



PUBLIC SUMMARY REPORT NEW PLANTINGS ASSESSMENT

SIME DARBY (LIBERIA) PLANTATION Inc

**Stage III 20,000 ha
Gbarpolu County Republic of Liberia**

Report Author

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1.0 Executive Summary

Sime Darby (Liberia) Plantation Inc. (Sime Darby) plans to develop 20,000 ha of land to oil palm at Gbarpolu County, Liberia. This development is Stage III of an ongoing planting that started in 2009 with reconnaissance fieldwork of a concession granted to Sime Darby for development to oil palm and rubber.

A Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) and a High Conservation Value (HCV) Assessment were completed in 2011 which recognised the following:

- There was no primary forest identified
- All areas required to maintain or enhance one or more HCV
- There was no peat soil identified
- All local peoples' land

Maps have been prepared and presented in the SEIA and HCV Reports to identify all of the above findings.

Charlie Ross, BSi RSPO Lead Auditor, reviewed the SEIA and the HCV assessment for the new plantings during August 2011. The verification methodology involved a desktop review of the SEIA and HCV reports against the RSPO Criteria and Indicators for new plantings. The verification process included cross-checking information contained in the SEIA and HCV against that obtained from literature searches and a satellite image.

Abbreviations Used

CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HCV	High Conservation Value
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SEIA	Social and Environmental Impact Assessment
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

2.0 SCOPE OF THE SEIA AND HCV ASSESSMENTS

2.1 Organisational Information and Contact Person

Sime Darby (Liberia) Plantation Inc is based in Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

Contact Person: Mr Azmi Jaafar
Phone: + 231 880624228
Email: azmi.jaafar@simedarby.com

2.2 List of Legal Documents, Regulatory Permits and Property Deeds Related to the Areas Assessed

The SEIA report is the basis to obtain the Environmental Permit from Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia.

Evidence of Land Tenure: Lease of land issued by Government of Liberia in April 2009 for a period of 63 years with an option of renewal for 30 years; Maps and Boundary Markers.

2.3 Location Maps

Maps showing the project location, landscape level and property level for the new development area are included as Figures 1, 2 and 3 in this Summary Report. The SEIA Report includes additional maps showing the topography, drainage and land use.

Preliminary maps have been prepared of the new development and include areas set aside for riparian reserves, roads, housing and layout of oil palm blocks.

2.4 Area of New Plantings and Time-Plan for New Plantings

The area of the new plantings is 20,000 ha. The new development will commence following the completion of the RSPO public notification period for review by stakeholders and is planned for completion within two years of the commencement date.

3.0 ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Assessors and their Credentials

The SEIA was carried out by Green Consultancy Inc of Liberia, whose senior staff Mr Solomon Wright and Mr Abraham Tumbey are licensed by the EPA Liberia as EIA evaluators.

The assessment of HCV sites was led by Dr. S.K.Yap with the assistance of a team comprising a biologist, forester, social scientist and GIS scientist. Dr Yap is an RSPO approved HCV assessor (Team Leader and Biodiversity). Dr Yap has previously been employed by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and presently operates a consulting company based in Malaysia:

Dr Yap Son Kheong
S.K. Yap Forestry and Landscape Advisory Services
(Company No. 001390483-M)
31 Lorong Zaaba
Taman Tun Dr Ismail
60000 Kuala Lumpur.

The HCV assessment team members were:

Dr. S.K.Yap Team Leader, Ecology
Mr. Roslan Yaacob, GIS
Mr. Solomon P. Wright, Social
Mr. E. Abraham Tumbey Jr., Geology/soil
Ms Patience Awhavbera Flora/Fauna
Mr. Ezekiel H. Kpehe Forestry

Project Location



Figure 1: Project Location

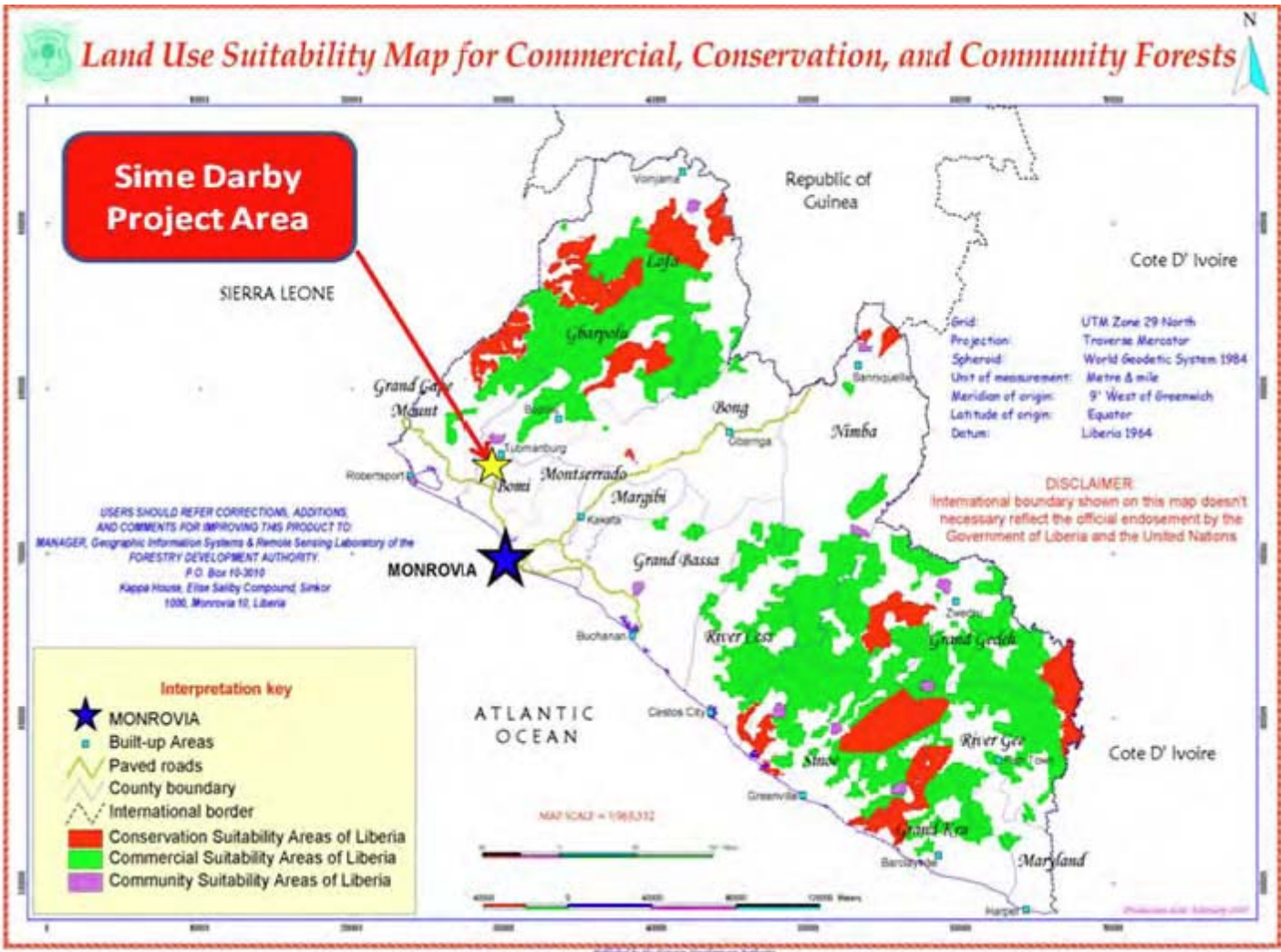


Figure 2: Landscape Level Forest Map

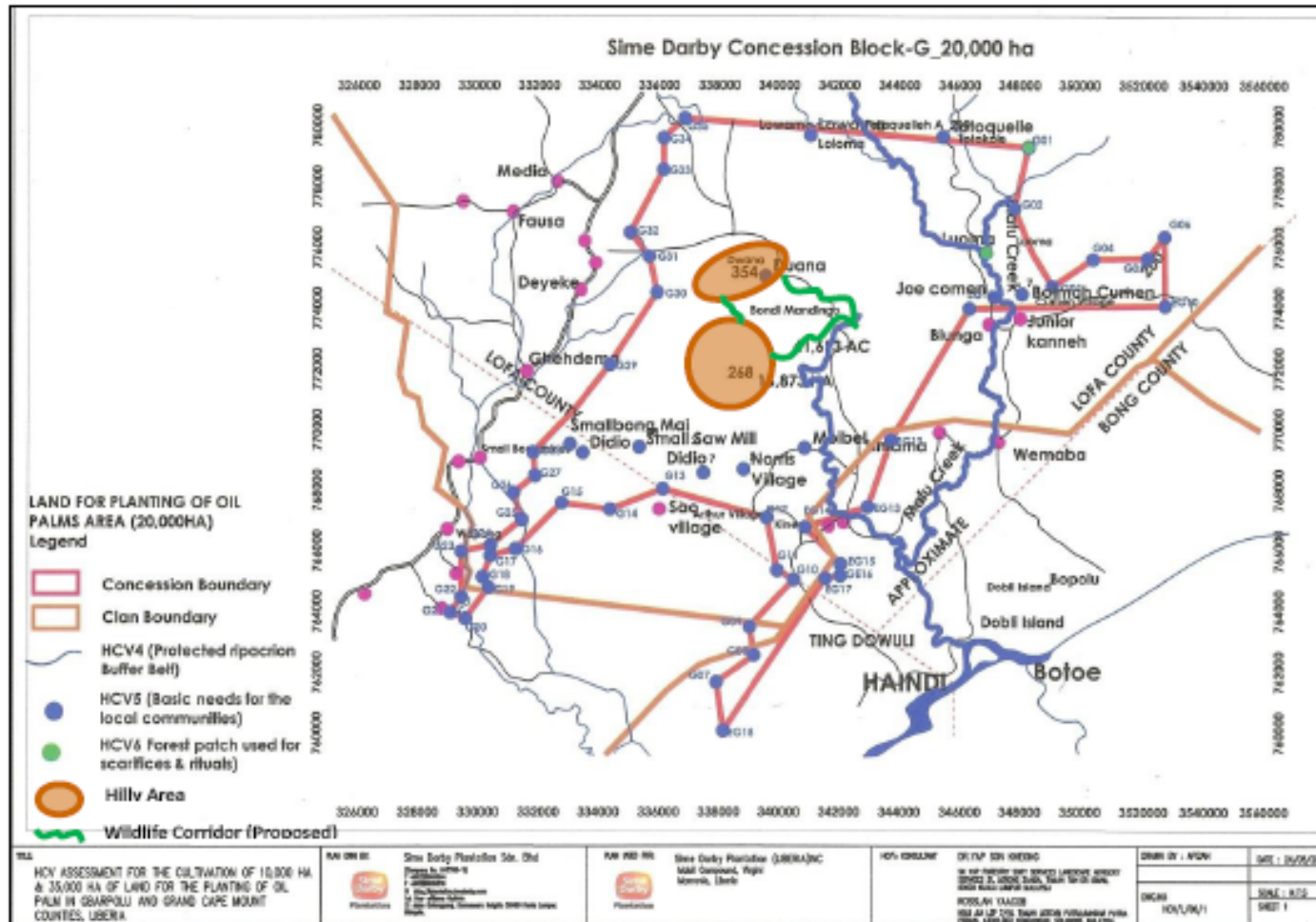


Figure 3: Location of Towns and Settlements with HCV 5 and HCV 6 Attributes

3.2 Assessment Methods

The SEIA and HCV assessments were carried out with a documentation review followed by a ground survey of the project site. Both assessments were conducted in the proposed oil palm plantation area as Stage III development of a larger concession held by Sime Darby (Liberia).

Green Consultancy Inc. carried out the SEIA during February, 2011. When local communities were recorded within or next to the project area a consultation was conducted with the residents. A survey using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology was conducted in the communities within and around the project site. In addition to acquiring useful and relevant information from participants, the methodology allowed for a broader participation by illiterate as well as literate people by using materials all are comfortable with. The methodology can bring out local knowledge, for instance by asking residents to define their own categories for analysis. PRA is generally known to foster confidence and a wish for increased participation among the participants.

S.K. Yap Forestry and Landscape Advisory Services carried out the HCV assessment fieldwork during May, 2011. The HCV assessment was conducted by a team of professional biologists and environmental personnel familiar with the local environment. It consisted of a preliminary documentation review followed by fieldwork surveys that were conducted based on an HCV decision making chart involving the following steps:

- Identify potential HCV sites (mainly desktop preliminary assessment)
- Identify specific HCV components in the field and through consultation
- Zone HCV sites
- Identify limits of acceptable change
- Plan precautionary activities
- Monitor impact of management activities
- Evaluate impact of management activities
- Adopt management where appropriate

Document Review

Preliminary assessment of the presence of HCV attributes within the project site was done by reviewing published information, discussion with the regulatory agencies and NGO. Published data of protected sites, endangered, rare and threatened species and the various enactments were used wherever appropriate. Planning was then made to determine the locations of these potential sites within the project area by using GPS. Data were also gathered through meetings with the management of Sime Darby Liberia Inc. and by meeting with members of local communities. The assessment was made with reference to each of the HCV attributes listed in the HCV Toolkit.

Ground Survey

Determination of HCV sites within the project area was conducted with an inspection of the area by a team of

biologists. During the inspection, sites with residual natural vegetation were marked out and an assessment of the ecology conducted. During the ground surveys the presence of species of flora and fauna was recorded by going through the project area by the existing roads. For the landscape assessment, surrounding land use especially residual forested sites were inspected and the potential flora and fauna determined. The presence of fauna was assessed by walking through the area recording visual sightings, droppings, calls and information from the local communities. The occurrence and distribution of all identified HCVs were mapped using GPS. These data were then overlaid on existing maps.

People, organizations/ institutions and other stakeholders of the Project, including interested parties have also been identified at local and national level.

Data on the importance of concession areas to local community values were collected through interviews with various village groups (e.g., village executive and council, hunters, fishermen, and traditional healers). This was done by filling out data sheets on the significance of the project area as sources of basic needs or as areas of cultural value.

3.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder consultation was initiated by meeting with representatives of relevant Government Departments and by placing a public notice in the local daily newspaper on 01 February 2011. This was followed by public meetings held at 14 towns and villages in the project area in February 2011. At the public meetings, Sime Darby representatives and the SEIA consultants described details of the proposed development and the changes that are likely to occur. The consultants recorded details of the meeting discussions, including concerns raised by local people as well as their aspirations such as the opportunity for employment and improved access to education and health services. Details were recorded of the locations and dates of communities visited, list of stakeholders and photographic record of each meeting. A list of the key stakeholders and communities consulted are shown below.

Government Departments

Environmental Protection Agency
Ministry of Agriculture
Forestry Department Authority
Gbarpolu County Council

Local NGOs

Ms Letta Mosenene, Fauna and Flora International
Dr. Nouhou Ndam, Fauna and Flora International
Conservation International, Liberia

Public Meetings at Local Communities:**Local Town Chiefs Name Town/Village**

1. Siaka Biyan	Totoquelle
2. Luoma Bassie	Luoma
3. Moses Kollie	Boimah Cumen
4. Junior Kannay	Junior Kanny
5. Joe Cumen	Joe Cumen
6. John G.Kollie	Lowoma
7. Thomas Falah	Duana
8. Jack Kollie	Small Bong Miles
9. John G. Flomo	Small Saw Mill
10. Oldman Kanneh	Sao
11. Judge Kamara	Boiyalla
12. Mathew Kolie	Norris
13. James Mulbah	Gibson
14. Vafee Kaneeh	Moibele

3.4 List of Legal, Regulatory and Other Guidance Referenced

National Environmental Policy of Liberia

Environmental Protection & Management Act, Liberia

National Forestry Policy of Liberia

Land Rights & Land Tenure Policy of Liberia

The High Conservation Value Toolkit, ProForest 2003

International Union on Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Data List

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora 1973 (CITES)

4a SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS FOR SEI**4a.1 Summary of Key Findings in Respect of Socio-economic Impacts to Country, Region and Local Communities**

Between 1990-2005, civil war and government mismanagement destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure. Many businesses fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them, but with the conclusion of fighting and the installation of a democratically-elected government in 2006, some have returned. Liberia had been a producer and exporter of basic products - primarily raw timber and rubber. Local manufacturing, mainly foreign owned, had been small in scope. The Government has taken steps to build support from international donors, and encourage private investment. The reconstruction of infrastructure and the raising of incomes in this ravaged economy will largely depend on foreign investment in key sectors, such as agriculture.

Despite gains made under the current regime the government still faces numerous challenges. Per capita GDP was estimated at US\$195 in 2007, still below pre-war levels, ranking Liberia among the poorest countries in the world. According to the nation's Poverty

Reduction Strategy, 64% of the population lives below the poverty line and 73% of these reside in rural areas.

The project area has low population and high poverty rate that are largely due to the lack of infrastructure and investment in the area, which is compelling the youthful population to migrate to other economically more attractive areas of the country. The proposed Sime Darby oil palm development project fits within the framework of the Government of Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy. The project will create jobs, provide basic social services, add value to Liberia's oil palm sector and generate revenues from taxes to support the Government's post war development agenda.

4a.2 Summary of Key Findings in Respect of Socio-economic Impact in Respect of Emergent Communities (workers, suppliers, etc)

There has been extensive clearing of the land within the Sime Darby concession for shifting cultivation. Sime Darby will compensate people who currently reside within the concession with relocation to newly built housing as part of the compensation package.

The proposed oil palm plantation would generate employment for about 2,500 workers during the site preparation, construction and operational period. The development of oil palm would have a positive impact by generating direct employment and spin-off service opportunities within the region.

The Development Plan includes information on the housing accommodation that will be constructed for the resident workforce. Permanent houses will be built and supplied with water, electricity and sanitation services. Resident workers and their families will have access to facilities for health, recreation and places of worship. The Plan includes information on the company's programs for training and occupational health and safety for developing a skilled workforce and a safe workplace.

Initially, the demand for skilled workers will not be able to be met from local communities and recruitment will be necessary from outside the project area. During the project development stage the externally recruited skilled workers will be mostly single males and there is likely to be an increase in petty crime and promiscuity. Sime Darby will give preference to local workers, for example from the adjacent rubber plantation in order to minimise the recruitment from outside the project area. During the project development stage, Sime Darby will apply the training programs that it has used successfully at its other oil palm operations to develop a skilled local workforce.

The project will generate spinoff business opportunities for local companies and entrepreneurs, who will be given preference provided they meet the entry level commercial criteria. The employment and business opportunities are expected to have beneficial outcomes for the local economy and in parallel with the development other infrastructure such as transport and communications will be improved.

4a.3 Issues raised by Stakeholders and Assessors Comments on each Issue.

The SIA component of the SEIA took into account the requirements of Government and the feedback received from local communities on their concerns about the new oil palm development and their aspirations for improvements to their livelihoods. In general the stakeholders welcomed the development of the project because they recognized the benefits to individuals and the local communities due to direct employment and improvements to basic infrastructure, such as roads and communications. Issues raised and the response are summarized below:

Project timeline – The project development will start immediately following completion of the RSPO notification period for the new plantings. The first work will involve a detailed survey to establish the boundaries of land within the concession that is occupied and used by local people, such as for agriculture. This will be followed by land acquisition involving the identification of persons eligible for resettlement. The overall land clearing and planting to oil palm should take approximately 2 years.

Crop compensation – The company will assess the area of existing crops grown within the concession in consultation with the owner and reach agreement on the compensation to be paid.

Resettlement – The company will resettle persons who presently live within the concession. The compensation package will include construction of new housing and will be based on direct negotiation with affected people, government and the company, with regard to the Laws of Liberia.

Employment - priority for employment will be given to the project host communities. Local people who meet the selection criteria will be given first offer of employment. Where skills are not available locally, initially experienced persons will be recruited from outside the project area.

Training – Training and localization of the workforce are important company priorities. The company will provide training of workers to develop the knowledge and skills required to carry out the various tasks efficiently and safely.

The BSi Assessor has reviewed the Sime Darby responses to the issues raised by stakeholders and considers that the company has responded appropriately for the early planning stage of the proposed development.

4b SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS FOR HCV ASSESSMENTS

4b.1 Overall HCV Identification and Proposed Measures to Maintain and Enhance those Identified

The proposed project area covers 20,000 ha of land located in Bopolu District, Gbarpolu County, encompassing several towns and villages. These are

Totoquelle Town, Dwana Town, Lowoma Town, Boiyalla Town, Sadiéh Town, Joseph Cumen Town, Norris Village, Gibson Village and Moibelle Village.

The land planned for the plantation development has been used for shifting cultivation and is now predominantly farmland. Patches of intermediate and residual secondary forest are located on steep slopes and along the banks of the major Mafu and Wegbeni Rivers. These areas retain different commercial timber species and secondary vegetation.

From the assessment of the 20,000 ha for the proposed oil palm plantation it was observed that there was low biodiversity in both flora and fauna owing to the clearing of the natural forests for the establishment of the sites of slash and burn cultivation. The present vegetation cover consisted of secondary vegetation that had established owing to the abandonment of some areas during the period of civil unrest in the country.

Terrestrial fauna in the area was less abundant and diverse than expected. Several small species of mammals were reported to inhabit the area, including a number protected under Liberian Law. Evidence of hunting was found in the form of spent shotgun shells and animal traps were reported around farmland.

There were no sites with significant HCV attributes except for the riparian buffer belts (HCV 4.2) and the towns within the project sites (HCV 5 and HCV 6).

The management practices for maintaining and enhancing the values of HCV sites were prescribed for the development area. To ensure that this could be understood by the management and field workers a training module was developed. Monitoring regimes were proposed to ensure that the HCV values would be maintained. Regular consultations with stakeholders would be established through a liaison committee.

For HCV 4 and HCV 5 sites the management recommendations are to maintain the existing vegetation in its natural state within the prescribed buffer belt. The process of natural regeneration will encourage introduction of more species. The increase in diversity of plants will also improve the food sources for the animal species and nesting sites. The vegetation cover will also provide a buffer from the surrounding oil palms having any impact on the forested area. In sites identified to have attributes of HCV 4.1 and HCV 4.2 the existing natural vegetation shall be maintained and excluded from the future replanting program.

For all the above HCV sites demarcation on maps and signage on ground will be essential to avoid possible encroachment. For HCV6, all sites of religious and cultural significance shall be mapped in consultation with local communities and will be excluded from the development.

Observation: Liberia does not have a regulation that prescribes the width of the riparian buffer zone that is to be set aside in relation to the size (width) of a river. Sime Darby is recommended to set aside a substantial buffer zone along the Mafu and Wegbeni Rivers as a

corridor for wildlife habitat and to provide connection between adjacent areas.

4b.2 Documentation Showing the Obtained Free, Prior and Informed Consent of any Indigenous Peoples Affected by the Development of the Concession (part of RSPO requirements)

The SEIA Report includes a copy of the record of public meetings held at each of the towns and villages of the project area. The meeting record includes a list of attendees, together with their signatures, a photographic record and information on the issues raised and discussed. The public meetings were supportive of the proposed development which will bring employment opportunities to the area. Sime Darby has stated that it will implement its 'Land Acquisition SOP' for all negotiations involving land acquisition from local people. Provided that the SOP is consistently implemented and detailed documentation recorded, the company should be able to demonstrate FPIC.

4b.3 Data Sources and quality

In investigating the area to assess the contribution of the project area to conserving ecosystems, the following official sources were consulted:

- Liberia Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan
- Biodiversity and Protected Areas-Liberia
- United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC)
- World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) Version 6
- The Ramsar Bureau.2002. List of Wetlands of International Importance
- Conservation International- Liberia
- Conservation and Wildlife Department
- Forestry Development Authority
- Agriculture Ministry-Liberia

No specific ecosystem that had been defined by the sources consulted was recorded in the project site. Intact forests were only observed at the South Lorma and Kpelle National forests areas which are outside of the project area.

Baseline spatial information on forest cover and landscape features was obtained from maps from the Liberia Forest Reassessment 2004. Analysis of recent satellite maps to delineate remaining forest areas and their contiguity within the concession area was conducted.

Priority forests have been identified as Gola-Lofa-Mano complex (bordering Sierra Leone), Upper Krahn/Bassa, Cestos-Sehnwen, Grebo, Sapo-Putu Range (including Sapo National Park and bordering Cote d'Ivoire) (Conservation International, 2001). Sapo is a priority for invertebrates, mammals, birds, and reptiles while

Cestos-Senkwehn and Lofa-Mano are very high priorities for invertebrates.

All areas that have been legally gazetted as Protected Areas under the country legislation were determined. The project area was located outside the National Forests which had been designated for protection (Figure 2).

Literature research on threatened and endangered species was through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (www.iucnredlist.org), Appendix I of CITES (www.cites.org/eng/resources/species.html). Liberia contains 14 threatened and endangered mammals, according to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2003):

African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)
 Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*)
 Diana Monkey (*Cercopithecus diana*)
 Liberian Mongoose (*Liberritia kuhn*)
 Nimba otter shrew (*Micropotamogale la mollier*)
 Red colobus (*Procolobus badius*)
 Allens's round leaf Bat (*Hipposideros marisae*)
 Buettikofer's Epauletted fruit Bat (*Epopops buettikoferi*)
 Jenktins Duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*)
 Pygmy Hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*)
 Sperm whales (*Physeter catodon*)
 Spotted-necked otter (*Lutra maculicellis*)
 West African Manate (*Trichecnus senegabnsis*)
 Zebra Duiker (*Cephalophus zebra*)

Information on the presence of these species in the project area was also obtained from reports from villages and towns. The list of protected animals of the Forestry Development Authority Protected Wildlife legislation also was referenced.

4b.4 HCV Toolkits Employed

In the absence of an HCV Toolkit for Liberia, the High Conservation Value Toolkit (ProForest 2003) was used for this assessment.

4b.5 Decisions on HCV Status and Related Mapping

HCV 1.1 Protected Areas

Within the project area assessed, there was no protected area found. The four protected areas found outside of the proposed project of the company are located in the north and west of the site. These are the Kpelle National Forest, South Lorma National Forest and the Gola National Forest. The proposed Lake Piso Multiple Sustainable Use Reserve is located further south west of the project site.

HCV 1.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

Most of the vegetation found within the concession area are degraded secondary vegetation consisting of savanna grasses and scattered sections of young bushes found in areas which had been farmed years ago. The isolated tracts of forest located along the Mafu and Wegbeni Rivers and two patches of forest on hillsides at 354 m altitude (775500N 338000 E) near Duana town and nearby at 266 m altitude (772000N 338000E) support species of fauna protected under Liberian Law. However, the proposed project area for oil palm establishment had no critical endangered species observed or recorded by hunters interviewed.

Observation: *Sime Darby should set aside an area as a corridor and link between the two hilly areas and the formation of single set-aside area.*

HCV 1.3 Endemism

This HCV attribute was not identified within the project area as no endemic species of flora and fauna were recorded.

HCV 1.4 Critical Temporal Use

The team concluded after numerous interviews and on site monitoring that the proposed oil palm area did not have habitats that support migratory birds of global significance. The team however found that the common Cattle Egret (locally referred to in some area as cow spirit) was the only bird of migratory nature seen in scattered open area of the project site. The site did not contain special food trees for the animals or breeding grounds except in the residual riparian forest.

HCV2 – There are three sub-categories assessed to identify the presence of such forest:

- HCV 2.1 The FMU is a large, landscape-level forest of global or regional or national importance
- HCV 2.2 The FMU is an integral part of a large landscape-level forest
- HCV 2.3 The FMU maintains viable populations of most naturally occurring wildlife species existing in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

None of these characteristics mentioned above were identified within the concession area during the HCV assessment. Large tracts of forest are only found at the South Lorma and Kpelle National forests, which are at least 3 km from the project area. These National Forests appeared intact with the original vegetation protected.

HCV 3.1 – In investigating these areas to assess the contribution of the project area to conserving ecosystems, the following official sources were consulted:

- Liberia Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan
- Biodiversity and Protected Areas-Liberia
- United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC)

- World Database on Protected Areas(WDPA)Version 6
- The Ramsar Bureau.2002. List of Wetlands of International Importance
- Conservation International- Liberia
- Conservation and Wildlife Department, Forestry Development Authority
- Agriculture Ministry-Liberia

No specific ecosystem that had been defined by the sources consulted was recorded in the project site. South Lorma and Kpelle National forests areas are outside of the project area.

HCV4.1 Watershed Protection

Forests critical to water catchments are the main attribute of this category of HCV as they play an important role in preventing flooding, controlling stream flow regulation and water quality.

The forest along the Mafu and Wegbeni Rivers, could be considered under this element of controlling stream flow regulation and water quality and unique source of water for daily use.

HCV4.2 Erosion Control

Forests are critical in erosion control. The forest cover maintains terrain stability, by reducing erosion, landslides, which will result in downstream sedimentation.

The forest along the Mafu and Wegbeni Rivers could be considered under this element of controlling soil erosion and maintaining water quality for domestic purposes. During fieldwork, a number of snares and traps set by hunters were found.

HCV4.3 Forests providing barriers to destructive fire

Owing to the high rainfall in the region the occurrence of fire was deemed to be low.

HCV5. All of the settlements surveyed were still dependent on the forests surrounding their area or forest far from them. The forest provided basic necessity such as food, medicine, protein, firewood and construction material.

HCV6. Of 14 communities surveyed, Totoquelle and Lowoma had sacred community sites within their villages, used for traditional sacrifices and rituals.

The assessment includes the identification of all surface water resources within the concession and recommendations for the establishment of buffer zones and the measures to be taken to protect and maintain the quality of the surface water and riparian vegetation. The locations of areas identified as having HCV values present, including HCV4, HCV5 and HCV6 were recorded by GPS during fieldwork.

5.0 INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY

5.1 Statement of Acceptance of Responsibility for Assessments

Sime Darby (Liberia) Plantation Inc acknowledges and confirms acceptance of the Assessment Report contents, including assessment findings.

5.2 Formal Sign-off by Assessors and Company

BSi Group Singapore Pte Ltd
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Genting Centre
Singapore 088934
Product Manager: Mr Soon Leong Chia
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Fax: +65 6270 2777
Email: soonleong.chia@bsigroup.com

BSi is a leading global provider of management systems assessment and certification, with more than 70,000 certified locations and clients in over 100 countries. BSi Standards is the UK's National Standards Body. BSi Group Singapore provides independent, third party certification of management systems. BSi has a Regional Office in Singapore and an Office in Kuala Lumpur.

Signed for on behalf of:
Sime Darby (Liberia) Plantation Inc



.....
Mr Azmi Jaafar
Head, Liberia Project

Date: 26 August 2011

Signed for on behalf of:
BSi Group Singapore Pte Ltd



.....
Charlie Ross
Lead Auditor

Date: 26 August 2011