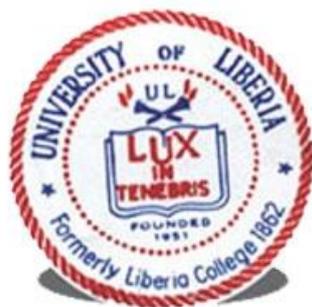

**ENHANCING CAPACITIES ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE
AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD MARKETS**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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THE FLAG AND MAP OF LIBERIA



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Country background

Liberia lies along the Atlantic Ocean with a coastline of 579 kilometers between Ivory Coast on the east and Sierra Leone on the West. It has a total land area of 11,369 sq.km. Liberia is the oldest independent state in West Africa and was created in 1847 by freed American Slaves.

The country has three main ecological regions: (1) mangrove swamps and beaches along the coast; (2) wooded hills and semi deciduous shrub lands along the immediate interior; and (3) dense tropical forest and plateaus in the interior. Forty percent of West Africa's rainforest is in Liberia.

Liberia has a tropical climate, typical of the rest of West Africa with a principal rainy season from May to September and a principal dry(or relatively dry) season from October to April and a mid-dry season in July – August, more or less marked according to the regions. Annual rainfall decreases from 4,000 mm or more along the coast to 2,000mm). Monrovia is the station with the highest rainfall (4,638mm over 16 years observation) followed by Tappita and Suakoko in the north-central region, receiving around 1,900 mm.

Total population is estimated at 3,482,211 with a growth rate of 2.64% (2005 est.). Liberia is divided into fifteen administrative regions and counties which form the basis of the decentralized structure of local government.

The University of Liberia (Partner 1) is the nation's highest public institution of learning founded in 1951. It has six undergraduate colleges, three professional schools and seven graduate programs, with a population of about thirty thousand students.

1.2 Objective and purpose of the project

To achieve the objective and purpose of the project, each partner institution is expected to conduct a study with the sole aim of identifying the current capacities of the partner's

institution and other related stakeholders in the partner's country as it relates to International Agriculture Trade agreements.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are presented under the following headings:

- a) Literature Review of Policy and Institutional Framework;
- b) Identification of Agro commodities in Liberia under ECOWAP;
- c) Assessment of Trade Negotiation Capacities of Partner Institution;
- d) Assessment of Trade Negotiation Capacities of Government Institutions; and
- e) Review of current curriculum of Partner Institution for elements of Agriculture Trade Policy, etc.

2.1 Literature Review of Policy and Institutional Framework

The government of Liberia has drafted several policy documents related to agriculture and trade that are being considered for revision. Some of these documents deal with trade in general while others deal directly with agriculture. Basic documents considered for review include:

- a) The Statement of Policy Intent for the Agricultural Sector;
- b) The 2008 National Food security and Nutrition Strategy (NSFNS);
- c) The 2009 Food Agriculture Policy and Strategy (FAPS);
- d) Liberia's National Policy for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services,
- e) SPS Capacity in Liberia (WATH/Accra Technical Report No. 19);
- f) The West Africa Productivity Program (WAAPP – Liberia);
- g) Liberia Trade Policy and Customs Project;
- h) Regional and Global Trade Strategies for Liberia;

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- i) Liberia’s Regional trade Prospects: policies, trade costs, and geography;
 - j) The Liberia National Trade Policy;
 - k) The National Export Strategy;
 - l) Forestry Law, Policy and Regulation;
 - m) Climate Change Adaptation Agriculture Project (CCAAP)
 - n) Liberia ECOWARP/CAADP Compact

2.1.1 The Statement of Policy Intent for the Agricultural Sector

This was an interim measure that envisioned the holistic development of agriculture into a sustainable, diversified, income generating, modernized, and competitive sector well-integrated into domestic and international markets. This policy also recognized the necessity of crafting effective land administration, flexible land use planning approaches, adaptive sustainable land management practices and other improvements. The key objective of the NFSNS is to make certain that “all Liberians have reliable access to the food they need and are able to utilize that food to live active healthy lives”. It seeks to accomplish this goal by addressing four separate dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization and vulnerability. The NFNS finally calls for the enabling factors such as sufficient human capacity, improved knowledge on household food security, and strengthened community-level actions.

2.1.2 The Food Agricultural Policy Strategy (FAPS)

Program was developed within the context of the Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and global developments as it relates to food insecurity. The FAPS identifies specific sector and sub-sector policies and strategies that will be implemented to revitalize and strengthen the food and agriculture sector, and reduce food insecurity. The specific objectives of FAPS’ pro-equity stance are to improved food and nutrition security, enhanced

competitiveness and market linkages and capacity building. To improve food and nutrition security, FAPS advocates additional investment in food production as per the Liberian response to the food crisis. The response strategy identified actions on three fronts:

1. Mitigating the impacts, as far as possible, of domestic price rises and ensuring consistent supply;
2. Maintaining access to food and improved nutritional well-being for vulnerable populations through safety nets; and
3. Promoting rapid domestic food production through the use of technology and innovation.

2.1.3 National Forestry Law and Regulation

The revision of the forestry policy of Liberia began with the “*Forest Policy Review: vision 2024*”. In 2006, the *National Forestry Policy and Implementation Strategy* was endorsed. This document is considered to represent state-of-the-art quality in forest policy, and is built on the principle of balancing the three uses of forests, i.e. community, commercial and conservation, also known as 3Cs. The goal of the FDA is to maximize economic benefits through sustainable management, conserve biodiversity and empower communities to ensure equitable benefit sharing and democratization of the sector. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is committed to community forestry by awarding concessions and licenses to local communities and local, small-scale enterprises, empowering local communities to identify opportunities, and providing extension and technical assistance in community forest management.

The National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 has been passed by the legislature. It provides the basic provisions for forestry activities in Liberia. The forest resources are held in trust by the Republic for the benefit of the people. Exceptions to this rule are communal forests and forests that have been developed on private or deeded lands through artificial regeneration. The Law governs the prospecting, use, transport, processing and trade of all forest products.

All forest operations must comply with the Forest Management Guidelines and the Liberian Code of Forest Practices (issued in June 2007). The latter is referenced in full in all concession contracts. The National Forestry Reform Law called for the drafting of a Forest Management Strategy, which has yet to be produced as a Policy Document. It does not address the issue of a Forest Processing Strategy, the development of a national forestry master plan, or the management of private and deeded lands. Implementation of forestry policy will require the strengthening of financial, human and technical capacity among stakeholders and institutions. It would be helpful to appoint one Deputy Managing Director in FDA for each one of the three Cs.

Activities concerning the modernization of the wood processing industry are clearly defined in the implementation strategy of the policy document. Responsibilities are logically shared between the private sector (*as investors*) and the government (*as supporter and regulator*). The Government reserves the right to negotiate international market access matters on behalf of the sector. This is welcome in light of the possible implications of the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade) initiative and the related VPAs (Voluntary Partnership Agreements).

2.1.4 Liberia Trade Policy and Customs Project

The Liberia Trade Policy and Customs (LTPC) Project is an engagement funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in support of Liberia's MCC Threshold Country Program (TCP). Working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Liberia (GoL), Deloitte is providing technical assistance aimed at improving Liberia's trade and customs laws and policies.

The Republic of Liberia, a democratic nation located on the Western Coast of Africa, was devastated by a 14-year civil war that ended in 2003, with a peace agreement signed in 2005. There has been strong annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth since then, but infrastructure remains woefully insufficient and lingering economic, political, and social effects of the civil conflict continue to plague the nation. Economic growth and health and

education systems outside the capital city of Monrovia have seen static progress. Liberia's per capita GDP is only \$190. In addition, Liberia has troubling nutritional health issues, a lack of reliable roads or electricity supply, and food security problems for much of the population.

In an effort to improve the Liberian economy and stimulate domestic private sector development, the Government of Liberia is making efforts to reform its trade regime (e.g.: customs reform and trade liberalization) and improve the business environment. Liberia ranked 112th out of 183 in the 2010 Doing Business report on the "Ease of Trading Across Borders" indicator.

Within the Liberia Trade Policy and Customs (LTPC) Project, Deloitte is aiding the Government of Liberia, more specifically, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Finance, through addressing five main initiatives:

1. Supporting tariff harmonization and reducing unnecessary non-tariff measures: The Project is focused upon simplifying, harmonizing, and guiding tariff policy as well as launching a non-tariff barrier reduction initiative, called the "National Trade Facilitation Forum."
2. Strengthening trade policy institutions and improving their policies: The Deloitte team is aiding the Government of Liberia in preparing for World Trade Organization (WTO) accession.
3. Modernizing customs practice: The new Customs Code has been created and reviewed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Deloitte is now implementing and redefining the regulations.
4. Strengthening protection of intellectual property rights: The Project is focused on assisting with the drafting of the Intellectual Property Act of 2012; reviewing Liberia's intellectual property (IP) regime vis-à-vis WTO requirements; training Government of Liberia staff (including MOCI, Industrial Property Office, Copyright

Office, Bureau of Customs and Excise) on IP issues; outreach to the universities; and sensitizing Liberian judges on IP enforcement.

5. Providing Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) assistance to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) and the Bureau of Customs and Excise (BCE) with developing and institutionalizing a formal approach to training and capacity building across trade policy, customs administration, and intellectual property rights (IPR) functions.

These activities are designed to engender a business enabling environment—allowing Liberia’s government to improve their trade capacity and infrastructure.

2.1.5 Regional and Global Trade Strategies for Liberia

No country can participate in a market economy without a minimum of “public goods” (health, legal system, etc.), which is another way of saying that appropriate institutions and sound policies are needed to participate successfully in the world trading system. Achieving this objective is a tall order for any low-income country. It can be even harder for a country whose economy suffered probably the worst economic collapse in the world (90% collapse of GDP during the civil wars), during which an already badly managed economy saw its management worsen. Strong recovery is on its way, but with Liberia’s very limited domestic market and low income, growth cannot be sustained without extending the market through international trade. Fortunately for Liberia, it is relatively well-connected to regional and international markets. As Rwanda’s experience described below shows, even with poor connectedness, good policy choices—mostly undertaken unilaterally, have resulted in strong growth of both exports and imports. With scarce human resources, the Government of Liberia (GoL) has to juggle with: WTO membership requirements, and how to best shape its participation in ECOWAS. But progress at integration in ECOWAS has been slower than in other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa and elsewhere. Since 2008, Nigeria has proposed a 5th tariff band for the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), while progress at meeting the objectives of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS)

signed in 1993 has been very slow. With no signs of speeding up implementation of the ETLS objectives, prospects for rapid trade-led growth at the regional level are dim.

Indeed the 5th tariff band at 35%, which has been approved by the Ministers of Finance in March 2013, is still highly controversial, as countries will likely scramble to re-classify goods into tariff bands that suit them and seek exceptions (type B exceptions). This paper argues that the current 5-band tariff is in no ECOWAS member's economic interests (except for the powerful lobby of Nigerian producers). Under these circumstances and recognizing that regional integration is good politics, Liberia can still: Participate in the ECOWAS CU, provided it involves small changes from its present tariff structure, which is broadly consistent with its longer-term growth and poverty objectives. As a small economy, Liberia should pursue an export-oriented development strategy to ensure future growth. WTO membership will be helpful for carrying out this strategy. The question then is; how much attention should Liberia spend on the regional strategy, since implementing WTO-consistent trade rules and laws will require expending political capital.

This paper evaluates the gains and potential costs of this regional strategy in this broader perspective. On the one hand, sustained growth in the region is a strong reason to pursue a regional-focused strategy, since close-by markets could open up and trade costs could be reduced through regional cooperation. Regional cooperation through trade agreements is also good politics.

On the other hand, Liberia will certainly be moving towards a tariff structure that is more protectionist than the one most appropriate for a small economy. This means subsidizing the production of inefficient regional partners that will, in turn, displace lower cost imports into Liberia from the rest-of-the-world. In effect, the current ECOWAS regime emphasizes the exchange of market access among partners in a way that belongs to 20th regionalism rather to the 21st century regionalism, which exchanges domestic reforms lowering barriers to trade for FDI. Thus political gains from ECOWAS membership may be stunted by lack of gains on the economic side because of the slow progress towards market integration in the region. Hence, in this report we emphasize the importance of a trade-strategy that is oriented towards multilateralism and the need for Liberia's approach to be a two-pronged trade strategy.²

The paper's outline is as follows:

- a) Section 2 shows that by several measures, Liberia is not trading as much as predicted with ECOWAS, which is likely a reflection of the slow reduction in trade barriers in the region.
- b) Section 3 summarizes the benefits from WTO membership for Liberia's trade strategy.
- c) Section 4 recounts Rwanda's experience: while joining the EAC probably resulted in a net economic cost for Rwanda, its previous sound trade policies and an excellent management of large aid inflows resulted in a positive outcome from EAC membership.
- d) Section 5 discusses the political and economic benefits of regional integration.
- e) Sections 6 and 7 provide quantitative effects of moving towards an ECOWAS CET in terms of government revenues and households' welfare, respectively.

Geography and Trade Costs

Since Liberia is very small in the ECOWAS region, even though some neighbors are also low-income countries with limited market potential, one might expect that; thanks to economic integration, at least some of the neighboring countries would figure among Liberia's top 10 trading partners. This is not the case on the export side, regardless of whether all goods or only manufactures are included. On the import side, only Ivory Coast is in the top 10 of Liberia's trading partners when all goods are included because of petroleum imports. Restricting the analysis to manufactures, China accounts for 36% of imports, followed by the US (presumably reflecting close historical ties). In sum, Liberia trades with far-away partners.

2.1.6 Liberia National Trade Policy

Overview

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has supported the Liberian Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) in the development of the Liberia National Trade Policy (LNTP). The policy was developed after years of consultations with the private sector, and its objectives were validated in a workshop organized by ITC and MoCI in February 2014. The LNTP was launched at the MSME Conference in April 2014.

The LNTP promotes policy coherence to enhance business competitiveness. Its role is to ensure that trade related policies – including but not limited to the Investment Code, MSME Policy, National Industrial Policy, Food and Agriculture Policy, National Transport Policy and Mineral Policy – work together to achieve Liberia’s trade objectives, such as membership in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The LNTP will serve as a living document and will be amended as policy conditions change.

Vision

The LNTP aims to promote international trade and a competitive domestic private sector by supporting the agricultural, industrial and services sectors, to create jobs, improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

The LNTP:

- a) Pulls together policies and strategies to create an umbrella trade policy for the Government, enabling efficient implementation and monitoring;
- b) Outlines Liberia’s strategy for trade policy issues, which is currently not adequately covered in government policy; and

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- c) Lays the foundation for a broad spectrum of legislative and policy reforms required for membership in ECOWAS and the WTO – essential steps for Liberia to integrate into value chains and the global economy.

2.1.7 National Export Strategy (NES)

Liberia's NES has been developed in collaboration between the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) in Liberia, as part of ITC's ongoing technical assistance program with Liberia. The NES provides a needs-based blueprint for improving the export development potential of the country, thereby contributing to socioeconomic growth. Anchored in a strong public-private dialogue, the strategy development process has involved rigorous and comprehensive analysis at the national, institutional and sector levels aimed at identifying priorities for enhanced export performance and strengthening the linkages between export development and economic performance.

Liberia's NES addresses issues ranging from competitiveness to development and poverty reduction. Broadly, the NES addresses:

The policy level: at the macroeconomic level, the NES addresses issues relating to Liberia's trade policy regime and provides options for optimizing the same with regard to export development, business environment and competitiveness aspects;

The institutional level: the NES addresses the effectiveness of the trade support network TSN in Liberia, and provides solutions aimed at strengthening the network so as to foster a business-friendly environment ; and

The enterprise level: the NES addresses issues of concern relating to enterprises that are already engaged or will potentially engage in exports. Key points of consideration will include entrepreneurship, value addition and value retention, innovation capabilities and business competencies of Liberian enterprises.

The vision of the NES is: "a competitive and inclusive export of value added products that sustainably uses resources for the benefit of all Liberians."

The selected vision is not stand-alone, and is supported by five strategic objectives. In brief, these objectives are as follows:

1. Ensure inclusive and equitable sustainable production to lift Liberia out of poverty. This strategic objective seeks to ensure that economic growth in Liberia is aligned to the country's broader developmental objectives of poverty reduction, employment generation, gender equality, environmental sustainability and regional integration.
2. Develop human capital to enhance productive capacity to meet local demand and enable exports.
3. This strategic objective recognizes that both emigration and destruction of the educational infrastructure during the conflict have impaired the capacities of Liberian institutions and enterprises. It aims to address human capital needs for MSMEs and institutions such as universities, the National Standards Laboratory and other government facilities.
4. Create an enabling environment to encourage investment and entrepreneurship and develop the domestic private sector, including MSMEs. This strategic objective seeks to improve the Liberian business environment and recognizes that it must be strengthened as a prerequisite for developing export competitiveness in the country. This will occur through concerted action to: improve regulatory mechanisms; improve processes involved in importing and exporting; and reduce bribe-seeking behavior.
5. Enhance the capacity of public and private trade support institutions so as to diminish the costs of doing business and improve support for businesses.
6. This strategic objective recognizes that trade support institutions (TSIs) – both public and private – provide vital and multi-dimensional support to enterprises across the export value chain and are essential for the development of export competitiveness in an economy. It consequently aims at building the capacity of individual TSIs, improving coordination mechanisms with the trade support network (TSN), and deploying a

feedback loop to constantly feed TSIs with information related to the evolving needs of enterprises.

7. Improve the image of Liberia by meeting local and international standards.
8. This strategic objective recognizes that work needs to be done to position Liberia as a supplier of high quality and reliable products to international markets, and aims at removing infrastructure limitations that make meeting international standards difficult or impossible. It focuses on reducing the supply-side and demand-side constraints associated with quality management, and will ultimately result in a culture of quality compliance by MSMEs, supported by a strong quality infrastructure.

Selected Priority Product Sectors and Cross-Sector Functions

Liberia's NES team used the following criteria to select priority NES sectors: sectors that are labor-intensive; sectors that produce products with a stable or increasing international demand; sectors that are aligned with the existing strategic policy priorities of Liberia; sectors with potential spillover effects to improve competitiveness throughout Liberia's economy; sectors with high potential for value addition; and sectors with the potential for attracting domestic and foreign investment. The rubber, cocoa, oil palm, fish and crustaceans, and cassava product sectors have been selected for the NES, along with three cross-sector functions: access to finance, quality management, and trade facilitation and logistics. An additional two product sectors – furniture and tourism – will be addressed in the second phase of this NES.

Cornerstone of the NES

The NES involves a two-pronged approach: prioritization, and creation of specific and measurable goals. First, given that resources for export development are limited, priorities are set to ensure efficiency in the use of existing resources. Priorities are set at the levels of

policymakers, TSIs and enterprises on the basis of the needs which provide the best prospects for export development and competitiveness according to actual market conditions and demand. In other words, the strategy addresses the constraints and identifies the opportunities that would achieve maximum export impact in the country.

Second, the strategy does not stop at defining broad objectives. Rather, it goes into detail of what should be done to achieve the objectives in actionable steps at the operational level. Assessment and monitoring systems are established through specific targets and impact measures, which promotes accountability, transparency and understanding of what actions directly contribute to export development and competitiveness.

Conclusion

This document is an initial but important step in realizing the vision stated by the NES. A sustained effort on multiple fronts, as laid out in the plans of actions of the sector and cross-sector strategies, will be required to meet the goal of export competitiveness across Liberia. This achievement will go beyond just export competitiveness, however, and will serve to raise the standard of living for Liberians and speed up the peace-building process.

Criteria for Selecting Product Sectors

The following criteria guided the selection of product sectors for the Liberia NES:

Sectors that are labor-intensive

The selected sectors are labor-intensive. This is a plus, given the prevailing high unemployment rate and Liberia's fast growing population. The need to engage and secure opportunities for the population is also urgent in the post-conflict context in Liberia.

Sectors that produce products with a stable or increasing international demand

There is a steady or increasing demand in international markets for products of the selected sectors. The NES places emphasis on this criterion to ensure diversification in the export basket as well as to reduce the risk profile of Liberian exports.

Sectors that are aligned with the existing strategic policy priorities of Liberia

To leverage momentum generated from existing national and sector-specific development plans, Liberia's NES ensures that the selected sectors are aligned as far as possible with these plans.

Sectors with potential spillover effects to improve competitiveness throughout Liberia's economy

The selected sectors hold significant potential for enhancing the quality, efficiency and productivity of sectors with value chains that are adjacent to or intersect with those of the NES product sectors. This is expected to result in positive spillover effects for these value chains and consequently increase the overall competitiveness of the Liberian export basket.

2.1.8 Climate Change Adaption Agriculture Project (CCAAP)

In 2011, the Government of Liberia (GoL) through the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) signed a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Agreement to implement the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) project titled "Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change by Mainstreaming adaption concerns into Agriculture Sector Development in Liberia".

The project is a vehicle for implementing priority interventions identified in Liberia's National Adaption Program of Action (NAPA) for the agriculture sector. It is a four-year project that will revitalize the agriculture sector, and ensure that adaption to climate change is integrated into the revitalization process. Specific contributions toward the reduction of vulnerabilities to climate change will be achieved through the pursuit of specific outcomes

including: Integrating concerns into relevant policies and planning processes at the state and national levels; Comprehensive capacity development for individuals in national agencies focusing on agriculture and in pilot counties, and farmers; Demonstration of risk reduction strategies and measures at pilot sites; Strengthening technical capacity to integrate climate change risk management into farmers level agricultural capacity; and Capturing and disseminating lessons learned to key stakeholders.

The project seeks to increase resilience and enhance adaptive capacity to address the additional risk posed by climate change in the agriculture sector in Liberia, which will be achieved through three components: Capacity Development; Demonstration measures to reduce vulnerability; and Knowledge management and up-scaling.

2.1.9 West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) – Liberia

The WAAPP is a two phase 10-year Adaptable Program, each of five year duration. The first phase, referred to as WAAPP 1A involves three countries: Ghana, Mali and Senegal. These countries started implementing the WAAPP over five years ago, with the exception of Mali, the other countries have completed and moved on the second phase. The civil unrest in Mali caused the suspension of several developmental activities, including the WAAPP project. The second group of countries known as WAAPP 1B includes Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast and Nigeria, while Benin, the Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo are in the WAAPP 1C group. WAAPP 1D which will include Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania is still being processed.

The development objective of WAAPP is to generate and disseminate improved technologies in the participating country's top priority commodity sub-sector that are aligned with regional priorities.

Project Components and Approach

The WAAPP project has four components which clearly direct the approach of the implementation. These components include:

- a) Establishing enabling Conditions for sub-Regional Cooperation and Market Integration;
- b) Establishing National Centers of Specializations (NCOS);
- c) Funding for Demand-Driven Technology Generation and Dissemination; and
- d) Project Coordination, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The WAAPP – Liberia was launched on November 14, 2012 at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, Montserrado County. At the launching, the Director of the program Management Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Moses Zinnah said the WAAPP-Liberia project was put together by the tireless efforts of a group of Liberian who were locked up in a hotel in Accra, Ghana. The document that resulted from the meeting was later presented to the World Bank and was approved which led Liberia to being included on a list of other African countries already participating in the Regional Project.

2.1.10 The Liberia’s National Policy for Agric. Extension and Advisory Services

Drafted 2012 with the sole purpose of developing a policy document that guide and drive the Agricultural Extension activities of Liberia. It was prepared in line with the Nairobi Decentralization on Agricultural Extension and Advisory services of 2011 which calls on governments to develop clear policies on extension and advisory services in a participatory manner.

The focus of the policy is to provide legal framework for the transformation of the existing extension system into a pluralistic, decentralized, demand-driven, and market-oriented system. Effective and efficient implementation of the Policy will enable sector stakeholder to appropriately and sustainably use their resources, and it will foster the acceleration of Liberia’s socio-economic development.

Vision and Mission

The vision of the policy is organized groups of Liberian agricultural extension and advisory service clientele across the country demanding and accessing at the right time and the right place, high-quality market-appropriate extension and advisory services from providers of their choice and contributing to the cost of these services.

The mission of the policy is to provide stakeholders across the country with efficient and effective agricultural extension and advisory services which contribute to their attaining food security and increased incomes through a sustainable, pluralistic, decentralized, demand-driven, and market-oriented system with increasing private sector participation.

Areas of Policy intervention

There are five primary areas of policy intervention requisite to realizing the Vision and Mission of the National Policy on Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services and achieving a transformed AEAS system. The five areas include: system characteristics; stakeholder and geographic coverage; content approach, and methods; actor roles and responsibilities and AEAS coordinate.

2.1.11 Liberia ECOWAP/CAADP Compact

Building on the Government's vision of and commitment to balanced socio-economic development of the nation-state, as well as the continuous commitment of the international community on development assistance to post-conflict Liberia, the Compact: (i) sets the contours for long-term partnership in the agricultural sector; (ii) specifies key commitments on the part of the government, development partners and other stakeholders and (iii) clarifies expectations with respect to agribusiness and farming communities in order to ensure successful implementation of the PRS agenda. Most important among these are sector policies, budgetary and investment commitments, as well as pledges to align and scale up long term development assistance to the sector.

The donor community has called on Liberia to articulate its development hopes and aspirations by formulating credible long-term plans. This Compact provides this plan for the agricultural sector by confirming the national consensus around goals and priority interventions that Liberia has set for the sector and the partnerships and assistance that are required to achieve these goals. The Compact will thus increase the effectiveness of planning and execution of government efforts as well as of the delivery of external assistance in the agricultural sector.

2.1.12 Sector Policies and Strategies

Policy 1

Improved Food and Nutrition Security: Safe and nutritious foods are available in sufficient quantity and quality at all times to satisfy the nutritional needs for optimal health of all Liberians, throughout their life cycles.

Strategies

1. Improving food availability;
2. Enhancing accessibility of the population to nutritious food;
3. Promoting improved food utilization;
4. Contributing to resettlement and reintegration programs; and
5. Supporting rural employment and self-reliant wage work to spur local economic development.

Policy 2

Enhanced Competitiveness and Linkages to Markets: Enhanced, inclusive and pro-poor growth in agricultural production, productivity, competitiveness, value addition, diversification and linkages to markets.

Strategies

1. Enhancing the efficiency, competitiveness and sustainability of the food and agriculture supply chains, particularly those of small holders, and linking of these chains to markets;
2. Creating more and better opportunities for much greater involvement of the private sector in the agriculture sector; and
3. Increasing public investments and creating an enabling environment for agricultural and agribusiness development.

Policy 3

Strengthened Human and Institutional Capacities: Strong and efficient human and institutional capacities of the public sector, civil society organizations and the private sector carrying out effective planning, delivery of services, coordination and monitoring activities in the sector, as well as sustaining natural resources, mitigating risks to producers, mainstreaming gender and youth considerations in planning and implementation of activities in the sector.

Strategies

1. Instituting improved governance, promoting civil society organizations, and facilitating decentralized and demand-driven service delivery;
2. Establishing functional, effective and efficient public sector support framework in agriculture (for planning, coordinating, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation;
3. Reducing risks and improving coping mechanisms;
4. Mainstreaming gender and youth in agriculture and rural development; and
5. Ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

Table 1: Other Key Policies and Strategies

Action Area	Key Policy	Main Strategy
Food crops	Sustainable self-sufficiency in rice, through small holdings, large scale food production and transitional mechanized cultivation.	Participatory design and implementation of an Integrated and Sustainable Modernization of Rice (ISMOR) program.
Tree crops	Increased production and productivity of oil palm, cocoa and coffee; competitiveness of small holder.	Creating linkages between out-growers and processors; improving land utilization and provision of essential inputs, providing adequate investment incentives.
Livestock	Re-stocking, focusing on small ruminants, short-cycled animals; reduced production cost.	Revitalizing the value chains in livestock production.
Fisheries	Sustainable availability of fish particularly increased artisanal fish.	Building and rehabilitating infrastructures for fisheries; enforcing industrial fishing regulations; developing a fisheries' plan and building human capacities entering external markets.
Forestry	Ensure sustainability of Liberia's Forestry Resources.	Balancing conservation, community and commercial utilization of forest resources; undertaking environmental impact assessment, and designing and implementing environmental conservation plans in agriculture projects.

Extension Services	Decentralized, demand-driven extension services targeting small holders and focusing on food production.	Participatory design and implementation of a National Agricultural Extension Project inclusive of Operation Eliminate Hunger (OPEH).
Agricultural Education	Continuous production of quality manpower in agriculture and extension services personnel.	Partnership with universities and colleges and implementing special Training Programs in Agriculture
Agricultural Research	Revitalized research system integrated with extension services and linked to private sector	Establishing a National Agricultural System; a National Agricultural Research Council; and constituting the Board of CARI.
Planting Materials and Agro-chemicals	Small holders have access to adequate, affordable and quality seeds and fertilizers and pest management inputs.	Design and implement a Planting Materials Supply Program and improve Crop protection knowledge and skills (Designing an IPDM strategy).
Pest/Disease Management	Integrated pest and disease management applied widely by farming communities and monitored utilization of agro-chemicals.	Establishing a Plant Protection Bureau with MOA and using Farmers' Field Schools' Approach in applying IPDM to farming.
Agricultural Mechanization	Adopted cost-recovery utilization of small-medium scale mechanization technologies.	Establishing within the MOA an Agricultural Engineering Unit and mechanization services provision centers in strategic areas around the country.

Financial Services	Widespread access to financial services by farmers, especially small holders.	Encouraging commercial banks to play greater role in sector; strengthening and expanding rural banks, micro-finance institutions, and promoting linkages between formal and informal financial services.
Agricultural Markets	Small holders having access to markets; agribusinesses increased and strengthened, particularly small producers.	Establishing agricultural Market Information Services; rehabilitating markets; constructing storage and processing facilities; building capacities of marketing bodies; meeting requirements to enter external markets.
Rural infrastructures and processing	Investments in rehabilitation of roads, market buildings, storages facilities.	Mobilizing resources from partners (government, private sector, donors) to provide the needed infrastructures; coordinating government outlay to facilitate synergy.
Food Safety	Wide awareness of link between food and health; widespread compliance to food safety and quality control measures.	Strengthen institutional capacities of MOA and relevant agencies such as MOHSW and MCI to regulate food safety and quality.
Macroeconomic environment	Wide awareness of link between food and health; widespread compliance to food safety and quality control measures.	Ensuring Macroeconomics; Assisting stability including extreme debt relief smallholders and producers to become more productive and competitive;

		promoting exports producing appropriate incentives.
Land Tenure System	Access, security, and sustainable land use.	Supporting activities of Land Commission; discouraging land holdings for speculative purposes; Promoting alternative to land redistribution such as out grower schemes.
Water Resources Development	Supporting activities of Land Commission; discouraging land holdings for speculative purposes; Promoting alternative to land redistribution such as out grower schemes.	Establishing a unit of MOA and building human and physical resources for water resources development; supporting development of a national water policy.
Agriculture and Environment	Mainstreamed environmental considerations in agricultural products.	Establishing an Environmental Unit in MOA and strengthening collaboration with the EPA including monitoring agricultural activities.
Natural Resource Management	Effective transition from shifting cultivation to sedentary farming.	Providing technical support and best practices for sustainable land use, organic and integrated farming; participatory management of forest resources.
Climate Change	Monitored sector activities to prevent contribution to climate change; reduced impact of climate change in sector.	Providing technical support and best practices for sustainable land use, organic and integrated farming; participatory management of forest resources

Gender	Empower agricultural women through access to credit, technology and markets.	Strengthening MGD and MOA to mainstream gender issues in rural development and implementing a Rural Women Empowerment Program.
Youth	Empower agricultural women through access to credit, technology and markets.	Developing and implementing a Youth-in-Agriculture Program.
Vulnerable groups	Provide food and nutrition security for vulnerable groups	Designing and implementing programs that provide safety nets.
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2.1.13 Major Export Trading Partners

Liberia is rich in natural resources. With its relatively large deposits of iron ore, diamonds and gold, and the suitability of the country's soil to the production of key commercial crops, such as palm oil, cocoa, coffee and rubber – it comes as no surprise that Liberia's exports are predominantly natural-resource dependent. Export volume of US\$454,790,119.96 was recorded in 2013 and the figure is expected to rise in 2014 due to increased trade activities in the mining sector. Over the period rubber exports dropped sharply, offset by increases in iron ore.

The major exports from Liberia are: iron ore, scrap metal, logs, cocoa beans, coffee beans, palm oil, rubber, cam wood and wood chips.

Liberia's major trading partners are China, the European Union, the United States of America and Ivory Coast. Given its trading partners, Liberia intends to boost exports by benefiting from several duty free quota free arrangements.

Table -2 Liberia's Top Ten Export Trading Partners (2013)

Sum of CIF Values

Country of destination	Total
China	108,254,486.13
France	63,518,088.79
Poland	58,934,518.95
Spain	43,657,607.00
Germany	29,933,147.30
Belgium	28,088,932.55
USA	26,112,925.19
Luxemburg	25,012,839.00
Cote D'Ivoire	23,695,656.82
Netherlands	11,347,334.00

Table -3 Materials that were exported in 2013

Country	Materials
China	Scrap metals, iron ore, cam wood, logs rubber wood
France	Logs, iron ore, rubber, processed rubber, coffee beans
Poland	Iron ore
Spain	Iron ore, cocoa beans
Germany	Logs, Iron ore
Belgium	Rubber, processed rubber
USA	Rubber, palm oil, barite, processed rubber, wood chips, rubber latex, soil sample re-export (diplomatic goods), cocoa beans
Luxemburg	Iron ore, palm oil
Cote D'Ivoire	Oil sample, Re-exported (mining equipment, X-Ray machine), processed rubber, assorted fish
Netherlands	Rubber, cocoa beans, coffee beans Robusta coffee, Cam wood, Re-exported (Mining equipment, anesthesia Machine)

3. AGRO-COMMODITIES FOR EXPORT IN LIBERIA

Liberia is endowed with many agricultural produce, both wild and domesticated. In the 1800s Liberia was referred to as the Grain Coast by European explorers who traded in agricultural products at the time with the locals. In 1929, the largest rubber plantation was established by the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company. This made Liberia the largest producer and exporter of natural rubber in the West Africa sub-region. In the early 1960, through the assistance of the World Bank, Liberia's cocoa and coffee industry was developed into a commercial entity. The Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) was established to help local farmers in the sale of their produce on international markets. At the moment cocoa and coffee export is minimal because many of the existing farms were destroyed by the 14years civil conflict. However, through the assistance of national and international partners farmers are re-establishing their cocoa and coffee farms. Oil palm has become one of the leading agro commodities in the country. Two oil palm companies are now planting thousands of acres of oil palm in the western and southeastern regions of the country. Palm oil will soon become a major export commodity of Liberia. Rice and cassava are produced on large scale but not on a commercial basis. Rice and cassava are consumed by the local population as major staples. Other potential agro commodities are plantain, banana, pineapple, and orange, all of which are still in the rudimentary stage with great prospect for export.

Fish is one of Liberia's major exports. The country has a coastline of 350 miles and its territorial water stretching two hundred miles along the Atlantic Ocean with six major rivers running across the country. There are also many smaller bodies of fresh water and a major lake which are also sources of fish for both national and international consumption.

The industrial fishery in Liberia involves bottom trawlers targeting demersal fish and shrimp purse seiners, and long lines targeting offshore tuna resources, crab vessels and on-shore cold storage facilities. All industrial fishing vessels fishing in Liberia waters must carry observers and vessel monitoring systems (VMS) as a requirement of obtaining license.

The Bureau of National Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture is working to promote the sustainable development of the fisheries sector in Liberia, balancing the needs of ecosystem, health, food security, economic growth and social development within a framework of good governance.

In 2013 Liberia earned total revenue of US\$3,012,346.00 from all sectors of the fisheries.

3.1. Assessment of Trade Negotiation Capacities of Partner Institution

A cross section of lecturers and administrators from two colleges of the University of Liberia was interviewed using questionnaires. Because of the intend of the study, the William R. Tolbert Jr. College of Agriculture and Forestry and the College of Business and Public administration were selected from among the other colleges and professional schools. Result from the analysis of the questionnaires revealed the following:

1. There are courses in both colleges that deal with trade in general;
2. There are no specific courses in both colleges that deal with agricultural trade negotiation;
3. Some faculty members of both colleges have training in general trade but not in agricultural trade negotiation;
4. Agricultural Trade Negotiation is a very new field which needs to be explored and encouraged; and
5. There was a lot of excitement among those surveyed about having agricultural trade negotiation as a course in the curriculum of the University of Liberia, especially the College of Agriculture and Forestry.

4. ASSESSMENT OF TRADE CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Personnel of key government institutions responsible for trade and commerce in Liberia were surveyed. Major government institutions considered include: the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA). Analysis of result from the survey revealed the following:

1. SPS measures are adapted in Liberia, but there are weak infrastructures for its application;
2. That agricultural policy are adapted from regional bodies and other countries to help in the formation of national policies;
3. That Liberia is in the process of harmonizing its agricultural policy framework with that of ECOWAS. For Example, Liberia has developed a national policy for the implementation of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) in the WAAPP 1B group;
4. The government has taken serious steps to address the growing demand for extension as it is evident by the drafting of the National Policy for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services, drafted 2012;
5. Personnel at the institutions surveyed have basic training in trade and trade negotiation, but not in international agricultural trade negotiation; and
6. The need for training in international agricultural trade negotiation is a kind of emergency.
7. Also surveyed were leading NGOs and other entities directly or indirectly involved in agriculture and agricultural trade activities. Personnel from these entities have no formal training when it comes to international agricultural trade negotiation. But they expressed much enthusiasm about the good intent of the project and pledged their full support to its success.

5. REVIEW OF CURRICULUM OF UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

The William R. Tolbert Jr. College of Agriculture and Forestry is one of the six undergraduate colleges of the University of Liberia. The college has six departments with five granting degrees in various disciplines and one offering service courses. The five that offer degrees are: Home Science and Community Development, General Agriculture, Agronomy, General Forestry, Wood Science and Technology. The sixth department is the Department of Agriculture Extension Education which is not presently offering a degree, but is developing a curriculum to grant degree.

After careful scrutiny of the curricula of the degree granting departments of the college, it was discovered that none of their course syllabus focuses on topics relating to negotiation of trade agreements, particularly international agriculture. Although some courses such as: Econ. 203 – Principles of Microeconomics, Econ. 204 - Principles of Macroeconomics, Agri. 304 – Agricultural marketing, Agri. 415 – Agriculture finance and Agri. 435 – Economics of agriculture development are requirements for graduation, issues relating to trade negotiations are not discussed in them.

Prior to the civil crisis, works on the initiation of graduate programs in various disciplines of the college were at an advanced stage, but documents and other relevant materials were either looted or destroyed. However, frantic efforts are being made to rekindle the process at which time courses in trade negotiation can be considered for inclusions and this project can be of great assistance in this process.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

International Agricultural Trade Negotiation is very paramount to the growth and development of markets in Africa. The success of this project should consider involving all of the sub-regions of Africa. In short, the project should be used as a pilot project and be replicated throughout Africa.

The handling and processing of agricultural produce in many countries have the produce to devalue as a result they cannot compete very well on the international front, thus suffering from low price and sometimes rejection. Hence it will be expedient for the various sub-regional groupings in Africa to develop appropriate standardized frameworks and mechanisms to assist in the improvement of African Agricultural Produce on the International Market.

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