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

FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT (Final)
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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.

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ACRONYMS

AML	Arcelor Mittal Liberia
APM	Advanced Participation Methods
ASNAPP	Agribusiness in Sustainable African Plant Products
AYP	Advancing Youth Program
BCC	Behavior Change and Communications
BOTPAL	Botanical Products Association of Liberia
CA	Community Assembly
CDWG	Curriculum Development Working Group
CFDC	Community Forestry Development Committee
CFMA	Community Forest Management Agreement
CFO	County Forestry Officer
CI	Conservation International
CJPS	Center for Justice and Peace Studies
CM	Community Mobilizers
COA	Communications Outreach Advisor
CRL	Community Rights Law
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
dTS	Development and Training Services
EMMP	Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan
ENNR	East Nimba Nature Reserve
ETD	Environmental Threshold Decision
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FED	Food and Enterprise Development Project
FEWG	Forestry Education Working Group
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
GIO	Gender Integration Officer
GoL	Government of Liberia
IBEX	Investing in Business Expansion Program
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IRD	International Relief and Development
LA	Livelihoods Advisor
L/LEDA	Leader, Livelihoods and Enterprise Development Activities
L/EDOA	Leader, Educational Development and Outreach Activities
LFSP	Liberia Forest Support Program
L-MEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program

LRCFP	Land Rights and Community Forestry Program
LTTP	Liberia Teacher Training Program
MES	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAEAL	National Adult Education Association of Liberia
NBST	National Benefit Sharing Trust
NNBSG	Northern Nimba Biodiversity Stakeholders Group
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
ODA	Organizational Development Specialist
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PROSPER	People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
PUP	Private Use Permit
SCFA	Senior Community Forestry Advisor
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

To build on previous investments in the forestry and agricultural sectors, particularly the Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (2007-2011) and the Liberia Forestry Support Program (2011-2012), USAID contracted Tetra Tech in May 2012 to implement a new, five-year program (2012-2017) entitled People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER). The overall goal of the program is to introduce, operationalize, and refine appropriate models for community management of forest resources for local self-governance and enterprise development in targeted areas of the country. 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;
- 3) Enhance community-based livelihoods derived from sustainable forest-based and agriculture-based enterprises in target areas.

Tetra Tech, charged by USAID with ensuring a seamless transition with LFSP (ending May 31, 2012), moved swiftly in late May and early June to install its team and launch operations. By June 1, the core technical and administrative team was in place, including 10 host country staff and expatriate Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party/Component 2 Leader, and Component 1 Leader. Tetra Tech took over the lease on the Liberia Forestry Support Program (LFSP) field office in northern Nimba and maintained the staff, allowing support of the three community forestry sites in Nimba to continue without interruption. Preliminary assessments of potential new sites in target counties were initiated in early June. From June 18-20, PROSPER organized an Inception Workshop for project staff, implementing partners, and key government and civil society stakeholders that resulted in the definition of a work plan, approved by USAID, covering the four-month “mobilization period” (June-September 2012).

This first quarterly report presents the activities undertaken and results obtained during the four-month mobilization period. Individual monthly progress reports were also prepared for USAID.

As the report sections that follow reveal, June-September was a period of intense preparation and initiation of activities including several important cross-cutting activities (site selection, gender assessment, performance monitoring plan development and work planning). Throughout the period, PROSPER worked with the community forest management bodies (CFMBs) and partners in its “inherited” sites in Northern Nimba (the Zor, Gba, and Bleih community forests) and the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) to consolidate and deepen results achieved under Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP) and LFSP. Subcontracts signed in June with PROSPER’s three national subcontractors (CJPS, NAEAL, and AGRHA) allowed all three to field staff to Northern Nimba (AGRHA, 3 staff beginning in July; CJPS and NAEAL, 2 staff each, beginning in August. In September, following USAID’s approval of seven new proposed work sites, PROSPER team members took to the field to inform the communities of their selection and to initiate community profiling. In parallel, with the support of subcontractors Fauna and Flora International (FFI), ASNAPP, and Rutgers University, PROSPER also launched biodiversity assessments, ethno-botanical surveys, and value chain analyses in the new sites.

As noted in the Component Work Plans section, the major activities and results assigned to the Education and Outreach, Community Forestry, and Livelihoods components under the mobilization plan were largely completed. A notable exception concerned PROSPER's planned support to the Forestry Training Institute to conduct a gap analysis of the curriculum (Activity 1.3). Stretched too thin by other demands in August and September, the Component 1 team deferred this task to the first quarter of FY 2013. A planned consultation with the Land Commission, Governance Commission and Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to develop a review process to facilitate the lifting of the moratorium on Community Forest Management Agreements (Activity 2.3) was also deferred due to the crisis that enveloped the FDA concerning private use permits (PUPs).

Throughout the June-September period, the work of PROSPER's technical team was supported and complemented by the program's administrative and financial unit which oversaw the recruitment of new staff, the identification and setting up of PROSPER's permanent office, the contracting of various service providers, the procurement, registration and insuring of vehicles, the purchase and installation of furniture and IT equipment, and numerous other administrative and logistical tasks associated with the start-up of a major program.

PROSPER's mobilization period coincided with the eruption of a serious crisis in the forestry sector. Revelations concerning the FDA's issuance of private use permits for timber exploitation on more than 2 million ha of forestland sparked an outcry led by civil society organizations that has been widely reported by the national and international press. That outcry resulted in a temporary moratorium on logging operations under *inactive* PUPs, Senate hearings on the issue, the suspension of the FDA Managing Director, and the appointment by the President of an independent investigative panel that is currently examining procedural and substantive legal issues related to the issuance and applicability of the PUPs. At the time of this report, however, logging operations under active PUPs have resumed (by Supreme Court order), and no matter what the investigative panel concludes, the FDA's exploitation of this "back door" alternative to authorize logging and the failure of the Senate and Supreme Court to condemn it, has cast considerable doubt on the Government's commitment to the reforms enacted since 2007 aimed at improving governance of Liberia's forest resources and promoting equitable benefits for forest communities. The sustainability of PROSPER's efforts to broaden and strengthen community forestry in Liberia will be conditioned to a great extent by the way the Government of Liberia (GoL) responds to the present crisis.

Deliverables Summary:

The following contract deliverables were completed during the Mobilization Period:

- Gender assessment identifying challenges and opportunities for improving participation and benefits of women in specific PROSPER activities and outlining proposed strategies (#22)
- Site selection report presenting seven recommended work sites in up to four landscapes (#23)
- Curriculum Development Working Group (CDWG) constituted comprising representatives from the public, NGO, Private sector, and USAID Education programs, to contribute to review and development of formal and non-formal curriculum (#25)¹

Deliverables to be completed in the first quarter of FY 2013 are:

¹ The Curriculum Development Working Group (CDWG) was constituted in the Mobilization Period and held its first meeting in August 2012. Tetra Tech ARD will prepare a succinct report for USAID to document the completion of this deliverable.

- Report summarizing findings of review of formal primary school curriculum, adult literacy curriculum, and non-formal education materials, and identifying opportunities to integrate environmental themes (#26)
- Initial assessment prepared of the viability of two Payments For Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes (#30)
- Baseline surveys, gender integration plan, and M&E systems established for each target county (#1)
- Sector surveys and analyses for selected forestry and agricultural value chains (#2)
- Biodiversity assessments completed for new sites (#24)
- First outreach campaign launched to improve public awareness of natural resource and environmental management issues (#28)

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Staffing:

During the mobilization period PROSPER's technical staff in the Monrovia headquarters comprised 12 members, including three provided by national implementing partners CJPS, NAEAL, and AGRHA and two by ACDI/VOCA (see Appendix 1). Hiring of Monrovia technical staff is complete with the exception of the 1) GIS Specialist and 2) M&E Officer. The GIS Officer will have several roles on the project. S/he will strengthen the FDA's GIS capacity, support teaching initiatives at the Forestry Training Institute (FTI), and provide geospatial analysis, mapping services and training in GPS within the PROSPER program. Options for providing GIS support for the FDA, FTI and PROSPER have been discussed with FTI and FDA. The consensus is that a fulltime person with STTA support is the right configuration and recruitment efforts are now under way. The M&E Officer will assist the PROSPER Monitoring Specialist to coordinate data collection in the three field offices to ensure accurate and timely collection of performance data. S/he will be hired in the second quarter FY13.

To staff the county offices that the program will open in October, PROSPER recently completed recruitment and selection of two Forestry Officers. The Forestry Officers will also serve as County Heads of Office and will report directly to the DCOP. The current Senequellie Forest Officer/Head of Office (Nuah Biah) will be moved to the new Tapitta Office. Two Field Office Administrators will be hired to support the Tapitta and Buchanan offices in October.

Subcontract Administration:

Within one month of contract award, Tetra Tech was able to conclude subcontract agreements with all eight subcontracts named in its proposal: ACDI/VOCA, Action for Greater Harvest (AGRHA), Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP), Center for Justice and Peace Studies (CJPS), Development and Training Services Inc. (dTS), FFI, National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL), and Rutgers University.

All eight participated in preparation of the Mobilization Plan and the FY 2013 Annual Work Plan, and contributed to implementation to varying extents in the June-September period according to their specific scopes of work.

Four subcontractors fill full-time positions on the PROSPER team. ACDI/VOCA provides the Component 3 Leader for Livelihoods and Enterprise Development as well as a Livelihoods Advisor. National subcontractors CJPS, NAEAL, and AGRHA each provide an advisor to PROSPER's Monrovia technical staff.

CJPS, NAEAL, and AGRHA are also responsible for providing Officers for PROSPER's three county field offices (Organizational Development, Education and Outreach, and Livelihoods, respectively) for a total of 9 Officers total. In addition, these NGOs are responsible for 3 community mobilizers (CMs) for each of 9 community forest sites for a total of 27 CMs in total (a 10th site, the Bleih Community Forest, is covered by CMs from the Zor and Gba sites).

CJPS, NAEAL, and AGRHA mobilized field staff (3 from AGRHA, and 2 each from CJPS and NAEAL) to northern Nimba during the mobilization period to support PROSPER's ongoing work in the Zor, Gba, and Bleih community forests. From July to September, CJPS and NAEAL undertook recruiting to fill officer and CM positions in PROSPER's new sites. As of September 30, Tetra Tech had approved the personnel and daily rates proposed by both subcontractors. Several CJPS and NAEAL staff participated in community profiling missions to new sites in September. AGRHA has not yet submitted its field staff for approval, preferring to wait for confirmation that all sites are accessible and that field offices are established.

Offices:

PROSPER moved from its temporary quarters in Capitol Hill to its new Monrovia office in Sinkor (19th Street and Payne Avenue) at the end of July. The lease on the Sanniquellie (northern Nimba County) field office was renewed in early June. Following approval of PROSPER's new sites in southern Nimba county and Grand Bassa, the program has identified field offices in Tapitta and Buchanan. Renovations will be completed in October and it is anticipated that the new offices will be operating by early November.

Procurement:

Tetra Tech ARD has received three Toyota Land Cruisers and one Toyota Hilux Pick-Up that will complement the four vehicles inherited from LFSP. 39 Honda 125 cc off-road motorcycles were also procured that will enable the community mobilizers to carry out their field work more efficiently.

CROSS-CUTTING TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

Site Selection:

The PROSPER program will continue to work in northern Nimba where the LRCFP supported the establishment of three community forests and the development of co-management in a National Protected Area. These forest areas included:

- The East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) comprising 13,369 ha., and co-managed under an agreement by the FDA, Zor, Gba, and Sayee communities;
- The Bleih Community Forest (629 ha.), managed under a Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA) by the Zor and Gba communities;
- The Zor Community Forest (1,139 ha), managed by the Zor community under a CFMA; and
- The Gba Community Forest (10,823 ha.), which will be managed under a CFMA that has been signed by the FDA but awaits approval from the Minister of Agriculture pending the removal of a moratorium on CFMA by the FDA Board.

What is a site?

Generally, community forestland use and management decisions are made at the clan level. Accordingly, PROSPER will support the development of community forestry governance structures at the clan (or multiple clan) level as was done under LRCFP. As a result, a site may cover one forest area, multiple forest areas (e.g. the Bleih Forest and ENNR under the Bleih and Zor clans' joint forest management committee), or one contiguous forest may include multiple sites (e.g. the Gio Forest with four sites).

In June, PROSPER submitted a preliminary site selection report assessing a range of potential new sites located in Grand Bassa, Bong, Margibi, Nimba, and Lofa counties. Following USAID's review of the report, the Sayee Clan site in northern Nimba was selected. The selection of this site, adjacent to the existing Gba site, expands the area at the landscape level where PROSPER activities will be conducted, and will also favor more comprehensive land use planning in northern Nimba. Finally, the Food and Enterprise Development (FED) program and Advancing Youth Program (AYP) are active in the Sanniquellie Mah district where the clan is located and can provide complementary programming.

To determine the remaining sites, USAID requested PROSPER to identify and vet additional potential community forestry sites in Lofa, Grand Bassa, and (southern) Nimba counties with particular focus on information collection related to biodiversity. The final site selection report ranked each of the proposed sites on a number of criteria, with biodiversity, size, access, and model replicability weighted most heavily. The outcome of the analysis was a recommendation to work in two sites in Grand Bassa – a mangrove forest site and a primary forest in District 4, adjacent to the River Cess Border, and in four contiguous sites in southern Nimba that comprise the Gio National Forest. Our analysis suggested that these sites would have the greatest impact on biodiversity, would provide more area under sustainable community forest management, would provide more relevant and replicable community forest (CF) models, and had greater potential to develop livelihood alternatives through market access. Further, the

proposed sites in these two counties presented fewer logistical challenges, permitting more efficient and effective use of USAID resources. Finally, most of the sites recommended were those that could take best advantage of the existence of USAID AYP and FED programming. The seven new sites are as follows:

- Sayee Community in Nimba County (Sayee CF)
- Barcoline Community in Grand Bassa County (Barcoline CF)
- Kpogblen Community in Grand Bassa County (Kortor CF)
- Gblor community in Nimba County (Gblor CF and Big Gio Forests)
- Sezuplay community in Nimba County (Big Gio CF)
- Yourpea community in Nimba County (Big Gio CF)
- Quilla community in Nimba County (Big Gio CF)

Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP):

Tetra Tech mobilized M&E Specialist John Mason to Liberia from June 14-27 to assist the PROSPER team to prepare the program's draft performance management plan (PMP), submitted to USAID on July 6. The PROSPER team subsequently met with the Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP) to review the draft in detail. Based on the feedback of L-MEP's DCOP/M&E Specialist-Economic Growth, the PROSPER team re-worked the results framework, further elaborated on critical assumptions associated with each program objective, and revised and sharpened the proposed set of indicators.

PROSPER submitted a final draft PMP on August 14 for USAID review. A work session was scheduled for the first week of October to review USAID and L-MEP's observations and recommendations on the revised PROSPER PMP and to agree on the content of the final plan.

During the mobilization period, PROSPER Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Darlington Vangehn completed two L-MEP-sponsored trainings. One concerned how to use L-MEP's Web Mapping System (June 15), and the other concerned Program Evaluation (Aug. 6-10).

Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan:

PROSPER is required to submit an environmental mitigation and monitoring plan (EMMP) in conjunction with the first annual work plan. In June, a Tetra Tech NRM expert prepared a preliminary draft EMMP that built on the PROSPER Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) and Environmental Threshold Decision (ETD), and outlined how PROSPER would implement the conditions of the IEE in order to mitigate and monitor environmental impacts. In September, Tetra Tech ARD's Senior Technical Advisor/Manager, refined and completed the draft EMMP in collaboration with PROSPER's Leader for Livelihoods and Enterprise Development Activities (L/LEDA). The draft EMMP presents project components and activities, the ETD for each activity, and for all activities associated with conditions, defines the mitigation measures and monitoring protocols.

The draft EMMP was submitted to USAID for approval in early October.

Work Planning:

Mobilization Period (June-September 2012)

To better familiarize PROSPER stakeholders and implementing partners with the contents and approach of the program, solicit their input and support in making it a success, and build and/or strengthen personal and professional relations among team members, PROSPER organized an Inception Workshop from June 18-20. The 55 participants included representatives from the GOL, other USAID projects, PROSPER's

Nimba County CF sites, Conservation International (CI), Arcelor Mittal Liberia (AML) and PROSPER's eight subcontractors. Participants analyzed the context for program implementation, defined a shared vision of "what we want to see in place and functioning in Liberia at the end of this 5-year project", examined roles and responsibilities among implementers, and identified key results for the mobilization phase.

The Inception Workshop concluded with internal working sessions among the PROSPER staff and subcontractors to identify specific tasks to be carried out – by component and activity – from the end of June to the end of September when PROSPER's first annual work planning period (FY 2013) would begin. The resulting Mobilization Plan was submitted to USAID on July 6 and approved.

First Annual Work Plan (October 2012-September 2013)

The First Annual Work Plan, covering FY 2013, was developed in cooperation with PROSPER's principal GOL partner institutions, subcontractors, and other key stakeholders. They participated in a 4-day work planning workshop led by professional facilitator, Rebecca Kanaan, during the second week of September. The Work Plan was submitted to USAID on October 1, 2012. Tetra Tech Senior Technical Advisor/Manager, Dr. Matt Sommerville, participated in the workshop and assisted the COP to develop the annual budget that will be submitted under separate cover in mid-October.

Staff Development: Training in Advanced Participation Methods:

In order to begin developing proficiency in the use of advanced participatory methods (APM) among PROSPER staff and implementers, and to share the methods with our principal Government partners, PROSPER organized a three-day introductory training from August 8-10 in Monrovia. Thirty-nine participants were present for the three-day workshop. The APM course was delivered by Mr. Gary Forbes, an internationally-recognized expert in facilitation and participatory methods with over 25 years' experience in similar contexts. Six "graduates" were given an opportunity to practice and deepen their APM skills under Mr. Forbes' guidance as co-facilitators of the Community Forestry Working Group meeting organized by PROSPER August 16-17 in Kakata.

Gender Integration Assessment and Strategy:

Development and Training Services, Inc. (dTS) was contracted by Tetra Tech to lead the development of a gender integration plan. A Gender Specialist with strong NRM credentials was mobilized in June 2012 to 1) conduct a gender assessment and 2) develop a gender integration strategy for PROSPER. The purpose was to identify constraints to gender integration and to recommend practical steps to ensure that the program's CF activities contribute to redressing gender imbalances to land and resources rather than exacerbating them.

The Specialist was able to attend the PROSPER Inception Workshop where she interacted with the PROSPER partners, familiarized herself with the scope of work and work plan, and gathered information concerning gender and forestry in the Liberian context. The resulting assessment report identifies constraints but also defines specific actions at the program, objective, and activity levels to support gender integration and the equitable distribution of program benefits. The gender strategy focuses on the design of interventions that should be considered during program work planning and will feed into a gender integration plan to be completed in the first quarter of FY 2013, following approval of the annual work plan.

COMPONENT WORK PLANS

Component 1 is a new addition to the USAID community forestry approach as piloted under LRCFP and LFSP. As a result, much of the implementing team's work during the mobilization period was focused on establishing good working relations with key constituents.

COMPONENT 1: EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, NRM, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Activity 1.1: Collaboratively support the development and/or modification of primary formal and non-formal school curricula to increase knowledge and understanding related to natural resources, their management, and the related rights and responsibilities of government and citizens

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Initial meeting of Curriculum Development Working Group (CDWG) convened and terms of reference developed for sub-committees on non-formal and adult education

Liberian environmental curricula compiled and reviewed, and preliminary list of themes identified for enhancement of primary curriculum

Contract deliverables due during the mobilization period: Curriculum Development Working Group constituted comprising representatives from the public, NGO, private sector, and USAID Education programs, to contribute to review and development of formal and non-formal curriculum

Key Accomplishments:

The main task identified under this activity for the period was the creation of a multi-stakeholder curriculum development working group (CDWG). The CDWG will be tasked with the revision of primary school, adult education, and non-formal education curricula to include environmental content. The concept of a CDWG was introduced to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and accepted during this reporting period. This committee is now fully constituted and is headed by the Acting Chair of the MoE's Center for Curriculum Development and Textbook Research. It comprises members from NGOs (FFI, CI, International Relief and Development, National Association for Adult Education in Liberia - NAEAL), the GOL (Environmental Protection Agency - EPA, FDA, MoE) and USAID programs (AYP, Liberia Teacher Training Program - LTTP). The working group has met twice to examine and prioritize themes that were identified by an environmental education consultant recruited by PROSPER to review curricula collected by the Leader for Educational Development and Outreach activities (L/EDO) and Education Officer (EO). In the first quarter of FY 2013 a curriculum development specialist from PROSPER subcontractor, Rutgers University, will assist the CDWG to integrate elements of these themes into the primary formal curriculum. The MoE has agreed that science, social studies, language arts and mathematics should be the focal areas for environmental theme integration.

Activity 1.2: Collaboratively support the development of outreach campaigns to increase public awareness of natural resource and environmental management issues

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Interest in CFWG rekindled through facilitated meetings of CFWG Secretariat and FDA

Lessons learned in outreach work shared among CFWG members, informing identification of best approaches and priority themes

Strategy developed for first annual outreach campaign

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

PROSPER's strategy to develop institutional capacity for effective outreach entails working through the Community Forestry Working Group (CFWG). The main tasks under this activity during the mobilization period were to revitalize the CFWG and assist members to identify important outreach themes and analyze lessons learned from past outreach efforts that could inform the collaborative design of a Year 1 information campaign.

To that end, PROSPER sponsored a two-day workshop for CFWG members in August. The workshop discussions, facilitated by participation expert, Gary Forbes, resulted in a general commitment on the part of CFWG members to reactivate their group with a focus on national level coordination and advocacy. Participants agreed to conduct community forestry outreach campaigns through the CFWG in order to support their advocacy mandate. They reviewed lessons learned from outreach and awareness-raising on NRM and environmental management issues, and generated ideas and themes for the first annual outreach campaign that PROSPER will support. PROSPER continued to liaise with the co-chairs of the CFWG throughout the month of September in preparation for an outreach campaign design effort scheduled for October.

Other major activities realized during the period included a refresher training course for CMs and CFMB leaders in facilitation skills, organized in Sanniquellie in August. This was complemented by a workshop led by the L/EDOA on behavior change and communications (BCC) in September that involved 38 field staff (county- and community-level) from PROSPER's three national implementing partners. A similar training will be conducted in Nimba during the next quarter for CFMB and Community Assembly (CA) members.

Activity 1.3: Develop a CF (Community Forestry) curriculum and support capacity development of FTI (Forestry Training Institute) staff to implement

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Relations established with FTI and membership secured on Forestry Education Working Group

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The main tasks planned under this activity for the period were to conduct a preliminary assessment at FTI to identify gaps and to recommend modifications and sequencing of classes based on an analysis of the current FTI curriculum; and to begin revisions of the curriculum. This preliminary assessment has not been conducted. However a strategy to conduct the assessment has been developed with the assistance of subcontractor, Rutgers University, and will be carried out in cooperation with FFI in the next quarter. PROSPER is also participating in the Forestry Education Working Group (FEWG) which has been charged with reviewing and updating the entire FTI curriculum.

In September, PROSPER staff participated in a workshop sponsored by FFI to provide teachers from FTI and the University of Liberia with a solid grounding in conservation studies and to involve them in the identification of short course and module subject matters.

Activity 1.4: Work with civil society institutions and communities to support policy dialogue, develop communication and coordination strategies, and support effective stakeholder engagement in the development of NRM, land, and environmental policy

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

List of key CSOs developed and initial contacts established

Ideas concerning advocacy needs collected through discussion with CSOs

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The purpose of this activity is to work with civil society organizations (CSO) to support policy dialogue, develop communication and coordination strategies, and support effective stakeholder engagement in the development of NRM, land and environmental policy. During the reporting period, the main tasks associated with this activity included identification of forestry stakeholders at the national and community level, and meetings to solicit ideas on advocacy. These activities are a precursor to the establishment of a Community Forestry Rights Forum.

Contact with national-level CSO was established and maintained during the period, facilitated in large part through the meeting and workshop of the CFWG described in Activity 1.2 above.

At the community level, the Community Outreach Advisor (COA) and Gender Integration Officer (GIO) spearheaded an effort to identify community-based organizations in northern Nimba County that PROSPER can work with and through to raise awareness on community forestry issues. In total, more than 40 organizations were identified in the Gba and Zor communities. Many of these organizations will be engaged in outreach campaigns currently scheduled under Activity 2.1 in the next quarter.

Activity 1.5: Train communities receiving benefit sharing funds from commercial logging and key partners such as the National Benefit Sharing Trust Board, FDA, private sector actors, and others on more effective and environmentally sound development programs for their communities

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Existing NBST training materials reviewed and updated

Date for NBST Board workshop to review proposal requirements established

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The main task under this activity for the period involved initiating contact with the National Benefit Sharing Trust Board (NBST) board co-chairs to procure the materials and outputs that are being used by the NBST in support of the proposal-writing process by which timber concession-affected communities access funds. This was accomplished through several meetings with the co-chairs during which it was also agreed that PROSPER would support the development of training materials to enable Community Forestry Development Committees (CFDC) to access NBST funds. Discussions are on-going with regard to the timing of materials development.

The NBST Board has also requested assistance to ensure that NBST money currently held in an escrow account is transferred to the NBST account. In addition, the NBST board has requested assistance to clarify whether royalty fees should be deposited in the NBST or distributed directly to communities. Apparently the Deputy Speaker of the House has been receiving these funds on behalf of his community. These issues will be addressed in the next quarter (see discussion under Activity 2.3 below).

COMPONENT 2: IMPROVED COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT LEADING TO MORE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND REDUCED THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY IN TARGET AREAS

During this quarter, activities focused on site selection activities and community profiling at the community level. Landscape level planning activities continued in the northern Nimba sites, and the DCOP and Organizational Development Advisor (ODA) were involved in many policy discussions with forestry stakeholders related to the PUP issue.

Activity 2.1: Build community capacity for forest management

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Action Planning with ENNR CMC conducted

Community Profiling conducted in one new PROSPER sites

Forest Guard Training held and module documented for inclusion in "How-to" Handbook

Forest Management Plans reviewed with CFMB to identify implementation challenges and training needs

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments

The main tasks under this activity included continued support for management plan implementation in established sites in northern Nimba; selection of new sites for PROSPER programming; community profiling of new sites; and documentation of training materials.

Final site selection was completed in August following field assessments at various sites and submission of a final report with recommendations to USAID (see section above on *Cross Cutting Technical Issues*).

A methodology was developed by the DCOP and Senior Community Forestry Advisor (SCFA) to conduct community profiling at the new sites. Profiling provides opportunities for PROSPER staff and communities to build rapport while learning about the community socio-economic, natural resource and governance issues. The community profiling exercises were conducted at the Barcoline site in Grand Bassa as a pilot. PROSPER staff participants included the SCNA, ODA, GIO, Livelihoods Advisor (LA) County Forestry Officer (CFO), and M&E Specialist (MES). In October, community profiling will continue in the remaining six new sites with members of the pilot team leading exercises.

PROSPER staff attended coordination meetings of the Northern Nimba Biodiversity Stakeholders Group (NNBSG) and held several meetings with CI, FFI and AML to maintain continued cooperation at the landscape level.

AML and PROSPER collaborated on Forest Guard training in the three sites in northern Nimba during the quarter. The training helped to define the community outreach and data collection roles of Forest Guards, and provided two days of practical training in the use of GPS units. The training was captured in modules that will be included in the "How-to" Manual series.

The DCOP, SCFA and ODA also led action planning meetings with the Community Assembly (CA) and Community Forestry Management Bodies (CFMB) at the three sites in northern Nimba. This entailed a review of the management plans and the development of a practical implementation plan for the next quarter which involves rules development, outreach and awareness, and preparation for the introduction of Forest Guards and permitting systems in the community forests. The planning process was captured in modules that will be included in the "How-to" Manual series.

Activity 2.2: Strengthen capacity of FDA, EPA, and CSOs to support sustainable forest management

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

PROSPER staff and partners are trained in village profiling and facilitation and biodiversity threats assessment protocols

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The key tasks under this activity for the reporting period included training for community mobilizers, FDA staff and identification of GIS support options.

To support activities under Activity 2.1, PROSPER provided refresher training to community mobilizers on facilitation skills (see Activity 1.2 narrative). These skills were used by one of the community mobilizers who joined the biodiversity assessment team at three of the new sites in northern Nimba and Grand Bassa (see discussion below under Activity 2.4).

A member of the FDA from the Community Forestry Department joined the PROSPER team and received hands-on training in forest management action planning, forest guard community outreach and data collection, and the use of GPS in July. The FDA staff later worked with PROSPER staff to facilitate similar training in additional sites. PROSPER has identified this FDA staffer as a potential member of the CF cadre and will discuss working arrangements in the upcoming months with FDA.

Options for providing GIS support for the FDA, FTI and PROSPER have been discussed with FTI and FDA. The consensus is that a fulltime person with STTA support is the right configuration and recruitment efforts are now underway. Data sharing and support with other USAID programs and government agencies will be explored in the upcoming months

A presentation of land tenure issues identified in the community profiling exercises will be developed for the Land Commission and presented in the next quarter.

Activity 2.3: Support development of legal framework for CF and LTPR

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Presentations on the Private Use Permits developed and presented at various fora

Process to lift the moratorium on Community Forest Management Agreements established with FDA

Discussions initiated on CRL regulatory reform

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The primary tasks under this activity involved the provision of information to decision-makers on policy issues related to community forestry. During the period, the PUP issue dominated policy concerns. The unexpected and questionable use of this mechanism, which would allow commercial forest operations in numerous communities comprising nearly half of Liberia's forested area, jeopardizes community forestry as a recognized and valid form of forest management. It was anticipated in the Mobilization Plan, that PROSPER would develop a policy brief related to the PUP issue during the quarter. However, given the speed at which the PUP issue evolved, it was determined that a policy brief was not the most effective means to present information to stakeholders and decision-makers. As an alternative, PROSPER focused on providing information to forestry stakeholders and decision-makers on the legal framework since there appeared to be a need for clarification and focus on the Community Rights Law.

The Mobilization Plan also identified a key task under this activity as the initiation of a process to lift the current ban on CFMAs. This was delayed, however, pending clarification of the PUP status. Specifically, the implications of lifting the CFMA ban were considered should the PUPs be found invalid. Because most of the PUPs are based on communal deeds, this would likely result in a huge demand to establish community forest management for commercial operations. So while lifting the moratorium on CFMA would serve to facilitate the

development of community forests in PROSPER areas, lifting this ban also runs the risk that community forests will be established in haste without the oversight of the FDA in order to facilitate consideration of commercial logging. Accordingly, efforts to lift the ban on CFMA have been shelved until a final determination by the GoL is made with regard to the PUP.

In the interim, during the quarter, PROSPER was invited to sit on the PUP regulation drafting committee as a technical resource. In this capacity, the DCOP presented the legal framework at a consultative meeting of forestry stakeholders. In collaboration with an advisor to the Ministry of Justice, the DCOP made a similar presentation to the President's Independent Investigative Panel on the PUPs.

PROSPER also initiated discussions with Green Advocates regarding the need to reform the CRL regulation. PROSPER's current position is that more time and practical implementation experience is needed before attempting to undertake a reform of the CRL regulation. In the interim, contradictions between the law and implementing regulation have been documented and summarized in a brief for the FDA.

Activity 2.4: Increase knowledge of forest ecosystems and design appropriate interventions

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Biodiversity Threats Assessment Protocols Established

Initial Payment for Environmental Services (PES) assessment conducted

Deliverable #30: Initial assessment prepared of the viability of two Payments For Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes (to be submitted in October 2012).

Key Accomplishments:

The main tasks associated with this activity for the reporting period included the development of a biodiversity assessment for use at the new PROSPER sites and the development of a PES assessment methodology and report on the viability of two PES schemes (a deliverable under the PROSPER contract).

A methodology was developed by PROSPER partner FFI to identify the biodiversity values in the new sites. This methodology was documented in a concept note and revised following comments from the SCFA and DCOP. Implementation of the assessment began in September and will conclude in November with documentation of results. A community mobilizer from CJPS joined the assessment team. The methodology used for the assessment will be revised following implementation for insertion in the Community Forestry "How to" Manual series.

As part of the final site selection process, options for PES were identified and summarized in the preliminary site selection report and final site selection report submitted to USAID in June and August respectively. A final report will be provided to USAID in early October to satisfy the requirements of Deliverable 30.

Posters developed under LFSP were not revised and reprinted as anticipated during this quarter because of the volume available for use in stock. Revisions will be made in the next quarter based on field implementation experience and staff recommendations.

COMPONENT 3: ENHANCED COMMUNITY-BASED LIVELIHOODS DERIVED FROM SUSTAINABLE FOREST-BASED AND AGRICULTURE-BASED ENTERPRISES IN TARGET AREAS

Component 3 activities focused on preparations for the 2012-2103 non-timber forest product (NTFP) collection season and a review of past curriculum and best practices that will be applied to materials development. Farmer Field Schools (FFS) were in session and carried over from LFSP.

ACTIVITY: 3.1 Assist communities, selected resource use groups within communities, and other appropriate public and private stakeholders to develop enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources and payments for ecosystem services

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD
Rapid ethno-botanical surveys initiated
Value chains mapping for NTFPs initiated
Training modules on NTFP collection, handling and storage reviewed
FFS curriculum revised
No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The key tasks for the reporting period under this activity included the design and implementation of ethno-botanical surveys, and review and revision of training materials for FFS sessions and NTFP collectors.

The methodology for the ethno-botanical survey and preliminary value chain analysis was designed by Agribusiness in Sustainable African Plant Products (ASNAPP) and Rutgers University with input from the Leader, Livelihoods & Enterprise Development Activities (L/LEDA) and SCFA. The ethno-botanical survey team was mobilized in late September and will submit their report in October. The survey teams visited all of the new sites except the Sayee Clan site which is located within the landscape of the existing community forestry sites established under LRCFP/LFSP. The team is expected to finalize its findings in early October. To date, samples of 11 species of NTFPs have been exported to the US for chemical analyses by subcontractor Rutgers University.

During the reporting period, PROSPER reviewed existing materials on NTFP collection practices, marketing and mitigation plans, and made revisions in anticipation of the 2012-2013 season. These materials will be adapted into a standardized training module format for inclusion in the “How-to” Manual series in the upcoming quarter.

NTFP mitigation plans were prepared in August and have been incorporated into the development of the PROSPER Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan.

ACTIVITY: 3.2 Reduce threats to biodiversity linked to livelihood activities

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD
Selection criteria for new FFS established
FFS weekly meetings conducted in Nimba on 8 sites (continuation of LFSP)
Expanded FFS curriculum to Community Forestry, Nutrition and NTFP collection developed
Business Plan discussed and explained to CPGs and CPOPs in Nimba
Existing cassava grinders and freedom mills (palm oil press) repaired and operational under new business model
No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

During this reporting period, the main tasks under this activity included continued support to FFS established under LFSP and restructuring the cassava processing groups (CPGs) and commercial palm oil producers (CPOPs).

The eight farmer field schools (FFS) planted hot pepper, ground nuts and cowpeas on empty, previously-harvested fields. Next year's crops are expected to benefit from the nitrogen fixed in the soils by these leguminous crops.

In August, PROSPER conducted post-harvest training in Nimba County. The training for FFS members focused on prevention of crop loss. By preserving more food product per household, the expansion of the cultivated area through forest clearance may be reduced, potentially leading to the reduction of threats to biodiversity. The training was conducted in eight locations with a total of 177 participants (81F/96M).

The FFS curriculum was reviewed and revised and now includes the cultivation of "domesticated" NTFP (e.g. Griffonia and Grains of Paradise). The revised FFS curriculum emphasizes maintaining and increasing soil fertility in order to increase the fallow periods during slash and burn rotations. The FFS will demonstrate over time that the application of green manure (e.g. cowpeas or groundnuts preceding upland rice) or other soil fertility enhancing methods and measures produces higher yields on the same land area, potentially reducing shifting cultivation and loss of forest.

PROSPER's predecessor, LFSP, had begun the work of restructuring cassava processing groups (CPG) and commercial palm oil processor groups (CPOP) with the aim of turning them into viable, sustainable, commercial operations. During the mobilization period, PROSPER continued this restructuring by providing these groups with training in Business Planning. The restructured groups will perform under strict business principles and will be required to generate enough income to operate, maintain and repair their production machines themselves. The training took place in two locations (Zor Lehpula and Sehyi-Geh) with a total of 80 participants (35F/45M). Repairs were also made to the existing processing equipment.

ACTIVITY: 3.3 Work with stakeholders to provide feedback/share lessons learned in best practices, workable approaches, and recommended actions to improve the effectiveness of forestry and agricultural enterprises

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

Established membership with Agriculture Coordination Committee

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

Key Accomplishments:

The September meeting of the Agricultural Coordination Committee was attended by the PROSPER L/LEDA. Through this meeting, initial contact was made with IBEX to discuss possible financing support to Botanical Products Association of Liberia BOTPAL or an exporter, and contacts were made with Catholic Relief Services which recently concluded a value-chain mapping of rice in Nimba. The ACC is one such forum for exchanging experiences and making strategic linkages to improve

ACTIVITY: 3.4 Establish test plots to determine baseline greenhouse gas content (especially carbon) in a representative sample of land use areas under a variety of management regimes and monitor their changes the production cycle

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE MOBILIZATION PERIOD

No results to report for Quarter 1

No contract deliverables due during the quarter

No work was planned or carried out under Activity 3.4 during the mobilization period.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

Tetra Tech ARD faced many challenges and obstacles during the mobilization period. Some were inherent to launching a large and complex new USAID program. Others had their roots in specificities of the Liberian context and in conjunctural issues affecting the Liberian forestry sector. The following are worthy of note:

- Ensuring a seamless transition between the predecessor project (LFSP) and PROSPER for the pursuit of activities in northern Nimba provided an early challenge as the PROSPER team was simultaneously absorbed with the urgent necessities of start-up (locating an office, hiring staff, procuring equipment and vehicles, establishing administrative, financial, and IT systems, etc.), orienting and mobilizing PROSPER's numerous implementing partners and stakeholders, and the imperative of getting out to the field to identify new work sites.
- The issuance of private use permits (PUP) over a large portion of Liberia's forestland impacted PROSPER's first months, restricting the number of potential community forestry sites in PROSPER target counties. By July, the unfolding PUP scandal had completely absorbed the attention of FDA's Monrovia staff, curtailing opportunities for consultation and partnership-building with FDA in the early months of implementation.
- PROSPER's progress on curricula development activities in Component 1 was slower than expected for reasons both internal and external to the program. PROSPER held several meetings with different officials in the Ministry of Education in June and July before the Ministry affirmed its interest in the PROSPER's initiative to strengthen the environmental content of the formal primary curriculum. The MOE did not designate a representative to lead the Curriculum Development Working Group until mid-August. PROSPER's efforts to analyze the primary and non-formal curricula and identify opportunities to strengthen their environmental content were hampered by the lack of environmental and curriculum development expertise within the Component 1 team.
- An intense and prolonged rainy season wreaked havoc with primary and secondary roads used by the PROSPER team and subcontractors, disrupting travel and the scheduling of field activities and causing extensive damage to PROSPER vehicles. Despite the poor road conditions, PROSPER managed to keep most activities on track through the middle of September, but had to suspend travel to several areas in the latter part of September as waterlogged roads became totally impassable.

Looking ahead to the first quarter of FY 2013, the PROSPER team anticipates several serious challenges, including the following:

- An extraordinary number of information gathering exercises need to be conducted/completed in PROSPER's new sites in October (community profiling, biodiversity assessments, value chain analysis, M&E data), while program staff and implementing partners move ahead with a busy schedule of training and technical assistance activities. The compilation, analysis, and reporting of this information will stretch program staff capacities in November and early December.

- A key part of PROSPER’s strategy to build a cadre of FDA staff well-versed in community forestry is to provide opportunities for FDA district agents to participate in different phases of CF development in PROSPER’s sites. The lack of basic operating budgets in FDA district offices makes such a strategy almost completely reliant on PROSPER resources – a situation that poses both budgetary issues for PROSPER and questions about sustainability.
- Up to now, LFSP and PROSPER have provided a three dollar meal to Farmer Field School (FFS) participants – an important incentive to subsistence farmers considering the opportunity cost of such training. As PROSPER extends FFS to new sites in FY 2013, however, budgetary constraints require the program to develop and experiment alternative forms and levels of incentive.
- The establishment of a fully-functional program office in Tapitta will require extensive renovations. This task will be complicated by the remoteness of Tapitta and the dearth of qualified building contractors in the zone.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PROSPER STAFF LIST

Full-time Staff: Monrovia

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
Technical					
1	Reid	Stephen	Chief of Party		14 May 2012
2	Litz	Vaneska	Deputy COP/Leader, Community Forestry/Land Tenure and Property Rights		01 June 2012
3	Sedlak	Philip	Leader, Educational Development and Outreach Activities		23 May 2012
4	Jackson	Nobeh	Outreach & Communications Advisor		01 June 2012
5	Johnson	T. Doe	Education Advisor	NAEAL	18 June 2012
6	Koffa	Samuel	Senior Community Forestry Advisor		12 July 2012
7	Kweme	Dominic	Organizational Development Advisor	CJPS	01 June 2012
8	de Waard	Peter	Leader, Livelihoods & Enterprise Development Activities	ACDI/VOCA	18 June 2012
9	Bedell	Hodo	Livelihoods Advisor	ACDI/VOCA	01 June 2012
10	Nyepan	Josephus	Livelihoods Program Officer	AGRHA	01 June 2012
11	Miller	Esthella	Gender Integration Officer		01 June 2012
12	Vangehn	Darlington	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist		01 June 2012
Financial and Administrative					
13	Tarr	Vera	Office Manager		01 June 2012
14	Williams	Joshua	Finance Officer		01 June 2012
15	Mulbah	Henry	Assistant Finance Officer		01 June 2012
16	Wheigar	Sando	Procurement/Contracts Officer		02 July 2012
Support Staff					
17	Saylee	Moses	Caretaker		01 June 2012

18	Johnson	Frederick	Head Driver		01 June 2012
19	Dukuly	Abraham	Driver		01 June 2012
20	Habah	John	Driver		01 June 2012

Full-time Staff: Northern Nimba Field Office

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
1	Biah	D. Nuah	Forestry Officer/Head of Office		01 June 2012
2	Ville	James	Field Office Administrator		28 August 2012
3	Boykai	Joel	Driver		01 June 2012

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF REPORTS SUBMITTED

	Title	Date Submitted	Reference (Deliverable/Reporting Requirement)	Notes
1	Monthly Progress Report, May 2012	June 8	RR-4	
2	Preliminary Site Assessment Report	June 20	D-23	
3	Mobilization Plan, June-September 2012	July 6	RR-1	Revision submitted 8/2/12; Approved
4	Draft Performance Management Plan	July 6		
5	Monthly Progress Report, June 2012	July 6	RR-4	
6	Monthly Progress Report, July 2012	August 2	RR-4	
7	Gender Assessment	August 10	D- 22	Final revision submitted 10/14/12
8	Performance Management Plan	August 14	RR-3	Final revision in preparation
9	Final Site Assessment Report	August 21	D-23 (f)	Revision submitted 8/25/12; Approved 8/28/12
10	Monthly Progress Report, August 2012	September 2	RR-4	
11	Monthly Progress Report, September 2012	September 30	RR-4	
12	Annual Work Plan, FY 2013	October 1	RR-1	

APPENDIX 3: SUCCESS STORIES



SNAPSHOT

Communities and Land Policy Development

Communities demand land rights and policy reform



JCFMB Co-Chairperson, Saye Thompson discusses the forest management plan with community members.

“We want the government to define or draw a clear line between conservation and concession”

-Saye Thompson, JCFMB Chair

Managing Liberia’s forests and its many valuable resources is a challenging task. The Community Rights Law (CRL) of 2009 established the legal framework to enable communities to sustainably manage their customary lands. Unfortunately, gaps in Liberia’s land policy and legal framework provide opportunities for overlapping land and resource claims that threaten the sustainability of forest resources. With USAID support, local communities are constructively engaging in the land policy dialogue.

In 2008, USAID’s community forestry program (LRCFP) and Liberia’s Forestry Development Authority (FDA) supported the development of three pilot community forests consistent with the CRL in northern Nimba County. Through a series of consultations, meetings and trainings, the Zor and Gba communities were able to organize a joint community forest management body (JCFMB) that was officially recognized in 2011. The JCFMB has worked closely with the FDA to develop a plan for the sustainable management of its forest which is adjacent to one of the nation’s three established Protected Areas and provides valuable habitat for many species including endangered chimpanzees. USAID support for the Zor and Gba communities continues under the recently-launched PROSPER program.

In June 2012, the JCFMB was informed that a mining company had entered the community forest and was exploring for mineral ores. The mining company had been given an exploratory license by the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME). The MLME was not aware of the communities’ claims on the land or that the communities’ approved Forest Management Plan forbade mineral exploration in the forest. The communities asked the mining company to leave and were supported in that demand by local government authorities who were co-signatories to the JCFMB’s management agreement with the FDA.

Not satisfied with this, the Chair of the JCFMB, Mr. Saye Thompson, contacted a national newspaper to explain the issue and urge the government to clarify its land policy: “The forests that we agreed to set aside as community forests for conservation purposes have all been awarded to mining companies for exploration purposes. We want the government to define or draw a clear line between conservation and concession because we continue to see companies coming with licenses to carry out exploration in those forests set aside by us and the Forestry Development Authority”

Through PROSPER, USAID will continue to support community forestry and to strengthen the capacity of local communities to participate actively in policy dialogues as Liberia deliberates and develops its land and resource use policy.

Telling Our Story

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SNAPSHOT

Exploring Potential NTFP Markets

PROSPER identifies alternative livelihoods from the forests of Liberia



Lou Dokpa at her market stall in Tapitta selling NTFP

“NTFP collection and marketing can provide livelihood options to rural men and women while contributing to sustainable forest management practices”

-Peter deWaard, Livelihoods Specialist

Over the last fifty years, more than 80% of the Upper Guinea Forest – which used to extend from Sierra Leone to Togo – has been lost to deforestation. Forty percent of this great forest’s remaining stands are found in Liberia. For hundreds of years, the inhabitants of the Upper Guinea Forest have been using non-timber forest products (NTFP) as a source for medicines, building materials and spices for their daily foods. Because of rapid deforestation and the migration of large numbers of people to urban centers, the collection of these NTFPs is increasingly confined to forested areas in the hinterlands of Liberia where remnants of the Upper Guinean Rainforest still dominate the landscape.

The USAID-funded PROSPER program is working with local communities to sustainably manage and use forest resources and is supporting the development of non-timber forest product (NTFP) market chains, including wild spices that grow in their forests.

In 2012, the PROSPER program conducted an ethno-botanical survey in order to determine the NTFPs that local communities are harvesting and their uses. As part of that study, a PROSPER plant scientist visited the local market in Tapitta, a small regional trading hub located in central Liberia, to identify NTFP spices that were being traded. Kou Dokpa a 45-year-old market trader was selling Grains of Paradise, the spice after which West Africa’s moniker “the Grain Coast” is based. *“I have been trading GOP for four years and sell more than a kilo a week. I am also selling black pepper, which I buy from collectors when they are in season. I dry the peppercorns and sell them small small on the market.”*

Another PROSPER team member spent long hours in local communities and in their forests gathering data on the names, uses and occurrence of a wide variety of NTFPs in order to determine collection practices and potential volumes available.

By conducting ethno-botanical surveys in the forests and mapping the value chains, USAID-PROSPER has gathered information that it will use to assist collectors and traders like Kou Dokpa to reach larger markets at the national and international level.

In its assistance to collectors and traders, PROSPER is taking care to ensure that NTFPs are harvested on a sustainable basis. Through this work, PROSPER is helping to demonstrate that standing forests in Liberia have an economic value and providing incentives for local people to sustainably manage them.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000

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