



USAID | **LIBERIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PEOPLE, RULES, AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES (PROSPER)

DELIVERABLE 17A: AN ASSESSMENT REPORT OF
DELIVERABLE 17

FEBRUARY 2016

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Tetra Tech.

This report was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development, Contract No. AID-669-C-12-00004, People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER) Project.

Principal contacts:

Paul Meadows, Chief of Party, Tetra Tech ARD, Monrovia, Liberia, Paul.Meadows@tetratech.com
Vaneska Litz, Project Manager, Tetra Tech ARD, Burlington, Vermont, Vaneska.Litz@tetratech.com

Implemented by:

Tetra Tech ARD
People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER)
19th Street and Payne Avenue, Sinkor
Monrovia, Liberia

Tetra Tech ARD
P.O. Box 1397
Burlington, VT 05402
Tel: 802-495-0282

LIBERIA: PEOPLE, RULES, AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES (PROSPER)

DELIVERABLE 17A:
AN ASSESSMENT REPORT OF DELIVERABLE 17 –
SERIES OF BROCHURES, RADIO PROGRAMS,
COMMUNITY THEATER, AND VIDEO PRODUCTS
DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED
FOREST PRODUCT AND AGRICULTURAL
ENTERPRISES IN LIBERIA

FEBRUARY 2016

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Acronyms ii**
- Background 1**
- The Third Campaign..... 2**
 - THE FOCUS 2
 - OUTREACH PRODUCTS..... 3
 - OUTREACH PROCESS..... 6
 - CONCLUSIONS..... 7
- Annex I – The Campaign Rollout Process 9**

ACRONYMS

APM	Advanced Participation Methods
CF	Community Forestry
CFOC	Community Forest Organizing Committees
CFWG	Community Forestry Working Group
CRL	Community Rights Law
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FMC	Forest Management Concession
FUG	Forest User Groups
KAB	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors
LL	Lessons Learned
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PROSPER	People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

BACKGROUND

The People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER) program is designed to introduce, operationalize, and refine appropriate models for community management of forest resources for local self-governance and enterprise development in Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. The three primary objectives of the program are:

1. expand educational and institutional capacity to improve environmental awareness, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and environmental compliance;
2. improve community-based forest management, leading to more sustainable practices and reduced threats to biodiversity in target areas; and
3. enhance community-based livelihoods derived from sustainable forest-based and agriculture-based enterprises in target areas.

The PROSPER Scope of Work identified the need to revitalize the Community Forestry Working Group (CFWG) with support from USAID. PROSPER has worked to build bridges between civil society organizations and government, two groups that had often been at odds during the Community Rights Law (CRL) drafting process. The development and implementation of an annual Outreach Campaign was envisioned as a shared activity that would allow these two groups to identify priorities, jointly develop key themes and messages, and cooperatively deliver and implement a campaign to further a shared vision for “[e]xpanded ... capacity to improve environmental awareness, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and environmental compliance” as well as “[e]nhance community-based forest management” and “community-based livelihoods derived from sustainable forest-based ... enterprises.”

The first outreach campaign focused on creating awareness of the CRL. The second outreach campaign focused on the process of establishing recognized community forests under Liberian Law. Through feedback and input from 10 communities in Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties, the third outreach campaign primarily focused on conserving biodiversity and reducing threats to it. Target audiences for the third annual outreach campaign were public officials, policy makers, stakeholders in the forestry sector, and forest user groups (FUGs)

This report reviews and makes recommendations on PROSPER’s third annual outreach campaign focused on pilot communities in and around Buchanan, District 4, Tappita, and Sanniquellie. The report discusses and makes recommendations on 1) the focus of the third campaign, 2) outreach products, and 3) the effectiveness of outreach activities. We conclude with discussion and recommendations for the focus of the fourth campaign.

This report is based on the results of the Lessons Learned Workshops held December 14, 15, and 23, 2015, in Tappita, Sanniquellie, and Buchanan, in which 199 participants discussed observations and issues from the campaign. It considers results from the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (KAB) baseline and endline surveys for forest communities conducted June 1–13, 2015, and September 15–25, 2015, respectively. It is also based on independent interviews (held February, 1–5, 2016) with Community Forestry Working Group (CFWG) members and Community Forestry Organizing Committees (CFOCs)’ co-chairs for Gbear-Gblor.

THE THIRD CAMPAIGN

THE FOCUS

Community Forestry still faces many challenges to its adoption and implementation as a viable management alternative. Forest-dependent livelihoods such as chainsaw logging, shifting cultivation, mining, collection of non-timber forest products, and other unsustainably practiced forest livelihood activities are putting significant pressure on forest biodiversity. While the first and second campaigns focused on educating the public on the community rights law and process of gaining authorized community forestry status, the third campaign focused on “biodiversity conservation ... reducing threats to biodiversity ... and doing activities that are linked to biodiversity threat reduction with communities.” The campaign also placed a spotlight on the CRL and the CRL Regulations.

The third campaign theme was “Community and Forest, the Welfare of All.” This theme was developed by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), PROSPER, and the CFWG to emphasize the importance of protecting forest biodiversity, to draw community attention to the debilitating effects of the unsustainable practices of forest management activities, and to shift livelihoods out of the forests and into alternative enterprises, primarily focused on agriculture.

While this focus was generally well received, participants in the Lessons Learned (LL) Workshops had mixed impressions about the effectiveness of some of the messages. Some participants of the Lessons Learned Workshops felt the community outreach task force fell short in accurately delivering the campaign messages. They noted that more should have been done to ensure a broader participation of other community members in the to ensure messages were pretested across different communities. For example, alternative livelihoods messages such as the ones designed to promote beekeeping, improved farming methods, and low-impact agricultural activities could have been effectively paired with the biodiversity protection messages. Dissemination of these kinds of messages support education of FUGs on viable alternatives to illegal hunting, fishing, shifting cultivation, forest product collection, and other practices that are degrading local forests.

Furthermore, campaign messages might have been perceived as negative. Subtle positive messages could have possibly achieved a similar behavioral change. Examples include:

- *The law will hunt those who hunt protected animals; know the wildlife law—protect wildlife.* A positive spin on this message that should be pre-tested might be, “Protect wildlife: Know the wildlife law—protected animals are almost gone.”
- *Report illegal chainsaw logging ... hunting to FDA: Call +231-770 741 754.* A positive spin on this message could be: “We are all responsible to prevent illegal [hunting, logging, mangrove harvesting, etc.] in the forest. Call the FDA at +231 770 741 754 if you see illegal activity in the forest.”
- *When you hunt protected animals, you’re in big trouble with FDA. Hunters: set good examples.* A more direct education approach on this message could be, “Hunting, killing, selling, capturing, or eating protected animals is illegal and subject to a minimum fine of \$250 and/or imprisonment for up to 6 months.”

Also noteworthy is PROSPER’s support for lowland and swamp farming as an alternative to forest-dependent livelihoods. This alternative has since been suspended because of concerns over swamp biodiversity destruction. These examples demonstrate the need for rigorous review and pre-testing of campaign messages. PROSPER is taking steps to prevent possible negative messages from becoming part of future campaigns.

Terminology plays an important role in natural resources management and communications at higher levels of government and civil society but a less important role in the behavior of communities whose members are reliant on subsistence livelihoods for survival. Nonetheless, public education on the definitions of these terms is important for building knowledge in forest-dependent communities. Natural resources terms and phrases like “shifting cultivation,” “biodiversity,” “threat to biodiversity,” were a focus of the messages in the third campaign. The focus on these words and phrases was to familiarize communities with their meanings in the context of natural resources management. Selected results suggested that 88% of respondents had heard of the word “biodiversity” after the campaign, while only 46% had heard of it before the campaign. Seventy-five percent of endline respondents had a good sense of what “threat” means in the context of forest-dependent livelihoods, up from 70%. Only 60% of respondents understood whether shifting cultivation was good or bad for forests. And 59% of respondents to the endline KAB said that shifting cultivation could be reduced if information on improved ways of farming in one place were available.

These and other results from the endline KAB demonstrate the significant challenges to educating the public on the disadvantages of degrading forest resources. However, there were some notable improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors over the baseline as well: 96% of respondents to the endline KAB believe local hunters are aware that the FDA enforces a law that protects animals, as compared with only 89% at baseline.

Identification of the target audience is an important part of any successful campaign. Chainsaw operators and hunters appear to be ignoring or not receiving the messages designed to influence their behavior. This could be due to the fact that most chainsaw operators and hunters do not reside in the communities where they operate.

When the owner of a logging company was asked about the outreach campaign, he was unaware that it existed. Someone closely associated with the outreach campaign said that “he is just a small business and not knowledgeable of the campaign.” Local leaders/elites should be a primary target of future biodiversity conservation messages because they play a significant role in allowing illegal activities to continue. Similarly, youth and students should be a primary target for biodiversity conservation messages. Mobilizers and outreach coordinators are taking steps to more actively engage these community members who may not be familiar with the campaign’s messages.

OUTREACH PRODUCTS

The third annual outreach campaign produced a number of new products, including different styles of T-shirts, a calendar, and radio programs as well as a new theme song and posters. Below is a ranking of outreach materials across communities that appear to be popular. T-shirts were ranked as the most popular materials in Tappita and Buchanan and the second most popular in Sanniquellie. The wildlife poster was the most popular in Sanniquellie. While the popularity of the materials is important for influencing knowledge and behavior change, it may not change the public’s knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

As would be expected, the types of messages and their relationship to the local environment influenced their popularity. The illegal chainsaw poster was the second most popular in Tappita and the sea turtle poster was the second most popular in Buchanan.

Ranking of Materials Across Communities

NO.	TOOL	TAPPITA SCORE	SANNIQUELLIE SCORE	BUCHANAN SCORE
1	T-Shirt	102	58	67
2	Illegal Chainsaw	101	54	58
3	Calendar	92	44	NA
4	Illegal Hunting	88	61	43
5	Illegal Mining	86	49	47
6	Wildlife Poster	86	65	50
7	Biodiversity	78	40	36
8	Timeline poster	74	50	51
9	Sea Turtle Poster	NA	NA	61
10	Poor people poster	58	43	40
11	Mangrove Poster	NA	NA	53

Below are brief conclusions and recommendations that can be drawn from discussion of the different outreach materials.

T-shirts: most popular due to their functional value. Messages that are appropriate for T-shirts should be focus-grouped further, and a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to determine the longevity of messages on T-Shirts in relationship with their higher upfront costs.

Illegal chainsaw poster: effective at reaching target audience by using appropriate graphics and messaging. This poster is perceived as having a significant impact on a broad set of community members—from timber cutters to community members who are reporting illegal activities. Chainsaw logging is the most common small-scale timber activity occurring around the community forest landscape in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. The lack of approved chainsaw milling regulations is challenging the ability of community forestry (CF) leaders to enforce sustainable practices.

Calendar: appears to have been distributed to a limited number of people at the campaign launch event and in the communities. The calendar is seen by communities as a source of information on Liberia biodiversity and wildlife. More copies of the calendar could be distributed across the sites.

Illegal hunting poster: bringing attention to hunting regulations and the need to sustainably manage these natural resources to provide long-term benefits to the community. It is advisable to use more subtle messages in place of messages that could be perceived as too direct or possibly threatening to the public. The guidance given to community members on how to use them appropriately needs to be expanded.

Illegal mining poster: distributed in communities where subsistence mining activities are minimal. Verify community economic activities that may have bearing on forest management activities to ensure that time and resources are appropriate for target communities.

Wildlife poster: provides a strong educational resource that captures the attention of communities due to the “life” relationship between humans and many of the protected species. These spiritual connections should be further focus grouped to understand additional opportunities for education and to develop personal connections with wildlife.

Biodiversity poster: appears to be ineffective at communicating its key messages, possibly because the presentation of the illustrative materials and messages was unclear. More appropriate local terminology should be focus-grouped and adopted.

Timeline poster: difficult to relate to and unsuccessful at capturing the attention of the target audiences. This poster should be redesigned through a focus group from within the community or dropped from future campaigns.

Sea turtle poster: benefited from ongoing conservation outreach activities. The messages on this poster are well suited for Barconnie and other coastal communities where sea turtle conservation is a priority.

Poor people poster: either provided a duplicate message to what is already known, or outreach task force members did not fully understand how to clearly explain the poster. The message conveyed by this poster should be redesigned and/or focus-grouped to ensure the messages are being effectively communicated.

Mangrove poster: providing effective messaging and perceived as reducing mangrove degradation and loss along the coast of Barconnie. The messages need to be persuasive and non-threatening or negative.

Media

PROSPER media messaging has included a campaign theme song and radio programs, including messages in local languages, a 15-minute interview with FUGs and technical experts, a 45-minute live phone-in show to talk about campaign focus topics, and a set of eight key translated messages. Below is the ranking of these media tactics for community outreach. Advanced Participation Methods (APM) participants in Sanniquellie believe messages in local languages to be the most important while participants in Tappita and Buchanan found the 45-minute live phone-in show to be the most valuable.

CAMPAIGN TOOLS	SANNIQUELLIE SCORE	TAPPITA SCORE	BUCHANAN SCORE
Campaign song	28	91	52
Messages in local languages	63	96	NA
15 minute interview	35	84	50
45 minute live phone show	53	100	62
Video	27	56	40

Campaign theme song: failed to inspire and develop interest in its key messages. Theme songs should be designed, thoroughly pretested, and circulated widely so as to ensure long-term resonance and playtime on local and national radio stations. Feedback received suggested that auditions and a more rigorous selection process would strengthen the theme song.

Community Perceptions – Before and After the 3rd Campaign

“There were pre-existing information about biodiversity.... User groups didn’t show [concern] because they had not fully understood the damaging effects of biodiversity loss and the benefit of biodiversity conservation and its impact on community forests.”

Now, “women in forest dependent communities are cautioning each other against crude fishing methods. ...Farmers are talking to their peers about collective [impact] on forests. ... NTFP [non-timber forest product] collection impact appears to be less. ... Chainsaw operators are now recognizing forest governance institutions ... and agreeing on approaches to chainsaw logging.”

According to at least one interview with a CF co-chair, while peer pressure is present, some community members are simply being more secretive about the use of unsustainable fishing techniques.

Messages in local languages: Radio outreach included more than 50 recorded sessions on sustainable agriculture, livelihoods, species protection, and other issues. These were aired in Bassa, Gio, Krahn, and Mano. The use of community representative voices to record the messages proved to be a successful approach that engendered community ownership of the campaign. Increased community participation in this aspect of the campaign process should be encouraged in future campaigns.

15-minute interview: appears to have fallen short of meeting the desired impact. Broadcast of these radio programs were scheduled at off-peak times, which reached fewer listeners than would have been desired. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that shorter-format radio programs are carefully designed and aligned with strong interviewees, who must be vetted more thoroughly to ensure that they are well informed about topics. Scheduling should be well timed for peak listening times.

45-minute live phone show: provided valuable opportunities for technical experts to develop a two-way dialogue with callers. This format should be expanded on and invested in further. Community forestry ownership and management benefits in relationship to the CRL is a valuable theme for this format. Messages should focus on things like “when property is managed according to CRL, these are the benefits.” Examples from communities would be beneficial.

Video: Quality and technology availability appear to have been limitations on effectiveness. Careful cost-benefit analysis should be conducted before developing and showing videos in rural communities. Alternatively, PROSPER should support the FDA and the CFWG in identifying ready-made video products on natural resource management (NRM) that can be screened in the communities. Audiovisual materials have drawn large crowds in past campaigns.

OUTREACH PROCESS

The FDA—in conjunction with the CFWG and with support from PROSPER—has refined the phased approach to outreach, carrying the process from the second annual outreach campaign into the third annual outreach campaign. The FDA still lacks some of the necessary capacity to conduct outreach, or it lacks the resources to do so, according to community forestry leaders. While FDA staff participated in all campaigns, they are still not taking ownership of the campaigns, often leaving the responsibilities of campaign planning and facilitation to PROSPER Project staff and/or the communities. FDA needs to be empowered to take ownership in future campaigns and be further trained on supporting communities to take ownership as well.

A number of lessons learned in the rollout are available, including:

- The planning process led by community forestry leaders was successful. Communication between CF leaders and the rest of the outreach team was good. Outcomes of meetings were successfully communicated.
- Timing of field activities to take place during the rainy season was a mistake, and reduced participation and impact was a result.
- Formation of outreach task forces offered community members the opportunity to engage in the process. It proved critical for ensuring that the participants should be selected based upon their performance and qualifications. This process could have been expanded in some communities.
- Mobilization of community participants and local leaders meant remote communities could participate. However, transportation limitations for community members was an obstacle that led to low participation rates, along with poor road conditions due to rain.
- Setting up the PA system lights and music went smoothly. However, dance contestants should be selected in advance, and the campaign song needs to be pretested thoroughly.
- Establishing the dance competition and prize awards was effective at motivating participation. However, more advanced planning on entry and judging must be completed. Presentation of posters to the

audience requires more advance preparation and debriefings after each presentation to learn from task force mistakes.

- Participation of local authorities was strong but impeded by the rainy season. Advance transportation planning should be considered to ensure efficient movement of the troupes, outreach task forces, and community members.
- The village-to-village outreach campaign needs to be expanded to include small satellite communities who are not being reached by the outreach efforts. CF leaders should be encouraged to lead their outreach activities instead of relying on PROSPER to provide funding for their activities. Measures should be put in place to ensure sustainability of outreach processes.
- Distribution of outreach materials went well overall, while quantity of materials needs to be increased because of high demand.

General Comments from APM Participants on Outreach Activities

- Opportunity to focus on enforcement of forest governance rules and law.
- Target people living within the community forests with messages as well.
- Local theater troupes enhance the delivery of messages. Train local troupes to support rollout activities.
- Develop a new concept of poster depicting FDA enforcing the law.
- Target all farmers and all forest user groups

Additional recommendation on the process can be found in Annex I.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of issues around focal audience emerged and should be considered in future campaigns.¹ An important process in the design of the outreach campaign is identifying and understanding the target audience. PROSPER has taken steps in the past to identify the best audiences to involve in the outreach campaigns, which improves the likelihood that key messages are relayed to other community members. FDA and the CFWG need to adapt a more improved and efficient way to communicate with a range of audiences to ensure target audiences participate in the campaigns.

Suggestions for the next campaign's focus included more information about sustainable management of forests; how communities can take "ownership" of resources so they can put in place good management practices; the need for an intensified process to help build understanding of community rights and good forestry management strategies; "transition" messages (related to PROSPER's phase-out); and the next steps the community should take on the nine-step process for community forest management. In addition, an exit strategy for PROSPER that conveys long-term messages on forest management and conservation should be considered.

The fourth annual outreach campaign should combine the CRL campaign focus with important biodiversity conservation messages. The shift in focus and messaging between the second and third campaigns has likely slowed progress towards empowering communities to apply knowledge gained from outreach activities to manage their community forests in a more sustainable manner.

While the introduction of terms and phrases such as "biodiversity" and "threat to biodiversity" influenced community perception about other life forms in the forest during the third annual outreach campaign, improved

¹ The responses from participants in Tappita, Sanniquellie, and Buchanan did not identify needs or issues that the campaign needed to focus on. Instead, APM respondents discussed audiences who should be included in future campaigns as well as the types of materials. This could have been due to lack of guidance by the APM facilitator.

understanding of these words and phrases are not enough to change behavior. There is a need to build upon the improved understanding of these terms and phrases to strengthen behavior change.

Deeper and longer-term engagement with communities on community forest management and livelihoods is needed. Community leaders requested further assistance and support in training their community members to implement community forest management practices. The need for outreach on alternative livelihoods from hunting, fishing, logging, and other forest-based enterprises is critical to behavioral change. The FDA should lead outreach activities at the village, community, and national levels. The fourth campaign should include FDA taking the lead role in all activities—from planning to lessons-learned assessments. The CFWG should be encouraged to evaluate the main issues in the sector when they design their campaign themes and messages while building on the lessons learned and materials from previous campaigns.

ANNEX I – THE CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT PROCESS

There are a number of opportunities to improve the fourth campaign, building from the 11-step process of the third campaign:

1. Stakeholder consultation at national and community levels
 - **Opportunity:** Strengthen engagement with forest user groups, local leaders, youth, and students. Deeper engagement and multiple rounds of feedback are needed to get things right.
2. Matrix of change to develop communication strategy
 - **Opportunity:** Strengthen the matrix-of-change exercise with rigorous pretesting of ideas in communities, and vet concepts once draft materials are produced.
3. Development of outreach materials
 - **Opportunity:** Continue to differentiate messages for audiences. Carefully develop messages that present alternatives in a persuasive way.
4. Pretest of outreach materials
 - **Opportunity:** Pretest materials in advance before finalizing, and identify message champions in communities in advance.
 - **Opportunity:** Screen video footage with pretest participants prior to campaign. Alternatively, identify and secure ready-made video products tailored to provide education on community forest management issues.
5. Preparation of community statement
 - **Opportunity:** Empower CF leaders to develop community statements and vet with field teams prior to public release.
6. Training on presentation of the posters
 - **Opportunity:** Identify and vet members of the outreach task force who present posters, and train them on effective presentation.
7. Translation of the messages into local languages
 - **Opportunity:** Translation of messages into local dialects is a high priority for communities. Ownership of outreach activities is assured when communities feel like they're a part of the campaign process.
8. KAB baseline/endline surveys on threat to biodiversity
 - **Opportunity:** Efforts to design and administer the biodiversity KAB baseline and endline surveys are important. The quality of the data collection timing and analysis process needs to be significantly improved. The outreach team, FDA, and the CFWG should take advantage of any available training in the design of KAB tools and in conducting an effective KAB survey.
9. Production of outreach materials and their distribution
 - **Opportunity:** Print sufficient numbers and ensure that strategic distribution to appropriate communities is taking place.

10. Mobilization of communities and dignitaries for the formal launch

- **Opportunity:** All activities need to take place in the dry season. The rainy season is not a viable option for conducting the campaign.
- **Opportunity:** Transportation to the events from distant communities needs to be provided to key participants.
- **Opportunity:** A high-quality bullhorn needs to be used. Low-quality equipment leads to poor results.

11. Preparation and presentation of statements by communities

- **Opportunity:** Avoid rainy season activities.

U.S. Agency for International Development
Liberia Mission
502 Benson Street
Monrovia, Liberia