

Project Title: Good governance and Sensitization for Environmental Sustainability and Development in Sierra Leone

Total Budget: 30,000 Euro

Project Duration: 30 Dec, 2009- 31st December, 2010

Description of Project Area

This project is about the Western Area Forest Reserves (WAPFoR) in Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. WAPFoR occupies a narrow chain of hills approximately 37km long and 14km wide, with a range of peaks, the highest being picket hill in south, which rises to about 900m. The reserve is probably the westernmost remnant of west Africa rainforest (the upper guinea forest block). The area also forms the only remnant of moist closed forest remaining in western Sierra Leone. The hills between 150m and 900m are covered by moist forest and along the coast the forest vegetation is interrupted by laterite plains covered by natural grass lands. The reserve supports two major reservoirs (the Guma valley and Congo dams) that supply water to Freetown and other communities. The climax vegetation of most of WAPFoR is rainforest of the hydrophilous coastal evergreen. Most of the forest is being extensively damaged by logging for timber, cutting of smaller trees for poles and fuelwood, granite mining and encroachment for housing development. The species targeted for timber production are; *Terminilia ivoriensis*, *T. calapa*, *T. suberba*, *Chlorophora regia*, *Auisophylla laurena*, *Brachystergia leonesis* and *Terretia utilis*.

Socioeconomic Characteristics of WAPFoR Area

Freetown the Capital city of Sierra Leone is located around WAPFoR. It is the main commercial hub in the country. It has a population of over 1.5m. The main commercial activities are trading of food products from other provinces in the country and household goods from mainly Asia, artisanal fishing, fuel wood and charcoal production, and commercial transportation. The prominent companies and industries are the Sierra Leone Brewery, Coca cola company, oil importers (like National Petroleum, Safecon, Total, Unipetrol), Ports Authority, and Mobile phone companies (Celtel, Tigo, Comuim and Africell)

Main socio-economic and ecological characteristics

Agriculture- slash and burn farming is rampant along the fringes of the reserves, but in some areas farming activities is practiced deep in the forest reserve. Soil fertility and agricultural productivity are low. However, much of the interior of the reserve remains fairly pristine, presumably, because of the steep slopes render these areas inaccessible

Logging and wood cutting- Illegal logging operations with the use of powered chain saws is increasing in the reserves. Such operations target mainly the most valuable tree species, resulting in the wasteful exploitation and reduction in the economic value of the forest as a whole. Wood cutting for fuelwood and charcoal production is an important economic activity especially for the urban. Fuelwood and charcoal is the source of domestic energy for over 90% of the residents in the city.

Housing Development- With the population of the Western Area increasing from 500,000 to over 1.5 M in the past 15 years. This has caused sharp increase in the demand for land for housing development in the Western Area, which is leading to rapid encroachment in the forest reserve.

Hunting- Hunting is a cultural activity by communities living around the reserve. Both threatened and common species are hunted. There has been a marked decrease in wildlife populations in the reserve

over the past 10 years. Leopard is now thought to be extinct in the reserve mainly due to hunting pressure. Hunting is prohibited by law in this reserve.

Mining- Granite mining is common along the deforested hills in the Western Area. It is being done by companies which export the rocks, construction companies, and locals who break the stones with simple implements for housing construction. Both platinum and gold are thought to occur in the WAPFoR, and prospecting licence was granted to a British company called Golden Prospect Mining Company PLC. to prospect for platinum.

Problems and Threats Facing WAPFoR

No effective management for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in general, and of the WAPFoR area in particular, due to inappropriate/insufficient law & enforcement and a lack of dialogue and lobby from civil society to demand them. As a consequence, the rapid rate of deforestation in the WAPFoR, with little prospect for reforestation because forested lands are being occupied by sprawling settlements, is leading to the permanent loss of forest, important tree species and the local extinction of threatened wildlife. It is also leading to the loss of important catchments which provide water to inhabitants, erosion and landslides, loss of soil nutrients and a change in the lifestyle of small often historic communities which have been living on forest resources and farming along the hill slopes in a sustainable way for the past 200 years.

This trend of uncontrolled deforestation continues in other forested areas in the country including protected areas. It is even worse in mining areas, where the land is left derelict. This makes life difficult for communities around the country almost all of which depend on forest resources for their livelihood, and forest catchments for water.

What are the causes?

The causes can be categorised as follows:

1. Lack of enforcement of forestry and wildlife protection laws, international treaties and implementation of policies. This is can be due to lack of motivation among staff of the Forestry and Wildlife Divisions, ignorance among police officers about the forestry and wildlife protection laws and policies, and a lack of the political will to enforce such laws- for fear of being unpopular among squatter settlers. Inadequate penalties for the violation of forestry and wildlife protection laws also contribute to these problems. For example the maximum fines are usually Le 200, when the value of a tree logged for timber can cost between Le 300,000 to Le 1m.
2. Some national laws contradict with forestry and wildlife protection laws. E.g The Sierra Leone Mines and Mineral act does not give due consideration to the presence of protected areas by law, and it allows the minister of mines to issue prospecting license over every territory within Sierra Leone. Also the Lands and Country Planning Act allocates all state lands, including forest reserves, to the Ministry of Lands which can issue it for the development of new settlements.
3. Corruption and lawlessness in the use of forest resources and acquiring of land is rampant among government officials, the police and the citizenry.
4. Though efforts have been made on raising awareness about disastrous consequences they still remain inadequate, and people are confused about the issues. There is also poor communication between forest/environmental protection agencies and the general citizenry about government's forest policies.
5. No or ineffective communication/dialogue between governments, NGO's/CSO's and other stakeholders on NRM issues

How are these causes related?

The lack of enforcement of forestry and wildlife protection laws and corruption remove all deterrence to the ordinary citizen to exploit forest resources in an unregulated manner. This is exacerbated by contradictory laws which hinder the drafting of coherent forest policies, and confuses forest/environmental protection agencies and land enforcement bodies. In totality, these affect the management of forest reserves and forest resources. Poor environmental education and the almost absence of a clear and consistent channel of communication between forest/environmental protection agencies and the public, affects public awareness about the need for the protection and sustainable use of the forest.

Strategy to deal with problems

ENFORAC through this project will advocate the acceleration of ongoing restructuring of the forestry, wildlife and environment departments improvement of terms of service for staff, and the current law reform process. It will also seek to involve the Anti Corruption Commission in the monitoring of the use of forest reserves and forest resources

The role of ENFORAC in the regulation of the use of the Sierra Leone's natural resources is becoming increasingly important. Sierra Leone's economy is still driven largely by natural resources extraction and bilateral aid, UN / INGOs assistance, loans and grants from the World Bank and IMF. The environmental impacts of the utilization/extraction of natural resources and continue to grow with intensifying adverse effects on the lives of the vast majority of an already impoverished people. In the face of high unemployment, growing food and oil prices, and a predominantly agrarian and unemployed rural population serviced by an informal local economy, the prevailing business- as-usual attitude of the new administration and its international partners in the natural resources sector will need to be countered by a bold, consistent, adequately resourced, internationally connected and highly professional civil society organisation. One that can both expose the excesses of the current players, as well as demonstrate good and practical examples of the way towards more sustainable natural resource management. Although ENFORAC is not quite at that level yet, it however has come a long way in four years and has the potential and every possibility to grow in this direction. ENFORAC now plays a prominent role in collecting relevant information on the state of the environment, through the utilization of its various expertise, and raising issues on its from its findings with the government and other relevant key stake holders.

Our unique position of being the sector of civil society has made us key players in the environment community. As a partnership, we enjoy respect and greater cooperation from government than as individual NGOs. This makes us more effective. This obvious and urgent need for a strong and responsible leadership from civil society will increasingly underpin the strategic focus of the Forum, as well as inform its activity plans and awareness campaigns in the immediate and medium terms. The need to be 'United in Action' has never been greater.

Goals

The project will seek to address some of the root causes that lead to the lack of enforcement of forestry and wildlife protection laws, international treaties and implementation of policies. It will also seek to strengthening current efforts of environmental education which will incorporate government policies.

Objectives and Results

1. *Establish the platform of dialogue where civil society organizations can engage government institutions and relevant organizations in developing and monitoring strategies that will promote sustainable use of natural resources.*

Result 1.1: Structural contacts are established between ENFORAC, governments and other actors who are relevant for ensuring appropriate NRM laws and enforcement

Activities

- Meet with ministers, commissioners, permanent secretaries, heads of department of line ministries and dealing with the environment and parliamentarians, and establish a government environmental NGO forum that will be holding regular consultations on threats to the forest reserves and law and policy reforms
- Meet with Regional Heads, Field Workers, and Park Rangers of line ministries and commissions dealing with the environment
- Establish a data base of contacts in of members of line ministries and commissions dealing with the environment

Result 1.2: ENFORAC grows into a network capable of advocating with the Sierra Leone government on environmental policies, and serving as resourceful implementing partners for donors and other development agencies working towards sustainable natural resource management in Sierra Leone.

Activities

- Formation of ENFORAC lobbying and policy working Group Compilation of TOR for working group
- During a visit from IUCN, conduct a participatory SWOT analysis of ENFORAC and its members and, based on the result, develop and agree on a plan for capacity strengthening.
- Develop a longer-term strategy for ENFORAC, with a practical implementation plan for the remainder of the project
- Lobby to be recognized as an official partner of the forest division for monitoring the implementation of forest laws and policies
- Provide services for other donor funded programs
- Phase 2 activities to be determined by activities above. E.g. Conduct trainings on key thematic areas, based on the findings of the SWOT analysis; some activity to facilitate/capitalize ENFORAC's learning from the lobby and monitoring activities

Result 1.3: A platform is built and tested around a concrete case: the protection of the WAPF.

Activities

- Joint monitoring - by different envisaged platform members - of the conservation activities, their progress, process and effect, of the planned EU project and other actors in the WAPF.
- Activities under Objective 2.

2. *Raise awareness among the public on NRM issues through regular and consistent information*

Result 2.1: Increased awareness on effects of degradation of the ecosystem services due to uncontrolled exploitation of the forests of the Western Area Peninsula Reserve

Activities

- Hold consultative workshop that will bring together government, local government, service providers like water companies and the ports authority, business houses, journalists, community leaders
- Collect information through sight visits and report on the status of the WAPF and bring it to the notice to government through the Government-NGO forum.
- Communicate government policies on the WAPF to other stakeholders through the media (radio, TV, press reports, stickers) and community meetings
- Conduct education sessions on the essence of the demarcation exercise around the WAPFR that will be conducted by the EU project?

Result 2.2: Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve is considered for declaration as a National asset for the preservation of cultural heritage, national revenue generation and preservation of the basic needs of the city

Activities

- Hold consultations with the Monument and Relics commission, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the National Revenue Authority with the purpose of them realizing the value of the WAPFR as a national asset
- Develop a strategy for the transformation of the WAPF to a National Park for the conservation forest, preservation of cultural heritage, and slavery historical relics which date back to 300 years
- Educate local communities about the viability of sustainable means of income generation like carbon financing and ecotourism from the WAPFR

3. *Increase the government and public focus on the conservation of the Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve. Build and test the platform through work on a concrete case: ensure sustainable management of the WAPF through monitoring*

Result 3.1: Greater public knowledge of laws and policies geared towards the protection of the WAPFR

Activities

- Make video documentary on the WAPFR which can be used as an advocacy tool
- Organise environmental education program on radio and TV, and in news papers

- Provide training to community leaders, forest guards, the police and the army on forest laws and policies

Stakeholders and Target beneficiaries

The main stakeholders are:

- The central government
- Environmental NGOs and civil society in totality
- Communities living within and around the WAPF
- Local government councils

This project will target between 15000 to 25000 people from government and the communities around the WAPFR. The male to female ratio in both cases will be 5 to 1. The anticipated target population is due to the radio coverage

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

A separate committee in the which will comprise of NGOs and institutions outside ENFORAC to carry out the M&E process. After every two weeks an evaluation report will be produced to be discussed together with other Forum Members and corrective measures be adopted by management. The monitoring and evaluation process will encompass a whole continuum of analysis. In its entirety, this continuum provides insight not only into whether a programme is working but also why is it not working. An evaluation of this kind will focus on three areas; implementation analysis, target analysis and impact analysis, the last two might focus on indicators but the implementation analysis helps the project to succeed. This process will start by looking at whether the right tools are used in the implementation process of the project.

At the end of every two months a peer review meeting of stakeholders will be called to review the whole project and evaluate progress made and what still needs to be done. During this session a lot will be learnt by the management team, Forum Members and reviewers from the Stakeholder Groups on how to maintain the project focus based on what was presented and experiences from other organizations. There is also a financial audit planned for ENFORAC. News Media and The Sierra Leone Association of non Governmental Organizations is also obliged to undertake an independent external evaluation.

Learning and sharing of experience will take place with these groups;

- Parliamentarians
- Local Councilors
- Civil Servants
- Fishermen, Charcoal Burners, Farmers and other Livelihood organizations
- Youth Groups and General Public
- News Media

Sustainability of Project Results

The good collaboration with government which this project intends to develop will serve as a platform on enforac as civil society will begin to jointly implement projects. ENFORAC will seek for funding, mainly from international partners for projects on resource management which are meant to be jointly implemented government and NGO. The training that will be provided during will equip them skills to begin locally based initiatives on natural resource management, alternative livelihood, and degraded land rehabilitation.