

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Final Report

1. Darwin Project Information

Project Reference No.	13/008
Project title	Establishing community-based forest biodiversity management around Sapo Park, Liberia
Country	Liberia
UK Contractor	Fauna & Flora International
Partner Organisation (s)	Forest Development Authority (FDA), Liberian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)
Darwin Grant Value	126.080
Start/End date	1 April 2004 – 30 March 2007
Project website	none
Author(s), date	Stephen van der Mark (July 1 st 2007)

2. Project Background/Rationale

- *Describe the location and circumstances of the project*
- *Who identified the need for this project and what evidence is there for a demand for this work and a commitment from the local partner?*

Liberia contains two of the three remaining large blocks of Upper Guinean rainforest: the Lofa-Gola-Mano block in the north-west contiguous with Sierra Leone (but mostly in Liberia) and the south-east Liberian block. The third block consists of Tai National Park and its surrounding forests, which are a continuation of the south east Liberian block. The Liberia portion of the remaining Upper Guinean rainforest is estimated at 42%, followed by Côte d'Ivoire with an estimated 28% of the remaining rainforest. Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Togo share the remaining 30%.

In Liberia, little more than 40% of original forest cover survives of which the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) estimates that about 35% is "undisturbed" forest, 45% "disturbed but productive" forest and 20% "disturbed and unproductive" forest. Based on analyses of satellite images from 1985 and 2001, annual forest loss is estimated at 0.2%, a low rate. However the ratio of "undisturbed" to "disturbed" forest types is changing in favour of "disturbed" since the 1980s. The Liberia Forest Re-assessment project (EU-funded), implemented from 2001 to 2004 substantiates this conclusion.

This trend threatens the exceptionally diverse and largely endemic biodiversity that still survives in the country. In Liberia, economic dependency on these forest ecosystems is extremely high: the population is extremely dependent on forests for jobs, revenue/foreign exchange, food, Non-Timber-Forest-Products (NTFPs) like medicines,

building materials, cultural practices, local climate regulation, clean water and much more. Forest management decisions have historically been dominated by commercial interests at the expense of community needs and conservation.

Since 1980, and especially since civil war started in 1990, Liberia has emphasised commercial timber production at the expense of ecosystem goods & services provided by forests, biodiversity conservation, and non-commercial or small-scale commercial uses of forests. Timber (round-log) export became worth two-thirds of official foreign exchange receipts and 26% of GDP by 2002. Furthermore forests became coveted as a prize of political office under the Taylor Administration where they were used to fund warfare in Liberia and in neighbouring countries from 2000 onwards. This in turn led to the UN Security Council imposing world-wide sanctions on the international trade of timber products originating in Liberia since July 2003.

This imbalance of pushing commercial interests at the expense of community and conservation issues is supposed to be rectified during the current phase of forest sector reform, which was prompted by the imposition of UN Security Council sanctions against the importation of timber products originating in Liberia. The Liberian Forestry Initiative (a platform where EU, WB, INGOs and Liberian governmental and non-governmental partners take part) addresses these issues and has been making significant process in reforming the Liberian forestry sector. Indeed, as a result of much groundwork a new forestry act has been passed by the Liberian Senate. A suspension of the UN sanctions or even a lifting is foreseen in 2007.

Reform of the forest sector in Liberia is central to restoring economic prosperity and political stability to Liberia, over and above Liberia's forests' international biological importance and the importance it has to ensuring subsistence and cultural identity to rural Liberians. All this was recognized in December 2003 when the National Transitional Government of Liberia officially adopted a policy of "balancing the three Cs" of forest management: **C**ommercial use, **C**ommunity use and **C**onservation (see attachment 1 & 2). The current Government took office in January 23rd 2006 with the inauguration of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and has actively endorsed and supported the policy of integrating the three C's. The importance of forestry to the past and future of Liberia was demonstrated when Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, elected President at the end of 2005, made her first executive act the scrapping of all timber concessions issued under previous regimes so as to allow for the forestry reform process to take place in earnest.

- *What was the problem that the project aimed to address?*

This Darwin-funded project attempts to pilot one of the never-before-tested legal categories of protected forest: Communal Forest. The Protected Forest Area Network Act of 2003 states that a 'Communal Forest' means an area set aside legally or temporarily by regulation for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products by local communities on a non-commercial basis" (Section 1.3). Section 9.10 continues "Acts prohibited in **Communal Forests** shall include: No prospecting, mining, farming or commercial timber extraction. Other uses are to be regulated by the designated local community with assistance from local authorities and declared by Regulations of the [Forestry Development] Authority." Although the legal texts are not completely clear (e.g. what constitutes commercial?) they do provide a basis for discussion and inclusion of "communal" type forestry in the national level land-use planning that is taking place now. The inclusion of communal forestry will receive a further push through the establishment of a National Land-Use Committee in 2007 and an upcoming Protected Areas Network Workshop in August 2007. FFI with support from the Darwin Initiative, and other partners such as the French GEF (FFEM) are now pushing the agenda for communal

forestry also taking into account conservation and especially commercial interests as this is the only sustainable way forward.

If successful in establishing a replicable model for this protected forest type, this project will help set legal precedent for empowering rural Liberians to control the forest resources they depend on for their livelihoods, as well as provide a practical model for supporting sustainable forest-based livelihoods in Liberia. It will also contribute to establishing a balance between the three Cs of forest use and remove one of the driving forces of political instability in the country.

This project ended at a pivotal moment as the new forestry act had been passed by the Senate in Liberia in September 2006. Fortunately, the FFEM funded project (830.000 Euros) that started in early 2007 builds on and expands on the Darwin funded work, thus supporting the inclusion of community and conservation interests in the overall forestry sector reform in Liberia.

3. Project Summary

- *What were the purpose and objectives (or outputs) of the project? Please include the project logical framework as an appendix if this formed part of the original project proposal/schedule and report against it. If the log-frame has been changed in the meantime, please indicate against which version you are reporting and include it with your report.*

The project's purpose is to ensure conservation of threatened Upper Guinean rainforest biodiversity and promote sustainable rural livelihoods in forested areas of Liberia based on a legally grounded, working model of community empowerment and forest resource use. This will be pursued through piloting communal forests in 3-4 sites with up to 40 villages around Sapo National Park, securing in perpetuity a forested buffer zone around the Park. To do this, project partners will implement and establish operational links between four activity themes:

- (1) Refining and testing the legal/regulatory framework for CFs,
- (2) Building the community-based, NGO and governmental institutions to implement CFs,
- (3) Ensuring sound management of environmental/ biological resources in the forest, and
- (4) Assisting local communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods and common property resources management.

The model developed at Sapo Park will be validated, adapted to other localities and then replicated across Liberia in the following years. The specific outputs listed in the project logical framework, as well as the objectively verifiable indicators, are as follows:

Outputs	Objectively verifiable indicators
1. Regulatory framework and legal amendments for CFs adopted	1. FDA promulgates regulations through a communal forest manual, resolving any incongruencies/issues between MIA and FDA policy
2. 3-4 communal forests/ tribal reserves in Sapo Park buffer zone established	2a. At least 3 CFs/TRs legally established around SNP, covering 70,000-80,000 ha
3. Model for sustainable natural resources & common property-based livelihoods developed	2b. Each communal forest has a mgt. plan under implementation
4. Capacity of FDA, MIA, Liberian NGOs and communities strengthened to create and manage CFs/TRs	3. Sustainable forest resource-based livelihood programmes underway for 3 communities with CFs, possibly incl. agro-forestry, rattan furniture, others tbd.
5. Model developed for replication of sustainable forest livelihood integrated with biodiversity conservation, supported by written materials (guidelines, evaluations, recommendations, training materials)	4. Efficient, effective monitoring and management of CFs, including formalising and implementing the mechanism within FDA to support recurrent costs of CFs, i.e. allocating certain forestry fees to CFs
	5. Report with clear lessons learned, procedures, recommendations for future CFs

- *Were the original objectives or operational plan modified during the project period? If significant changes were made, for what reason, and when were they approved by the Darwin Secretariat?*

No major adaptations of the original objectives during the project cycle took place although minor budgetary re-allocations were requested and approved by the Darwin Secretariat (Darwin letter 162/13/008, 14 February 2005).

- *Which of the Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) best describe the project? Summaries of the most relevant Articles to Darwin Projects are presented in Appendix I.*

Project Contribution to Articles under the Convention on Biological Diversity		
Article No./Title	Project %	Article Description
5. Co-operation (b/t Government, indigenous communities, NGOs and development agencies)		
6. General Measures for Conservation & Sustainable Use	15%	Develop national strategies that integrate conservation and sustainable use.
7. Identification and Monitoring		Identify and monitor components of biological diversity, particularly those requiring urgent conservation; identify processes and activities that have adverse effects; maintain and organise relevant data.
8. In-situ Conservation	15%	Establish systems of protected areas with guidelines for selection and management; regulate biological resources, promote protection of habitats; manage areas adjacent to protected areas; restore degraded ecosystems and recovery of threatened species; control risks associated with organisms modified by biotechnology; control spread of alien species; ensure compatibility between sustainable use of resources and their conservation; protect traditional lifestyles and knowledge on biological resources.
10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	15%	Integrate conservation and sustainable use in national decisions; protect sustainable customary uses; support local populations to implement remedial actions; encourage co-operation between governments and the private sector.

11. Incentive Measures	15%	Establish economically and socially sound incentives to conserve and promote sustainable use of biological diversity.
12. Research and Training	20%	Establish programmes for scientific and technical education in identification, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity components; promote research contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, particularly in developing countries (in accordance with SBSTTA recommendations).
13. Public Education and Awareness	20%	Promote understanding of the importance of measures to conserve biological diversity and propagate these measures through the media; cooperate with other states and organisations in developing awareness programmes.
14. Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts		Introduce EIAs of appropriate projects and allow public participation; take into account environmental consequences of policies; exchange information on impacts beyond State boundaries and work to reduce hazards; promote emergency responses to hazards; examine mechanisms for re-dress of international damage.
15. Access to Genetic Resources		Whilst governments control access to their genetic resources they should also facilitate access of environmentally sound uses on mutually agreed terms; scientific research based on a country's genetic resources should ensure sharing in a fair and equitable way of results and benefits.
16. Access to and Transfer of Technology		Countries shall ensure access to technologies relevant to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity under fair and most favourable terms to the source countries (subject to patents and intellectual property rights) and ensure the private sector facilitates such assess and joint development of technologies.
17. Exchange of Information		Countries shall facilitate information exchange and repatriation including technical scientific and socio-economic research, information on training and surveying programmes and local knowledge
19. Bio-safety Protocol		Countries shall take legislative, administrative or policy measures to provide for the effective participation in biotechnological research activities and to ensure all practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis, especially where they provide the genetic resources for such research.
Total %	100%	Check % = total 100

- *Briefly discuss how successful the project was in terms of meeting its objectives. What objectives were not or only partly achieved, and have there been significant additional accomplishments?*

Output 1: The Liberian National Forestry Reform Law was adopted on 19 September 2006. However, it fails to address adequately community land tenure, access and user rights or meaningful public participation in forest management and forest sector reform. The National Forestry Reform Law prioritizes commercial exploitation of Liberia's forests by industrial loggers. Community land tenure rights (but not access or user rights) are dealt with briefly within the new law but largely in terms of 'statements of intent' without detailed commitments. For example, there is no obligation that community land tenure rights be legally recognized in the commercial timber contracts and permits. This is left to social agreements between communities and holders of Forest Management Contracts and does not sufficiently protect communities who may not have the capacity or support to negotiate such contracts. This imbalance undermines the spirit of the "3C's" approach, which seeks to balance the community, conservation and commercial interests, and demonstrates the dominance of commercial forestry in the forestry reform process. To mitigate this, FFI is participating in various national fora to address these incongruences and the French GEF (FFEM) supported project that FFI is implementing provides important funding to further push the communal forestry agenda in Liberia.

Interestingly, this Darwin project demonstrated that the main interest expressed by local communities around Sapo NP resides in the legal opportunity to create communal forests where they would officially be recognised and be given user rights to manage the natural resources. Local communities see in this process a guarantee to avoid the return of foreign logging industries that ran their operations with no benefits nor compensation to the communities.

One of the tools to facilitate the establishment of Communal Forests and present a “road map” on how to establish Communal Forests is the communal forest manual. A second draft of the communal forest manual is developed but this doesn't resolve any incongruencies/issues between MIA and the FDA policy. At the heart of the matter is that the current forestry act is not building on a wider landscape/land-use planning. The MIA is the responsible government agency for, amongst others, landscape/ land-use planning. The problem is currently being addressed through the establishment of a National level Land-use Committee where various INGOs and Liberian Government partners participate. The real challenge though lies in addressing the absence of a clear linkage of how community forests fit into wider landscape level planning exercises and on how local communities can actually get their communal forests legally recognized at all levels. This limits the impact of a communal forest manual at this point in time.

Output 2: In 2005, this project began its field work with conducting 3 case studies that identified 51 grassroots organizations in Sapo National Park communities. The studies also examined the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership structures these organizations institutionalized to govern social relationships and catalyze resource use and management efficiency. The first step in efforts to strengthen grassroots leadership in the period covered by this report was the conduct of democratic elections of (communal forest) officers. This set of officers was to replace the current batch that had occupied positions through consensus, self-appointment or selection.

Elections were followed by formation of 3 communal forest associations namely, the **Upper Wedjah Communal Forest Association** (Juarzon: Zone I), the **Gbaybo Communal Forest Association** (Putu: Zone II), and the **Lower Jeadebo Communal Forest Development Association** (Jeadebo: Zone III). The third activity was for each association to prepare its own constitution and by-laws. The 3 CF associations have completed first drafts of their constitutions and by-laws and these documents have been rectified by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee organized by each association for that purpose. A team of the elected officers of each association and project management staff have reviewed these documents for further improvement and final rectification by the general assembly of each association in late 2006.

As mentioned in the earlier annual report, three communal forest areas have been selected – one in each of the three management zones of Sapo National Park – the selection being based on a set of selection criteria defined for the purpose in a participatory manner. These were that the site must be balanced with respect to : a) **geographic spread** (there must be a CF in each zone of the Park), b) **ethnicity** (the four ethnic groups found in Park communities must be represented), and c) **proximity to the Park** (the CF must be relatively close to the Park to function as a buffer zone). Three communal forests associations formed by local households in the three communal forest areas have been set up; **Gbaybo Chiefdom** Community Forest Association, **Lower Jeadebo** Community Forest Development Association and the **Upper Wedjah** Community Forest Association, in total these three associations cover approximately 23 villages.

Field reconnaissance to familiarize with these forests was conducted by a team consisting of CF staff and members of the concerned CF associations, as were consultative meetings to solicit suggestions from members of each cluster of the villages constituting the CF community in determining the size and exact location of each CF. The first activity during excursions was to demonstrate to participants the size of an acre or hectare as measured on a given piece of land. Because most of the locals do not know what area an acre or hectare actually covers, the team provided this information so that community members could be realistic about how large they would want their CF to be. With this information officers of each association, in consultation with the general membership, suggested the size of each forest. Upper Wedjah Communal Forest Association suggested a 2000-hectare area, Gbaybo, 50000, and Lower Jeadebo, 20000. The size suggested in Lower Jeadebo appears possible and Upper Wedjah may even increase the size of its forest to about 10000-15000. However, it appears impossible for any of these forests to go up to 50000 hectares. These ideas had been presented to each association in separate meetings with its leadership. With the question of size hanging in the balance, it was impossible to have flagged any of these communal forest areas in the 3 zones as was planned by this project. Also, there currently is a dispute in Zone I & Zone II over the size and location 'on the ground' of areas where the Park had been extended few years ago. As mentioned earlier the problem is further compounded by the lack of a legally grounded national level land use planning albeith this is currently (July 2007) being addressed.

Output 3: At the time of this final report, 26 households in the 3 management zones of the Park have been engaged in various small-scale gardening and agro-forestry activities. These activities were preceded by a series of planning tasks (community-led selection of participating households, identification of household-preferred crops, preparation of calendars of activities, site selection). Other activities preparatory to planting included purchase of planting material and demonstration of appropriate planting methods, including proper spacing for various crops and ploughing, to household gardeners. These activities have involved intensive continuous on-the-job training involving FFI staff and FDA Communal Forestry officers.

Output 4: The FFI Communal Forestry team that is based in the Sapo region always works with Liberian government counterparts. Throughout the projects duration the Liberian Government was in a state of reorganization, FDA in particular and less so MIA. Government partners have stabilized recently with staff re-organization, organizational audits, etc. having been concluded. Counterparts have been working intensively on CF issues with the FFI project team. Although no formal training was undertaken, the close collaboration between the FFI-CF team and government/NGO counterparts could be characterized as an on-the-job training process resulting in improved capacity of FDA/MIA and NGO counterparts to deal with communal forestry issues. In fact, FFI moved into the FDA offices in early 2007 (the only INGO to do so), resulting in continuous skills transfer and on-the-job training. However, efficient and effective monitoring and management of CFs at the national level (for reasons already mentioned) is not in place. Local structures are in place and communities monitor their CFs themselves. National level CF activities have not been formalized and this is mainly attributable to government reform and delays in formulating and amending the forestry legislative framework. The legal frameworks pertaining to communal forestry at the national level have very recently been adopted but it will take months for its effects to filter down to local communities.

In a process to further strengthen capacity of the FDA in communal forestry, FFI is engaging with Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) and the German Agro Action (GAA) to, respectively, meet the social infrastructural

(construction/renovation of school buildings, latrines, water pumps, village halls, etc) and food security needs of the CF community. In this way, FFI hopes to establish a positive linkage between conservation on the one hand and communal forestry and livelihood issues on the other hand.

Output 5: Limited progress has been made towards this objective. A second draft Communal Forestry manual has been designed and awaits further adaptations and amendments. A variety of reports have been produced and these are expected to be compiled in 2007 with support from the Dutch Government funded DGIS-livelihoods project.

In the period covered by this final report many of the issues raised in the earlier progress report have been addressed. The most important of these, being that local communities clearly realized the necessity of having some form of ownership over these forests. They expressed a clear need for either having the deeds to the communal forests or having clear resource ownership rights. This has now been addressed through the formation of community forestry associations and the setting aside of community forests at the local level. However, as mentioned before, the forestry act fails to address adequately community land tenure, access and user rights or meaningful public participation in forest management and forest sector reform. This is a major obstacle towards the successful implementation of communal forests in Liberia.

4. Scientific, Training, and Technical Assessment

- *Please provide a full account of the project's research, training, and/or technical work.*

The project supported various research and training activities as well as technical interventions that are listed below (see also detailed log-frame in appendix 1).

Type *	Detail
Research	<i>Various in-country studies conducted by the CTA on-site and at the FDA-Monrovia level to help formulate an implementation strategy for development around Sapo National Park. (Technical report available).</i>
Research	<i>Assessments conducted by CTA to identify grass-root governance structures in communities around Sapo National Park (technical report available).</i>
Research	<i>Review conducted by CTA of existing development interventions in and around Sapo National Park.</i>
Research	<i>CTA identified opportunities for agro-forestry and conservation around Sapo National Park.</i>
Training	<i>CTA trained FDA staff on-the-job at the site level in various aspects of community engagement and communal forestry.</i>
Training	<i>CTA trained various focal families at the site level in technical aspects of home-gardening, agro-forestry and improved cropping techniques.</i>
Technical intervention	<i>Formulation of the first draft of the communal forestry manual that was presented during a workshop.</i>
Technical intervention	<i>Introduction of improved crops at the site level.</i>

- **Research** - *this should include details of staff, methodology, findings and the extent to which research findings have been subject to peer review.*

Reports listed below have been submitted to the Darwin Secretariat.

Research type *	Title	Methodology	Publishers (name, city)	Available from	Author
Report	<i>"Defining an Implementation Strategy for Development around Sapo National Park"</i>	<i>Interviews, meetings</i>	<i>FFI report (Electronic)</i>	<i>FFI-Cambridge</i>	<i>Dr. Sam Koffa</i>
Report	<i>"Preliminary Assessment of Grassroots Structures of Governance in Communities Around Sapo National Park"</i>	<i>Interviews, meetings</i>	<i>FFI report (Electronic)</i>	<i>FFI-Cambridge</i>	<i>Dr. Sam Koffa</i>
Report	<i>"Review of Conservation and Development Interventions in Communities around Sapo National Park"</i>	<i>Interviews, meetings</i>	<i>FFI-report (Electronic)</i>	<i>FFI-Cambridge</i>	<i>Dr. Sam Koffa</i>
Report	<i>"Opportunities for Agroforestry and Conservation around Sapo National Park"</i>	<i>Interviews, meetings, literature research</i>	<i>FFI-Report</i>	<i>FFI-Cambridge</i>	<i>Dr. Sam Koffa</i>

Most training that took place was informal and on-the job as this proved to be the most effective form of transferring skills and knowledge. Training took place at two levels; firstly at the FDA-Monrovia through interaction with the Communal Forestry Department (mostly informal on-the-job training) and secondly at the site level where the CTA and Liberian TA of the project trained FDA staff as well as villagers on-the-job

5. Project Impacts

The New Forestry Act was passed by the Liberian Senate in September 2006. The new legislation acknowledges community rights but mechanisms controlling benefits from the forestry operations to local communities are not clarified. This illustrates that a real integration of the three Cs is still on the far horizon although progress is being made through FFI's participation in various fora that aim to inform and address the integration of the three Cs in the forestry sector and land-use legislation. However, the question remains how the legislature will respond to an amendment of the section on community rights that has far reaching implications for the balance of power or their influence/authority in the sector? This issue is currently being addressed through the FFI EU funded project and the real challenge lies in establishing an interface between field-based Community Forestry activities and developments at the national legislative level.

Various community based structures have been set up and strengthened to implement Communal Forests around Sapo National Park. This activity is ongoing under the FFEM project. The pilot communities have drafted local constitutions and by-laws for the establishment of Communal Forests and recently the first community has submitted a formal request to the Forest Development Authority to legally set aside the first Communal Forest around Sapo National Park. Although this request cannot be formally processed because the forestry legislation is being amended, hopes are that the first communal forest will be set aside in the latter half of 2007.

Through various other projects (FFEM, EU and GEF) FFI is aiming to facilitate sustainable management of environmental and biological resources in the Sapo area.

The Darwin project provided important funding to collect baseline data on communities and start this process through piloting communal forestry approaches around Sapo National Park. Interventions around Sapo have expanded significantly (approximately 2.000.000 US\$ of FFI project interventions) and mostly built on the ground work done through the Darwin project. The integration of local livelihoods with the conservation objectives of Sapo National Park through communal forestry was one of the main pillars of the Darwin project. Given the enormous potential that communal forestry has demonstrated in Liberia, FFI continues building on this approach.

- *To what extent has the project achieved its purpose, i.e. how has it helped the host country to meet its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention (CBD), or what indication is there that it is likely to do so in the future? Information should be provided on plans, actions or policies by the host institution and government resulting directly from the project that building on new skills and research findings.*

The Government of Liberia is a signatory to the CBD. One of the key obstacles is that due to lack of capacity in the various government institutions plans and actions or policies have not really crystallized at this point in time. However, the Darwin project has led to the establishment of a Community Department within the Forest Development Authority, the main Government partner in this project. This in turn has led to an active push of community concerns in broader discussions pertaining to wider land-use and cross-sectoral issues such as the establishment of a Protected Areas Network, the push for sustainable (certified) commercial logging under the EU FLEGT initiative, mining and agriculture. The inclusion of community issues is illustrated in the FDA annual work plans (commercial, conservation and community) that call for well-defined “stakeholder” consultation processes in all steps of the sequence of creating either commercial logging concessions, protected areas and communal forests.

- *If there were training or capacity building elements to the project, to what extent has this improved local capacity to further biodiversity work in the host country and what is the evidence for this? Where possible, please provide information on what each student / trainee is now doing (or what they expect to be doing in the longer term).*

As mentioned before, training and capacity building were key activities during the project at a variety of levels. Most training focused at the field level where FDA and village staff were trained on various aspects of communal forestry through on-the-job training.

At the site level this contributed to the training of one FDA Communal Forest Officer as well as one MIA Communal Forest Officer. In each of the village pilot sites various villagers were trained on-the-job and this process is continuing with support of the FFEM project. At the national level (FDA-Monrovia) the Darwin project facilitated the establishment of the Community Department where various staff were trained in communal forestry issues such as community organization, demarcation, legislative aspects and CF activities (agro-forestry, home-gardens, etc.)

- *Discuss the impact of the project in terms of collaboration to date between UK and local partner. What impact has the project made on local collaboration such as improved links between Governmental and civil society groups?*

The project has definitely led to increased awareness regarding the Darwin Initiative in Liberia. Various collaborative efforts between the Government of Liberia, civil society groups and FFI are under way to develop new proposals building on the lessons learned from this project.

- *In terms of social impact, who has benefited from the project? Has the project had (or is likely to result in) an unexpected positive or negative impact on individuals or local communities? What are the indicators for this and how were they measured?*

FDA staff and villagers benefited from this project. Indicators are increased levels of awareness regarding communal forestry concepts and approaches. Indirect benefits to local communities in the future might include diversified livelihood options (improved home-gardens, agro-forestry and various other CF activities).

REVISED PROJECT OUTPUTS(Submitted by Jamison Suter October 24th 2005)		
Year/Month (starting April)	Standard Output Number (see standard output list)	Description (include numbers of people involved, publications produced, days/weeks etc)
November-December 04	6A 6B	10 Liberians (FDA, MIA, NGOs) trained in TR/CF laws and regulations, 10 people x 0.5 weeks = 5 weeks
January 06 onwards	6A 6B	10 Liberians (FDA, MIA, NGOs) trained in community consultation & awareness-raising techniques, and facilitation techniques. Follow-on in-the-field. 2 weeks of TA x 10 people = 20 weeks
By April 06	6A	On-the-ground training in sustainable forest-use/NRM to 3 CFECs and Liberian ENGO staff, plus on-going TA in these topics
By August 06	6B	2 weeks x 50 people = 100 weeks (plus 12 weeks of TA to participants)
	6A 6B	3 CFECs trained in management & administration; MIA, FDA and NGO field staff trained in meeting facilitation with on-going TA in this topic 2 weeks x 50 people = 100 weeks (plus on-going TA to participants)
Same dates as above	7	4 sets of training materials prepared, one for each major topic listed above
Starting in May 04 but esp. after Sept 04	8	J Murray = 3 weeks J Suter – 7 weeks/year x 3 years = 21 weeks TOTAL = 24 weeks
November 06	9	3local, simple management plans finalised
December 04 to March 07	14A	60 (estimated) workshops/seminars/rural meetings, mostly in Sinoe County with villages, local authorities and County officials, plus a few in Monrovia, esp. in 2004 and fist half of 2005 to agree communal forest policy and in March 07 to present evaluation recommendations.
	14B	CF findings and policies presented and debated at Liberian National Forestry Policy workshop (June 2005) and Community Forestry in Liberia Workshop (December 2005) and communal forestry manual workshop (March 2006).
Beginning September 04 to March 07	15A	At least 5
	15B	At least 30 (including town crier announcements)
mid-2005 and late 2006 (est.)	15C	2 write-ups in FFI Magazine or <i>ORYX</i>
Throughout project lifetime, but esp. late 2004, May-July 06 and Mar 07	19A	At least 3
	19C	At least 20 (incl. rural radio)
April 04 to March 07	20	£40,000 (est.) although with depreciation over the project lifetime their value will be lower at the time they are handed over post-project
By late 2006	22	3 (one for each CF to be used as a control for monitoring the CF)
April 04 to March 07	23	£527,712 (est.) – THIS ESTIMATE IS HIGHLY OPEN TO INTERPRETATION BECAUSE OF WHAT ONE COULD CONSIDER DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT CO-FINANCING TO THE INITIATIVE.

6. Project Outputs

- *Quantify all project outputs in the table in Appendix II using the coding and format of the Darwin Initiative Standard Output Measures.*

- Explain differences in actual outputs against those in the agreed schedule, i.e. what outputs were not achieved or only partly achieved? Were additional outputs achieved? Give details in the table in Appendix II.

REVISED PROJECT OUTPUTS(Submitted by Jamison Suter October 24th 2005)		
Year/Month (starting April)	Standard Output Number (see standard output list)	Description (include numbers of people involved, publications produced, days/weeks etc). (Differences in blue)
November-December 04	6A 6B	10 Liberians (FDA, MIA, NGOs) trained in Communal forestry approaches but not in CF laws/legislation as this is still under development. 10 people x 0.5 weeks = 5 weeks
January 06 onwards	6A 6B	accomplished
By April 06	6A 6B	accomplished
By August 06	6A 6B	accomplished
Same dates as above	7	2 nd draft communal forestry manual finalized that incorporates elements of topics above.
Starting in May 04 but esp. after Sept 04	8	accomplished
November 06	9	accomplished
December 04 to March 07	14A 14B	Approximately 30 meetings held. Mainly attributable to problems targeting appropriate target audience due to re-organization FDA and MIA. Management Advisory Committee has not been established due to reasons mentioned above. Accomplished and communal forestry manual workshop (March 2006) organized.
Beginning September 04 to March 07	15A 15B	Partially accomplished Partially accomplished
mid-2005 and late 2006 (est.)	15C	Not accomplished
Throughout project lifetime, but esp. late 2004, May-July 06 and Mar 07	19A 19C	Partially accomplished Partially accomplished
April 04 to March 07	20	accomplished
By late 2006	22	accomplished
April 04 to March 07	23	accomplished

- Provide full details in Appendix III of all publications and material that can be publicly accessed, e.g. title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Details will be recorded on the Darwin Monitoring Website database.

Research type *	Title	Methodology	Publishers (name, city)	Available from	Author
Report	"Defining an Implementation Strategy for Development around Sapo National Park"	Interviews, meetings	FFI report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Dr. Sam Koffa
Report	"Preliminary Assessment of Grassroots Structures of Governance in Communities Around Sapo National Park"	Interviews, meetings	FFI report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Dr. Sam Koffa
Report	"Review of Conservation and Development Interventions in Communities around Sapo National Park"	Interviews, meetings	FFI-report (Electronic)	FFI-Cambridge	Dr. Sam Koffa
Report	"Opportunities for Agroforestry and Conservation around Sapo National Park"	Interviews, meetings, literature research	FFI-Report	FFI-Cambridge	Dr. Sam Koffa

- How has information relating to project outputs and outcomes been disseminated, and who was/is the target audience? Will this continue or develop after project completion and, if so, who will be responsible and bear the cost of further information dissemination?

Information has been disseminated to the FDA and MIA as well as LNGOs. The FFEM project will fund further dissemination of communal forestry information (approach, lessons-learned & best management practices) to the above audience as well as a wider audience.

7. Project Expenditure

- *Tabulate grant expenditure using the categories in the original application/schedule.*
- *Highlight agreed changes to the budget.*
- *Explain any variation in expenditure where this is +/- 10% of the budget.*

Current Year's Costs	2005/6 Grant ^A	Claimed so far in 2005/6 (not incl. present claim)	Remainder for 2006/7

Main underspending occurred in the conferences/seminars budget line. This is mainly attributable to the fact that many of these expenditures have been taken over by other donors.

8. Project Operation and Partnerships

- *How many local partners worked on project activities and how does this differ from initial plans for partnerships? Who were the main partners and the most active partners, and what is their role in biodiversity issues? How were partners involved in project planning and implementation? Were plans modified significantly in response to local consultation?*

FDA, MIA and SCNL have participated in this project in accordance with the initial plans for partnerships. The most active government partner has been the FDA that recently finalized the restructuring exercise. Participation of the MIA has been limited due to continuous re-structuring. FDA is the government mandated agency to manage Liberia's forests and protected areas network. It has established a variety of departments of which the conservation, community and commercial department are worth mentioning here. It actively pursues the integrating of the Government of Liberia endorsed approach of integrating the 3 Cs (Commercial, Community, Conservation). Throughout the project the FDA has been involved in planning and implementation. Piloting of communal forests around Sapo National Park has informed the legislative process around Liberia's forests which is illustrated by the inclusion of communal forestry aspects in the recently accepted New Forestry Act.

- *During the project lifetime, what collaboration existed with similar projects (Darwin or other) elsewhere in the host country? Was there consultation with the host country Biodiversity Strategy (BS) Office?*

None such collaboration and neither consultation took place during the projects timeframe.

- *How many international partners participated in project activities? Provide names of main international partners.*

At the end of the projects timeframe but still partially overlapping the Darwin project, CI started implementation of an USAID funded initiative “Community Conservation Corps”. This project seeks to establish positive linkages between conservation and livelihoods through a variety of approaches such as incentive payments and community environmental awareness raising. Although having a different approach towards establishing positive community-conservation linkages as compared to this Darwin funded project, it does built on lessons-learned from the Darwin project. FDA, FFI and CI have closely worked together to seek synergies between both projects.

- *To your knowledge, have the local partnerships been active after the end of the Darwin Project and what is the level of their participation with the local biodiversity strategy process and other local Government activities? Is more community participation needed and is there a role for the private sector?*

Aforementioned partnerships are still active. Integration with national biodiversity strategy and other local government activities is still on the far horizon due to the emphasis on national level government restructuring at the expense of local (provincial) level restructuring and the lack of local (provincial) capacity and awareness in relation to biodiversity strategies, legislation and enforcement, landuse planning, etc. Community consultation, participation and factual involvement is being pushed through a variety of FFI-implemented projects such as the FFEM project. However, one of the main hurdles to take is active broad stakeholder consultation and involvement in the broader land-use planning debate that is taking place in Liberia now. Private sector (BHP-Billiton, Mittal and the commercial logging industry) might be able to positively facilitate broader stakeholder and in particular community involvement in the national land use planning debate.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation, Lesson learning

- *Please explain your strategy for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and give an outline of results. How does this **demonstrate** the value of the project? E.g. what baseline information was collected (e.g. scientific, social, economic), milestones in the project design, and indicators to identify your achievements (at purpose and goal level).*

FDA and SCNL have prepared reports with respect to their participation in the project, according to their normal procedures. These have been drawn on heavily during all phases of the project cycle. As discussed before many of the recommendations and reports produced have provided valuable baseline data (see previous table with list of reports and materials produced) that have guided project implementation and the inclusion of community issues in the broader cross-sectoral and land use debates at the national level.

- *What were the main problems and what steps were taken to overcome them?*

Difficulties were encountered in promoting the idea that a community can own or have a state-recognized right to use and manage a forest. This is largely attributable to the ‘culture of dependency’ instilled in rural communities by the highly centralized forest management system of government. After decades of paternalistic relations between the state and rural communities it, understandably, has been an uphill battle selling the idea that such communities can responsibility for managing their forests.

Grassroots communities are complex social realities, for this reason it is impossible to separate out forest management from other concerns such as gender issues,

farming, social organization, non-agricultural activities, employment and cash income generation, etc. Experience shows that communal forest management capacities can only be built successfully when there is a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the community of interest.

Facilitating processes that will strengthen environmental governance issues take time and continuous effort, often well beyond the project time-frame. It is important to remember that efforts to enhance governance and resource management and use systems are not starting from zero. Many of the communities have managed their own environment for a long time, however well or badly, so that traditional knowledge of forest management of some form exists. Any project intervention should build on these indigenous knowledge systems. Clearly, communities are not totally inexperienced as managers: they manage their households, agricultural systems, religious or cultural events, as well as their relations with others and the state. However, in the light of arising challenges such as climate change and associated carbon markets, the conservation paradigm, etc. communities' rights and responsibilities for retaining forest need to be recognized and fairly compensated based on sustainable and equitable use of forest resources, and improved governance of these resources, making a substantial contribution to poverty reduction, conservation and avoided destruction in Liberia.

FFI, through the FFEM, EU and GEF funded initiatives will in particular focus on approaches that can (1) improve the legal and policy environment for land tenure, property & access rights and natural resource management in forest projects; (2) build the capacity of communities and their governmental and non-governmental partners to develop and sustain communal forest concessions and possibly future community carbon concessions; and (3) generate environmentally-sustainable and equitable economic benefits for rural residents. Underlying these actions is the need to develop, strengthen and foster the enabling environment through the implementation of pilot activities that can potentially be replicated in many areas of the country.

- *During the project period, has there been an internal or external evaluation of the work or are there any plans for this?*

Reviews are conducted upon submission of each report. An internal review was conducted in 2005 of FFIs' Liberia programme and part of this review focused on the Darwin Initiative funded Communal Forestry Project.

- *What are the key lessons to be drawn from the experience of this project? We would welcome your comments on any broader lessons for Darwin Initiative as a programme or practical lessons that could be valuable to other projects, as we would like to present this information on a website page.*

Land and property rights laws and policies in Liberia are unclear. There is no consensus at the national level on what Liberia's property rights system should be, how dual legal structures (customary and statutory) should function in one legal framework, or if the state should be engaged in land redistribution, which would imply that the state would take land from one group to give to another. While some laws (e.g., the recent 2006 Forestry Law) defining property rights exist, many laws are outdated. While there is a community forestry policy in place, this policy has not been fleshed out and as yet there are no government-sponsored community forestry programs. The creation of a law governing community rights with respect to forest lands (mandated pursuant to the Forestry Law of 2006 for passage in 2007) and its accompanying policies and regulations is explicitly supported by many donors.

Community forestry (CF) is the most recent addition to the Liberian forestry sector and is defined as a process of increasing community involvement and ownership in the management of forest resources, including natural forests, plantations, and agroforestry systems adjacent to forests, in order to promote sustainable use of these resources, increased revenue generation, increased devolution of authority, improved democratic governance processes and more secure tenure and property rights for communities. One of the key challenges is the lack of mechanisms that assure that benefits are generated, shared and distributed in equitable ways amongst all stakeholders involved. At the heart of the matter is the lack of transparent and equitable forest resources governing mechanisms. This situation can have possibly dire consequences that will negatively impact local communities and especially marginalised people in society. This may eventually lead to a return to civil-conflict and associated regional instability and humanitarian disaster.

Key lesson learned is that continuity of engagement is essential. Good governance forms the foundation of sustainable development. Strengthening good governance takes time well beyond the scope of most project cycles. Without assuring continuity the danger arises that previous efforts to strengthen governance basically erode away.

10. Actions taken in response to annual report reviews (if applicable)

- *Have you responded to issues raised in the reviews of your annual reports? Have you discussed the reviews with your collaborators? Briefly summarise what actions have been taken over the lifetime of the project as a result of recommendations from previous reviews (if applicable).*

11. Darwin Identity

- *What effort has the project made to publicise the Darwin Initiative, e.g. where did the project use the Darwin Initiative logo, promote Darwin funding opportunities or projects? Was there evidence that Darwin Fellows or Darwin Scholars/Students used these titles?*

Darwin logo was used on project vehicles as well as a variety of publications.

- *What is the understanding of Darwin Identity in the host country? Who, within the host country, is likely to be familiar with the Darwin Initiative and what evidence is there to show that people are aware of this project and the aims of the Darwin Initiative?*

The FDA and SCNL are definitely aware of the Darwin Initiative. Evidence includes the fact that both FDA, MIA and SCNL staff actively participated in all phases of the project cycle leading to increased awareness of this project as well as the aims of the Darwin Initiative.

- *Considering the project in the context of biodiversity conservation in the host country, did it form part of a larger programme or was it recognised as a distinct project with a clear identity?*

The project formed part of the larger GEF funded programme “Biodiversity Conservation in the Republic of Liberia’s Sapo National Park”. However, despite this it was recognized as a distinct project with its own identity.

12. Leverage

- *During the lifetime of the project, what additional funds were attracted to biodiversity work associated with the project, including additional investment by partners?*

FFEM: 830.000 Euros leveraged.

EU: 1.800.000 Euros leveraged.

Conservation International, one of FFIs' partners leveraged a further 1.400.000 US\$ for an environmental awareness building project around Sapo National Park.

- *What efforts were made by UK project staff to strengthen the capacity of partners to secure further funds for similar work in the host country and were attempts made to capture funds from international donors?*

FFI-Liberia is in-house with one of the main partners, the Forest Development Authority, and has worked on a daily basis with FDA staff on all project activities. FFI-Liberia staff has furthermore assisted the FDA in developing proposals for a variety of initiatives such as the upcoming USAID funded communal forestry project.

13. Sustainability and Legacy

- *What project achievements are most likely to endure? What will happen to project staff and resources after the project ends? Are partners likely to keep in touch?*

The communal forestry manual developed under the Darwin Initiative funded project has proved to be a valuable tool to guide communal forestry activities in the country. Most project staff will continue to receive support and training under the current FFEM funded project that focuses to a large extent on communal forestry. Resources have been transmitted to in-country partners. Partners stay in touch through the Liberian Forestry Initiative and various working groups and committees that have been established.

- *Have the project's conclusions and outputs been widely applied? How could legacy have been improved?*

Yes, see remarks above. Legacy could be improved by assuring continuity of the project on a larger scale (piloting communal forests in other localities in Liberia).

- *Are additional funds being sought to continue aspects of the project (funds from where and for which aspects)?*

Yes, additional funds have been secured through FFEM to continue the communal forestry interventions around Sapo National Park.

14. Value for money

- *Considering the costs and benefits of the project, how do you rate the project in terms of value for money and what evidence do you have to support these conclusions?*

The rapidly evolving political and institutional environment in Liberia necessitates an adaptive project framework, something that is not optimally supported in the current setup of Darwin Initiative supported projects. This negatively impacts efficient and coherent implementation of the project in its limited timeframe.

15. Appendix I: Darwin Contacts

To assist us with future evaluation work and feedback on your report, please provide contact details below.

Project Title	Establishing community-based forest biodiversity management around Sapo Park, Liberia
Ref. No.	13/008
UK Leader Details	Fauna & Flora International
Name	Stephen van der Mark
Role within Darwin Project	Overall project coordinator
Address	Fauna & Flora International, 4 th floor Jupiter House Station Road, CB1 2JD, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Other UK Contact (if relevant)	FFI-Liberia
Name	Richard Sambolah
Role within Darwin Project	Technical Assistant
Address	Fauna & Flora International--Liberia 2nd Fl, Kappa House, Elise Saliby Compound Congo Town, 1000 Monrovia 10, Liberia
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Partner 1	Forest Development Authority
Name	John Woods (Managing Director)
Organisation	FDA
Role within Darwin Project	None Directly, but Managing Director of the Forest Development Authority, the main Liberian Government partner
Address	
Fax	
Email	
Partner 2 (if relevant)	
Name	
Organisation	
Role within Darwin Project	
Address	
Fax	
Email	