and cost. Would have to do full FPIC process with communities to get their permission.

There is often differing intra-and inter-institutional perspectives and support for even initiatives that seek common objectives.

State institutions are poorly resourced to carry out their mandate.
funding (through the community development fund) as well as employment.

There is also resistance to the company taking on any implementation and enforcement activity outside concession areas where we have no legal, practical or moral authority to implement and enforce conservation programmes. We are however supporting the developing of production protection agreements (PPAs) which explicitly link the funding of community-owned community oil palm (COP) outgrower projects with active forest protection. The forest protection element would be supervised by the FDA and other parties, so obviating the authority question for us.

**Financial:**

Companies have limited financial capacity to cover management of often large areas of HCV. Government institutions request funding support to undertake enforcement activity for companies.

We are working with a variety of government agencies as part of developing the PPA model (see above) which will implement schemes to encourage
Local communities to monitor forest conservation actively.

Non-resident members of the community (diaspora) have little incentive to preserve community lands, but exert a great deal of interest in monetising this land through any means possible that allows them access to money generated. Since community members who have more than a very basic education tend to leave the resident community and move to urban areas, the resident community lacks education, skills and knowledge and is therefore vulnerable to exploitation even from stakeholder they believe they should be able to trust.

**Capacity:**

It is unclear how conservation will be effectively enforced or monitored in larger HCV areas (cost and technical capacity).

**Wider impact & other barriers**

Third party actors are needed to moderate the intimidation tactics of NGOs against companies, especially regarding the role of plantations in national development agenda. There should be less

Meaningful no deforestation strategies require much more than just carving up land. The following incentives are needed but not yet available:
**‘No deforestation’ in West Africa Understanding barriers to implementation and raising awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on research papers and more on practical action. Some international NGOs seem to be more in favour of the environment than of human (socio-economic) needs, and are not willing to strike a compromise. There needs to be a sense of trust and constructive dialogue. ND commitments are understood and appreciated by government institutions, yet these are challenged and seen as somewhat unfair by locally affected communities and officials. (ie in those areas where no or limited development is possible).</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| - Financing for community capacity building, including for infrastructure and governance;  
- Investment capital: oil palm funds for outgrowers;  
- Annual conditional income to companies for implementing commitments. |
### 5.3 Côte d’Ivoire

Note that the number of participants that were formally interviewed individually was limited, particularly for government with only two government interviewees. However, 25 participants from all through sectors attended the validation meeting and provided substantial inputs during the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>CSO/ NGO</th>
<th>Government*</th>
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</table>
| Uptake    | Awareness: The HCV approach is fairly well known amongst the large producers interviewed through:  
  - RSPO certification requirements and trainings on this topic,  
  - Collaboration with NGOs and services provider organisations.  
  The HCS approach was less well known amongst palm producers, and there was some confusion about it as a carbon measurement tool. But there was some awareness of ND commitments, and the HCS approach through:  
  - Clients’ commitments (HCS),  
  - Engagement with the TFA2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative and the national REDD+ programme. | Awareness: The international NGOs interviewed are well aware of ND commitments, and HCV/HCS through:  
  - RSPO, FSC, SAN,  
  - Sustainable West Africa Palm Oil Programme  
  - Trainings by Proforest & TFT  
  - TFA2020  
  - The REDD+ programme  
  - Cocoa and Forests Initiative  
  - Plan d’investissement forestier  
  - Private sector initiatives  
  Generally, the NGOs interviewed were more familiar with HCV than HCS, in part because of their involvement with certification and | Awareness: The two government representatives interviewed were familiar with the HCV concept, but less so with the HCS approach.  
Deforestation is of course a major preoccupation for OIPR with encroachment by farmers and gold miners a challenge – this is monitored frequently.  
In general, the issue of deforestation is well recognised by government and there are several policies and commitments to reduce and halt deforestation. The REDD+ programme includes a strategy for zero deforestation by agriculture, and |
Companies mentioned the following as part of the “business case” for addressing deforestation:
- Sustainability of operations,
- Reputational risk,
- Forest and natural resources conservation,
- Tackling climate change,
- Desire to sell to markets requiring zero deforestation products,
- Better relationships with communities,
- Importance to potential investors in Côte D’Ivoire’s agricultural sector.

RSPO, where the HCSA is not yet integrated. There is generally a lack of knowledge at a production level about HCS, and efforts are needed to sensitise more producer companies and (especially) smallholders about deforestation. Most small farmers do not understand the benefits of keeping forest standing and risks of deforestation to their activities.

It was also suggested that although government awareness on deforestation is generally high, and initiatives are in place – they have not been effectively reconciled with agricultural targets.

TFT have a cocoa smallholder project in Méagui with Mondelez and SEP REDD+, aiming to raise awareness about ‘no deforestation’. They plan to do pilot HCV and HCS studies in this smallholder context.

the Ministère des Eaux et Forêts has several other forest rehabilitation and reforestation policies. The government has the target to restore forest cover to at least 20% of the country by 2030.

Government’s plans to increase agricultural production are mainly focused on increasing productivity of existing production areas.
‘No deforestation’ in West & Central Africa Stakeholder awareness and barriers to implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Deforestation drivers</strong> (identified by a combination of interviewees):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Smallholder agriculture, especially cocoa and natural rubber. Includes illegal deforestation/encroachment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Forestry development</td>
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<td>• Infrastructure development, including buildings, facilities, roads</td>
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<td>• Mining</td>
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<td>• Charcoal production</td>
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<td>• Bush fires</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Population migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low yields / extensification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation: pre-establishment</td>
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<td>General barriers raised included corruption, inadequate coordination amongst government departments and inadequate enforcement of existing legislation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>More specific barriers raised include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A lack of government control of land allocation processes,</td>
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<td>• Unclear land tenure and mapping, including of national parks, reserves and other land uses, leading to land conflicts and insecurity,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Government does not do enough to raise awareness about deforestation in remote areas, including with village and community administrative bodies, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Producers (including larger operators) consider EIAs costly. One suggestion was that governments could give financial incentives to companies that protect the environment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Social:**

All interviewees identified insecure land tenure and land conflict as major challenges in Côte D’Ivoire, including amongst different ethnic/migrant groups. One interviewee stated that only 2% of land in Côte D’Ivoire had been registered since 1999.

It was also commonly stated that communities receive little to no benefit in keeping forest standing, as it prevents land being used for agriculture.

Specific ‘social’ barriers raised by companies were:
- Public consultations with communities are required, but these are often cursory. FPIC is implemented as part of RSPO requirements by member companies, but not by the broader palm sector in CI, and
- Complaints about the cost of registering rural property.

**Social:**

Additional social challenges raised by CSOs include:
- FPIC infrequently implemented outside of certification,
- Communities often do not understand companies’ informal conflict management processes related to land tenure,
- Royalties paid by companies to communities vary in amount as they are not fixed by the government, and committees responsible for managing these funds are often poorly managed and exclusive, and
- Social conflict often results from eviction and resettlement of people outside of conservation areas.
- Many cocoa farmers are migrants who do not have land security, and therefore won’t invest in

**Social:**

In some cases government oversight of development is limited because communities give lands to private actors without consulting the government.
No deforestation' in West & Central Africa Stakeholder awareness and barriers to implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smallholders:</th>
<th>conservation or longer term ‘stewardship’.</th>
<th>Smallholders:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Most interviewees identified many of the often-cited challenges faced by smallholders in tackling deforestation, including:</td>
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<td>• Technical difficulty and cost for smallholders/cooperatives to implement the HCV and HCS approaches,</td>
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<td>• Lack of organisation/association making implementation at scale a challenge,</td>
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<td>• Limited agronomic expertise or inputs needed to cultivate on degraded lands,</td>
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<td>A more specific comment was that EIAs are not legally required for plantations &lt;1000 ha. Given the predominance of smallholder agriculture in Côte D’Ivoire this means legal protections against environmental impacts are limited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity / Technical:</td>
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<td>Specific technical capacity challenges identified by companies included:</td>
<td>A major technical challenge to implementation of the HCV and HCS approaches, particularly in the cocoa sector, is the absence of an adapted smallholder or landscape-level tool. It was questioned whether HCSA would allow the necessary flexibility, and gradual roll-out to implement in such a complex context.</td>
<td>Governments suggested that companies often lack the necessary expertise to implement environmental best practice. The government has produced guidance but it has not been adequately publicised.</td>
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<td>• Good local availability of EIA assessors, but not of HCV and HCS assessors,</td>
<td>It was also suggested that companies often lack the necessary expertise to implement environmental best practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Professional agricultural service provision organisations need more support, and</td>
<td>Financial:</td>
<td>Financial:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Government lacks the capacity to monitor implementation of ESIA requirements.</td>
<td>Companies identified the following financial barriers:</td>
<td>Similarly to companies, CSOs identified the high cost of conducting HCV/HCS assessments, and suggested that additional funding was needed to finance forest protection/avoid deforestation.</td>
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<td>• High opportunity costs of identifying (e.g. ESIA assessments) and protecting forests from conversion, and</td>
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<td>Companies interviewed stated that government monitoring of EIAs and subsequent implementation of management and monitoring plans was generally inadequate, resulting in patchy implementation. Some companies also consider some aspects of management, such as anti-poaching, as a role for the state.</td>
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<td>Once again, concerns were raised about the government’s inadequate support for companies seeking to implement more sustainable practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social:</td>
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<td>Non-planted or conservation areas can be difficult to control, with encroachment by communities for farming often an issue. Communities do not always manage royalty payments effectively, for example, spending them on large funerals rather than development projects.</td>
<td>CSOs suggested that social problems often result from no involvement of local communities in natural resource management or development of management plans.</td>
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### ‘No deforestation’ in West & Central Africa Stakeholder awareness and barriers to implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wider impact, other barriers &amp; opportunities</th>
<th>Financial: Cost of managing forest/conservation areas is considered restrictively high.</th>
<th>Financial:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Financial: It was suggested that companies do not always implement EI&amp;S recommendations or slope conservation measures.</td>
<td>Technical: Poor coordination and collaboration was again identified as a challenge. In addition, unstable commodity prices were identified as a problem as when prices of cocoa drop, farmers often expand to be able to secure a minimum income.</td>
<td>Financial: Many of the actors interviewed mentioned the need to implement cross-cutting programmes on deforestation, encompassing also shifting cultivation to avoid leakage.</td>
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</table>
| Wider barriers to effective implementation of commitment identified by companies were: | • A general lack of capacity on implementation tools, such as legal measures, HCV and HCS, amongst local and national actors responsible for implementing environmental initiatives,  
• Poor collaboration between actors and initiatives, especially cross-sectorally between cocoa, rubber, timber and palm. | Poor coordination and collaboration was again identified as a challenge. In addition, unstable commodity prices were identified as a problem as when prices of cocoa drop, farmers often expand to be able to secure a minimum income. | Many of the actors interviewed mentioned the need to implement cross-cutting programmes on deforestation, encompassing also shifting cultivation to avoid leakage. |
Opportunities and needs identified by stakeholders include:
- Promoting and speeding-up land registration in the rural domain
- Land-use planning
- Improve coordination and synergies between different policies and administrative bodies
- Increase the value of ecosystems through ecotourism, carbon credits, PES, etc
- Promote participatory management of conservation areas and natural resources
- Build capacity of HCV and HCS assessors in Côte D’Ivoire
- Downstream companies need to support implementation of landscape-level smallholder projects on the ground
- Companies working in the same landscape should co-finance HCV-HCS assessments
6 Summary of legal review findings

The HCV and HCS approaches were benchmarked against existing national and customary legal frameworks in the target countries (Ghana, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire), to assess how closely they already safeguards natural ecosystems, biodiversity and community rights.

The methods used included:

- **Developing a Legal Checklist of questions to guide the legal review.**

- **Review of Legal Framework:** which included the respective national Constitutions, Acts of the Legislature, Legislative Instruments, and ratified international conventions. The review covered all the applicable mandatory requirements in the agriculture and forestry sectors in Liberia. This included, but was not limited to, relevant laws, conventions/treaties, guidelines and other relevant mandatory requirements. It entailed answering specific questions under a set of themes related to HCV-HCS, and some broader questions about the wider legal framework in Liberia. Due to its backing by the Constitution, customary laws were also reviewed to assess their relevance to the HCV and HCS approaches.

- **Developing a Benchmarking Framework:** to assess the extent to which the thematic issues in HCV-HCS were addressed by the national legislation and customary laws ("legislation"). The benchmarking incorporated a three-colour code for each of the thematic questions. Green was used where the theme was fully addressed by specific legislations; Orange, used where some general provisions in legislation addressed the theme and Red, where the theme was not addressed or covered by any legislation at all.

A summary of the thematic assessment is as follows:

6.1 Ghana

*The general legal context and land allocation*

There is clarity in the legal framework on the sources of law in Ghana and how to resolve conflicts between Statutory Law and Customary Law. Also, the legal framework identifies decision-making bodies and institutions responsible for land use and allocation. However, there is a lack of coordination between various agencies responsible for land allocation and management. It is expected that this will be clarified following the implementation of the New Land and Spatial Planning Act, 2016. In terms of HCV and HCS, there are strong statutory and customary laws and institutions (such as Customary Land Secretariats) to ensure community involvement in the allocation and management of customary land, which provides some protection for community rights and promotes Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). These provisions do not extend to public lands. Furthermore, with the exception of on- as opposed to off-reserve areas, there is no large-scale land use planning. Overall, these provisions in themselves do not fully address the identification and protection of HCV and HCS areas.
Species protection

Species protection in Ghana rests on the combined effect of the Wild Animals Preservation Act and the Wildlife Conservation Regulations. These address protection for wildlife both within and outside protected areas. Trees outside reserves and trees that lack timber value receive very little protection. Perhaps the strongest legal instrument for species protection is the definition of habitat of any endangered or threatened species of indigenous flora and fauna as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). *On the condition that these provisions are strongly enforced, Species Protection may be considered Fully Addressed by legislation.*

Ecosystem and habitat protection

The legal provisions for Ecosystems and Habitat Protection address a range of ESAs. There is, however, no strict definition of a habitat, and to be subject to protection, areas must be demarcated as sensitive. It is still too early to assess how effectively the new Land Use and Spatial Planning Act will regulate land zoning for various activities. As for species protection, the laws do not regulate all land use but provide for specified zones only. Again, the potentially most important piece of legislation is the definitions of ESAs, which, on the condition that these *definitions are refined and the provisions strongly enforced*, may help protect important habitats. Therefore, ecosystem and habitat protection are considered Partially Addressed by legal provisions.

Ecosystem services

There are general and sector specific requirements for the protection of slopes and vulnerable soils (although there is no direct burden on companies for enforcement). However, there are no legal provisions (only policy guidance) for protecting buffer zones around rivers, water bodies and wetlands. All in all, protection of areas providing ecosystem services is considered to be Partially Addressed by legislation.

Community land and resource use

There are broad provisions to ensure respect for identified community and customary user rights. However, although the Environmental Protection Agency requires consultations with the community and persons likely to be affected by concession activities of forestry and agriculture, the Environmental Protection Law does not stipulate in detail who is to be consulted. This creates a situation where chiefs and other elites may influence law implementation to their benefit. Therefore, protection of community land and resource use is considered Partially Addressed by legislation.

Cultural sites and values

There is legislation explicitly providing for the identification and protection of historical, cultural sites and sacred groves in agricultural and forestry concessions. The law further mandates concession managers to give full respect to and uphold the cultural rights of the communities. It is therefore considered that legislation Fully Addresses the protection of cultural sites and values.
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Establishment of conservation management areas or ‘set-asides’

A combination of legal provisions enables the private sector to establish voluntary set-asides and protected areas within their forestry concessions, and such initiatives may receive some government assistance in terms of monitoring. There is less support for such initiatives in agricultural settings, although there are no legal barriers per se. Therefore, legal provisions for establishing and securing conservation set asides are considered Partially Addressed.

6.2 Liberia

The general legal context and land allocation

There are clear, specific laws on the ownership, acquisition process, jurisdictional institutions, and management rights for land and associated resources in Liberia. Apart from the Constitution and specific statutory laws enacted by the legislature, jurisdictional institutions have developed regulations, policies and guidelines to facilitate the observation of such laws. Some mechanisms exist to support companies in complying with HCV and HCS requirements, such as macro-level planning that prioritizes agricultural concession allocation in more degraded areas, and legal mechanisms to support community land registration and decision-making. However, these provisions in themselves do not fully address the identification and protection of HCV and HCS areas.

Species protection

Liberia has a strong legal framework for the protection of rare and threatened species that also includes protections for certain freshwater and high forest habitats. Individual species also receive strong levels of legal protection in theory. Penalties for contravention of such laws include fines and/or terms of imprisonment. On this basis the theme Species Protection is Fully Addressed by a mixture of several legal provisions – although implementation of these strong legal provisions in practice in agricultural and forestry concessions was not assessed.

Ecosystem and habitat protection

There is a mix of general and specific provisions for the protection of ecosystems and habitats, and Liberia is incorporating numerous relevant international conventions into national law. A requirement to conduct environmental assessments prior to the commencement of development activities is intended to prevent/mitigate adverse impact on specified ecosystems and habitats. National zoning, which includes protection for ‘High Forest Zones’, Protected Areas and important forest corridors, poses some restrictions on where commercial agricultural and forestry activities can be developed. Legal provisions for ecosystem and habitat protection could, therefore, be considered to be Partially Addressed.

Ecosystem services

There are legal requirements for the protection of riparian buffers and steep slopes in forestry operations, as well as general provisions for the extraction and use of
water. However, there are fewer provisions for agricultural development. Legislation to protect vulnerable soils is still underway. Environmental protection in agricultural developments hinges primarily on environmental impact assessments conducted by the Environment Protection Agency and based on the Environmental Protection and Management Law (EPML). Therefore, protection of ecosystem services by legislation in Liberia is considered only *Partially Addressed*.

**Community land and resource use**

From the Constitution of Liberia, through the EPML to the Community Rights Law, there are clear and specific legal provisions recognizing the rights of communities to land and associated resources, and requiring commodity companies to seek their free, Prior, informed Consent (FPIC) prior to development. Therefore, protection of community land and resource use is considered *Fully Addressed* by legislation.

**Cultural sites and values**

There are laws fully recognizing local people’s rights to land and associated resources, which include protection of their cultural and archaeological sites. Therefore, protection of cultural sites and values is also considered *Fully Addressed* by Liberian legislation.

**Establishment of conservation management areas or ‘set-asides’**

Guidelines in the National Wildlife Conservation and Protection Area Management Act encourage commodity companies to make provisions for the conservation of natural resources and wildlife management on private land, including the establishment of conservation areas. However, there are no legal obligations to set aside land, and no economic incentives for doing so. Therefore, legal provisions for establishing and securing conservation set asides are considered only *Partially Addressed*.

### 6.3 Côte d'Ivoire

**The general legal context and land allocation**

The legal framework identifies decision-making institutions responsible for the allocation of state land for forestry operations. For non-state land in rural areas (the “rural domain”) there is a clear requirement for the land to be legally registered, a process that recognises customary land claims. However, implementation has been negligible with only about 2% of land registered to date. Furthermore, there is no national-level land-use planning for the rural domain.

In terms of HCV and HCS, there are some weak legal requirements for community consultation in order to allocate classified forest to companies, but these are not necessarily robust enough to fully protect community rights and promote FPIC. In the rural domain, where companies are not allowed to own land, communities have the right to decide on the use of their land. At present, as most land is not legally registered, family or community land holders follow customary processes
to rent or share land. This provides a basis for community-based decision-making (assuming such processes are equitable).

Overall, these provisions do deliver some protection of community land rights in the rural domain, although largely customary rather than legal. However, there is no large-scale land-use planning within the rural domain to support identification of HCV and HCS areas.

**Species protection**

The legal framework provides good protection for rare and threatened species, and even for less rare species within on-reserve areas. However, legal mechanisms to identify and protect the habitats of species in the rural domain are relatively weak. Therefore, species protection is considered only *Partially Addressed* by legislation.

**Ecosystem and habitat protection**

Aspects of Ivorian law provide strong legal protection for certain ecosystems across all land types, namely gallery forest, humid zones, mangroves and sacred forests. Freshwater ecosystems receive additional protection. The challenge consists of applying the legislation in rural areas where most land properties are not legally registered.

These laws protect some but not all areas likely to be HCV ecosystems, and constitute a strong foundation to build on. However, the legislation does not currently address all HCS forests, and ecosystem and habitat protection is therefore considered *Partially Addressed*.

**Ecosystem services**

Protection of water bodies can be considered well addressed by legal instruments in Côte d’Ivoire. Steep slopes are legally protected, but effects are limited as the degree of slope requiring protection is not quantified. Overall, this theme is considered *Partially Addressed*.

**Community land and resource use**

Insecure land tenure in Côte d’Ivoire presents major challenges in terms of legal recognition of customary rights, although in practice most rural communities and families have customary rights and make decisions on how to use their land. This aspect is considered *Partially Addressed*.

**Cultural sites and values**

The Forest Code and legislation regulating Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) provide some protection for cultural sites, values and rights, but lack the detail necessary to enforce them in practice. Sacred forests are typically well protected through customary means. Overall, these aspects are considered *Partially Addressed*.

**Establishment of conservation management areas or ‘set-asides’**
There are no formal legal barriers to the establishment of voluntary conservation areas, assuming land-owners and users agree, and existing contracts on state land are not breached. However, practical challenges exist, and companies or land-owners that set aside conservation areas currently receive no legal benefits or compensations (e.g. tax breaks). Therefore, this theme is also considered *Partially Addressed.*
7 Synthesised findings

7.1 Uptake and awareness of ND commitments

7.1.1 Ghana

All interviewed stakeholders were aware, to a varied extent, of ‘no deforestation’ commitments, mainly through multi-stakeholder initiatives (e.g. REDD+). Exposure to HCV was through RSPO and FSC, and other trainings and related NGO activities. Most respondents were also familiar with the HCV approach, but barely aware of the HCS approach and its objectives.

HCV-HCS approaches were acknowledged to be good in principle for the long-term sustainability of forests, and attractive to commodity companies looking to expand their land base. However, there was general skepticism about the prospects for the success of company ND commitments and use of the HCV-HCS tools. ND commitments were considered likely to have little impact unless extended to cover all sectors and become legally required to ensure cohesiveness. Complex land and resource ownership/tenure also poses serious challenges to implementation of ND objectives and the application of HCV-HCS tools. Government agencies, notably the Forestry Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Authority and the Lands Commission, are considered vital to the success of ND commitments, but are also seen as ineffective due to under-resourcing and lack of collaboration.

Deforestation is seen as currently driven mainly by subsistence farming (when aggregated), infrastructural development, and mining (especially illegal small-scale alluvial gold mining, known locally as “galamsey”) and charcoal production. Large-scale agricultural expansion (of cocoa and oil palm) is no longer considered a major driver. Clearance in recent years has shifted to degradation of shade cocoa areas (removing shade trees) and small forest patches in agricultural landscapes. There was a frustration that initiatives to tackle deforestation, such as the national REDD+ Strategy, seem to be still at the conceptual level, with too much piloting and little concrete action. A newly-enacted Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (2016) may bring order to land use across the country, but respondents were not sure if it would work.

7.1.2 Liberia

All interviewed stakeholders were familiar with both the HCV and HCS approaches. Their exposure to HCV was greater and was due to their involvement in national post-conflict recovery processes, since the late 2000s, that had forest and agricultural resource governance reforms as focal development agendas. Stakeholders’ experience of HCV-HCS issues related mainly to the agricultural and forestry sectors initiatives, such as FLEGT/VPA, RSPO, REDD+, other National Working Groups and the RSPO HCV National Interpretation process.

General challenges identified included that smaller companies will struggle with the financial and technical capacity to implement no deforestation effectively. For larger companies (especially multinationals), the difficulties are mostly linked to existing technical expertise. Some CSOs expressed concerns that companies are merely paying lip service to ND commitments: the rate at which the forest is being
converted by commodity companies was perceived to not reflect such professed commitments.

In terms of government’s role, the government has a legal target of setting aside 30% of its forest estate for conservation, but to date it has yet to reach 10%.

There appears to be an absence of trust and a lack of rational debate around deforestation in Liberia. One interviewee stated that a company had tried to support a local community to establish a small-scale legal logging operation to bring in income to the community, through a transparent process with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and a local NGO tackling illegal logging, only to be the subject of a campaign by an international NGO alleging illegal logging. Several companies expressed major concerns that HCSA was preventing any agricultural development in Liberia by being too strict, whilst forest degradation by shifting agriculture increases. The social justice and human side of deforestation has been completely missing from the debate. There was a call for a moderated discussion between companies and NGOs to try to find a way forward.

Funding for forest conservation is often prioritized for protecting the most intact forest in Liberia, but efforts are also needed to protect recovering forests near villages where appropriate, otherwise communities will continue degrading forest and the frontier will advance.

The key drivers of deforestation in Liberia were listed as:

- Shifting cultivation for subsistence agriculture, predominantly for rice,
- Plantation agriculture, led by rubber and, to a lesser extent, oil palm,
- Logging, dominated by concessions, but also illegal chain/pit-sawing,
- Mining (both alluvial and industrial),
- Infrastructure development (especially the destruction of mangrove forest for construction of houses along the coast).

7.1.3 Côte d’Ivoire

All stakeholders interviewed were familiar with ‘no deforestation’ commitments, largely due to recent efforts of multistakeholder initiatives and capacity building efforts in country. Both the HCV and HCS approaches were known, but HCV far more so through its role in certification and there was some confusion over the function of HCS as a tool.

Stakeholders highlighted that wider knowledge of the tools, particularly amongst producers and smallholders, was very weak. Given the dominance of smallholder agriculture in CI, there is an urgent need to raise awareness of deforestation at a village level. Government engagement with deforestation was considered high, and stakeholders encouraged international actors to support and strengthen existing initiatives such as REDD+ and CFI.

Deforestation is almost entirely driven by smallholder agriculture in CI, with cocoa the main commercial driver coupled with shifting agriculture. This meant that the international focus on palm (and timber) as deforestation drivers largely passed CI by, and deforestation only became prominent recently with the development of the CFI. In general, stakeholders feel that efforts to tackle deforestation in CI should focus on smallholder agriculture across commodities and ensure social
inclusion. There is a sense that HCSA does not currently provide sufficient flexibility or a process for the stepwise roll-out needed to address the social and smallholder drivers of deforestation.

7.2 Implementation: pre-establishment

7.2.1 Ghana

The major barriers to implementation of ‘no deforestation’ in the pre-establishment/land allocation phase of commodity development were identified as:

- **Poor coordination** among key state institutions in concession allocation, management and monitoring, especially the Forestry commission (FC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Lands Commission, and the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC),
- **No financial, technical or other relevant support** from government agencies to commodity companies,
- **Scarcity of qualified and affordable in-country HCV-HCS assessors,**
- **Legislation, policy frameworks and administrative processes are perceived as bureaucratic, uncoordinated or even conflicting,** which often delays the implementation of relevant policies,
- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) are only needed for areas >40 ha, and therefore do not apply to smallholders, >80% of whom have landholdings of about 2.5 ha. Thus, the necessary environmental and social checks-and-balances for the most significant actors in deforestation are absent,**
- **It is uncertain what really constitutes consent** under community consultation. Most Social Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) achieve community involvement rather than consent. Community representation is often not fair or inclusive,
- **The assumption that there is contiguous land for commodity development is flawed** because smallholdings are scattered,
- **In the absence of government and/or private support for smallholders, adoption of HCV-HCS approaches is prohibitive or simply not acceptable.**
- **There is abundant degraded land, but this does not translate into availability of land for commodity development** due to community land tenure claims or other community-related issues,
- **The national definition of forest makes it challenging** to define what constitutes deforestation and has little impact on concession allocation for the oil palm sector,
- **There is great potential for fallow areas to become HCS,** which will inevitably cause big problems for commodity development in the highly fragmented agricultural landscapes. If these areas are to be considered forest (a big question), then efforts to prevent deforestation should be cross-commodity to stop users simply switching crops. Farmers may also be expected to simply keep cutting fallow areas to avoid reaching the HCS threshold.
• **Fragmentation of forest concessions by the government** is a huge challenge. When a concession lease expires, there is a tendency to sub-divide it into smaller leases to multiple companies. The result is that management interventions are fragmented accordingly, and there is no long-term perspective to ensure financial and environmental sustainability.

### 7.2.2 Liberia

Stakeholders identified the following challenges:

- According to some actors, there is good coordination amongst the lead state agencies in the forestry and agricultural sectors. This includes an MoU between the EPA, the FDA and Ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant land-linked ministries and agencies. However, most of these state institutions are severely constrained by qualified personnel, budget and logistics, thereby limiting their ability to effectively monitor the actions/activities of the companies to ensure compliance with legal and voluntary commitments,

- **FPIC is not legally required**, although companies are expected to engage with the communities by the Environmental Protection and Management Law (2002), and the Community Rights Law (2009). **International FPIC guidance (e.g. from RSPO, HCSA) needs to be locally adapted,**

- **Community land ownership and decision-making.** All land is owned by the State, but the Community Rights Law grants communities the right of access to forested land through a nine-step process. It ultimately guarantees communities the right to decide on the land use. Some communities have opted to sell timber rights, allow illegal chainsaw operations or allocate lands for slash-and-burn agriculture. This has resulted in deforestation, contrary to the expectation that land rights would safeguard forest land and biodiversity. At the same time, **HCSA has meant that companies have had to say to some communities that they cannot develop land** even if the community wants to,

- **Absence of a ‘High Forest Cover’ approach within HCSA** has prevented development of the palm sector in many parts of the country. There is an almost complete absence of large, contiguous non-HCS areas to develop. In practice, this has led some communities to decide to develop on their own (sometimes irresponsibly) to get value from their land,

- With the support of rights-based NGOs, processes to redress community grievances have been successfully adopted, and stakeholders are becoming increasingly assertive in expressing their grievances. There is, however, a tendency for the stakeholder consultation process to be exploited by vested interests, thereby stalling FPIC processes needed for companies to proceed with development plans,

- Companies have experienced problems where **local communities are unequally affected by application of the HCS approach**, e.g. with developable areas not equally distributed and communities feeling they miss out on development,

- **A very high cost of business in Liberia.** Companies report having to cover virtually all costs for establishing their operations, that would typically be covered by government (e.g. infrastructure, healthcare, etc). From an
7.2.3 Côte d’Ivoire
Stakeholders identified numerous barriers to implementation of ‘no deforestation’ in the pre-establishment/land allocation phase, including:

- **Land insecurity** amongst smallholders (especially migrants), that gives little incentive to keep forest standing as there is no long-term stake in the land. This is further confounded by the high cost of land registration,
- **Land scarcity** leads to competition for land for agriculture and virtually no financial value to farmers of keeping forests standing. These problems have been exacerbated in places by government evictions of farmers from protected areas,
- Scarcity of affordable and qualified Ivorian HCV and HCS assessors,
- The **high costs faced by smallholders** to comply with HCV or HCS requirements. Furthermore, EIAs are not legally required for smallholders <1000 ha (except in some limited circumstances), which although socially just, means that there is no government oversight of most agricultural production in CI,
- **Poor suitability of current HCV and HCS tools** for the predominant smallholder context of CI – although cocoa stakeholders were interested to learn about RSPO’s new HCV for smallholders’ tool. It was suggested that HCV and HCS could benefit from being more flexible to integrate with the government’s new forest classification and action plan – which is deemed by some to be more realistic and have more practical timelines,
- The **lack of a government land use plan** or zoning also greatly hinders efforts to tackle deforestation.
- Companies striving to comply with HCV and HCS requirements felt that they received **no financial support from government** (e.g. financial incentives or tax breaks),
- A lack of, and urgent need to develop, **alternative livelihoods and payments for ecosystem services** that can incentivise smallholders to reduce deforestation, and
- An urgent need to **raise awareness about deforestation at a community and smallholder level**, including through **wider dissemination of existing government guidance on best agricultural practices**.

7.3 Implementation: post-establishment
7.3.1 Ghana
Stakeholders identified the main barriers to post-establishment concession set-asides as:

- **The extent of company compliance with procedures depend** on company action rather than effective government enforcement. Although government provides monitoring and regulatory roles in permit allocation and verification, it often lacks the necessary skills and workforce to undertake these effectively,
- **Government grievance mechanisms for community complaints are often poorly known amongst communities.** The REDD+ technical working group
is currently developing a feedback and grievance mechanism to allow community-level disputes to be raised, and then channelled through district, regional and national levels,

- **Protection of HCV-HCS set-asides** are undertaken by companies (such as anti-poaching and encroachment prevention), with little active support from relevant state institutions. Company staff may even break the law due to poor understanding of national legislation,

- **Setting up voluntary set-asides within concessions is not actively encouraged by relevant state institutions**; only two cases exist of set-asides of significant scale, both in the Western Region,

- **It is challenging for companies to** identify, manage and monitor HCV-HCS areas, and

- **There are no effective, state-assisted mechanisms for** company/community mediations. Conflict is often simmering in the background with compensation invariably not going to communities but to elite chiefs.

### 7.3.2 Liberia

The main barriers post-establishment of concession set-asides were identified by stakeholders as:

- **There is often a purely cosmetic adherence to protection of habitats** (and associated species) by some companies. Sometimes an entire forest may be converted, leaving only a narrow riparian buffer for the appearance of keeping water bodies safe,

- **There is limited capacity of both companies and relevant government agencies to enforce forest habitat protection** across the country, even with a presence of state institutions (e.g. EPA, FDA),

- **Companies face many social barriers in managing set-asides**, including communities encroaching on buffer strips and other HCV set-asides for farming, chain saw logging in concession areas, hunting, and burning of charcoal in concession areas,

- **Labour laws in Liberia require companies to primarily hire Liberians and providing jobs to members of local communities is prioritized**. However, in some cases this has limited companies’ abilities to hire suitably qualified HCV staff, and

- **Companies feel that the government does not currently have enough capacity to help them to manage set-asides or address encroachment**.

### 7.3.3 Côte d’Ivoire

The main barriers to securing forest or environmental set-asides in farms or concessions once established were identified as:

- **Inadequate government monitoring of companies’ compliance with EIA or social requirements**, leading to patchy implementation,

- **Companies struggling to prevent encroachment by community members or farmers into conservation areas**. It was argued by some that this is often the result of companies not adequately involving communities in natural resource management decision-making and implementation.
Legal contradictions over ownership of trees versus property in CI are also contributing to this challenge.

- **Elite capture and mismanagement of royalty payments** to communities, and
- Companies pointed to **high costs of managing ‘set-aside’ conservation areas** and felt that some activities such as anti-poaching enforcement should be the government’s responsibility.

### 7.4 Impact (beyond palm & forestry)

#### 7.4.1 Ghana

The issues of most concern to stakeholders was the need to strengthen institutional coordination in efforts to tackle deforestation, particularly between the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), the Forestry Commission (FC), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD).

#### 7.4.2 Liberia

Companies face many barriers to their ND commitment, including communities encroaching on buffer stripes and other HCV set-asides for farming, chain saw logging in concession areas, hunting, and burning of charcoal in concession areas. These drivers are also contributing to deforestation outside of company concessions or management areas. Government agencies do not currently have the capacity to address these challenges.

The recently adopted REDD+ Strategy and the TFA2020 Marrakesh Declaration may offer some practical mechanisms to implement a ND regime in Liberia although they are not yet fully integrated into law.

#### 7.4.3 Côte d’Ivoire

In terms of other comments raised, the most widely stated was the importance of strengthening cross-sector coordination in efforts to tackle deforestation, particularly between the cocoa, palm and rubber sectors. Linking to and strengthening the CFI action plans, efforts under the REDD+ programme, and several evolving landscape initiatives around the Tai National Park were suggested as vital. One justification for these cross-sectoral efforts was the need to break the link between declining commodity (especially cocoa) prices and forest conversion.

In the cocoa sector, the CFI is interested in doing a jurisdictional pilot for HCS-HCV to better understand how the tools and definitions can align with the government’s new forest classification system for CI’s classified forest.
8 Recommendations and opportunities

8.1 Ghana

Stakeholders gave the following specific recommendations:

- In the face of an integrated HCV-HCS, the currently outdated HCV National Interpretation (2006) should be updated, with sub-national jurisdictional definitions where possible. A critical consideration under this is the definition of forest in Ghana. A new interpretation must then be clearly communicated to all actors, to avoid any inadvertent counter-productive outcomes.
- Companies are making big announcements of their commitments, without mechanisms to implement sustainability on the ground. Process is important, and monitoring is crucial. There is the need for a national forest monitoring system, such as used in other areas (e.g. Brazil). An ongoing system for Ghana under the FC, linked to the VPA process, may be operational by end of 2018. This will include an online system, a GIS-based inventory – and scope for carbon conservation.

Other more general suggestions included:

- Securing acceptance of HCV-HCS practices at the local level has long term connotations that are hard to demonstrate. It is difficult to change practices that have been in existence for centuries, if not millennia. There is a need for persistent initial motivation and a positive case to support the desired changes.
- There is a need to adequately define / implement community user-rights in concessions.
- In the face of growing land scarcity for commodity development, intensification must be adopted and actively promoted (via best management practices) to get the optimum yield from remaining areas.
- Efforts to tackle deforestation must also consider ‘galamsey’ and illegal timber harvesting.
- There is a need for a broader jurisdictional approach to land use planning, as envisaged in the national Land use and spatial planning Act (2016). This will help secure the bulk of the dwindling forest cover in the country, and
- Any tools for no deforestation, HCV and HCS need to be very simple and practical for farmers.

8.2 Liberia

The recently adopted REDD+ Strategy and the TFA2020 Africa Palm Oil Initiative Marrakesh Declaration may offer some practical mechanisms to implement a ND regime in Liberia, if they can be converted from policies/strategies into enabling legislation. This is needed to ensure a level playing ground for all companies, otherwise leading companies feel that they are at a disadvantage in implementing an ND commitment, whilst others rush to cut down as much forest as they can before legislation is passed. This is partly achieved by the government’s existing
policy on oil palm development making RSPO certification a requirement of all concession lease agreements.

There is a strong sense from the private sector in Liberia that they are trying to find solutions for both deforestation and community development that are not being supported by the international community. For example, by trying to develop produce-protect-include models as viable compromises to provide rural development and ensure forest protection by stabilising deforestation and degradation. The idea is to do this with support from the FDA in managing the protection areas.

Specific recommended solutions included:

- The urgent need for the international community to either endorse proposed models for sustainable development being developed by companies and actors in Liberia, or to develop a High Forest Cover Landscapes (HFCL) approach. It was suggested to aim for no net deforestation, whilst protecting wildlife corridors, important biodiversity areas and allowing pragmatic land development,
- Establish a rational discussion about the deforestation challenge in Liberia that recognises the social realities on the ground, and the forest degradation/deforestation trajectory that is already playing out. This could perhaps use the established Oil Palm Sector Technical Working Group but may need moderation between NGOs and companies!
- Efforts to establish out-grower schemes (as required under lease agreements) have been stalled by a lack of start-up funding. Companies have called for international donors, e.g. the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to support in establishing these projects.

A more general recommendation was for actors to recognise Liberia’s recent conflict history and invest in building the government institutions that will help to establish rule of law, tackle corruption, provide jobs, create downstream processing jobs and ultimately tackle deforestation.

8.3 Côte d’Ivoire

Stakeholders identified a series of opportunities to strengthen implementation of ‘no deforestation’ commitments in Côte d’Ivoire. Specific suggestions were:

1. Develop or scale-up HCV-HCS for smallholder tools. In the cocoa sector, the Cocol and Forests Initiative (CFI) is interested in conducting a jurisdictional pilot for HCS-HCV to better understand how the tools and definitions can align with the government’s new forest classification system for CI’s classified forest,
2. Build capacity of HCV and HCS assessors in Côte d’Ivoire,
3. Downstream companies need to support implementation of existing landscape-level and smallholder projects on the ground, especially in the Tai/San Pedro landscape. Examples of existing projects mentioned
include the SEP REDD+ project, and Mondelez and TFT’s smallholder project in Méagui, and
4. Companies working in the same landscape should co-finance HCV-HCS assessments for smallholders.

Other more general suggestions made included:

5. The need to shift to cross-sector initiatives to tackle deforestation covering cocoa, palm, rubber and subsistence crops,
6. Promoting and speeding-up land registration in the rural domain,
7. Improve coordination and synergies between different policies and administrative bodies, including land-use planning,
8. Increase the value of ecosystems through ecotourism, carbon credits, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), etc, and
9. Promote participatory management of conservation areas and natural resources.

9 References

Specific references are provided throughout the document as footnotes. General references are listed below:

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