



REPORT

LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT OPTIONS ASSESSMENT OF FOREST COMMUNITIES IN AND AROUND THE GOLA FOREST NATIONAL PARK



**SUBMITTED TO:
FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**SUBMITTED BY:

SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE OF LIBERIA (SCNL)
&
VAINGA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY
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This report is the product of a technical assessment carried out under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) administered by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and funded by the Norwegian Government through the World Bank (WB). A Joint Venture (JV) comprising the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and Vainga Agriculture Development & Management Consultancy, Inc. (VADEMCO) conducted the assessment. The JV generously acknowledges with profound gratitude the support provided by the Management and staff of the Forestry Development Authority and the Liberia Office of the World Bank. In particular, the JV is appreciative of the high-level cooperation received from the staff of the Conservation Department at the FDA both at the central and field offices during the desk review and data collection processes. John Smith, Chief Park Warden, and rangers at the Gola Forest National Park played magnificent roles during the data collection process in selected communities in Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties, respectively.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARTP	Across the River Transboundary Project
CI	Conservation International
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GFNP	Gola Forest National Park
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoLaMA	Gola Management Agreement
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Consent
JV	Joint Venture
KII	Key Informal Interview
NDC	Nationally Determined Consent (when INDC ratified)
PC	Project coordinator
PRA	Participation Rural Appraisal
REDD	Reduction Emission Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RIU	REDD ⁺ Implementation Unit
SCNL	Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VADEMCO	Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy
WABICC	West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change
WB	World Bank
WRI	World Resources Institute

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the product of an assessment conducted by a Joint Venture (JV) consisting of the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy, Inc. (VADEMCO) between June and October 2019 for the Forestry Development Authority (FDA).

In May 2019, the Government of Liberia, through the FDA, awarded a consultancy to the JV to conduct an assessment in communities in and around the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in order to determine their current livelihood activities as well as to identify sustainable alternative livelihood support options for the communities. The assessment was financed under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) funded by the Government of Norway through the World Bank (WB).

The assessment, which is Phase I of the arrangement, was in consideration of the potential threats to the GFNP by the livelihood activities of the communities in and around the proximity of the Park. Its findings will inform subsequent design of the Phase II planned to focus on the implementation of the approved alternative livelihood support activities for the communities. The assessment specifically sought to:

- a) Identify a “menu” of options for viable, well-suited, and sustainable livelihood support activities endorsed by the targeted communities and the FDA;
- b) Develop criteria for selecting beneficiary communities;
- c) Establish Sustainable Livelihoods Support Committees in the target communities (clans) to provide oversight for the Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Support Activities; and,
- d) Inform the design and implementation of environmentally and culturally feasible livelihood improvement activities in the target communities.

The GFNP is the nucleus of the greater Gola landscape located in the northwestern forest block of Liberia, precisely situated in Pokpa and Gola Konneh Districts in Grand Cape Mount County and Kongba District in Gbarpolu County. It is remarkable by the presence of several big watercourses that form part of a very rich watershed system. There are mining camps sparsely situated in and around the GFNP inhabited by diverse nationalities as well as Liberians from other counties. Economic activities in these mining camps include petit trade, weekly markets, farming, hunting, pit sawing, etc.

The team used a mixed-method approach to carry out the data collection process. The approach included a desk review, composition and training of the survey team, and development of survey tools. The team held community leadership meetings in each of the four (4) major communities in the two counties which brought together local authorities, youth and women leaders and representatives from satellite communities comprising farmers, miners, hunters, pit sawyers, etc.

The leadership meetings created awareness about the purpose of the assessment at the leadership level after which the leaders in turn created awareness in their respective communities in advance of the arrival of the survey team.

Focus group discussions held with 8-10 respondents from each major community and surrounding satellite communities in each of the two counties were interactive, using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods. Resource individuals from major communities and satellite villages also interacted with the team through key informant interviews. These were social workers, elders, business people and others who have knowledge about and stake in the well-beings of the communities. The essence was to crosscheck information obtained during the leadership and community meetings. Accompanied by community members, the team used transect walks to places of interest to observe and collect vital information, while an ICT specialist used Geographic Positioning System (GPS) to collect coordinates of settlements visited and impacted by community's livelihood activities. In consultation with the FDA, criteria were developed and used to identify and select target communities for the assessment as outlined under the methodology.

Six (6) common livelihood activities identified by the assessment in both Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties were farming, mining, hunting, non-timber forest product (NTFP) collection, pit sawing and petit trade. Original inhabitants of the assessed communities, Liberians from other counties and foreign nationals largely from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea are carrying out these livelihood activities. Almost all of the respondents covered by the KIIs and the FGDs in both counties identified farming as their major livelihood activity. According to respondents, lowland farming and vegetables production are the two major farming activities practiced by the people of Grand Cape Mount side of the GFNP followed by upland rice farming and cash crops. Surprisingly, Cassava, which is a major staple food in Liberia was ranked 5th followed by livestock production. Mining of diamond and gold is common in both Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties.

Pit sawing which is one of the major livelihood activities in and around the GFNP in both counties is at minimum scale due to deplorable road condition while **loggi** was not taking place at all for the same reason. In various FGDs, community people also averred that some of the planks/timber obtained from the areas cross the border to neighboring Republic of Sierra Leone. Respondents also asserted that inhabitants of the forest communities collect a wide variety of non-forest-timber-products (NFTP) from the forests.

The team noted a high dependence on various forms of environmental resources by all communities to meet their daily needs. Respondents reported during the KIIs and FGDs that in both Counties, mining, farming, hunting and pit sawing are negatively affecting the environment at different scales. This was confirmed by the assessment team through transect walks.

In the case of *mining*, respondents cited deforestation, land degradation, water pollution (ground and surface water), undermining of trees, and pit holes as serious attendant consequences of the mining activities in their areas. The team confirmed this assertion. Deforestation, land degradation and water pollution are most acute in Grand Cape Mount County than in Gbarpolu County, while pit holes and undermining of trees are relatively prevalent in Gbarpolu than in Grand Cape Mount County.

As regards farming, respondents cited deforestation, degradation, biodiversity habitat loss, and water pollution as negatively affecting the environment. In Liberia, traditional farming practiced by the local people is shifting cultivation, which entails slash and burn method that undermines the forest. Impacts of pit sawing were reported to include deforestation, degradation, destruction of windbreaker, and economic loss due to smuggling of timber to the Republic of Sierra Leone. In the case of hunting, biodiversity loss was mentioned by respondents as an impact on the environment. In summary, the team acknowledged that most current livelihood activities of the inhabitants have negative implications on the environment. The team also observed that fostering environmental resilience is critical to any livelihood support interventions in the target communities. Respondents outlined an exhaustive list of alternative livelihood activities during the PRA, KIIs and FGDs and the assessment team guided them to rank and prioritize the activities. The determination of the final MENU was guided by expert judgments and reports from previous projects implemented by SCNL and partners.

Based on thorough analysis of responses coupled with multiple observations during the assessment, the team is pleased to advance below recommendations for consideration:

1. Consider prompt alternative livelihood implementation strategy to enable communities located in and around the GFNP to reaffirm their support to the sustainable management of the park;
2. Consider climate smart and conservation agricultural activities to reduce pressure on the Park to ensure its sustainability, as it is done in protected areas in other countries;
3. Support skills enhancement around protected areas to reduce dependency on forest resources for livelihood;
4. FDA and partners should prioritize conservation of the GFNP through effective and clear communication and visible presence of forest rangers;
5. Establish and enforce regulations that will address the issue of settlements inside the park;
6. Prioritize women and youth specific interests in the design and implementation of future conservation and development activities; and,
7. Intensify awareness and sensitization initiatives about the environment in future endeavors with the forest communities.

2.0 ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This report is the product of an assessment conducted by a Joint Venture (JV) consisting of the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and Vainga Agriculture Development and Management Consultancy, Inc. (VADEMCO) between May and October 2019 for the Forestry Development Authority (FDA).

In May 2019, the Government of Liberia, through the FDA, awarded a consultancy to the JV to conduct an assessment in communities in and around the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) in

order to determine their current livelihood activities as well as to identify sustainable alternative livelihood support options for the communities. The assessment was financed under the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) funded by the Government of Norway through the World Bank (WB).

The assessment, which is Phase I of the arrangement, was in consideration of the potential threats to the GFNP by the livelihood activities of the communities in and around the proximity of the Park. Its findings will inform subsequent design of Phase II, which will focus on the implementation of the approved alternative livelihood support activities for the communities. The proposed activities are environmentally and culturally acceptable for implementation to improve the lives of the forest communities and at the same time conserve the Park.

2.2 Assessment in Context

The forest of Liberia is the heart of Upper Guinean forest ecosystem with about 42% remnant forest cover within the West Africa sub-region. Its richness and uniqueness in biodiversity stand as attraction for investment. The forest cover of the country shows two major blocks: the Northwestern forest block and the southeastern forest block (Liberia Forest Atlas, 2019).

Liberia's membership with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) led to its commitment to keep aside 30% of forest for conservation (NFRL 2006). Liberia, in 2015, also submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Consent (INDC) and subscribed membership to the Paris Agreement. In the year 2018, the Government of Liberia (GOL) ratified the INDC to become Nationally Determined Consent (NDC), which is to ensure the mitigation of climate change at the global level.

As part of effort to ensure the sustainable management of Liberia forest ecosystems, the Government of Liberia and development partners adopted the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006, which contains the Commercial Forestry, Community Forestry and Conservation (3Cs) philosophy. The National Legislature enacted five (5) protected areas in Liberia into law including the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP). Prior to its establishment, the GoL through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) carried out series of consultations with inhabitants of the GFNP for their concurrence because their livelihoods largely depend on forestland and related resources.

To conserve the protected areas, the SCNL and partners through the Across the River Trans-boundary Project (ARTP) and the Gola Management Agreement (GoLaMA) Project conducted a baseline and detailed livelihood surveys in 2013 and 2017. Based on results of the surveys, the LFSP under the auspices of the FDA commissioned the JV to undertake a field assessment for sustainable livelihood support activities for communities in and around the GFNP. The assessment was designed for Phase I intended to map out the current livelihood activities of communities in and around the Park. It was also designed to identify alternative environmentally sound and culturally friendly livelihood options for inhabitants, which would be vetted by the FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure that the livelihood options meet acceptable environmental and cultural standards. Upon approval of the alternative livelihood

options, the Phase II will consider implementation of the alternative sustainable livelihood support activities for the target communities. The assessment accordingly was conducted between May and October 2019.

3.0 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 Assessment Objectives

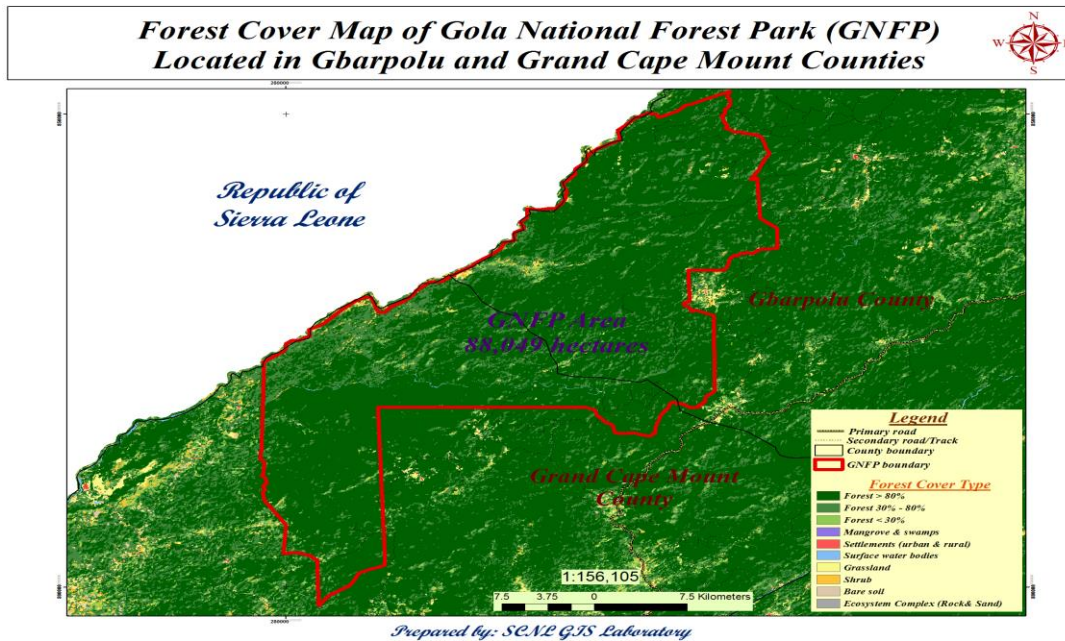
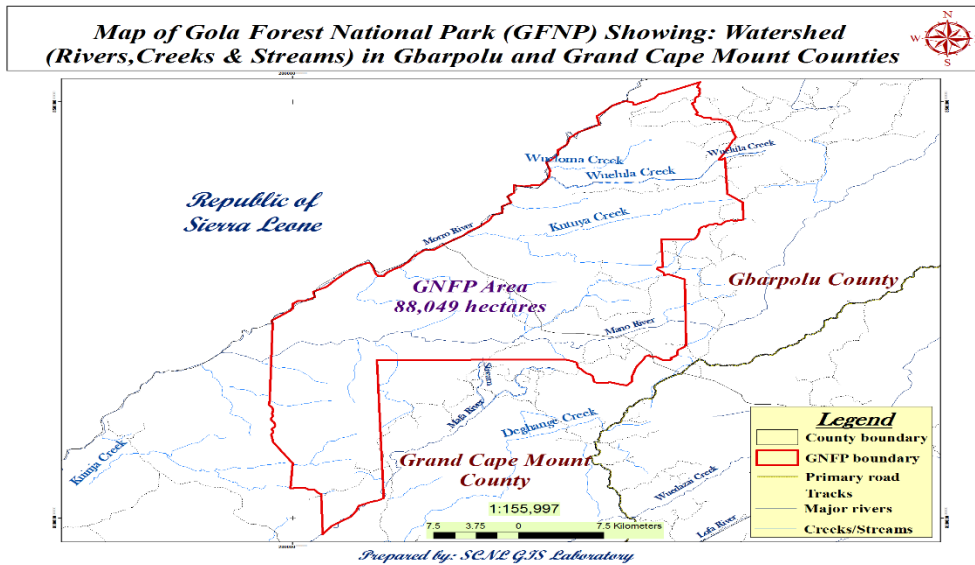
The overarching objective of the assessment was to determine the current livelihood activities of forest communities and identify alternative environmentally sound and culturally friendly livelihood options for community inhabitants.

The assessment specifically sought to:

- a) Identify a “menu” of options for viable, well-suited, and sustainable livelihood support activities endorsed by the targeted communities and the FDA;
- b) Develop criteria for selecting beneficiary communities;
- c) Establish Sustainable Livelihoods Support Committees in the target communities (clans) to provide oversight for the Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Support Activities; and,
- d) Inform the design and implementation of environmentally and culturally feasible livelihood improvement activities in the target communities.

3.2 Technical Description of Assessment Sites

The GFNP is the nucleus of the greater Gola landscape located in the northwestern forest block of Liberia, precisely situated in Pokpa and Gola Konneh Districts in Grand Cape Mount County and Kongba District in Gbarpolu County. The GFNP is remarkable by the presence of several big watercourses that form part of a very rich watershed system. Some of the rivers have great waterfalls and rapids that are potential for the establishment of hydropower. In terms of land cover, the GFNP and surroundings are an integral part of tropical rain forest characterized by the presence of unique and diverse timber species as well as mineral such as gold and diamond. For that reason, mining sites are seeing alongside the roads and streams. There are mining camps sparsely situated in and around the GFNP inhabited by diverse nationalities as well as Liberians from other counties. Economic activities in these mining camps include petit trade, weekly markets, farming, hunting, pit sawing, etc. The maps below provide more detailed descriptions of the assessed areas.



3.3 Deliverables

The assessment was designed to achieve the following deliverables:

DI: An Options Assessment Report (OAR) of potentially viable sustainable livelihood support activities that can be implemented around Gola National Park and a sound, simple and culturally

appropriate strategy (considering the location) for implementing the OAR activities in a fair and equitable manner, including the criteria for selecting the beneficiary communities.

D2: Final Livelihood Support Plans incorporating the Clients comments and inputs (if any).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk Review

The literature review included gathering of reports and other relevant documents related to past and current interventions at the GFNP by various institutions including VADEMCO, SCNL and other development partners. The review helped to enhance the team's appreciation of progress made and challenges associated with the implementation of livelihood interventions in and around the GFNP and to obtain some insights of current livelihood activities. This undertaking eventually helped the team to frame the fieldwork methodology.

4.2 Composition and training of the Survey Team

The JV recruited a project coordinator and redeployed staff from their respective pools of manpower to form part of the assessment team based on their experience and expertise in field assessments. A full day training session was held at Mano River Kongo to enhance the capacities of the enumerators in data collection, research ethics and note-taking techniques, using the assessment tools. The JV technical experts assisted the Project Coordinator to facilitate the training. The enumerators also received training in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach and use of questionnaires through mock key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The Project Coordinator and the technical experts led the pilot testing and collected observations and feedbacks using a standard quality control checklist. These exercises gave the team solid understanding of the application of the PRA techniques and the survey tools used to collect data for the assessment, including community entry and engagement. They also helped to ensure quality of data collection.

4.3 Survey Tools Development

Prior to training of the enumerators, the technical experts and Project Coordinator **developed the survey tools**. The tools were tested and revised as necessary after the pilot testing. The team produced enough copies for conduct of the assessment in the two counties.

4.4 Community Awareness and Data Collection

The team held community leadership meetings in each of the four (4) major communities in the two counties which brought together local authorities, youth and women leaders and representatives from satellite communities comprising farmers, miners, hunters, pit sawyers, etc. The leadership meetings created awareness about the purpose of the assessment at the leadership level after which the participants in turn created awareness in their respective communities in advance of the arrival of the survey team. The initial plan of the assessment was to divide the

team into two (2) groups at the end of the training and then have the assessment conducted simultaneously in both counties. However, the team decided to work together to complete the assessment in Grand Cape Mount County before proceeding to Gbarpolu County. This arrangement was helpful in addressing logistical constraints and for the two teams to be able to backstop each other during the assessment in areas that were very harsh.

4.5 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Focus group discussions were held with 8-10 respondents from each major community and surrounding satellite communities in each of the two counties. These discussions were guided by a set of tools containing interrelated lead and follow-up questions about issues related to environmentally and culturally friendly livelihood options. The questionnaires had two (2) important parts. The focus of one part of the questionnaire was to identify current livelihood activities for communities around the GFNP. The second part focused on the identification of alternative livelihood activities that would improve the lives of forest communities while preserving protected areas of the forest. Probing questions were helpful to assessing the environmental and social impacts of current activities from the perspectives of respondents. The Focus Group Discussions were interactive using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods.

4.6 Key Informant Interview (KII)

The survey team interviewed key individuals from major communities and their satellite villages. These were social workers, elders, business people and others who have knowledge about and stake in the well-beings of the communities. On the average, three (3) KIIs were carried out in each of the major communities and two (2) KIIs in each of the satellite villages. The essence was to crosscheck the information obtained during the leadership and community meetings with results of the Focus Group Discussions and Participatory Rural Appraisal.

4.7 Field observation (GIS)

The team anticipated the production of several maps to show the forest cover and other related realities of the GFNP. The maps will support the results of the assessment by graphical representation of the geographic outlay of the GFNP. Accompanied by community members, the team used transect walks to places of interest to also observe and collect vital information while an ICT specialist used Global Positioning System (GPS) to collect coordinates of settlements visited and areas impacted by community's livelihood activities. Maps produced from the exercise are contained in the report.

4.8 Sample size

All the statistics relating to the sample size are all summarized in the below Table 1. It presents the categories of information, the projected number of respondents prior to going in the field and the actual number addressed.

Table 1: Sample size and statistics

Categories	Projected number of respondents	Actual number of respondents
Communities (Majors + Satellites)	41	35
Community leaders	94	101
FGD	160	140
KII	94	53
Total	348	294

4.9 Data Analysis and Reporting

The team conducted its analysis using a two-stage approach. In Stage I, the Project Coordinator guided a daily debriefing session with the team taking into account key issues, events and responses observed during each day's data collection. The debriefed sessions provided meaningful insights into key findings and emerging trends, while helping to identifying attendant challenges and jointly identifying solutions. The Project Coordinator and supervisors documented the emerging issues and gaps identified by the team. The team used the “gaps” identified to strengthen the use of probes and follow-up questions in subsequent interviews.

Under the Stage II, once the assessment was completed, the team conducted a two-day participatory analysis exercise in Monrovia to identify vital findings and discuss outliers. Two individuals from the team experienced in data entry were tasked to enter the data using a software to identify common themes across the FGD and KII questions. Data were coded to determine commonalities and differences by various classifications, such as age, gender, major or satellite communities and other demographic factors. Data across all methods of the survey were triangulated to obtain multiple viewpoints and also to facilitate strong conclusions.

5.0 CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

The assessment, which was planned to commence in May 2019 and end in August 2019, rather started in June and ended in October 2019 due to some unforeseeable circumstances involving logistics, documentation and other project related issues. Also, conducting field research in rural Liberia is not easy, especially during the rainy season. On several occasions, the assessment team got stranded in remote locations due to bad roads and other non-permissive weather conditions which made it difficult for the team to reach some communities. In addition, three target communities, which were temporary mining and hunting communities (Boakai Camp, Kagomah Camp, and Nyukor Village) ceased to exist. As such, thirty five (35) communities out of the proposed 41 communities were assessed.

6.0 SELECTION CRITERIA AND ASSESSED COMMUNITIES

In consultation with the FDA, the following criteria were developed and used to identify and select target communities for the assessment:

1. Communities situated within the Greater Gola Landscape or its zone of influence;
2. Communities in areas to support reduction of ecosystem fragmentation by promoting sustainable management of the GFNP;
3. Communities in or around areas of global biological importance;
4. Communities located in or around areas of high existing natural forest cover between and/or within Protected Areas and Community forest;
5. Communities identified prior to the establishment of the GFNP; and
6. Communities whose livelihood activities may affect the smooth management of the GFNP.

In consideration of the established criteria, the communities in the matrix below were selected for the assessment.

Table 2: Selected and assessed communities

County	District	Clan	Community
Cape Mount	Porkpa	Sokpo	Fornor, Gbanjallah, Camp Israel, Fula camp, Jackson Village, Karwood, Jebbeh fornor, Kawelahun, Kingston village, Kpelleh village, Managoduah, Varney camp, Weajue
Gbarpolu	Kongbar	Tonglay	Kumbor, Lyne, Normon, Borborbee, Lawson village, Madingo camp, Daniel Camp, Alice camp, Symbol village, Kortee village, Monkey duluyan, Camp Alpha, Money camp, Zuie, Beaden, Bethuo, ULC, Sayfulah, Gonsuah, Moses Village, Smith village, Jawajeh, Donmamanah, Borborhun, Galahun, Salomon Camp.

7.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings of the assessment categorized as current livelihood activities, impacts of the current livelihood activities on the environment and GFNP, the alternative livelihood options, and the livelihood project support committees.

7.1 Current Livelihood Activities and descriptions

The six common livelihood activities identified by the assessment in both Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties were farming, mining, hunting, non-timber forest product (NTFP) collection, pit sawing and petit trade. Original inhabitants of the assessed communities, Liberians from other counties and foreign nationals largely from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea are carrying out these livelihood activities. Almost all of the respondents covered by the KIIs and the FGDs in both counties identified farming as their major livelihood activity.

According to respondents, lowland farming and vegetables production are the two major farming activities practiced by the people of Grand Cape Mount side of the GFNP followed by upland rice farming and cash crops. Surprisingly, Cassava, which is a major staple food in Liberia was ranked 5th followed by livestock production. In the Gbarpolu County side of the GFNP, lowland and upland rice farming activities were ranked to be the two major farming activities followed by lowland rice farming, cash crops and vegetables productions followed by cassava farming. Livestock was ranked the lowest farming activity

According to respondents, mining of diamond and gold is common in both Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties. However, most respondents in the two counties questioned the procedures of acquiring licenses from authorities to carry out artisanal mining in the counties. They asserted that some individuals acquire their licenses from the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) in Monrovia while others do so from field agents of the ministry based in the counties. This approach, they noted, is confusing. The assessment team could not independently verify the assertion due to the unavailability of relevant field agents in the assessed areas. Regarding large scale mining, the use of earth moving equipment was reported by respondents as a mining activity in the forests and along the water courses which they noted impacts larger surface of their environment.

Pit sawing which is one of the major livelihood activities in both counties in and around the GFNP was observed to be at minimum scale during the assessment due to deplorable road condition while logging was not taking place at all for the same reason. In various FGDs, community people also averred that some of the planks/timber obtained from the areas cross the border to neighboring Republic of Sierra Leone. Speaking in one of the FGDs, a local youth leader said ***“Not all of the planks sawed from our forest can benefit our communities because nothing can be paid to the communities for planks sent across the border”***. Respondents asserted that inhabitants of the forest communities collect a wide variety of non-forest-timber-products (NFTP) from the forests (see Annex D). The team noted a high dependence on various forms of environmental resources by all communities to meet their daily needs.

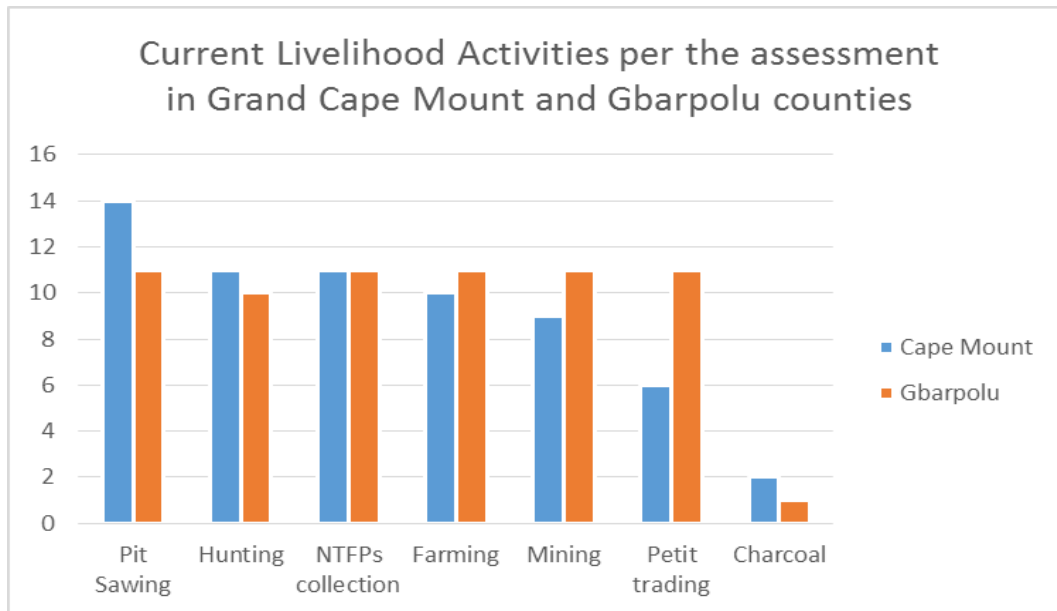
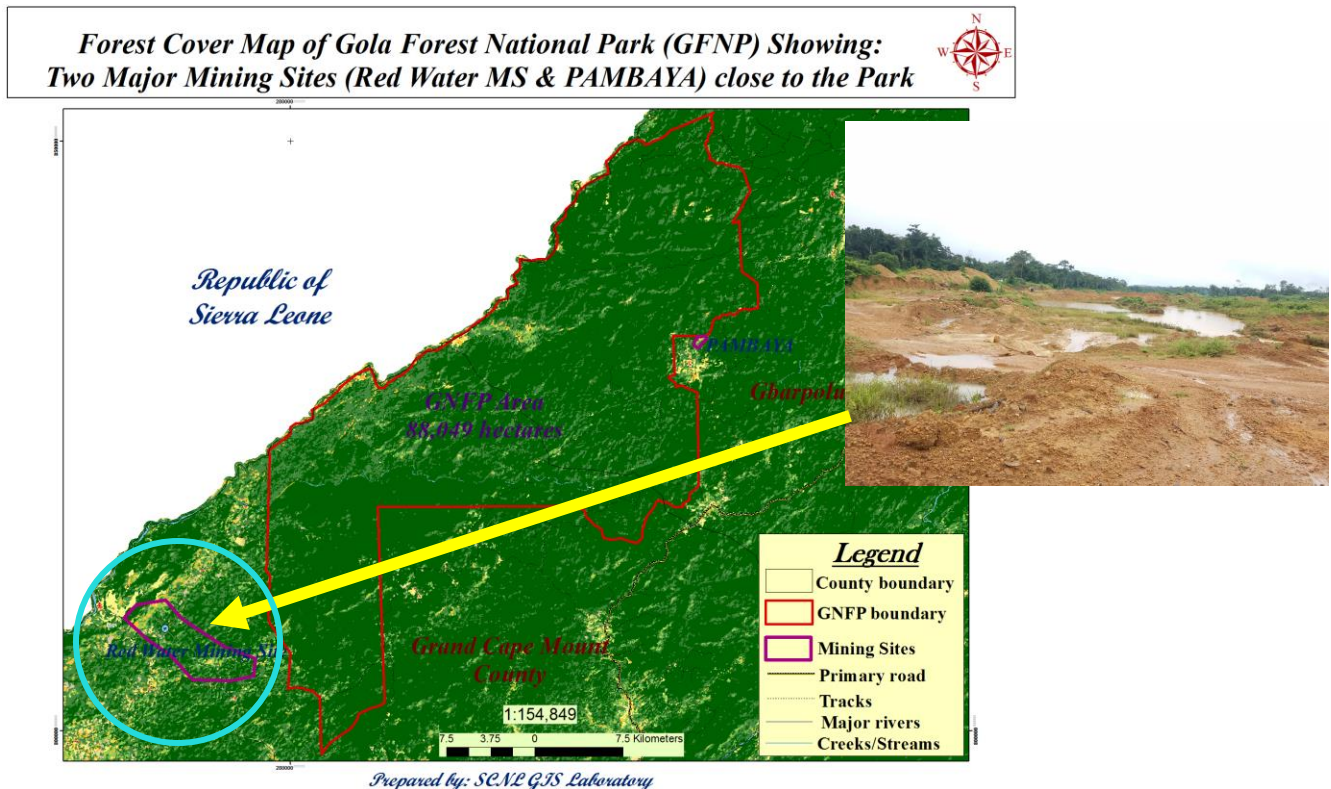


Figure 1: Diagram of current livelihood activities in Grand C. Mount and Gbarpolu Counties

7.2 Impact of Current Livelihood Activities

This component of the report focuses on the impacts of the communities’ current livelihood activities on the GFNP and surrounding. Respondents, during the KIIs and FGDs, reported that in both Counties mining, farming, hunting and pit sawing are negatively affecting the environment. The team confirmed the assertion through transect walks.

In the case of *mining*, respondents cited deforestation, land degradation, water pollution (ground and surface water), undermining of trees, and pit holes as serious attendant consequences of the mining activities in their areas. This assertion was cited by respondents and confirmed by the team (see the below forest cover map). Deforestation, land degradation and water pollution are most acute in Grand Cape Mount County than in Gbarpolu County, while pit holes and undermining of trees are relatively prevalent in Gbarpolu than in Grand Cape Mount County.



As regards *farming*, respondents cited deforestation, degradation, biodiversity habitat loss, and water pollution as negatively impacting the environment. In Liberia, traditional farming practiced by the local people is shifting cultivation, which entails slash and burn method that undermines the forest.

Impacts of pit sawing were reported to include deforestation, degradation, destruction of windbreaker, and economic loss due to smuggling of timber to the Republic of Sierra Leone. In the case of *hunting*, biodiversity loss was mentioned by respondents as an impact on the environment. The interaction between species and their environment is very critical. There are species that are known to be flagship species while other are known to be umbrella ones.

In summary, it was acknowledged that **most current livelihood activities** of the inhabitants have negative implications on the environment. The team observed that some respondents have a fairly good understanding on environmental degradation issues such as deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, landslides and consequences on soil fertility, and exhaustion and destruction of vegetation including long-term impacts such as droughts. In most FGDs and KIIs in the communities, some respondents admitted to some consequences of their different livelihood activities on the environment but mentioned that majority of inhabitants lack knowledge and strategies needed to mitigate the negative impacts on the environment. The team observed that **fostering environmental resilience is critical to any livelihood support interventions in the target communities.**

The figure below presents the extent of impact of the current livelihood activities on forest communities in and around the GFNP.

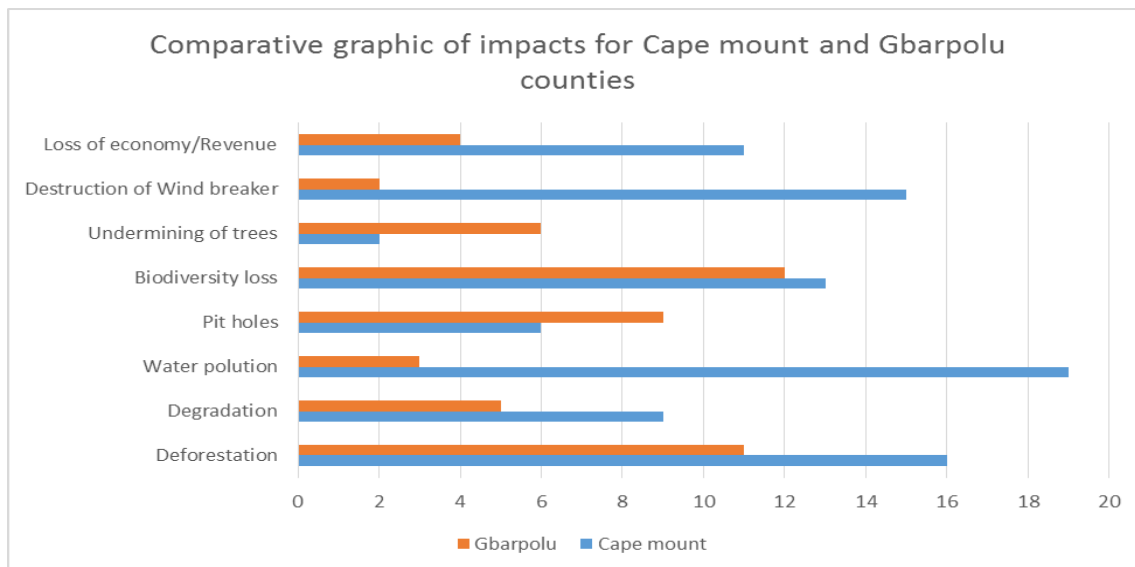


Figure 2: Livelihood impacts in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties

7.3 Alternative Livelihood Activities

This section of the report presents the alternative livelihood options for each county as determined by the respondents through the assessment mixed-method approach. The livelihood options were ranked on basis of the scale of preference of respondents out of which the proposed livelihood MENU was derived for consideration by the FDA. Respondents outlined an exhaustive list of alternative livelihood activities during the PRA, KIIs and FGDs and the assessment team guided them to rank and prioritize the activities (See Annexes E1, E2 and F). The determination of the final MENU was guided by expert judgements and reports from previous projects implemented by SCNL and partners.

In that doing, the experts applied the following principles in the process:

1. environment friendliness and cost benefit analysis
2. evaluation of livelihood options from the perspective of technical and economic feasibility and sustainability
3. protected area appropriate and culturally compatible livelihood options

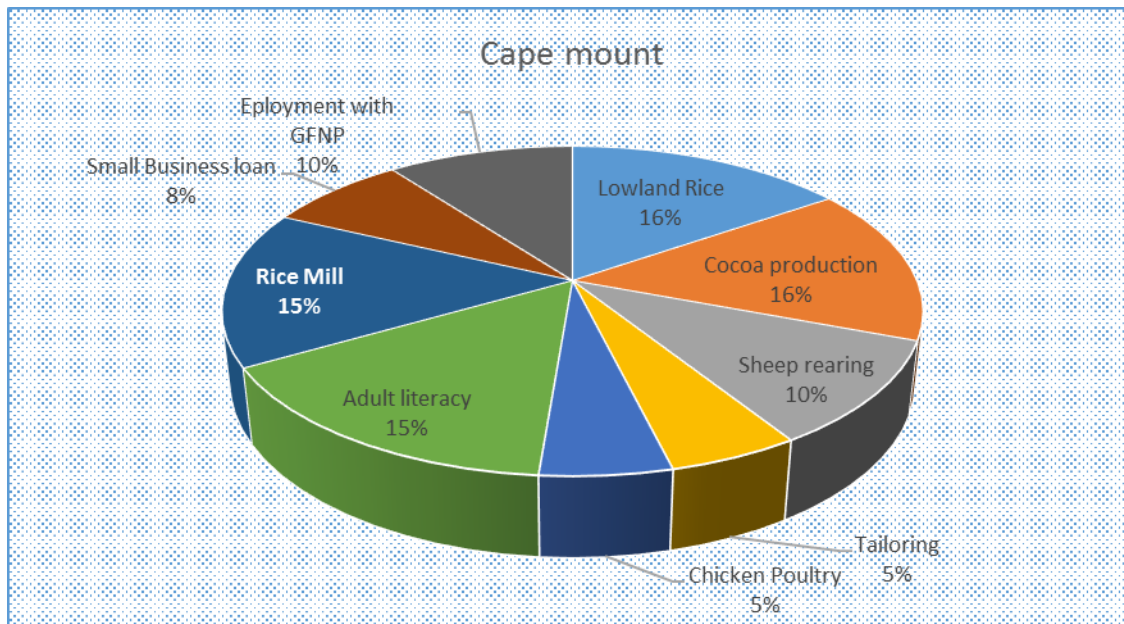


Figure 3: Diagram showing Alternative Livelihood options for Grand Cape Mount County

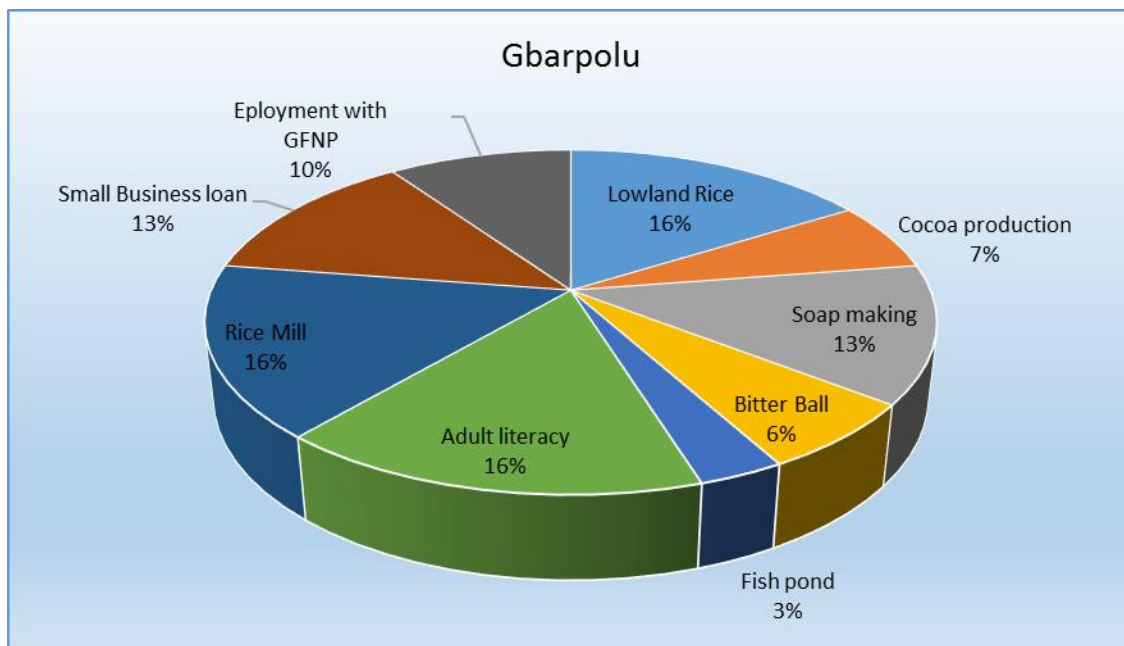


Figure 4: Diagram showing Alternative Livelihood options for Grand Cape Mount County



Table 3: Proposed Alternative Livelihood MENU by County

County	Sector	Activities
Grand Cape Mount County	Agriculture	Lowland rice
		Cocoa
		Livestock (Sheep)
		Vegetables (Pepper, Bitter ball, groundnuts)
	Skills training	Tailoring
		Soap Making
	Others	Adult Literacy
		Rice Mills
		Microfinance
Gbarpolu County	Agriculture	Lowland rice
		Cocoa
		Vegetables (Pepper, Bitter ball, groundnuts)
	Skills training	Soap Making
		Tailoring
	Others	Rice Mill
		Adult Literacy
		Microfinance

The proposed livelihood activities in Table 2.0 above derived from Annexes A&B. These two annexes provide wider livelihood options identified by the respondents during the KIIs and FGDs. The wider options were narrowed down to the activities in Table 1.0 by considering the first five (5) priorities of respondents. In order to further scrutinize the options to ensure that activities in the menu are culturally, economically and environmentally feasible for protecting the forest, the team applied experts' experiences, and documentation of previous activities to derive the proposed menu for each county.

It is also worth noting that, in addition to this MENU, respondents requested activities such as adult literacy, provision of rice mills, as well as employment opportunity in the context of working with the FDA as rangers for management of the park.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Conclusion

The major livelihood activities in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties are **farming, mining, pit sawing, vegetables production and petit trading**. There is an influx of nationals from Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea and Liberians from other counties attracted to the assessed areas primarily by hunting, mining and pit sawing. The presence of the satellite villages and their livelihood activities within the GFNP is seriously undermining the sustainable management of the park and related resources.

While some respondents appeared to understand the impact of their livelihood activities on the environment and the forest, a greater proportion seemed to lack broader awareness about fostering environmental resilience. Respondents cited deforestation, land degradation, water pollution, wildlife habitat loss, and economy loss as the major impacts caused by the unsustainable use of natural resources including the GFNP.

The alternative livelihood activities cited by the assessed community dwellers in and around the GFNP were similar in both counties. However, they were prioritized and ranked differently from one community to another. In total eight (8) major alternative livelihoods activities were identified as priorities. They are Lowland rice, Cocoa, Vegetables, Livestock, Soap Making, Tailoring, Adult Literacy, and Rice Mills.

Based on our long-term experience with livelihood support for protected areas management that includes rice production, the provision of rice mills serves as an incentive for increased production as it releases women in particular of the drudgery of labor. In the case of livestock rearing, the two counties' original inhabitants who are largely Muslims placed emphasis on goats, sheep and chicken/poultry.

The issue of road remains a big challenge because of high transportation cost that makes food supplies and other needed household items traded by women and men very expensive. Logs are smuggled across borders because of deplorable roads to Monrovia from the assessed areas during the rain. Regarding infrastructures, 10 of the 35 assessed communities have access to some essential social service infrastructure such as school, clinic, markets and hand pump. The team made transect walks in the communities to confirm this assertion.

In addition, the remoteness of the assessed areas is evidenced by the virtual lack of amenities such as radio station, communication facilities and towers, electricity and road network. In Kumbor for example, beside the SCNL office and guest house that have electricity, only a building put constructed for the community by the current Representative has electricity.

9.2 Recommendations

Based on thorough analysis of responses received from respondents coupled with multiple observations made during the assessment, the team is pleased to advance below recommendations for consideration:

1. Consider prompt alternative livelihood implementation strategy to enable communities located in and around the GFNP to reaffirm their support to the sustainable management of the park;
2. Consider climate smart and conservation agricultural activities to reduce pressure on the Park to ensure its sustainability in considering climate change mitigation;
3. Support skills enhancement around the GFNP to reduce dependency on forest resources for livelihoods to promote sustainable forest management;
4. FDA and partners should prioritize conservation activities in the GFNP through effective and clear communication strategy;
5. Establish and enforce regulations that will address the issue of settlements inside the park;
6. Prioritize women and youth specific livelihood activities in the design and implementation of future conservation and development activities; and
7. Intensify awareness and sensitization initiatives about the GFNP in future endeavors with the forest communities.

10.0 ANNEXES

Annex A: List of Community Livelihood Committees in Grand Cape Mount County

No.	Names of Members	Sex	Title	Contact	Community
1	J. Washington Kollie	Male	Community Health Assistant	N/A	Kpelle Village (Porkpa)
2	Bendu Watson	Female	Teacher	N/A	Kpelle Village (Porkpa)
3	Jenneh Biun	Male	Business Woman	88125313	Jackson Village (Porkpa)
4	Momo Johnson	Female	Business Man	881084324	Gbanjallah Village(Porkpa)
5	Zoe Kiezolu	Male	Business Woman	N/A	Jebbeh Fornor(Porkpa)
6	Varney Sinii	Female	Teacher	N/A	Fornor (Porkpa)
7	Hawa Kromah	Female	Business	N/A	Fornor (Porkpa)
8	Richard O. Fahn	Male	(RN) Officer in Charge (Hospital)	N/A	Kwelahun (Porkpa)
9	Ansu Cooper	Male	Teacher	N/A	Kwelahun (Porkpa)
10	Jenneh Henry	Female	Business Woman	N/A	Kwelahun (Porkpa)
11	Bendu Tarlawalay	Female	Business Woman	N/A	Kingston Village (Porkpa)
12	Martin V. Palay	Male	Community Health Assistant	N/A	Upper Sokpo (Porkpa) Camp Israel
13	Kou S. Joe	Female	Gender Focus Person/Business Woman	880265577	Upper Sokpo(Porkpa) Camp Israel
14	Jerry B. Kerkulah	Male	Business Man	N/A	Upper Sokpo (Porkpa) Fula Camp
15	Yeamba Gbopea	Male	Business Man/Hunter	N/A	Korwood Village (Gola Konneh)
16	Papay Mulbah	Male	Teacher/Business Man	N/A	Kpelle Village (Porkpa)
17	Esther Jackson	Female	Community Health Assistant	N/A	Manogoudou(Gola Konneh)
18	James Morris	Male	Teacher	N/A	Manogoudou (Gola Konneh)

Annex B: List of Community Livelihood Committees in Gbarpolu County

No.	Name	Sex	Title	Contact	Community
1	Augustine Lamin	M	Principal	N/A	Camp Alpha
2	Massa Brown	F	Zone chair lady	N/A	Camp Alpha
3	Joseph Sando	M	CHA	N/A	Beaden
4	Charles Kanneh	M	Citizen	N/A	Jawajeh
5	Lorpu Mulbah	F	OIC	0770945444	Kungbor
6	Foday Kamara	M	Principal	N/A	Kungbor
7	Sekou Swaray	M	Citizen	N/A	Lyne
8	Austin Dolo	M	Community Health Assistant(CH A)	N/A	Mbama
9	Boakai Keneh	M	CFOC Chair	N/A	Normon
10	Hawa Sam	F	Citizen	N/A	Normon
11	John Y. Martor	M	CHA	N/A	SLC
12	Sebastine Quoi	M	CHA	N/A	Smith Village
13	Ambrose Smart	M	Community Health Assistant(CH A)	N/A	Tima Village
14	Amie Ford	F	Chair Lady	N/A	ULC
15	Washington McGill	M	CHA	N/A	Zuie

Annex C: Composition of Survey team

Names	Position/ Responsibility	Agencies
Michael Garbo	Executive Director	SCNL
Suliman Kamara	Executive Director	VADEMCO
Joel Gamys	Project Coordinator	Consultant
Mulbah Jackollie	VADEMCO	Program Manager
Timothy Gaye	Consultant	Environmental Economist
Torwon Yantay	SCNL	GIS Specialist
Matthew Williams	Research Technicians	VADEMCO
Joe Gartor	Research Technicians	VADEMCO
Alexander Forkpah	Research Technicians	VADEMCO
Derick Paye	Research Technicians	SCNL
Mambu Sheriff	Research Technicians	SCNL
Janet Urey	Research Technicians	SCNL
Shadrack Smith	Research Technicians	SCNL
Mambu Sheriff	Research Technicians	VADEMCO
Tarnue Baysah	Research Technicians	VADEMCO
Zuannah Yanudu	Research Technicians	SCNL
Prince Gbanyateh	Research Technicians	SCNL
Morris Kallon	Research Technicians	SCNL
Lawrence Sherbo	Research Technicians	SCNL

Annex D: NTFPs reported during the assessment

No	Name of NTFP	Usage / Virtues
1	Bitter kola (<i>Garcinia kola</i>)	Medicine for malaria and typhoid. Also use as aphrodisiac for man potency. Bitter kola fruits are sold in almost all the major communities in around the GFNP.
2	Bush meat	Animal killed for commercial purpose and other usage. The animals are killed and dried for bagging and to be transported to Monrovia.
3	Gana-gana	Tree bark and roots use in the cane juice, say to increase man sexual desire and combat other sickness in the body (infections).
4	Medicine / herbs	Traditional healing medicinal plants parts are taken from the forests. In some cases, the herbs heal without going to the clinic. Common malaria, eye diseases, headache and sores are treated with medicinal plants.
5	Charcoal	Massive cutting of woody plants to burn charcoal to replace fuel wood use for cooking. Mostly done for commercial proposes.
6	Fish	Though fishing is prohibited to take place in the GFNP, the weak implementation of the law is putting pressure on the water body of the park. The commercialization of fish from the water courses of the park is of no secret.
7	Round poles (<i>Xylopia aethiopica</i>)	Due to the shape of the rattan, it is often used for construction of shelters. In order to construct, lot of trees are cut from the forest to serve as round poles and roof. In addition to its woody stem, the species fruits is used as spice (black pepper).
8	Bush pepper (<i>Pipper guinensis</i>)	It is harvested from the forests and used as spice in the soup. It often used by herbalists as ingredient.
9	Yam (<i>Dioscorius sp.</i>)	Wild yam is a tuber of a known vine that is dug for human consumption.
10	Walnut (<i>Coula edulis</i>)	Walnut tree produces a fruit that is cracked for human consumption. Its fruits are sold in Monrovia during the walnut season.
11	Fuel wood	Dead wood taken from the forest to use for cooking.
12	Palm nut (<i>Elaeis guinensis</i>)	The nuts are obtained from palm trees and are used for soup in the communities. They are also used for red oil extraction. The oil collected from the process can be used for consumption or commercialization.
13	Honey	This is a product collected from bees. SCNL and its partners are also supporting the community dwellers with bees keeping projects in both Cape Mount and Gbarpolu.
14	Wollor (<i>Belshiemeidia manii</i>)	Is a forest tree that produces fruits which when dry is used on GB (traditional dish) soup to make it slippery. Some people can also cook wollor soup to be eaten with rice. It also has medicinal value.
15	Rafia wine (<i>Rafia g. hocherii</i>)	In addition to its medicinal value, it is used as wine. In communities, such traditional wine is loved by people.
16	Mushroom	There various type of comestible mushroom that are harvested for consumption and commercialization.
17	Bush attaye	It has strong medicinal and aphrodisiac virtues.
18	Fruits	There are several fruits gathered from the forests that are used for consumption and medicinal value.

Annex E1: List of prioritized and ranked alternative Livelihood options for Cape Mount's Communities

Livelihoods	Fornor					Kawelahun					Fula Camp					Koorwood					Waejue					Total
	Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Agriculture																										
Cocoa		x				x									x					x			x			6
Goat rearing																						x				1
Sheep rearing					x			x						x												4
Piggery																	x									1
Poultry (Chicken)										x				x												2
Fish pond																			x							1
Lowland rice				x				x					x							x		x				6
Bitter ball																										1
Pepper																									x	1
Skills Training																										
Tailoring	X											x														2
Carpentry																								x		1
Soap making																										1
Others																										
Adult literacy	x					x					x					x					x					6
Business loan				x					x							x										3
Employment with GFNP		x					x					x					x									4
Rice Mills			x				x					x							x		x					6

Annex E2: List of prioritized and ranked alternative Livelihood options for Gbarpolu County's Communities

Livelihoods	Beaden					Normon					Zuie					Kumgbor					Camp Alpha					Total
	Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					Ranks					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Agriculture																										
Cocoa													x									x				2
Goat rearing																							x			1
Sheep rearing		x																								1
Piggery										x																1
Poultry (Chicken)														x												1
Fish pond																				x						1
Bee keeping																									x	1
Lowland rice	x						x					x						x				x				5
Bitter ball									x											x						2
Pepper																								x		1
Peanut				x																						1
Skills Training																										
Soap making						x			x						x				x							4
Others Supplementary																										
Adult literacy	x						x					x					x					x				5
Small Business loan					x					x			x				x									4
Employment with GFNP									x										x						x	3
Rice Mills	x						x					x							x			x				5

Annex F: Ranking of Alternative Livelihood Options per County

A. Grand Cape Mount County					
Livelihoods	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4th	5 th
Agriculture					
Cocoa		X			
Sheep rearing			x		
Poultry (Chicken)				x	
Lowland rice	X				
Life skills					
Tailoring					X
Others					
Adult literacy	X				
Business loan				x	
Employment with the GFNP			x		
Rice Mills		X			
B. Gbarpolu County					
Livelihoods	1 st	2 nd	3rd	4th	5 th
Agriculture					
Cocoa			x		
Fish pond					X
Lowland rice	X				
Bitter ball				x	
Life skills					
Soap making		X			
Others					
Adult literacy	X				
Business loan				x	
Employment with GFNP			x		
Rice Mills		X			

Annex G: Status of every community about social infrastructures

No	County	Clan	Community	Social Infrastructures			
				<i>School</i>	<i>Clinic</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Functioning Hand pump</i>
1	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Beaden	0	0	0	0
2	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Camp Alpha	1	0	Yes	Yes
3	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Camp Israel	0	0	0	0
4	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Fallah Village	0	0	0	0
5	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Fornor	Yes	0	0	Yes
6	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Fula camp	0	0	0	0
7	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Gongzna	1	0	0	0
8	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Jackson Village	0	0	0	0
9	Cape Mount	Upper sokpo	Karwood	0	0	0	0
10	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Kawelahun	Yes	1	0	0
11	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Kingston village	0	0	0	0
12	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Kpelleh village	1	0	0	1
13	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Kumbor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Gbarpolu	Jawejah	Lyne	0	0	0	0
15	Cape Mount	Upper sokpo	Managoduah	0	0	0	0
16	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Money Camp	0	0	0	0
17	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Monkeyduluyan	0	0	0	0
18	Gbarpolu	Jawejah	Normon	1	0	0	0
19	Cape Mount	Sokpo	Varney camp	0	0	0	0
20	Cape Mount	Upper sokpo	Weajue	Yes	0	Yes	Yes
21	Gbarpolu	Tonglay	Zuie	1	0	0	0

Annex H: Some concerns raised by communities

No	County	Community	Community dwellers concerns
1	Cape Mount	Kpelleh village	When are we going to see your team again?
2	Cape Mount	Varney camp	Will SCNL or FDA come back to cut new boundary between the national park and the community forest?
3	Cape Mount	Fula camp	What will be our benefits as community people after all?
4	Gbarpolu	Kumgbor	Why shall we stop hunting and mining?
5			Apart from the park, can we go to do hunting in the community forest?
6			What will be our benefit for all the questions you have asked?
7	Gbarpolu	Monkeyduluyan	The only problem we have with government and NGOs is that they hardly reach us, even mosquito nets, we can't get it from them, and they usually stop to Camp Alpha.
8			There are rumors that say, our community will be re-located, is it truth?
9			Will FDA help us re-locate the demarcation of the park?
10	Gbarpolu	Money Camp	We want to know whether this community will be re-located or not?
11			When FDA or government will relocate us from here.