



CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

Liberia



CONSERVATION AGREEMENT NEGOTIATION & PARTICIPATORY LAND USE PLANNING

held in Eight (8) communities in Rivercess and Sinoe counties



31 May – 14 June

2022

NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING

Project

Contents

1.0. Rationale	2
2.0. Purpose and Goals	2
3.0. Objective	2
4.0. Conservation Agreement Engagement Approaches	3
4.1. Overview of the NCA project Session	3
4.2. Conservation Agreement Model	3
4.3. Verification of benefit package	4
4.3.1. Pairwise Comparison and Ranking of community Priorities	4
4.3.2. Sharing of Draft Conservation Agreement.....	4
5.0 Participatory Land use planning approach.....	5
6.0. Other Key Findings.....	5
7.0. Challenges	5
8.0. Recommendation.....	6
Appendix 1: Pairwise Comparison and Power Ranking of Communities' Needs for Conservation Benefit.	7
Appendix 2: Pictures.....	14
Annex 3: Meeting Attendance	17

1.0. Rationale

The Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) project seeks to improve conservation and sustainable use of Liberia's coastal natural capital by mainstreaming the value of nature into Liberia's development trajectory. The Third outcome (3.1) of the project is aimed at ensuring that community-level conservation and sustainable use of coastal resources is improved through performance-based payments using conservation agreements.

It is envisaged that Eleven-thousand Nine-hundred and Seventy-five (11,975) additional hectares of mangrove ecosystems, and Five-thousand (5,000) additional hectares of terrestrial forest in coastal ecosystems (in the Southeast of Liberia) will be placed under protection and sustainably managed to improve the income of targeted communities by 50%.

Against this, Nine (9) communities have been targeted to be worked with. Two (2) in Rivercess county, Five (5) in Sinoe county, and Two (2) in Grand Kru county. Prior to our field visit, the NCA PMU had had two (2) engagement meetings, (in line with CI's Conservation Model) to carry out feasibility studies and initiate preliminary engagements. The field team also used the opportunity to create awareness on the Project's objective, and on the importance of environmental conservation.

In order to build agreement with the project targetted community, more engagements would be needed to interact with persons of influence and interest, so as to ensure that the full steps in CI's CA model is followed for possible signing and successful implementation of Conservation Agreements in the selected communities.

2.0. Purpose and Goals

The goal of the Conservation Agreement negotiation and introduction of Participatory Land use Planning was to create more awareness on the importance of local community participation in conserving their natural resource, and to enhance relationship with these interested resource users (the local communities) – with an overarching goal to design and formalize an agreement (though a transparent process), and to begin the process of setting socio-economic and biodiversity baselines.

3.0. Objective

The objective of the field activity was to:

- Continue conservation agreement negotiation and engagement with targeted communities, by enhancing relationship with interested resource users in a transparent and participatory manner.
- Begin setting of socio-economic and biodiversity baselines.
- Meet with persons of influence and interest (county, district, clan, city - authorities) in a bid to build awareness on the project and to promote local ownership.

- To orient local communities in the targeted villages toward the sustainable management of their natural resources.

4.0. Conservation Agreement Engagement Approaches

Prior to the field trip, a stakeholder engagement plan was developed. This activity was necessary to have the buy-in from different layers of persons with influence and vested interest, if we are to enter into conservation agreement with the targeted communities. Involving people in the management process implies recognition of their worth, their vital role and their credentials as citizens (Stoll-Kleemann and Welp, 2006).

At this level of negotiation, the PMU team identified Six (6) levels of stakeholders (county leadership, district leadership, clan leadership, city leadership, town/community leadership and local people), and designed engagement plans accordingly. Identified were formally informed and appointment booked for meetings at their convenience. There were also sessions held, where District, Clan and Town leaderships were asked to participate in discussions held with the general project targeted community.

4.1. Overview of the NCA project Session

During this session, a brief overview of the NCA project was made. This was necessary because the participants stumbled on giving a positive feedback when quizzed about their knowledge of the project. We assumed this was due to the fact that it took a while before we reengaged the process, or that some people in attendance were new to the process due to emmigration.

It must be noted that the issue of mangrove and wetland conservation is new in these parts of Liberia.

The objective of the project, its relevance and expected outcomes, and voluntary need for local community involvement was simplified. Participants also helped in translating the project's title into their local vanacular so as to guide them on remembering the project's concept.

4.2. Conservation Agreement Model

During this session, a member of the team explained the conservation model to the local community in a simplified way - as presenting a viable option for local resource users to conserve biodiversity through explicit agreements that provide tangible benefits in exchange for effective conservation of high priority areas and species.

With due gender consideration, everyone was allowed to ask questions and to also share local knowledge on their understanding of conserving critical biodiversity habitats. From our interaction with the communities, we discovered that they already had traditional knowledge of the importance and benefit of the natural environment, and the need to keep it safe.

Local leaders gave more opportunity to community dwellers to drive the discussion and only provided feedback where and when necessary.

4.3. Verification of benefit package

During our last meeting with the communities, series of items were proposed by the communities to form part of their conservation benefit package. Those items were proposed after the NCA team clarified that benefit package should be tangibles that meet the general needs of the community and should not be individually driven - and that these benefits should be structured to offset the opportunity cost of conservation incurred by the project affected people.

The team had a moment during this meeting to verify those items that were listed and provided an opportunity to update the list. The items were listed on a board, and participants allowed to give feedback on whether those listed were still a priority for the community.

It must be clarified that participating local leaders allowed the community people to drive this discussion, as they witnessed and provided guidance where and when necessary. Consensus was reached, and the final benefit package list was also shared with the local communities.

4.3.1. Pairwise Comparison and Ranking of community Priorities

After receiving and building consensus on the community's priorities for the CA benefit package, a pairwise comparison method was used to rank and prioritize the items proposed by the communities.

Pairwise comparison is a powerful and simple tool for prioritizing and ranking multiple options relative to each other. It is the process of using a matrix-style tool to compare each option in pairs and determine which is the preferred choice or has the highest level of importance based on defined criteria. At the end of the comparison process, each option has a rank or relative rating as compared to the rest of the options.

The product of this process will be useful to help communities prioritize their benefit package needs under a possible conservation agreement. Pairwise comparison results for each of the communities are provided in Annex 2 of this document.

4.3.2. Sharing of Draft Conservation Agreement

A draft of the conservation agreement was shared with the targeted communities, through their heads, with the hope that they will read and familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions contained therein. Due to limited field presence, we could not spend more time going over the clauses of the CA with the communities. However, we informed the communities that the agreement shared with them was non-binding, but only meant to give them an insight on what a possible agreement to sustainably manage their natural resources between them and CI would look like. They also had an option to call to seek more clarity or withdraw from the process if they are uncomfortable to work with CI. We left with an anticipation that we'll be afforded more time by CI-Liberia leadership to make another field visit to build the agreement with the communities, so as to ensure local ownership.

5.0 Participatory Land use planning approach

Conservation Agreement negotiations are grounded in participatory land use planning (PLUP) to ensure that local land users are given the opportunity to play a central role in decision-making processes concerned with the land and resources they use and depend upon. Building on initial site identification work, as contained in the ProDoc, a thorough feasibility assessment and stakeholder engagement process was conducted to confirm key sites on the southeast coast of Liberia for community-based conservation. The project's goal is to conserve mangroves and other coastal ecosystems both within and outside Liberia's proposed protected area network, based on social, biological and economic values of these areas. Although mangrove ecosystems are the core focus of this project, community engagement will promote a holistic resource management perspective, grounded in a participatory land use planning process.

Against this, the team introduced the participatory land use process to the communities during the field engagement, with a hope to accelerate further discussions during future engagements to fulfill requirements contained in Liberia's (LLA) National standards for participatory land use planning. Please see pictorals of meetings in annex 3.

6.0. Other Key Findings

The team discovered that there are host of communities that also have access and rights to the target natural resources we intend to work with the communities to manage under a conservation agreement in Timbo Kru. Along with Timbo Kru, we identified two (2) other communities located in Guanaway Clan that have rights to the main mangrove ecosystem targetted for possible sustainable management.

These towns include: Weahgar, and Wruah towns. It must be emphasized here that the people of Timbo Kru community informed the NCA team about the importance of getting the other towns involed in the consevation agreement negotiations. The team scheduled separate meetings with the other two affected towns, since we were at an advanced stage in the negotiation process with Timbo Kru. We began the CA negotiation process with Weahgar and Wruah towns with a hope to design a CA framework that'll involved all the resource users in cluster agreement.

7.0. Challenges

As always, the road to Liberia's Southeastern countryside is always a great challenge due to its deplorable state. This was a huge challenge for the team, as we at times spent over Ten (10) hours at disconnected points where the heavy down pour of rain had disrupted free flow of traffice. As always, we had to do labour intensive work in preparing sections of the road to make a cross over. Traveling on these bad roads posed serious damages to the vehicle, and had serious health effects on us, as we spent long hours working under heavy rains to fix deplorable roads to gain access.

Also, the time spent in the field was not enough to fulfill CI CA's Model transparently. We can't confidently say that the community fully understood the dictates of the conservation agreement.

We think more time will be needed for this to be accomplished. Due to limited time, we could not complete the full activities required for a full participatory land use planning exercise.

We were unable to meet the county authorities of Rivercess and Sinoe counties, as they had come to Monrovia on a presidential assignment. It'll be ideal if we can make this a priority during our next mission.

8.0. Recommendation

We recommend that more time be applied in building the conservation agreement with the community, even if we get CBOs to roll out this activity. Also, we need to give sufficient time to the participatory land use planning exercise, if we are to have a successful and sustainable conservation agreement with the targeted communities.

Though we were not able to complete the exercise in Grand Kru county, we think it's still important to continue to engage with the people in Grand Cess. As seen from satellite-derived mangrove extent maps, Sass Town does not present so much potential in terms of mangrove coverage – there's another area around Barclayville that has much potential and should be considered also.

We recommend that we follow best practices and standards in rolling out our activities – this means giving considerable time, resources and field presence to ensure that our impact is meaningful and owned by the local communities.

Appendix 1: Pairwise Comparison and Power Ranking of Communities' Needs for Conservation Benefit.

6.0 NEEGBA COMMUNITY BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING												
	Fishing Net	Canoe	Boat Motor	Cold Storage	Farming Tools	Loan	Rice Mill	Gari Mill	Coconut Oil Machine	Hand Pump	Score	Ranking
Fishing Net		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Hand pump
Canoe	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Loan
Boat Motor	1	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Cold Storage
Cold Storage	1	1	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	3	Farming Tools
Farming Tools	1	1	1	0		0	0	0	0	0	3	Rice Mill
Loan	1	1	1	1	1		0	0	0	0	5	Gari Mill
Rice Mill	1	1	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	3	Coconut Oil Machine
Gari Mill	1	1	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	3	Boat Motor
Coconut Oil Machine	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0		0	3	Fishing net
Hand pump	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		9	Canoe



TIMBO KRU COMMUNITY BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING												
	Hand pump	Loan	Fishing Net	Training	Gari Machine	Cold Storage	Coconut Oil Machine	Farming Materials	Boat Motor	Canoe	Score	Ranking
Hand pump		0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	Loan
Loan	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	8	Fishing Net
Fishing Net	1	0		0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	Training
Training	1	0	0		1	0	1	1	0	0	4	Cold Storage
Gari Mill	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	0	0	1	Boat Motor
Cold Storage	1	0	0	0	1		1	1	0	0	4	Canoe
Coconut Oil Machine	0	0	0	0	1	0		0	0	0	1	Hand pump
Farming Materials	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		0	0	2	Farming Materials
Boat Motor	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1		0	4	Gari Mill
Canoe	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0		4	Coconut Oil Machine



DOWN THE MANGROVE COMMUNITY BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING										
	Training in Soap Making	Loan	Training in Tailoring	Boat Motor	Training in Catering	Hand Pump	Training in Tie & Dye	Training in Cosmetology	Score	Ranking
Training in Soap Making		0	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	Loan
Loan	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	7	Hand Pump
Training in Tailoring	1	0		1	1	0	1	1	5	Training in Tailoring
Boat Motor	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	Training in Soap Making
Training in Catering	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	1	Training in Catering
Hand Pump	1	0	1	1	1		1	1	6	Training in Tie & Dye
Training in Tie & Dye	0	0	0	1	0	0		1	1	Training in Cosmetology
Training in Cosmetology	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1	Boat Motor

DION TOWN BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING										
	Hand Pump	Block Mold	Loan	Canoe	Boat Motor	Fishing Net	Farming Tools	Gari Machine	Score	Ranking
Hand Pump		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Loan
Block Mold	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Boat Motor
Loan	1	0		1	1	1	1	1	7	Farming Tools
Canoe	0	1	0		0	0	0	0	1	Hand Pump
Boat Motor	0	1	0	1		0	0	0	2	Canoe
Fishing Net	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	Fishing Net
Farming Tools	0	1	0	0	0	1		1	2	Block Mold
Gari Machine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	Gari Machine



PANAMA BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING											
	Canoe	Fishing Net	Gari Machine	Loan	Hand Pump	Public Toilet	Training	Farming Tools	Boat Motor	Score	Ranking
Canoe		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Loan
Fishing Net	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Training
Gari Machine	1	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Farming Tools
Loan	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	8	Boat Motor
Hand Pump	1	1	1	0		1	0	0	0	3	Hand Pump
Public Toilet	1	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	2	Gari Machine
Training	1	1	1	0	1	1		0	0	5	Public Toilet
Farming Tools	1	1	1	0	1	1	0		0	5	Canoe
Boat Motor	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0		4	Fishing Net



LEXINGTON BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING											
	Hand Pump	Canoe	Public Toilet	Farming Tools	Palm Oil Machine	Training	Loan	Fishing Net	Gari Machine	Score	Ranking
Hand Pump		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	Hand Pump
Canoe	0		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	Farming Tools
Public Toilet	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Canoe
Farming Tools	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	8	Loan
Palm Oil Machine	1	1	1	0		1	0	0	0	3	Fishing Net
Training	1	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	2	Gari Machine
Loan	1	1	1	0	1	1		0	0	5	Palm Oil Machine
Fishing Net	1	1	1	0	1	1	0		0	5	Training
Gari Machine	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0		4	Public Toilet



SEEBEH BENEFIT PACKAGE PAIRWISE COMPARISON AND POWER RANKING									
	Micro Loan	Training in Catering	Training in Tailoring	Training in Soap Making	Training in Tie & Dye	Fishing Boat	Training in Cosmetology	Score	Ranking
Micro Loan		1	1	1	1	0	1	5	Micro Loan
Training in Catering	0		0	1	1	0	1	3	Fishing Boat
Training in Tailoring	0	0		0	1	0	1	2	Training in Catering
Training in Soap Making	0	0	0		1	0	1	2	Training in Tailoring
Training in Tie and Dye	0	1	0	0		0	1	2	Training in Soap Making
Fishing Boat	0	1	1	1	1		1	4	Training in Tie and Dye
Training in Cosmetology	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	Training in Cosmetology

Appendix 2: Pictures



Photo 1: Engagement meeting held in Timbo Kru



Photo 2: Engagement meeting held in Timbo Kru



Photo 3: Engagement meeting held in Neegba



Photo 3: Engagement meeting held in Lexington



Photo 5: Engagement meeting held in Guanaway



Photo 6: Engagement meeting held in Guanaway



Photo 7: Introduction of PLUP in Panaman



Photo 8: Introduction of PLUP in Lexington



Photo 9: CI-12 (NCA Vehicle) gets stuck in heavy mud



Photo 10: NCA Project Manager presents draft conservation agreement to Chairlady of Seebeh Community



Photo 11: NCA Project Office exhausted from hard labour in trying to create new road



Photo 12: NCA Project Manager and Driver looks on as road is completely blocked

Annex 3: Meeting Attendance



GEF_NCA_SE_CA_En
gagement_Attender

