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

11th QUARTERLY REPORT
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Front Cover Photo: Inventory Exercise of the Gba Community Forest, January 2015

Front Cover photo credit: Othello Weltee, PROSPER Transportation Specialist

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ACRONYMS

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

NAEAL	National Adult Education Association of Liberia
NBST	National Benefit Sharing Trust
NNBSG	Northern Nimba Biodiversity Stakeholders Group
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
ODA	Organizational Development Specialist
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PROSPER	People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
TMF	Tailings Management Facility
UOF	Universal Outreach Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

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

- 1) Expand educational and institutional capacity to improve environmental awareness, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and environmental compliance;
- 2) Improve community-based forest management leading to more sustainable practices and reduced threats to biodiversity in target areas;
- 3) Enhance community-based livelihoods derived from sustainable forest-based and agriculture-based enterprises in target areas.

This quarterly report presents the activities undertaken and results obtained during the second quarter fiscal year 2015 (FY15Q2) which covers January 1 – March 31, 2015.

During the January - March period, the restrictions and effects of Ebola began to subside and Liberia began to return to normal. There were some difficulties with the submission of contract deliverables due to the Ebola crisis, however, the project is almost back to normal and STTAs are once again able to come to Liberia. This will significantly improve PROSPER's ability to timely submit the deliverables scheduled for the remainder of FY2015.

Summary and Highlights

Component 1 activities for the quarter included: formatting prototypes of the Environmental Education (EE) booklets and posters in easy-to-use electronic formats for submission to MoE; identifying School EE/nature/conservation clubs and teachers within PROSPER communities; conducting situation analysis on threats to biodiversity in the three PROSPER sites; conducting a matrix of change workshop to support the development of a communication strategy for the third annual outreach campaign; developing site-based outreach activities for CF leaders; presenting results of the impact assessment of the second annual outreach campaign to FDA and the CFWG; developing radio programs in collaboration with PCI Media Impact and CFWG for nation-wide broadcast, with specific media support activities in the PROSPER sites; deploying PROSPER staff to FTI to provide regular support and to monitor teacher development at FTI; and conducting workshops with staff and students of FTI to improve their capacity to access and effectively use FTI website.

Component 2 activities for the quarter included: supporting the Gba CFMB to implement the MOU signed between Gba CFMB and AML; revising CFMP's for Gba, Zor and Blehi CFs; coordinating support to the Community Forest Management Bodies in Northern Nimba with AML; training Community Forest Guards in Northern Nimba; resolving the issue of recognition of PROSPER supported sites by FDA Board of Directors as CF Pilots; developing training manual and tools for CSOs and FDA in Socio-economic Reconnaissance Survey methods; supporting the FDA/CFWG/ CSOs to define and document CF steps to becoming an authorized CF, and; supporting the FDA and the NGO Coalition with the Harmonization of the CRL and its regulations.

Component 3 activities during the quarter included: training CFMBs in Best Practices of NTFP harvesting; Working with local NTFP Market Analysis/Trade Network in District 4 and Barconnie; providing support to develop and foster wood-based enterprises; providing maintenance and operations training for CPGs in Northern Nimba; monitoring processing volume of CPGs & CPOP; continuing Oil Palm processing support, Freedom Mill demonstrations, and the development of Oil Palm Nurseries; discussing possibilities of an eco-tourism pilot in the Barconnie area with other Buchanan entrepreneurs that have attempted similar projects; crop diversification activities and training in Farming as a Business (FaaB); providing technical assistance in crop production; and identifying eight new groups in the PROSPER sites.

Deliverables Summary:

There were several deliverables expected to be submitted during FY15Q2. While none were approved, significant progress has been made with each of them and many are expected to be submitted for approval in FY15Q3.

Former Del. #	No.	Deliverable	Due Date	Comments
4	4	Environmental curriculum materials developed and copies made available to the MoE for use in Liberian schools.	31 Jan 2015	This deliverable is currently being published. Once the printed materials are received they will be distributed to MOE.
6	6	Public outreach and awareness building manuals developed and provided to relevant GOL agencies, target communities, and other identified stakeholders	30 Apr 2015	An STTA, Ken Bauer, was scheduled to come in FY15Q2 to work on this deliverable. He is now planning to come in early June.
11	11	Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to educate the Liberian public in community forest development, land tenure and rights, and environmental awareness	15 Feb 2015	Recommendations by COR have been implemented with the Branding and Marking of this deliverable. Expected to be submitted in Q3.
12&14	12	Community Forest Management Handbook that outlines the development, registration, operations, and management of community forests is developed and made available to communities, FDA, civil society, Private sector actors, and other stakeholders.	31 Jan 2015	This is currently being completed by an STTA. Two other STTAs were in Liberia in February to assist with chapters to this deliverable. Expected to be complete in FY15Q3.
13	13a	Annual revision of Deliverable 13 (<i>Biodiversity Monitoring Handbook for Community Forest Managers is revised/developed and available for communities and their partners</i>)	15 May 2015	USAID is aware that PROSPER will actively work on Del 13a in FY15. It will include a revised version as well as distribution plan and evidence of receipt by communities and partners
15	14a	Deliverable 14 - Regional and National Workshops developed (<i>Draft of laws, regulations or policies for enactment by necessary GOL legal authorities in support of secure land tenure and property rights for communities in forested areas are developed /revised and disseminated in collaboration with stakeholders</i>)	31 May 2015	This fulfillment of this deliverable will be through Harmonization of the CRL and CRL Regs. STTA is scheduled to arrive in early May to lead this process and draft appropriate

Former Del. #	No.	Deliverable	Due Date	Comments
				language.
16	15	Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community forest management in Liberia	30 Nov 2014	This deliverable is complete and was scheduled to be uploaded to a cloud based website for review by USAID. However, there were difficulties in transferring the files and a hard drive will now be delivered to USAID in Liberia.
17,18,19	16	Agriculture and Community Forest Enterprise Management Manual developed that provides overall guidance to individuals and organizations in the development of sustainable natural resource- based enterprises.	15 May 2015	This deliverable is nearly complete and is being worked on by ACDI. A draft has already been reviewed and a final draft is expected to be submitted by the end of May.
20	17	Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community-based forest product and agricultural enterprises in Liberia	15 May 2015	Comp 1 & 3 are compiling the information for this deliverable. Materials are complete or nearing completion. Expected beginning of Q4
26	23	Report summarizing findings of review of formal primary school curriculum, adult literacy curriculum, and non-formal education materials, and identifying opportunities to integrate environmental themes	15 Feb 2015	A draft is complete and is being reviewed by the team. To be delivered in Q3.
27	24	Year 1 Education Review Workshop with the CDWG to review lessons learned, best practices, and to assess the development of formal and non-formal curricula	15 May 2015	This deliverable follows the completion of Deliverable 4, above.
29	26b	Deliverable 26b - Three Policy Briefs	15 Dec 2014	This deliverable is complete and will be submitted in May
29	26c	Deliverable 26c – Three Policy Briefs	15 May 2015	An STTA is scheduled to arrive in early May to complete 2 of these policy briefs. DtS is currently working on the third policy brief.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Staffing:

In Q2, PROSPER lost both the M&E Officer and M&E Specialist. However, a new M&E Officer has been hired through CJPS. The M&E Officer has experience with other USAID projects and it is anticipated that he will be promoted to the M&E Specialist position in the upcoming quarter. Recruitment is on-going for the M&E Officer position. While this transition has been challenging, the M&E system was set up very well so there has been little impact on M&E activities.

As discussed in the last Quarterly Report, two new positions were created after the former COP resigned his post. The new Deputy Leads for Components 1 and 2, Nobeh Jackson and Dominic Kweme respectively, are currently in their new positions.

The new Business Development Advisor, Daniel Thompson, was selected at the end of March and commenced work as of 1 April, as anticipated.

In early February of this quarter, Vaneska Litz replaced Jesse Buff as the TTARD STA/M. Ms. Litz was the former DCOP for PROSPER and was also the COP for PROSPER's predecessor program LRCFP. Project Manager Kristin Blodgett was also replaced by Thomas McCann.

Activities:

Due to delays with commencing then Socio-Economic Reconnaissance Survey Notice Posting, the quarterly planning meeting with all PROSPER staff and FDA was not conducted until the first week in April. This caused a slight delay with the submission of the FY15Q2 Quarterly Report.

Subcontract Administration:

National subcontractors:

- CJPS – No significant administrative changes during the quarter.
- NAEAL – No significant administrative changes during the quarter.
- Biodiversity Partner – As part of the Annual Work Plan, PROSPER anticipated sourcing a local partner to work with the program to increase its emphasis on supporting community forests to generate benefits from the sustainable management of timber and non-timber forest resources and for the CFMBs to have better knowledge of biodiversity collected through systems that can be implemented by local communities. Following the issuance of an RFP and an extensive search of possible partners, there was no response from any qualified potential sub.

Following this, project management decided that implementation of this plan through a local subcontractor was not prudent, nor was a solicitation from international organizations feasible. The contract value was \$250,000 through the end of the program. PROSPER management is now exploring means of meeting the work plan objectives through STTA and/or existing partners, including the possibility of engaging FFI to provide some of the elements that were anticipated with this subcontract.

- WIENCO – In February 2014, TTARD signed a local subcontract with WIENCO to work with Comp 3 on a Smallholder Cocoa Farm Rehabilitation project. Due to the Ebola crisis, Wienco left Liberia and did not return. As such they requested a termination of contract. No work was performed and no invoices submitted.

- Universal Outreach Foundation – A local subcontract was signed with Universal Outreach Foundation that will work with Component 3 to develop a Beekeeping Pilot program. The Contract value is approximately \$15,000
- KWAKERDOE – This local NGO recently signed a local subcontract valued at approximately \$11,000. KWAKERDOE will be working with Component 3 on an Improved Oil Palm Nursery project.

International subcontractors:

- Rutgers University – No significant administrative changes. Although PROSPER is currently discussing how to best use their services for the remainder of FY 2015.
- ASNAPP – No significant administrative changes.
- ACDI/VOCA – During the past quarter TTARD has been working with ACDI to submit a revised budget which will include Peter deWaard through the end of 2015, a nine month extension to the current contract. An RFA has been submitted to USAID to increase the contract ceiling for the ACDI/VOCA contract. The increase was anticipated in the recent budget realignment approved by USAID. ACDI's ceiling limits are expected to increase by approximately \$106,000.
- FFI – No significant administrative changes. FFI has hired a new Country Manager, Mary Molokwu. She is replacing Jens Lund. Ms. Molokwu has worked closely with Component 1 of PROSPER since 2012 and is very familiar with the program.
- DtS will be working more closely in the next year with our Gender Integration Officer. DtS will also be producing a Policy Brief (a USAID deliverable) on women's roles in the CFMBs.

CROSS-CUTTING TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

Performance Monitoring:

The M&E team struggled at the beginning of the quarter with the departure of both the M&E Specialist and M&E Officer (MEO). A replacement MEO was found and started working in early February. Subsequent to his arrival, PROSPER attended a workshop at LMEP to have the rest of the Technical Staff understand the Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS). The “Performance Indicator Tracking Table” and the “Workshops, Meetings, and Other Events organized in FY15Q2” is found in the Appendices.

Gender Integration:

Gender Forum conducted at Forestry Technical Institute

The PROSPER program continues to motivate women, men and youth toward gendered participation in community forest management. As part of this effort, PROSPER engaged FTI students in community forestry education and discourse to maximize their various roles through the Gender Forum. One forum was held through this quarter at the FTI campus in Tubmanburg, Bomi County on ‘setting career goals and achieving them.’ This forum attracted more than a hundred participants, including males and female students, administrators and instructors. A range of issues were discussed, including goal setting strategies that increase the probability for achieving them, associated challenges and success stories.

Facilitated the participation of women from respective project sites in International Women’s Day celebrations

The PROSPER team provided support to and organized women from respective PROSPER sites to participate in the International Women’s Day Celebrations. The International Women’s Day is celebrated around the world on March 8 to recognize women for their social, political and economic achievements. It provides the opportunity to reflect on progress made, challenges women continue to face, and looks forward to new opportunities for change that will make the world a better place for women. A total of 14 women, representing communities in PROSPER sites in Northern and Southern Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties, participated in the celebrations. They made presentations on their experiences in “Gender Inclusive Community Forest Management”.

Continued engagement with WONGOSAL

During the quarter, PROSPER continued to coordinate with WONGOSAL, the Women’s NGO Association of Liberia. A scheduled presentation by PROSPER on the topic: “Experiences of Gender inclusive CF management”, was postponed by WONGOSAL once again as their Secretariat is yet to resume her monthly meetings, suspended because of the Ebola crisis.

Collaboration with the rest of the technical team

The Gender Integration Officer (GIO) collaborated with the education and outreach team in the development of biodiversity conservation messages and threat reduction. The objective was to produce messages for the 3rd annual outreach campaign that were sensitive to the needs and fears of each vulnerable group represented in the communities.

The GIO also joined the multi-disciplinary team, including FDA and the CFWG, in the launch of the posting of notices for the conduct of Socio-economic Reconnaissance Survey in the PROSPER pilot sites.

Geographic Information System Specialist:

The PROSPER GIS Specialist spent a considerable amount of Q2 assisting the Gba CF with an inventory of the 450 acres of the Arcelor Mittal Limited (AML) Tailings Mining Facility (TMF) area. The inventory

exercise was led by STTA William Cordero and focused on a 100% inventory of merchantable trees in the TMF area. Although the Gba CF situation is unique as it will be a salvage operation, the lessons learned from the inventory and the GIS training that was conducted will be useful with future CF's in conducting inventories and assessing values of their forests.

COMPONENT WORK PLANS

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

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

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
Formatted prototypes of the EE booklets and posters in easy-to-use electronic formats for submission to MoE (Result)
School EE/nature/conservation clubs and teachers within PROSPER zones identified (Result)
Contract deliverables due during the quarter:
Environmental curriculum materials developed and copies made available to the MoE for use in Liberian schools. (DELIVERABLE 4)
Report summarizing findings of review of formal primary school curriculum, adult literacy curriculum, and non-formal education materials, and identifying opportunities to integrate environmental themes. (DELIVERABLE 23)

Key Accomplishments:

Deliverables due during this quarter

- Environmental curriculum materials developed and copies made available to the MoE for use in Liberian schools. (DELIVERABLE 4): This deliverable has been drafted. The draft is being reviewed by MoE and the PROSPER education team for finalization in Quarter-3.
- Report summarizing findings of review of formal primary school curriculum, adult literacy curriculum, and non-formal education materials, and identifying opportunities to integrate environmental themes. (DELIVERABLE 23). A draft of this deliverable is in place and will be finalized in Quarter-3.

Formatted prototypes of the EE booklets and posters in easy-to-use electronic formats for submission to MoE

During the second quarter, the education team worked with the Bureau of Curriculum Development of the Ministry of Education and collated all lesson plans with their respective Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) in readiness to work with a printing house. The PROSPER team developed and published appropriate Request for Quotations (RFQs), after which a successful vendor was selected and contracted.

By the close of the quarter, all posters, flash cards and lesson plans had been formatted and draft prototypes were developed. This deliverable (Deliverable #4) will be finalized in Quarter-3, following a high-level meeting with MoE officials regarding their adoption and use.

School EE/nature/conservation clubs and teachers within PROSPER zones identified

In Quarter 1, the PROSPER Education Team established criteria to identify or set up school environmental clubs in PROSPER sites. An assessment was conducted by community mobilizers and five schools were

identified per site. There are a total of 15 schools that will participate in the Environmental Education (EE) program later this academic year. Plans are under way to provide training for community mobilizers in preparation for providing support to teachers of school EE club.

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

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
Situation analysis on threat to biodiversity conducted in the three PROSPER sites (Result)
A matrix of change workshop conducted to support the development of a communication strategy for the third annual outreach campaign (Result)
Site-based outreach activities developed by CF leaders with support by PROSPER field teams (Result)
Result of the impact assessment of the second annual outreach campaign presented to FDA and the CFWG (Result)
Radio programs developed in collaboration with PCI Media Impact and CFWG for nation-wide broadcast, with specific media support activities in the PROSPER sites (Result)
Contract deliverables due during the quarter:
Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community forest management in Liberia (Deliverable 15)
Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to educate the Liberian public in the community forest development, land tenure and rights, and environmental awareness (Deliverable 11)

Key accomplishments:

Deliverables due during this quarter

- a) Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community forest management in Liberia (Deliverable 15). This deliverable was compiled for submission in Quarter 1. Due to the large size of the files, attempts were made to deliver a hard drive to USAID in Washington without success. PROSPER will work out an appropriate means of submission with her COR early in Quarter 3.
- b) Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to educate the Liberian public in the community forest development, land tenure and rights, and environmental awareness (Deliverable 11). PROSPER has responded to all questions raised by USAID related to branding of materials and comments on the 'Make Rights Real Video'. The final revised version will be submitted this quarter.

Situation analysis on threat to biodiversity conducted in the three PROSPER sites

During the quarter, the PROSPER Education and Outreach team conducted a series of situational analysis workshops on threats to biodiversity in the three PROSPER sites in conjunction with Components 2 and 3, members of the Community Forestry Working Group (CWFG), and the FDA. The workshops followed the Theory of Change (TOC) concept introduced in PROSPER's Annual Work Plan, and incorporated outputs from consultations with the Monrovia-level forestry and agriculture stakeholders.

Workshop participants were drawn from various sectors, including hunters, farmers, chainsaw operators, miners, fishermen and women, local representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), along with members of forest governance institutions. In all, over 130 stakeholders participated in respective workshops held at Sanniquellie, Tappita and Buchanan.

The biodiversity threat situation analyses gauged the perspectives of local stakeholders including private sector partners on human activities perceived as threats to livelihoods, forest and forest biodiversity. It validated perspectives of Monrovia-level forestry and agriculture partners on biodiversity threats with local communities and rural partners. It built on results from earlier analysis, which supported communities to share their experiences and develop ways to address local biodiversity threats within their environmental,

social and cultural contexts. Importantly, the results of the consultations were used as the basis for the development of a communication strategy for the third annual outreach campaign. Higher level biodiversity threats emerged as urgent and important priorities, i.e. shifting cultivation, bush-meat hunting, chain-saw logging, artisanal mining (gold), indiscriminate mangrove cutting and human-induced sea turtle mortality.

A matrix of change workshop conducted to support the development of a communication strategy for the third annual outreach campaign

In order to develop an effective communication strategy for the implementation of the third annual outreach campaign, the Component 1 team in consultation with leads of Components 2 and 3, the CFWG and representatives of the FDA including PROSPER field staff, met in Monrovia and developed a Matrix of Change during the quarter. The exercise focused on the key biodiversity threats important in respective PROSPER sites – Shifting Cultivation, Bush-meat Hunting, Chain Saw logging, Mangrove Cutting, Artisanal Mining and Human-Induced Sea Turtle Mortality.

The team developed a Matrix of Change that focused on each priority threat, identified communication objectives based on each threat, determined barriers to behavior change and proposed needed solutions to the identified barriers in ways that will produce desired changes. The team appropriately segmented a range of audiences with consideration of people directly affected by the threats and people directly or indirectly influencing the threats. Relevant outreach messages were developed and appropriate dissemination channels and materials were identified. The resulting Matrix of Change formed the core of PROSPER's communication strategy on biodiversity, which will be rolled out in the third annual outreach campaign.

In the third quarter, the communications and outreach team will continue to prioritize outreach messages with support from the Tetra Tech Communication Specialist. Further support is being provided by the CFWG, FDA, the PROSPER GIO and Technical Leads for the development of materials for use in the third annual outreach campaign. Procurement arrangements for the production of these outreach materials are at an advanced stage in preparation of the campaign launch in May.

Site-based outreach activities developed by CF leaders with support by PROSPER field teams

In preparation for the rollout of the third annual outreach campaign, PROSPER field teams supported Community Forest (CF) leaders in the development of their outreach activities. The PROSPER Communications and Outreach team will assess the feasibility of the proposed activities and work with field teams to mainstream them in the rollout agenda in the respective sites.

Result of the impact assessment of the second annual outreach campaign presented to FDA and the CFWG

The results of the Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior (KAB) surveys that were carried out as a baseline in February 2014, and as an annual end-line/ after action survey in July 2014, respectively, were presented to the CFWG during the quarter. These surveys focused on measuring the impacts of the "Make Community Forestry Rights Real Campaign" and were used to inform stakeholders about the impact of the Behavior Change Communication (BCC) designed for the campaign, and to inspire the development of a similar tool for measuring the impact of BCC on biodiversity threats and livelihoods.

The respondents targeted in the Forest Rights Campaign were the community forest governance structures, including the primordial groups in the new sites. The key hypothesis in the survey was: 'if the leaders are educated in the CRL to the extent that it can affect their behaviors, then they can educate their constituencies and govern justly'. The result of the survey indicated that 85% of the leaders interviewed showed a substantial increase in knowledge on the CRL and CRL Regulations, acquired through the interventions of the second annual outreach campaign. At the baseline, only governance groups from Northern Nimba showed about 68% of its membership having basic knowledge on the CRL and CRL. The new groups scored very low. This result changed dramatically for the better after the rollout.

As PROSPER moves toward communication on biodiversity threats, a similar KAB/BCC survey is being designed by the technical team to measure its impact.

Radio programs developed in collaboration with PCI Media Impact and CFWG for nation-wide broadcast, with specific media support activities in the PROSPER sites

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprising PROSPER, FDA and PCI Media Impact, supervised the development of dramatized radio programs and continued to provide technical support to PCI Media Impact, STEWARD's communications partner. By the end of Quarter 2, 17 episodes of radio drama had been produced and aired over the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS). Various studio guests were invited to discuss issues emerging from the dramas, coupled with engaging call-in and text-in to the program.

PROSPER's current sub-contract with PCI Media Impact for the production of 52 Episodes of Radio Drama is in the process of being reduced to 42 because STEWARD will be closing down and 10 episodes will not be produced because of delays due to the Ebola crisis. Since the production cost was heavily subsidized by the STEWARD program, PROSPER is working with PCI Media to make necessary modifications to reflect this change. Meanwhile, plans are under way for the TAC to facilitate training of radio producers to serve as moderators for radio drama to be aired on community radios.

Activity 1.3: Develop a CF curriculum and support capacity development of FTI staff to implement

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
One technical staff of PROSPER from the Component One team in Monrovia deployed at FTI to provide regular support and to monitor teacher development at FTI
Participation of one FTI faculty and three students in three situation analyses on threat to biodiversity (Result)
A full session conducted with staff and students of FTI to improve their capacity to access and effectively use the FTI website (Result)
Contract deliverables due during the quarter: No Deliverable due this quarter

Key Accomplishments

One technical staff of PROSPER from the Component One team in Monrovia deployed at FTI to provide regular support and to monitor teacher development at FTI

Due to the Ebola crisis, the Forestry Training institute (FTI) remained closed for significant part of the quarter. However, the PROSPER team maintained regular contact with the institution's administration and faculty, strategized ways to engage once the health emergency was lifted and education institutions reopen. Upon the resumption of limited activities at FTI in February, PROSPER deployed the Education Advisor to FTI and a regular monitoring plan was established. The specific task of the staff is to conduct periodic in-class observation of the delivery of the CF curriculum to ensure effectiveness of the delivery and objective assessment of its suitability for the institution.

Following the reopening of FTI, PROSPER had a series of engagements with the new administration, as the former Executive Director, Garvoie Kardor, was recalled to the FDA central office. The PROSPER Education Team also took the opportunity to welcome the new Executive Director, Mr. Jeremiah Karmo, and also informed him about the changes within PROSPER and the focal persons assigned to FTI.

In follow up engagements, the Education Advisor and GIO worked closely with the FTI Faculty and reviewed their global curriculum to understand where they were in the implementation of the Community Forestry curriculum and where they would resume. It emerged that Year-1 completed Community Forestry (CF) Part-1 in July, 2014. They will be graduating to Year-2 in May and will start off with CF Part-2 in June. The current Year-2 was offering Community Forestry as a non-scoring course as they did not have the opportunity to cover the entire curriculum. The GIO was also able to arrive at a reasonable schedule for conducting a periodic Gender Forum, which is scheduled to occur monthly.

A full session conducted with staff and students of FTI to improve their capacity to access and effectively use FTI website.

Even though Community Forestry courses were not taught at FTI through the term, PROSPER staff monitored the use of the FTI website. The Faculty and students requested basic guidance on the use of the digital learning platform (Canvas). Their request confirmed the monitoring results from PROSPER staff,

who found out that there were limited hits on the FTI website. A refresher session was organized for Faculty and students and they were coached through basic internet navigation to optimize their use of the FTI website. The Faculty promised to identify a staff who will serve as Web Administrator to monitor the website locally, in conjunction with PROSPER.

Participation of FTI faculty and students in three situation analyses on threat to biodiversity

During the Quarter, PROSPER facilitated the participation of one FTI faculty member and four students in the site-level situation analyses on threat to biodiversity held in February in Sanniquellie, Tappita and Buchanan. The exercise provided them insights on how communities perceive environmental and biodiversity threats, including the manner in which they address such threats locally.

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

Activity 2.1: Build community capacity for forest management

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE QUARTER
Continued the support to the Gba CFMB to implement the MOU signed between Gba CFMB and AML
A Draft of the Revised CFMP for Gba, Zor and Blehi produced
Coordinated support to the Community Forest Management Bodies in Northern Nimba with AML
A Draft of the Revised CFMP for Gba, Zor and Blehi produced
Provided training for Community Forest Guards in Northern Nimba
Provided coaching and regular support for CFMBs to present at CSDC, LC, and County Forest Forums
Resolved the issue of recognition of PROSPER supported sites by FDA Board of Directors as CF Pilots
Contract deliverables due during the quarter:
Community Forest Management hand book that outlines the development, registration, operations and management of community forests is developed and made available to communities, FDA, civil society, private sector actors and other stakeholders (Deliverable 12)
Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community forest management in Liberia (Deliverable 15)

Key Accomplishments:

Deliverables due during this quarter

- Community Forest Management hand book that outlines the development, registration, operations and management of community forests is developed and made available to communities, FDA, civil society, private sector actors and other stakeholders (Deliverable 12). This deliverable is currently being completed by an STTA. Two complimentary STTAs already contributed to writing two chapters in the handbook. The other chapters are already in their advanced stages. It is expected to be finalized during the next quarter for submission to USAID.
- Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community forest management in Liberia (Deliverable 15). This deliverable was completed in conjunction with Component 1.2. It is ready for submission during the next quarter.

Continued Support to the Gba CFMB to implement the MOU signed between Gba CFMB and AML

During the quarter, PROSPER continued to support the implementation of the MOU signed between the Gba CFMB and AML. Part of the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is for the Gba CFMB to clear the remaining 450 acres of 510 acres to be taken by AML for the establishment of a TMF. Technical support was provided by PROSPER to the Gba community to develop several options for small-scale salvage operation that could be managed by the CFMB in addition to \$150,000 compensation to be paid by AML for the loss of forest resources in the first 60 acres of 510 acres. While PROSPER will not

sanction extraction of timber in its program, the unavoidable circumstance that warranted negotiations by the community to arrive at this win-win situation for them and AML, presented a rare learning opportunity. It provided PROSPER the opportunity to develop simple forest inventory methodologies, i.e. 100% inventories and strategic inventories. It also provided an opportunity to develop timber management plans and annual operation plans. Once these models are fully developed, they could be replicated in future community forests whose forest management plans would include timber harvesting options.

PROSPER hired two STTAs with complimentary, but distinct tasks, to provide further technical assistance to the Gba CFMB, including hands-on training and in-depth consultations with communities to define their timber harvesting and marketing strategies. The consultants utilized outputs from the 'quick' timber market survey conducted by the PROSPER Livelihoods and Northern Nimba Field Teams.

The local consultant, Sam Koffa, together with the Gba CFMB reviewed the Timber Market Survey report and the community selected an option that they deemed had better potential than the other four they identified, to yield profitable returns. This was a completely new realm for them to consider harvesting and selling timber for which they had no skills. Based on the fact that they lacked any technical skills to harvest timber the CFMB selected the option to auction standing timber to local or out-of-county bidders. This, they agreed, will guarantee that they will make additional funds on top of the compensation to be paid by AML. The challenge coupled with that was the determination of how to maximize additional income.

In his support to the Gba CFMB, the international STTA, William Cordero, focused on the development of practical, simple, time saving and cost-cutting tools for planning and conducting forest inventories. He introduced tools for both one-hundred percent (census) and strategic inventories. He then conducted hands-on inventory training for select Community Forest Guards (CFGs), CFMB members from Gba, Zor and Blehi, FDA staff – regional and the FDA Liaison with PROSPER and some Community Mobilizers. They were trained on how to upload virtual plots on the GPS, geo-reference trees and download GIS data for the production of inventory maps. Some of the high performers were linked with the PROSPER GIS Specialist for continued engaged during data collection exercises. After the departure of the STTA, the CFMBs and the CFGs, with support from the PROSPER technicians, inventoried the three remaining blocks within the 450 acres. Extensive data was collected through the timber census, which included Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) and the estimated commercial height, from which the volumes were calculated.

At the end of the exercise, the communities were able to appreciate the value of timber in the Class A, B and C merchantable species. As part of the capacity building support, the STTA developed small scale sustainable timber management plan for future harvesting operations in the Gba CF, AML's projected mining plans. This model could be adapted by FDA for other community forests with relevant CFMPs.

It is important to note that the CoP discussed with the COR the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment related to this activity. Given that PROSPER is not supporting the actual harvesting, and that the harvesting was never envisioned as a PROSPER activity, the COR informed PROSPER that no EIA would be required.

As the timeframe for the execution of the MoU drew to expiration, the Gba CFMB requested for a time extension, given that both parties incurred delays in implementing certain provisions of the MoU. The parties agreed to a 3 month extension of the time period for which the Gba CF could remove any merchantable trees before AML clears the site.

During the execution of the MoU through the quarter, and as a result of PROSPER's support to the Gba CFMB and the AML, the following milestones were achieved;

- In February, the AML began the construction of the access route to the 450 acres to allow access to timber. The exercise was stalled several times due to claims and counter claims by farmers within the area.
- AML provided a check of \$150,000.00 USD to the CFMB as compensation for the forest resources lost in the first 60 acres of the 510 acres of forest land. The check was deposited into the Gba CFMB's account.

- The most challenging aspect of implementing the MoU has been the claims and counter-claims by farmer and settlers in the 510 acres. Unfortunately, this was outside the scope of PROSPER to resolve, other than to call on the CFMBs to uphold their role of managing the forest to the highest esteem. The County Authorities were called in by AML and they put a verification process in motion. Once farmers were verified, a standard compensation package was given to them in accordance with the criteria set by the GoL. This exercise is on-going.

A Draft of the Revised CFMP for Gba, Zor and Blehi produced

Through a local STTA, PROSPER commissioned the updating of the Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs) of the Gba, Zor and Blehi Community Forests. The draft documents will need to be screened through a consultative process with the communities validating the new situations they would like reflected in their plans. A simplified format for writing forest management plans was also proposed for the consideration of FDA and CFWG.

Coordinated support to the Community Forest Management Bodies in Northern Nimba with AML

During the quarter, PROSPER and AML realized that the CFs were making identical requests for assistance to both institutions. After consultations with the AML Management, and then with CFMBs, it was agreed that the best option was for each CFMB to develop concise six-monthly/ bi-annual plans with budgets that could be sent to AML or PROSPER. After review, PROSPER may decide to support activities traditionally budgeted for, while AML may support other activities outside the scope of PROSPER. The Gba CFMB was encouraged to fund their own action plan after receiving their \$150,000 compensation. The PROSPER field team worked with each CFMB to develop their action plans that included Community Assembly and CFG patrols.

Ultimately, AML intimated that they were willing to support the communities through a Conservation Agreement Trust Fund. They recognized and approved of the work done so far by Conservation International (CI) in a few villages within the ENNR. PROSPER has been in consultation with CI for possible engagement with the CFMBs. The CI Director was invited to PROSPER's quarterly planning session where she did a presentation to the team on the process and cautions observed to avoid usurping the rights of local communities. Two cautions that PROSPER raised with CI is the length of time required to go through this process and limitation of CI's experience to take on a larger scale self-identified community, e.g. the CFs in Northern Nimba are defined according to clans.

A Draft of the Revised CFMP for Gba, Zor and Blehi produced

Furthermore, the three CFMPs which include the Gba CFMP were reviewed and revised to conform to the current and emerging realities by STTA. Additionally, and specific to the Gba CFMB support, a simple management plan template was developed to be introduced to the FDA for incorporation into the Community Forest Management Hand Book. It is expected that the plan will be adopted by the CFMB and presented to the FDA for approval.

Provided training for Community Forest Guards in Northern Nimba

Through the quarter, PROSPER continued support to the CFMBs in Northern Nimba in the implementation of their Community Forest Management Plans (CFMP). The training modules for Community Forest Guards (CFG) were consolidated into a standardized training module. After the module was developed, an orientation was organized for PROSPER staff on the use of the module. A refresher training was also conducted for the CFG and the CFMB in order to test the module. The PROSPER team was prepared to better coordinate CFG activities, while the CFG and CFMB were trained to effectively conduct monitoring patrols, accurately identifying and recording data, and reporting on them. Following the training, there was a marked increase in data and reporting quality by the CFG, including threats to biodiversity.

Provided coaching and regular support for CFMBs to present at CSDC, LC, and County Forest Forums

During the quarter, PROSPER provided support to the CFMB and other community members in the development of accurate and informative reports and mastery of presentation technics. The overall objective for the coaching the CFMB and community members is to strengthen their skills for effective stakeholder engagement. To simplify development of reports, PROSPER developed a practical guide. The Gba, Blei and Zor CFMB developed and presented reports on their individual CF activities at the Northern Nimba

Biodiversity Stakeholders Group (NNBSG) and the Joint partnership meetings in Monrovia, respectively. These presentations were available for presentation to the County Development Steering Committee (CDSC), the Land Commission and County Forest Forums. However, presentations were not feasible as these forums were suspended due to the Ebola crisis.

Resolved the issue of recognition of PROSPER supported sites by FDA Board of Directors as CF Pilots

The PROSPER program continued to support eight applicant communities through the 9-step process to establish an authorized forest community status. Unfortunately, the PROSPER program suffered an unforeseen delay by the FDA management for unexplained reasons. It emerged that at the end of Quarter 1, FDA selected another pilot called the Beyan Poye community located in Margibi County without the knowledge of PROSPER or the CFWG. The communication PROSPER received from FDA was that all Applicant Communities, including the PROSPER pilots would need to suspend the CF development process until the new pilot at Beyan Poye had completed the 9-step process. Meanwhile, FDA expected PROSPER to develop the tools and processes intended for use at this new pilot. After several consultations with FDA management and the CFWG, including a resolution by the CFWG and a commitment letter by the FDA Operations Manager, the FDA finally provided a clear communication to proceed, and FDA recognized the PROSPER-supported sites as FDA pilots. The Beyan Poye Committee still remains an FDA pilot that is totally independent of PROSPER pilots. This impasse ended at the end of the quarter, causing significant delays in the implementation of the process.

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

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE QUARTER

Reviewed and update the ToRs of the FDA cadre staffs to conform to objective of the PROSPER

Collaborated with Northern Nimba Biodiversity Stakeholders Groups (NNBSG)

Developed training manual and tools for CSOs and FDA in Social Economic and Reconnaissance Survey methods

Continued to support FDA/CFWG/ CSOs to define and document CF steps

Contract deliverables due during the quarter: No deliverables due for the period.

National level forum advocating for citizen and community rights with regard to tenure, property rights, protection and management of forest resources is established and operationalized (**Deliverable 10**)

Key Accomplishment:

Reviewed and update the ToRs of the FDA cadre staffs to conform to objective of the PROSPER

The PROSPER program works with five seconded FDA Cadre staffs. These personnel directly represent the FDA on the program and receive capacity strengthening through participation in field training opportunities, hands-on learning by doing, and exercise the mandate of FDA within a controlled environment. During this quarter, a draft TOR was developed by the FDA Liaison Officer that was circulated for input by his colleague and then by PROSPER. The PROSPER management advised the Cadre staff to discuss their proposed TOR with the FDA management who could advise PROSPER accordingly.

After consultations with the FDA Managing Director (MD) for Operations and the Cadre staff, PROSPER incorporated the 5 Cadre staff, the Community Forest Technical Manager (CFTM) and the Operations Manager into the existing PROSPER VPN Close User Group (CUG). Each Cadre staff started receiving automatic \$10 credit, the CFTM and the MD Operations \$30, respectively. A Cellcom phone with a dedicated number was provided for the CFTM to communicate with FDA/PROSPER staff and with the forest communities. A Cellcom Modem with automatic monthly credit of \$100 was also loaned to the FDA Community Forestry Department to enhance communication.

Collaborated with Northern Nimba Biodiversity Stakeholders Groups (NNBSG)

The quarterly NNBSG meeting was held on 26 January 2015 at the AML head office in Monrovia. The Environmental NGOs (ENGOS), forest sector donors, government partners and the private sector institutions working in Northern Nimba attended the meeting. The group focused on strengthening

collaboration among partners and communication strategies that could enhance coordination and minimize geographical overlaps. Paramount among the discussion was the need to review the co-management agreement between the FDA and the communities for the management of the ENNR, which was facilitated by the USAID-LRCFP, PROSPER's predecessor program. Also, AML pledged full support to the implementation of the co-management agreements. It was reported that a proposal had already been developed by FFI, pending AML's approval and support for the implementation. Regarding the review of the co-management agreement, it was agreed that the park management of the ENNR and the AML-BCP program coordinate and organize the forum of NNBSG for the review. FDA highlighted that 1.5 million hectares of Liberia's forest is prescribed by law to be managed as protected areas. FDA's representative further revealed that the World Bank had been providing funds for PA activities since 2011 to date.

Additionally, the outcome of the report from the special investigation committee set up to investigate the violent protest against the AML concession was said to be still pending. The AML phase-two mining plan was suspended due to the drastic decline in the price of iron ore on the international market. AML were actively considering the option of exploitation of Mount Gangra in the north of the Gba CF.

The three CFMBs presented on their achievements and challenges in their respective CF. PROSPER emphasized the need for the CFMBs continual participation in the NNBSG meetings as they are major stakeholders in the Northern Nimba landscape.

Developed training manual and tools for CSOs and FDA in Social Economic and Reconnaissance Survey methods

In collaboration with the CFWG and FDA, PROSPER finalized the standardized Socio-Economic Survey letter of notice and the complimentary posters. The PROSPER program then supported the printing of the posters and delivered to the FDA for use all over the country. The PROSPER team finalized the Socio-economic and Reconnaissance (SER) survey manual and tools. Extensive preparations were made, including the development of a process for posting SER survey notices by FDA, to meet the requirements described in the FDA Checklist for certifying the Authorized Forest Community process. Unfortunately, the team was held back by delayed approvals by FDA to commence the posting of notices in the PROSPER supported communities. This approval was finally communicated by FDA on the final days of the quarter.

The FDA, PROSPER and CFWG were set to go on the first week of April to launch the posting of the SER survey notices, including mandating the FDA Cadre staff to continue to lead the process.

Continued to support FDA/CFWG/ CSOs to define and document CF steps

During the quarter, the PROSPER program continued to support the FDA, through the CFWG to screen additional Community Forest applications. Since July 2014, PROSPER had supported the FDA to screen a total of 86 resubmitted applications from across the country. Of the 86 applications, 68 were recommended for approval to move to STEP-2 by the CFWG and two were disqualified. The CFWG recommended that 16 communities should re-do and resubmit their applications due to observation of some misnomers. Among the applications screened on 28-29 January 2015, included a resubmitted letter from the Kortro and Martrol communities of Kpogblen Clan, the District #4 community being supported by PROSPER. After the resolution of misperceptions among some stakeholders, a unified application letter was sent to FDA for consideration (see Snapshot for more detail). The Gblor community in Tappita also sent in their application, as they intended to manage their customary forest land separate from the Big Gio Forest portion, which they share with Gbear.

Table: Community Forestry Applications received and processed by FDA

Application Received by FDA	Applications Screened by FDA/ CFWG	Approved to Move to Step-2	Disqualified Applications	Advised to re-do and Resubmit
120	86	68	2	16

An emergency CFWG meeting was held at the FDA to address the unfortunate development at FDA with the claim that there was only one recognized CF pilot approved by the FDA Board. The CFWG developed a resolution on their recognition of PROSPER sites as pilots for learning and development of the entire CF process. The FDA considered that resolution in their decision-making, committing to move the communities through the nine steps, and incorporate lesson into the standardized Forest Management Hand Book with support from PROSPER. Following this, the process would then be rolled out nationwide.

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

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE QUARTER

2.3.6: Supported the FDA through the process of Harmonization of the CRL regulation with the CRL

2.3: PROSPER support the Barconnie Community signed a Joint Resolution that resolved long standing disputed between two key family member of the community (**Target**)

Contract deliverable due during the quarter:

Develop and present 3 policy briefs in partnership with CSOs (**Deliverable 26b**)

Key Accomplishments:

Deliverables due during this quarter

Develop and present 3 policy briefs an partnership with CSOs (Deliverable 26b). During Quarter-2, three policy briefs were developed in fulfilment of Deliverable 26b on the following topics;

- i. Protected Area Expansion, a call for restraint;
- ii. Customary land Governance: Option for community Forestry, and;
- iii. Forest Resource Rights in an evolving policy environment

The drafts were shared with the PROSPER COR for preliminary comments pending formal submission.

Meanwhile, topics for the next set of policy briefs, comprising Deliverable 26c, are being discussed with PROSPER partners. The PROSPER STAM has been in close discussion with Dts, the PROSPER Gender support partners to consider a range of gender related topics;

- i. Entry Point for Gender integration in community forestry;
- ii. Cross-sectoral considerations to address gender inequality and drivers of deforestation, and;
- iii. Legal representation of women in CFMBs.

Also under consideration were some legal reviews that examine the challenges faced by third parties as to when and how to link up with community forest entities, given that FDA lacks the resources to take communities through the Authorized Forest Communities status process.

Supported the FDA through the CRL and CRL regulation harmonization

Following the development of a scope of work for the Legal Consultant to conduct the harmonization of the CRL Regulations with the CRL in Quarter-1, the Chairman of the CRL Harmonization Committee formally requested PROSPER to support the hiring and funding of an independent legal expert. The consultant is scheduled to arrive in May.

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

RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE QUARTER

Advertised a Request for Proposal for Biodiversity Sub-Contractor

Developed a Biodiversity Calendar in collaboration with FFI and Component-1,

Collaborate with stakeholders on REDD initiatives

Contract deliverables due during the quarter:

Annual revision of Deliverable 13 (*Biodiversity Handbook for Community Forest Managers is revised/developed and available for communities and their partners* (Deliverable 13a))

Key Accomplishments:

Advertised a Request for Proposal for Biodiversity Sub-Contractor

In accordance with the annual work plan, PROSPER developed and advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP). Until the expiry date of the advert, no service provider applied. The deadline was extended and some NGOs were hand delivered an RFP. The response was still unfavorable and PROSPER concluded that it was not prudent nor feasible to move forward with a new Sub-Contractor to perform this work. Part of the reason why this option was initially considered was due the absence of our biodiversity partner, FFI during the Ebola crisis. However, FFI informed PROSPER that they will be operational again in May. Further discussions will be made with FFI on a potential SoW.

Developed a Biodiversity Calendar in collaboration with FFI and Component-1,

Based on the Biodiversity Assessment Report produced by FFI in 2013, PROSPER worked closely with FFI to develop a Biodiversity Calendar, highlighting endangered and vulnerable animal species occurring in the pilot sites and the rest of Liberia. The calendars will be printed next quarter.

Collaborated with stakeholders on REDD initiatives

The World Bank Group, Energy and Extractives and Environment, invited PROSPER to a report presentation on the topic: Developing a National Biodiversity Offset Scheme: A Roadmap to Liberia's Mining Sector. This was hosted at their office within the German Embassy on March 26, 2015. The forum, which was video-linked with the World Bank Office in Washington DC, was attended by EPA, the Ministry of Mines, FDA – including the FDA lead for REDD⁺ initiatives in Liberia, Mining Companies, International and National Conservation NGOs among others.

A presentation was done by Sally Johnson, who worked for the World Bank on a National Biodiversity Offset Scheme for Liberia and the Biodiversity Offset Sourcebook and Toolkit. In her presentation, she pointed out that the Liberian economy had been significantly affected by the Ebola crisis and that the Mining sector has the potential to become a significant engine for growth and broader-based development, however, it can also be a threat to the last extensive forest areas in West Africa.

The report explored the feasibility of implementing a national biodiversity offset scheme in Liberia to help minimize adverse impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services resulting from mining. The scheme could potentially overcome some of the limitations of project-specific biodiversity offsets and at the same time provide an opportunity for the private sector. Following the presentations, the panel and other partners discussed the advantages and risks for both conservation and economic development of a national biodiversity offsets scheme for Liberia.

Some of PROSPER's concerns with the Biodiversity Offset Scheme included the issue of due diligence. For project development, offsets are last resorts when all other options run out. There is a tendency for companies to simply contribute to the National Biodiversity Offset Trust Fund and destroy pristine ecosystems. Also, the forest communities of Liberia lack basic trust in government holding money on their behalf as the National Benefit Sharing Trust as proved. Finally, such a scheme should be thought out very well to avoid forest land dispossession from communities to meet government's commitment for meeting Protected Areas threshold numbers.

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

Activity 3.1: Increased number of sustainable agro/forest-based enterprises.

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
Community Forest NTFP's developed (Result)
Small scale sustainable timber enterprises supported (Result)
Oil palm based enterprises improved (Result)
Small scale ecotourism piloted (Result)
Contract deliverables due during the quarter:
Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community-based forest product and agricultural enterprises in Liberia (Deliverable 17 and Revision of same 17a) (These deliverables are also listed under 1.2)
Agriculture and Community Forest Enterprise Management Manual developed that provides overall guidance to individuals and organizations in the development of sustainable natural resource- based enterprises (Deliverable 16)

Key Accomplishments:

3.1.2.1 Training of CFMBs in Best Practices of NTFP harvesting

In Northern Nimba, the established CFMB of Zor and Bleih have not updated their management plans yet. A permitting system for harvesting NTFPs, including Dura Palm, is expected to be part of the management plan. PROSPER will execute a quick survey targeted at the CFs specifically to find out what NTFPs are harvested within the boundaries of the CF. Although an Ethnobotanical survey was conducted in 2012, that survey assessed the NTFP availability/production in the entire clan area and was not exclusively focused on the CF. PROSPER will use the survey questions that were developed in March for the communities in Grand Bassa. Students from the Forest Training Institute and PROSPER staff will carry out the survey in April. When the NTFPs to be regulated have been identified, these NTFPs can be incorporated into the management plans. PROSPER will develop and print Best Harvesting Practices guides that support sustainable natural resources management of those NTFPs, to be issued by the CFMB to licensed NTFP collectors.

3.1.2.2 Local NTFP Market Analysis/Trade Network in District 4 and Barconnie

For District 4 and Barconnie, a two-page questionnaire for the market analysis regarding the identification of established NTFP trade networks that trade NTFPs that are found and harvested in the areas that have been set aside to become Community Forests (CFs) was completed and training of field staff in using the questionnaire was conducted. The survey was tested by the staff during the training in seven towns. The survey was conducted late March in eight towns in District#4 and four towns in Barconnie. The survey was conducted to provide insight information in order to determine if PROSPER assistance in connecting traders with collectors to establish stronger market linkages is needed. The survey results are being tabulated at the end of this quarter and a final report will be presented in April. Preliminary results indicate that “country spice” (*Xylopia sp.*) was the most cited and preferred NTFP due to its market demand and availability (volume) in the (to be established)

CFs in both Barconnie and District#4. Three other NTFPs, “bush pepper” (*Piper guineense*), “bitter kola” (*Garcinia kola*) and “bush



Figure 1: Bush Kola (*Kola nitida*)
Picture source: Wikipedia

cola” (*Kola nitida*) were also frequently cited for their high volume of trade and availability in the CF.

The persons interviewed told the staff that country spice is mostly found in the secondary forest, whereas bush pepper and bitter cola are found in old (primary) forest. The survey showed that the NTFPs are mostly collected during November to April, which falls within the dry season, making it easier to dry the spices. Further the time of harvest and drying is good for collectors to travel to the market centers with the dried products to meet with the buyers because the road conditions during the dry season are relatively good compared with the rainy season that make many roads and paths difficult or impossible to travel on. Often transport prices spike. The harvesting of country spice often involves the cutting of the entire tree for easy access. This is sometimes combined with clearing fields for shifting cultivation. The straight branches of the tree are often sold for roof rafters.

The survey also found that the harvesting of bush pepper is often carried out through destructive methods of harvesting. The vines are often cut and pulled down in order to pick bunches of peppercorns of the vine.

Bush Kola and Bitter Kola are found more in the old forest. The fruits are harvested by picking them up from the forest floor, sometimes assisted by hitting the branches with a long stick so that the fruits drop.

In District # 4, interviewees see the NTFPs business as a viable alternative source of income with noticeable trade links, but those in Barconnie claimed the lack of regular buyers had diminished their interest in the collection of NTFPs. The survey identified fifteen potential buyers. Their contact numbers phone numbers made available to the persons that were interviewed during the survey. PROSPER will follow up with the traders to facilitate the initial linking of collectors and traders in the PROSPER communities in order to establish long-term relationships between the two parties. PROSPER will conduct a training for collectors before the next collection season in how to collect/harvest bush pepper in a sustainable, non-destructive way. The CFMBs in development of District #4 and Barconnie Community Forest will hopefully incorporate in their Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs) rules that out-law destructive harvesting methods in conjunction with a permit for harvesting that can be revoked when non-sustainable harvesting methods are being used by licensed NTFP collectors.

3.1.3 Support to develop and foster wood-based enterprises

The support to develop and foster wood-based enterprises has continued focusing on the Gba CF forest because of a unique business opportunity that has emerged due to the mining activities of AML. PROSPER is supporting the Gba CFMB to update their Community Forests Management Plan (CFMP) that will be used to manage the 10,932-hectare Gba Community Forest. This community forest is overlapping with a mining concession of AML. AML is planning to build a TMF to store the waste residues (“tailings”) from the enrichment plant that AML is planning to build as part of their expansion in Phase II of their mining operations in Northern Nimba. This TMF is to be located partially within the Gba CF. All trees of the 510 acres TMF site will have to be cleared. A MOU was signed between the Gba CFMB and AML, compensating the Gba CFMB for all forest resources to be lost from the first 60 acres and allowing the Gba CFMB to harvest the non-timber forest resources (NTFRs) and timber forest resources from the remaining 182.2-hectare (450-acre) forest that will be cut to make way for the TMF.

An initial assessment carried out in Quarter-1 suggested that the easiest and most profitable solution for the CFMB would be to parcel the area up in a number of blocks, and “auction” these blocks off to timber dealers/buyers that have their own contracted chain saw operators. Although the Gba CFMB was paid \$150,000 by AML in March 2015 as compensation for the CF area lost, an investment by the Gba CFMB in equipment and employing (un-trained) local workers to do the clearing and transporting of timber to landing areas will be expensive and will most likely result in an operational loss. The study found that harvesting timber on such a relatively small scale and only as a onetime event does not justify large investment in machinery and transport equipment. Selling the standing timber off to a private sector operator who has the equipment and the skilled labor to carry out such work is preferable. Unskilled labor, e.g. carrying planks from the felling site to the loading road site, must be recruited locally and as stipulated in a contract between the CFMB and a timber buyer

In February and March, PROSPER fielded two STTAs (Willam Codero and Sam Koffa) to provide the Gba CFMB with advice and knowledge on how the clearing of the AML TMF in the Gba CF could be

implemented. William Codero executed a tree inventory of one part of the 510 acres in order to calculate the volume and possible value of the timber. This block inventory could serve as an example on how to prepare a bid paper to interested prospectors to place a bid on the resources. The preliminary findings of both STTAs are available and will be published in Quarter-3.

It looks like that the urgency for clearing the TMF site has been diminished by AML's postponement of the second phase investment of which the TMF site was an important part. Due to a slump in the world market price of iron ore, AML might decide to explore other options like other deposits of direct shipping ore that unfortunately are also located in or very near the Gba CF.

In late March, PROSPER recruited a Business Development Advisor (BDA), who will train and coach the CFMBs (starting with the CFMBs in Northern Nimba) to make sound business decisions on activities that support the sustainable exploitation of forest resources. The BDA will start with an assessment of the business skills of the current CFMB members. This assessment will be the basis for developing training modules that will provide basic business skills for all CFMB members in upper Nimba.

3.1.4 Maintenance and operations training CPGs in Northern Nimba

All activities supporting the Cassava Processing Groups (CPGs) and Commercial Palm Oil Processor (CPOPs) came to an end in the previous quarter. After a long period of support that started in FY11 under the Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP), and a final round of technical training in operations and maintenance (3.1.4a), all CPOPs and all CPGs except one will stand on their own with supervision of the Zor or Gba CFMBs. PROSPER will continue to monitor performance throughout FY15 (see 3.1.4b below).

The new CPG in Lugbeyee that was formed after the Gba CFMB reallocated the cassava grinder from the dysfunctional CPG in Zolowee to Lugbeyee will receive further support in strengthening the group structure, operational management and bookkeeping. This support will be finalized at the end of next quarter.

3.1.4b Monitoring Processing Volume of CPGs & CPOP

The monitoring of the processing volumes of CPGs and CPOPs in the upper Nimba communities continued during the quarter with significant increases in cassava processing as compared to last quarter, but with a decreased volume in processed oil palm. The total volume of palm oil produced during the quarter was 88 gallons (33, 36 & 19 for January, February & March respectively) as compared to 104 gallons during last quarter. The decrease in the volume of oil palm processed was caused by a breakdown of the Freedom Mill in one of the highest productive CPOPs in Kialay. The Kialay palm farmers have begun collecting money amongst their group to fund the repair of the mill.

For the CPG, a total of 3,889 kilos (1,116, 1,320 & 1,453 for January, February and March respectively) was realized in this quarter as compared to 2,101 kilos in the previous quarter, amounting to an 85 percent increase. The increase in volume of processed cassava is due to the dwindling activities in harvesting and processing of rice. Additionally, to ensure the effective use by the farmers of the cassava processing machines, PROSPER developed and finalized an Operations and Maintenance Manual for cassava grinders (3.1.4c and 3.1.4d). The manual is a simple pictorial version that names the various parts of the cassava grinder and provides step-by-step advice on how to use the machine for processing cassava and how to maintain the machine to ensure continuous performance of the machine. The development of the manual was a follow on to the last round of training that was conducted during last quarter. Copies of the Operations and Maintenance Manual for cassava grinders have been distributed to various partners that are involved in processing cassava and who use similar machinery (3.1.4e). The distribution is channeled through the Agriculture Coordination Committee (ACC) chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture.

3.1.5.1 Oil Palm-Based Enterprises - Oil Palm Nurseries

Four groups around the Big Gio Forest were identified last quarter in Beatuso, Behwallay, Old Yorpea and Toweh Town (3.1.5.1b). These groups expressed interest and commitment to start their own oil palm nurseries with improved high yielding dwarf varieties developed in Ivory Coast. PROSPER field staff completed the mobilization of the four groups, and prepared a RFP in order to find a partner through an open bidding procedure that can implement this activity. The oil palm production by smallholder farmers in PROSPER communities is to encourage small scale permanent farming system, and discourage shifting cultivation so as to reduce threats to biodiversity in the CF and the larger landscape surrounding the CFs. A total of 51 individuals (42 male, 9 female) signed on to participate in the nursery activities. To enhance the sustainability of the nursery activity program with the oil palm farmers, PROSPER informed the farmers that the nursery program was going to be on a cost sharing basis. The oil palm farmers agreed and each farmer paid an amount of US\$60 for the cost of 60 pre-germinated seeds, enough to establish one acre for each farmer. The money was raised by the farmers and paid to the PROSPER office in Tappita towards the purchase of the pre-germinated seeds. PROSPER will contract through an open bidding procedure a service provider that can execute the oil palm nursery establishment and extension training, which is expected to start early April after all procurement steps have been executed and finalized (3.1.5.1a)

Some group members have stated that they would like to become “full time” palm farmers and that they would like to reduce their “rice farming” because rice farming is a lot of work with high risks and low returns. With much higher efficiency in processing using the Freedom Mill, and high yielding dwarf varieties that also reduce harvest labor time, small scale palm farming has become a very attractive alternative to shifting cultivation. PROSPER would like to introduce for the participating farmers a signed commitment, by means of a simple affidavit, that states that farmers will commit not to farm within the boundaries of the Community Forest. Such an affidavit in which such a commitment is made to the applicable CFMB, could also be used to commit other groups of beneficiaries of PROSPER component 3 activities. However, currently such a commitment/affidavit is only possible in upper Nimba because of the nascent stage of the CFs and their governance structure in other PROSPER sites, whereby the CFMBs do not yet exist.

3.1.5.2 Oil Palm-Based Enterprises - Processing Support

During the quarter, PROSPER procured four Freedom Mills (oil palm press machine) for palm farmers groups in Beatuso, Behwallay, Old Yorpea and Toweh Town, all situated around the Big Gio Forest in lower Nimba (3.1.5.2a). The machines were procured on cost sharing basis with the groups. The four Freedom Mills were purchased from Moon Light Metal Works and Garage in Gbarnga. The farmers contributed US\$300 out of their own pockets to the purchase cost of the machine that cost US\$950, which is over 30 percent of the cost of a machine. Most participating farmers have old Tenera oil palm trees that were planted in the eighties of the previous century. The reduced processing time and labor costs per gallon of palm oil produced makes oil palm farming an attractive prime income earner. The underlining assumption is that when farmers maintain their old Tenera oil palm trees or replant farms with improved dwarf variety and start to generate income from their improved farms, they will be able to buy rice and other food items, send their children to school, support the family’s healthcare needs, and address other family financial matters. One of the main contributing factors to shifting cultivation is upland rice farming, which is done year after year and destroys the forest and biodiversity resources. Therefore, the support to these oil palm farmers would invariably contribute to less shifting cultivation, hence a reduction of a major threat to biodiversity.

Concurrent with the delivery of the Freedom Mills in the four communities, an operations and maintenance training was conducted for the four groups of palm farmers (3.1.5.2b). The training was facilitated by Mr. Musa S. Kamara, the Palm Oil Extraction Specialist and Trainer who previously worked for the USAID Small Holder Oil Palm Support (SHOPS I) program. During the training, a total of 160 individuals (120 male, 40 female) participated in the four communities. Five main topics were covered in each of the training, which included: identifying/naming the various parts of the Freedom Mill and their function, assembling the various parts, demonstrating and practicing the processing of palm fruits, disassembling the various parts, and demonstrating post processing activities such as cleaning and preventive maintenance. To ascertain whether the training was well understood by the farmers, a post-training impact assessment was

carried out with ten questions that were posed to the participants. The assessment showed that seventy percent of the participants showed sufficient basic knowledge of the operations and maintenance of the oil extracting machine. Copies of the Freedom Mill User Guide that was developed by USAID PROSPER during FY14 were given to each of the group leaders to serve as a reference guide to support their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the operation and maintenance of the freedom mill.

After the training of the farmers, they immediately launched into the processing activities with no delay and put their own investment of \$300 to good use. The introduction of the freedom mills coincided with the beginning of the palm fruit season. As a result, 444 gallons (157 & 287 in February and March respectively) of palm oil was realized by the four farmer groups (3.1.5.2c). The processing of palm fruits using the Freedom Mill has brought a great relief to the oil palm farmers because of the limited time and efforts applied during the processing, as compared to the traditional pit method which is very tedious and time consuming. The farmers expressed their appreciation to USAID PROSPER for the support given to them to acquire the four Freedom Mills.

3.1.5.2 Oil Palm-Based Enterprises – Freedom Mill Demonstrations

Following the successful introduction and training of operators of the four Freedom Mills in lower Nimba, PROSPER embarked on a demonstration program in March to let the new groups that own their Freedom Mills show the ease of use and the efficiency of extracting palm oil from fresh fruit bunches to other farmers from nearby towns and villages (3.1.5.3a). The four demonstrations in four different towns were well attended and created interest of other communities that would like to undertake a similar operation (3.1.5.3d). The targeted audience was existing Tenera small holders (3.1.5.3b). In total 177 persons attended the demonstration days (135 men and 42 women). It is expected that new groups will form and that the PROSPER developed application form for this type of assistance/cost sharing (3.1.5.3c) will be submitted to PROSPER in Q3 of FY15.

3.1.6 Eco-Tourism pilot

As a follow-up on the initial assessment (3.1.6a) that was carried out in December of 2014 on beachfront facilities that have been established in the Barconnie Community and that could possibly support eco-tourism, three key entrepreneurs were met in Buchanan. The three entrepreneurs were Mr. Helmut E. Kriese and his Wife Teta Kriese, who are the proprietors of the New Cess beach facility in the New Cess Town; (2) Mrs. Christina Diouf, owner of Black and White Beach, and (3) Mr. Tuke Woods, proprietor of Sun Set Beach. All three entrepreneurs have plans for future development and expansion of their businesses, with two of them having plans to establish overnight accommodations. Currently, all cater to day tourists from (mainly) Buchanan. The Ebola crisis, the closing of Buchanan Renewable, the slowdown of expansion of the iron ore mining activities of AML, and the reduction of the UNMIL force in Liberia have severely slowed down the beach entertainment business. Most of the expansion plans by these private entrepreneurs have been put on hold. A request made to the FDA on their policy and views on eco-tourism has not yielded any response yet.

A full report on the possibilities of support to eco-tourism by PROSPER in Barconnie is being prepared and will be submitted in the next quarter.

Activity 3.2: Reduce threats to biodiversity linked to livelihood activities

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
Outreach to existing development groups associated with other projects (FED, FFS, etc.) (Result)
Farmers rehabilitate Cocoa plots (Result)
Farmers diversifying and rotating crops (Result)
Improved Market information available to project beneficiaries (Result)
Bush meat hunting better managed and alternatives identified (Result)
Alternatives to Mangrove fuel wood and charcoal production explored (Result)

Contract deliverables due during the quarter:

Agriculture and Community Forest Enterprise Management Manual developed that provides overall guidance to individuals and organizations in the development of sustainable natural resource- based enterprises (Deliverable 16)

Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community-based forest product and agricultural enterprises in Liberia (Deliverable 17 and 17a)

Key Accomplishments:**3.2.1 Outreach through groups**

No developments to be reported

3.2.2 Cocoa Rehabilitation Activities

During the quarter, WIENCO Liberia Limited, subcontractor of the Cocoa rehabilitation activities under PROSPER, requested the cancellation of the sub-contract that was signed in March 2014. There was no work performed since the contract was signed. The subcontract was cancelled due to the problems WIENCO encountered in farmers signing up for their program. Further, WIENCO stopped all activities in August due to the Ebola crisis and withdrew temporarily from Liberia. Based on the initial experiences, PROSPER has redesigned the Cocoa Rehabilitation Program. This program will start in next quarter and will focus on rehabilitation demonstration by using contact farmers that have been selected by PROSPER, and who will use their cocoa farms as demonstration plots for improved cocoa crop management, using the WIENCO input package.

The problem WIENCO faced in 2014 was that farmers were reluctant to sign up for WIENCO's inputs on credit and extension program that was supported by USAID PROSPER. Farmers were not convinced that the package costing \$320 (for cocoa fertilizers, plant protection chemicals and equipment) would be offset by higher earnings/higher yields. Further, farmers were reluctant to put \$20 per person in a group bank account, which was a key WIENCO requirement to qualify for participation in the program. The long travel distance to banking facilities and the lack of trust amongst the members of the newly formed groups proved to be a large hindrance to farmers. The only bank available to the participants in upper and lower Nimba is in Ganta.

As per the PROSPER workplan, PROSPER will conduct demonstrations in order to convince farmers that the WIENCO credit package will prove very profitable, and is worth the USD \$20 down payment at a distant banking facility. PROSPER will demonstrate the results on small holder cocoa farms by using PROSPER selected contact farmers that will accept the input package, and who will be trained by WIENCO staff one-on-one to carry out all required crop husbandry measures to rehabilitate an old cocoa farm (3.2.2b). Various field days will be organized for surrounding farmers (3.2.2c) to show the result of the various steps and applications and to convince farmers that these best practices will lead to substantial yield increase to up to 10 bags per acre (under no/low management 1-2 bags per acre). After their return to Liberia in March 2015, PROSPER has started negotiations with WIENCO about the availability of WIENCO training staff to train the contract farmers on a regular basis. In the meantime PROSPER staff has started selecting farmers that meet the following criteria: they are willing to participate, in a high cocoa density area, relatively close to an established or future CF (3.2.2a), and are preferably women owned/operated cocoa farms that can be relatively easily supervised/visited by PROSPER staff. The selection and appointment of cocoa contract farmers that fit the above described requirements is expected to be finalized in April.

No nursery activities are foreseen in the PROSPER cocoa rehabilitation program in FY15. However, if farmers want to replace eliminated cocoa trees with new, high yielding ones, PROSPER will assist them in contacting private nursery entrepreneurs that produce cocoa seedlings in Saclepea (Nimba County). Farmers who adopt the techniques will later be linked with these nurseries as well as some of the oil palm nursery entrepreneurs that are also supplying cocoa seedlings.

3.2.3 Crop Diversification

Crop diversification activities continued during the quarter with conducting training in Farming as a Business (FaaB), technical assistance in crop production, and the identification of eight new groups in the PROSPER sites.

PROSPER organized and provided training in FaaB to all the sixteen crop diversification groups (4 groups in Buchanan, 3 groups in upper Nimba, and 9 groups in lower Nimba) that were established in FY14 plus the eight new groups that had been selected. The purpose of the FaaB training was to introduce the basic concepts of a business, and to understand that farming can be done as a business. A total of 583 persons (119 male, 462 female) participated in the training. Some of the topics covered during the training included: Who and what is a business farmer?; How does a business farmer start?; crop production planning tips; budgeting; and record keeping.

During the training, farmers were very enthusiastic to learn that farming can be done as a business. In one of the training sections in Sehvi, one of the farmers, Mrs. Kou Nah said: *“I never knew that farming is a business. This is the reason why we can just work and don’t realize anything (meaning money)”*. She further said: *“I swear to God, if I was to have this idea before, then I get plenty money now. But the way you bring this new idea to us, I will use it to change my life”*.

It is expected that once farmers understand and adapt the FaaB concept, they will gain self-confidence and will start growing money making agricultural products on a small scale with a variety of produce that has a high market demand, while mitigating weather and climate related risks.

The eight new groups that were identified to participate in the crop diversification activities were chosen because of their proximity to the established and future Community Forests (CFs). These groups identified consist of 69% women and 31% men (141 and 65 respectively). The distribution of the new groups in the three PROSPER sites include two in Grand Bassa (Bold Dollar and Yaweh), three in upper Nimba (Bintowin, Gbobeyee and Zortapa), and three in lower Nimba (Kaylay, Korlay and Marlay). The identification of these eight new groups close to the community forest is to ensure that improved agricultural practices that are profitable for these groups also lead to the reduction of threats to biodiversity because the production system is no longer based on shifting cultivation primarily.

To ensure that these groups start on a strong footing on crop diversification and production activities which are all geared towards the reduction in shifting cultivation and permanent farming practices, they were trained in good agriculture practices (GAP) methodologies. The training covered various topics that included: what is and why crop diversification?; advantages of crop diversification; crop families and crop rotation; crop diversification and reduction of threats to biodiversity; integrated pest management, (IPM), etc. After the training, PROSPER provided each group with a set of tool packages that included one knapsack sprayer, two watering cans, five pieces of cutlasses, two files to sharpen cutlasses, five pieces of scratching holes and one piece of tarpaulin. Also, technical assistance was provided which included farm sanitation (removal and destruction of host plants for diseases and pests) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods, including the use of soap solution to control insects (grasshoppers) on vegetables like pepper and bitter-balls. Other activities included the weeding and watering of crops planted at the tail end of the rainy season, and those planted at the beginning of the dry season production. Further attention was given to guiding farmers in the selection of good sites to grow crops in the upcoming agricultural (rainy) season.

PROSPER has not finalized the updating of the Crop Diversification Manual and the Farming as a Business Manual. These finalized manuals will be part of deliverable 16.

3.2.4 Improve Market Information

No progress to be reported.

3.2.5 Bushmeat Alternative

A field visit was conducted to the cane rat production site in Zortapa. The facility has no cane rats anymore. Visits to goat development activities of the USAID FED program are scheduled for January 2015. PROSPER was not able to receive any information from Land-O-Lakes since their operations were halted due to the Ebola crisis. It is expected that this program will be restarted in FY15Q3. A full report on viable bushmeat alternative options will be released in FY15Q3.

An RFP was issued by PROSPER for the implementation of a beekeeping pilot program in lower Nimba (3 groups) and Grand Bassa (2 groups). Though originally designed to provide an alternative livelihood for hunters who would be impacted by rules that restrict hunting in the CFs, the program will be piloted towards youths and women because there are no CFMBs yet in lower Nimba and Grand Bassa PROSPER communities. In upper Nimba beekeeping is not possible in the Zor community because the ZOR clan has a taboo on bees and honey, and the Gba CFMB has no approved management in place yet, nor have any rules that deal with restricting hunting been formulated.

The beekeeping pilot program will start in April 2015.

3.2.6 Charcoal Production

No progress to be reported.

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

ANNUAL RESULTS & DELIVERABLES (YEAR 3)
Lessons learned and best practices identified (Result)
Best practices and other project findings shared with the ACC (Result)
Meetings and workshops to share best practice / lessons learned (Result)
Contract deliverables due during the quarter:
Agriculture and Community Forest Enterprise Management Manual developed that provides overall guidance to individuals and organizations in the development of sustainable natural resource- based enterprises (Deliverable 16)
Series of brochures, radio programs, community theater, and video products developed to support community-based forest product and agricultural enterprises in Liberia (Deliverable 17 and 17a)

PROSPER participated in both the Cocoa Sector Technical Working Group meetings and the Agriculture Coordinating Council (ACC) meetings respectively during the quarter. The ACC reconvened in January after it was suspended in June 2014 due to the Ebola outbreak in the country. The first meeting was called to officially inform all partners in the agriculture sector about the resumption of the monthly ACC meeting. Major issues discussed at the ACC during the period under review was the restructuring and up-dating of membership of the various Technical Working Groups in the subsectors Cocoa, Rice, Vegetables, Cassava, Oil Palm, Livestock and peri-urban horticulture to ensure that all partners working in the agriculture sub-sectors fully participate and form part of at least one working group. The production of rice was highlighted as the major food crop in Liberia to reflect production, processing, marketing of surpluses after harvest by farmers, and pricing. For the Cocoa Technical Working Group, the major issue discussed was that the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) has agreed in principle to support Liberia in developing its cocoa sector. In light of this, ICCO has asked the Ministry of Agriculture- Liberia to do a SWOT analysis of the cocoa sector and report back to ICCO the findings.

PROSPER participated in all three ACC meetings and all sub-committee meeting (cocoa) held this quarter. There was no sub-committee meeting held on oil palm during the quarter.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STAFF LIST (31 MAR 2015)

Full-time PROSPER Staff: Monrovia

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
Technical					
1	Meadows	Paul	Chief of Party		6 Jan 2014
2	Cole	Eugene	Deputy Chief of Party		21 Jan 2013
3	Kweme	Dominic	Deputy Lead, Component 2		21 Jan 2013
4	Jackson	Nobeh	Deputy Lead, Component 1		01 Jun 2012
5	Johnson	T. Doe	Education Advisor	NAEAL	18 Jun 2012
6	Dorwison	Melvin	Education Consultant	NAEAL	April 2013
7	Kweme	Dominic	Organizational Development Advisor	CJPS	01 Jun 2012
8	de Waard	Peter	Leader, Livelihoods & Enterprise Development Activities	ACDI/VOCA	18 Jun 2012
9	Akoi Forkpa	Laveto	Deputy LEDA	ACDI/VOCA	01 Feb 2014
10	Queejay	Marvelous	Senior Field Coordinator	ACDI/VOCA	01 Feb 2014
11	Dennis	Koko	Liaison Officer/Coordinator Cadre Staff	FDA	07 July 2012
12	Miller	Esthella	Gender Integration Officer		01 Jun 2012
13	Van Ross	Rechline	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	CJPS	1 Feb 2015
14	Thompson	Daniel	Business Development Specialist		1 Apr 2015
15	OPEN		Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist		TBD
	Vangehn	Darlington	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist		RESIGNED
	Kollie	Anthony	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer		RESIGNED
Financial and Administrative					
16	Tarr	Vera	Office Manager		01 Jun 2012

17	Williams	Joshua	Finance Officer		01 Jun 2012
18	Mulbah	Henry	Assistant Finance Officer		01 Jun 2012
19	Wheigar	Sando	Procurement/Contracts Officer		02 Jul 2012
20	Sartee	Alvis	Administrative Operations Officer		10 Feb 2014
21	Glaydor	Garnahweh	Administrative /Finance Assistant		07 May 2014
Support Staff					
22	Saylee	Moses	Caretaker		01 Jun 2012
23	Johnson	Frederick	Head Driver		01 Jun 2012
24	Dukuly	Abraham	Driver		01 Jun 2012
25	Habah	John	Driver		01 Jun 2012
26	Weltee	Othello	Driver		08 Oct 2012
27	Boykai	Joel	Driver		01 Jun 2012
28	Goflee	Evelyn	Caretaker	CJPS	01 Oct 2013

Full-time PROSPER Staff: Sanniquellie Field Office (northern Nimba County)

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
1	Vesselee	Martin	Forestry Officer/Head of Office		08 Oct 2012
2	Ville	James	Field Office Administrator		28 Aug 2012
3	Kollie	Henry	Driver		02 Jan 2013
4	Paypay	William	Coordinator	NAEAL	
5	Mah	Robert	Mobilizer – Zor	NAEAL	
6	Gomah	Marcus	Mobilizer - Sehyi	NAEAL	
7	Nyumah	John	Mobilizer - Gba	NAEAL	
8	Saye	Ruth	Coordinator	CJPS	
9	Sayekea	Ophelia	Mobilizer - Gba	CJPS	
10	Baimie	Chyrrei	Mobilizer - Sehyi	CJPS	
11	Deemie	Michael	Mobilizer - Zor	CJPS	
12	Dahn	Julius	Caretaker	CJPS	01 Oct 2013
13	Zonen	Leona	Field Facilitator - Sehi	ACDI/VOCA	

14	Kerkula	Thomas	Coordinator	ACDI/VOCA	
15	Mynen	Joe	Field Facilitator - Zor	ACDI/VOCA	
16	Zayzay	Joseph	Extension Officer - Sanniquellie	FDA	

Full-time PROSPER Staff: Tappita Field Office (southern Nimba County)

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
1	Biah	D. Nuah	Forestry Officer/Head of Office		01 Jun 2012
2	Maximore	Gibson	Field Office Administrator		01 May 2014
3	Gant	Garretson	Driver		05 Nov 2012
4	Brisbane	Joseph	Coordinator – Tappita	NAEAL	
5	Sherman	Magdelene	Mobilizer - Gbear Gblor	NAEAL	
6	Dweh	Oliver	Mobilizer - Boe-Quilla	NAEAL	
7	Kabakollie	Isaac	Mobilizer - Kparblee	NAEAL	
8	Gayflor	Joseph	Mobilizer - Sehzueplay	NAEAL	
9	Younquoi	Viola	Coordinator -	CJPS	
10	Coleman	Joseph	Mobilizer - Gbear Gblor	CJPS	
11	Seh	Bendu	Mobilizer - Sehzueplay	CJPS	
12	Yoko	Daniel	Mobilizer - - Boe-Quilla	CJPS	
13	Sangai	Martin	Mobilizer - Kparblee	CJPS	
14	Gibson	Sam	Caretake	CJPS	01 Oct 2013
15	Quaye	Sampson	Coordinator Tappita	ACDI/VOCA	
16	Wehyie	Patrick	Field Facilitator - Boe-Quilla	ACDI/VOCA	
17	Kamara	Mcdonald	Field Facilitator - Kparblee	ACDI/VOCA	
18	Dwana	John	Argo Forestry Ranger - Tappita	FDA	

Full-time PROSPER Staff: Buchanan Field Office (Grand Bassa County)

	Last Name	First Name	Function	Subcontract Organization	Start Date
1	Gibson	Eugene	Forestry Officer/Head of Office		20 May 2013
2	Dugbeh	Sam	Field Office Administrator		03 Dec 2012
3	Manobah	Folley	Driver		16 Oct 2012
4	Kenedy	Winifred	Coordinator	NAEAL	
5	Gorvego	Roland	Mobilizer District 4	NAEAL	
6	Bloh	Eric	Mobilizer Barcoline	NAEAL	
7	Folley	Isaac	Coordinator – Acting	CJPS	
8	Josiah	Joe Benson	Mobilizer - District # 4	CJPS	
9	Johnson	Rufus	Caretaker	CJPS	01 Oct 2013
10	Johnson	Nathaniel	Coordinator	ACDI/VOCA	
11	Newman	Kollie	Field Facilitator District #4	ACDI/VOCA	
12	Kpainay	Joseph	Regional Extension Officer, Grand Bassa County	FDA	
13	Johnson	Boima	Agro Forestry Ranger District # 4	FDA	

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF REPORTS SUBMITTED

Title	Reference (Deliverable/Reporting Requirement)	Notes
FY15/Q2 Quarterly Report	RR-5	-Submitted 10 FEB 2015 -PENDING USAID REVIEW
FY15/Q1 Quarterly Financial Report	RR-6	-Submitted 10 FEB 2015 -PENDING USAID REVIEW
FY15/Q2 Quarterly Accruals Report	RR-7	-Submitted 12 MAR 2015
Three Policy Briefs (draft for initial review)	D-26b	-Sent to COR for comment on 12 MAR 2015 -PENDING
Sustainable Timber Management	STTA - USAID Debrief Presentation	-6 MAR 2015

APPENDIX 3: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TRACKING TABLE - FY15Q2

Performance indicators and types	Explanation - +/- 10% of Quarterly Target	FY 2015 Target	2015 Q2 Target	2015 Q2 Actual	2015 Q2 % Actual vs Target	FY 2015 % Actual vs Target
Intermediate Result 1: Increased educational and institutional capacity to improve environmental awareness, NRM, biodiversity conservation, and environmental compliance						
1.1 Number of institutions with increased capacity to improve environmental awareness, NRM, biodiversity conservation, and environmental compliance – <i>Custom/Outcome</i>	Annual Target. Nothing to report in Q2	3	0	0	0%	0%
Sub Intermediate Result 1.2: Improved capacity of CSOs to design and conduct outreach campaigns to increase public awareness of natural resource and environmental management issues						
1.2.1: Number of CSO members involved in the design and conduct of outreach campaign activities that incorporate best practices – <i>Custom/Outcome</i>	The Matrix of Change workshop was conducted this quarter with a larger turnout than expected. This annual target was likely underestimated. PROSPER is confirming that only CSO members are counted and not all participants	25	5	14	280%	96%
Sub Intermediate Result 1.3: Improved capacity of FTI to develop and deliver a community forestry curriculum						
1.3.2: Number of individuals supported by program to conduct applied research at one or more of the program's pilot sites – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Annual Target. Nothing to report in Q2	5	0	0	0%	0%
Sub Intermediate Result 1.4: Improved capacity of civil society and community organizations to contribute to NRM, land and environmental policy development						

Performance indicators and types	Explanation - +/- 10% of Quarterly Target	FY 2015 Target	2015 Q2 Target	2015 Q2 Actual	2015 Q2 % Actual vs Target	FY 2015 % Actual vs Target
1.4.1: Number of policy briefings and presentations made to national leadership by forestry stakeholders regarding LTPR and forest resource protection and management – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Due to the inability of STTA's to travel to Liberia, Policy Briefs were suspended. However, all 6 Policy Briefs are expected to be submitted by the end of Q3	6	3	0	0%	0%
1.4.2: Number of presentations at County Development Committee meetings by communities on policy-related issues – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Normally CFMBs will provide presentations with PROSPER support at the CDC mtgs. These meetings did not occur this quarter and are expected to resume in Q3 and Q4.	10	3	0	0%	0%
Intermediate Result 2: Improved community-based forest management leading to more sustainable practices and reduced threats to biodiversity in targeted communities						
Sub Intermediate Result 2.1: Increased community capacity for forest management						
2.1.2: Number of community members trained in the management of their community forestry areas (e.g., biomonitoring, permitting) – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Site Level consultations were done at each field office to elicit community input on threats to biodiversity. The participation was much higher than anticipated	40	10	69	690%	172.5%
2.1.3: Number of community members who have applied conflict management skills to manage land conflict issues – <i>Custom/Outcome</i>	This target was anticipated based on moving forward with the 9-step process. PROSPER was not allowed to proceed based on an FDA directive. This issue appears to be resolved and the process is moving again.	35	10	0	0%	0%
Sub Intermediate Result 2.2: Strengthened capacity of FDA, EPA and CSOs to support sustainable forest management						
2.2.1: Number of FDA, EPA, and partner CSO staff trained in the practical steps involved in developing community forestry management bodies and plans incorporating conservation, community, and commercial values – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Over Target. More meetings were performed than anticipated due to revision of guidelines for CF process and development of standardized checklist	28	15	19	126.6%	67.8%
Sub Intermediate Result 2.3: : Legal framework for community forestry and LTPR improved and simplified on the basis of recommendations from stakeholder consultations						

Performance indicators and types	Explanation - +/- 10% of Quarterly Target	FY 2015 Target	2015 Q2 Target	2015 Q2 Actual	2015 Q2 % Actual vs Target	FY 2015 % Actual vs Target
4.8.1-7: Number of policies, laws, agreements, or regulations promoting sustainable natural resource management and conservation that are implemented as a result of USG assistance – <i>Custom/Outcome(PROSPER 2.3.1)</i>	The delay in proceeding with the development of the CF 9-Steps during Q1 and Q2 contributed to this deviation.	12	6	3	50%	25%
Sub Intermediate Result 2.4: Increased use of forest ecosystems data to support the design of community outreach materials and programs						
2.4.1: Number of outreach/awareness products (public reports, brochures, radio messages, documentaries, etc.) that incorporate data from monitoring of biodiversity and/or the carbon footprint of farming and forestry activities that have been disseminated – <i>Custom/Output</i>	Annual Target. Nothing to Report in Q2.	10	0	0	0%	0%
Intermediate Result 3: Improved community-based livelihoods derived from sustainable forest and agricultural-based enterprises in targeted communities areas						
4.8.1- 6: Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable NRM and conservation activities as a result of USG assistance – <i>FtF/Outcome(PROSPER 3.1)</i>	Annual Target. New users from CPOPs and CPGs in Q2	320	0	123	38.4%	38.4%
Sub Intermediate Result 3.1: Increased number of sustainable agro/forest - based enterprises						
3.1.1: Number of new agribusiness/forestry enterprises formed to support program-assisted value chains – <i>Custom / Outcome</i>	On Target	8	2	2	100%	25%
Sub Intermediate Result 3.2: Reduced threats to biodiversity linked to livelihood activities						
4.5.2-7: Number of individuals who have received USG-supported short-term agricultural sector productivity training – <i>FACTS/Output (PROSPER 3.2.1)</i>	Annual Target. Nothing to report in Q2	400	0	0	0%	0%
4.5.2-5: Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance – <i>FtF/Outcome(PROSPER 3.2.2)</i>	Annual Target. Nothing to report in Q2	120	0	0	0%	0%
Sub Intermediate Result 3.3: Increased information available to stakeholders concerning best practices, to improve effectiveness of forestry and agricultural enterprises.						
3.3.1: Number of extension publications disseminated through the Agriculture Coordinating Committee and other national and local fora to interested stakeholders -- <i>Custom/Output</i>	On Target	2	2	2	100%	100%

APPENDIX 4: WORKSHOPS, MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS ORGANIZED IN FY15Q1

WORKSHOPS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER EVENTS ORGANIZED BY PROSPER PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD January to April 2015

N	Date	Title	Objective	Location/ Community	CF Site	Days	NO of participants			
							F	M	Staff	Total
1	January 14, 2015	Site-level Consultation on threat to biodiversity	To elicit community input on approach (s) required to address threat to forest biodiversity	PROSPER Field Offices	Sanniquellie, Buchana and Tappita	3	16	53	45	114
4	January 16-27, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Lugbeyee	Lugbeyee	10	15	3	0	18
5	January 16 - 25, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Kialay	Kialay	9	0	6	0	6
6	January 7-14, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Sehyigeh	Sehyigeh	7	6	0	0	6
7	January 2,20, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Goagortuo	Goagortuo	2	1	1	0	2
8	January 19, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Kpolay	Kpolay	1	0	1	0	1
9	January 6, 15, 16, 2015	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Lepula	Lepula	3	3	0	0	3
10	February 2-4, 2015	GPS Training for Field Staffs/CFMB members	Field Staffs & CFMB Members of Gba, Zor & Blei will be trained to defined, identified different types of GPS, Drill through the functionalities, awareness of GPS and applied necessary safety measures and work with the GPS effectively	PROSPER Sanniquellie Office	Nimba County	3	5	18	8	31
11	February 5-7, 2015	Refresher Training in GPS and Patrol methods for CFG	To applied effective patrol methods in their work, complete patrol data collection sheet with the use of the GPS and work with the GPS accurately.	Zorgowee	Nimba County	3	3	37	2	42
12	February 4-5, 2015	Matrix of Change on Threats to Forest and Forest Biodiversity	To develop a shared vision and roadmap to the implementation of the Third Annual Outreach Campaign	S.T. Nagbe Methodist Church, 13 th Street, Sinkor,	Monrovia	2	9	19	5	33
13	February 5,	Operational and	To provide basic practical knowledge	Toweh's Town	Tappita	1	7	40	0	47

	2015	Maintenance Training for Four (4) Oil Palm Processing Groups and Operators around the Big Gio CF	and understanding to the new Oil Palm Processing Groups' members and operators on the correct operation							
14	February 6, 2015	Operational and Maintenance Training for Four (4) Oil Palm Processing Groups and Operators around the Big Gio CF	To provide basic practical knowledge and understanding to the new Oil Palm Processing Groups' members and operators on the correct operation	Behwallay	Tappita	1	5	19	0	24
15	February 7, 2015	Operational and Maintenance Training for Four (4) Oil Palm Processing Groups and Operators around the Big Gio CF	To provide basic practical knowledge and understanding to the new Oil Palm Processing Groups' members and operators on the correct operation	Yourpea Old Town	Tappita	1	7	24	0	31
16	February 9, 2015	Operational and Maintenance Training for Four (4) Oil Palm Processing Groups and Operators around the Big Gio CF	To provide basic practical knowledge and understanding to the new Oil Palm Processing Groups' members and operators on the correct operation	Beatuo	Tappita	1	21	28	0	49
17	February 17-27, 2015	Sustainable Timber Management	To train CFGs, FDA & Project Staffs and Participate in Forest inventory and tree census	Sanniquellie PROSPER Office	Gba CF	9	0	15	4	19
18	March 6, 2015	CFWG Messages		USAID-PROSPER		1	3	8	3	14

		Workshop		HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia						
19	March 24, 2015	Presentation of BCC/KAB Survey results to CFWG Members & FDA	To Present Findings of the BCC/KAB Surveys	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	5	7	4	17
20	March 27, 2015	FTI/PROSPER GENDER FORUM	To engage Students and Faculty on Gender Issues	Tubmanburg	Bomi County	1	20	77	2	99
21	March 24-25, 2015	Distribution of Cassava Processing Mill	To distributed Printed Copies of Cassava Processing Mill	Lugbeye	Nimba	2	13	18	2	33
22	February 28 – March 31	CPG and CPOP Tracking Sheet	Tracking Economics Beneficiaries	Upper Nimba and Southern Nimba	Nimba	15	52	71	0	123
23	February 2015	National Policy Briefs	Forest Resource Rights in an involving Policy environment	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	3	4	6	13
24	February 2015	National Policy Briefs	Customary Land Governance (Option for Community Forest)	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	5	8	4	17
25	February 2015	National Policy Briefs	Protected Areas Expansion: A Call for Restraint	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	4	8	8	20
26	March 8, 2015	IWD Presentation	The Roles of Women in Community Forest Management in PROSPER site Northern Nimba.	Sanniquellie City Hall	Sanniquell ie	1	30	4	3	37
27	March 8, 2015	IWD Presentation	The Role of Women in Community Forest Management in Grand Baassa County	Buchanan City Hall	Buchanan	1	33	7	2	42

28	March 2015	1.4.1 Presentations/ Policy briefs made to National Leadership	To Present Forest Resource Rights in an Involving Policy Environment	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	10	5	4	19
29	March 2015	1.4.1 Presentations/ Policy briefs made to National Leadership	To Present Customary Land Governance (Option for Community Forest)	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	12	6	6	24
30	March 2015	1.4.1 Presentations/ Policy briefs made to National Leadership	To Present Policy on Protected Areas Expansion: A Call for restraint	USAID-PROSPER HQ 19 th Street, Sinkor Payne Avenue, Monrovia	Monrovia	1	7	9	8	24
31	February 23, 2015	4.8.1-7 Agreement and Resolution reached in promoting the sustainable natural resource management	Resolution from the Emergency CFWG meeting held at the FDA Board Room, Recognizing and Endorsing Pilot Communities for the Establishment of Authorized Forest Communities	FDA Board Room	Monrovia	1	6	13	3	22
32	March 2015	4.8.1-7 Agreement and Resolution reached in promoting the sustainable natural resource management	Joint Resolution By and Between the People of Bleewein of Barconnie Community and District #3A, Grand Bassa County and The people of Garwein of Hammersville Township Distric#3A, Grand Bassa County	Buchanan	Buchanan	1	20	26	3	49

APPENDIX 5: SNAPSHOTS



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SNAPSHOT

"Farmers Cost-Share for Oil Palm Enterprise Establishment linked to Biodiversity Conservation"



Some members of the oil palm farmers in Old Yourpea Town contributing their resources (in cash) for the purchase of a Freedom Mill.



The Freedom Mill operations and maintenance training conducted as the mill is introduced in the community.



Female farmers are practicing mechanical processing of palm fruits during the operational training.

Most farmers in Liberia are producing at subsistence levels. Liberia's poor infrastructure and access to agricultural inputs to increase productivity contribute to this situation. As a result, most value-added agricultural production in the hinterland of Liberia has been supported by donors. In fact, it is not uncommon for a donor to provide 100% of the inputs for a project without any community contribution. This cycle is beginning to change.

In an ongoing effort by USAID PROSPER to help communities manage their forest and forest resources sustainably through derived livelihood activities linked to reducing threats to biodiversity, communities have formed four oil palm farmers' groups in the communities of Toweh Town, Beatuo, Old Yourpea Town and Behwallay, which are all situated around the Big Gio Forest in southern Nimba County. These farmers' groups, in a demonstration of their commitment to increasing their own productivity are contributing their own resources for the purchase of their own Freedom Mills (oil palm press) at the cost of about US\$ 1,000 per mill. By January 2015, the four groups had raised US\$ 1,200 (US\$300 each) amounting to 30% of the total cost of four Freedom Mills and requested PROSPER's support for the remaining balance. In early February of this year, four Freedom Mills were introduced in the four communities and training was provided by the manufacturer of the machines for each group of small holder palm farmers in Good Operations Practices (GOPs).

This initiative by the four farmer groups to contribute their own resources in the amount of US\$1,200 is a first for PROSPER-supported activities and expresses a gradual shift from donor dependency, where farmers would wait for a donor to contribute all the resources required in establishing an agriculture-based enterprise. It also illustrates the farmers' understanding and adoption of the "Farming as a Business" concept advanced by PROSPER. When farmers process their palm fruits mechanically it reduces the amount of labor and time, while increasing the total amount of oil a small holder can process from her/his palm farm. By shifting the source of cash income from agriculture based on shifting cultivation, which has been identified as one of the major threats to biodiversity in forested areas, to income derived from permanent oil palm small holder agriculture, farmers contribute to PROSPER's overarching goal of reducing threats to biodiversity.

Processing of oilpalm is now underway. Mr. Daniel Gbemie, a member of the Old Yourpea Town Oil Palm Farmers' Groups said: *"With the machine it took us less than an hour to process one drum of palm fruits while obtaining 7.5 gallons of oil compared to 1-2 days to process one drum using the traditional method and obtaining between 4-5 gallons."* He further stated that he expects all the abandoned oil palm farms will be brought back to full production as a result of the presence of the Freedom Mill and that palm oil production may now be an attractive alternative to rice farming.



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SNAPSHOT

“Harmonizing Community Interests: A Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Objective”



Members from the proposed USAID-PROSPER supported Kpogblen Community during a Harmonization Meeting



Representative Siaway addressing the Kpogblen Community during the Harmonization Meeting

In April 2014, the Liberian Forestry Development Authority’s Board of Trustees (FDA Board) agreed to lift a long-standing moratorium on the creation of Community Forest Management Agreements (CFMA). The creation of CFMA’s is a right guaranteed to the people of Liberia through the Community Rights Law of 2009. Following the action of the FDA Board, over one hundred applications from interested communities throughout Liberia applied for Authorized Community Forest status. In support of the FDA, USAID-PROSPER has been piloting eight applicant communities in Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties, helping guide them through the 9-step process of achieving Community Forest status. A major challenge that has presented itself is ensuring that the applicant communities are aware of the process and agree with each other regarding the boundaries and objectives of their proposed Community Forest. During a recent vetting of applications, it was discovered that two different applications had been submitted from the same community of Kpogblen of District 4 in Grand Bassa County, which is also one of the PROSPER pilot communities.

In an effort to support community participation in sustainable forest management activities in Liberia, USAID-PROSPER has supported a series of stakeholder meetings to explore and address what caused two different applications with different intents from the same community. The purpose of this engagement was to harmonize the interests of the 18 villages surrounding the Martro and Kortro forests, which comprise the Kpogblen Community, and to help them come to an agreement on the sustainable management of their forests. It was discovered during the process that several of the 18 villages had interpreted the intent of establishing a Community Forest differently from the others. While most preferred a conservation-based approach to managing the forests, others had envisioned the land being used for concessions. On 9 January 2015, in an effort to create better awareness of the Community Forest process and resolve any ongoing conflict in Kpogblen Community, USAID-PROSPER facilitated a “Harmonization Meeting” which included the 18 communities, the FDA’s Deputy Managing Director for Operations (DMDO), the Community Forestry Technical Manager, and Representative Robertson Siaway of District 4. The FDA and the Rep. Siaway explained that the development of a Community Forest and a resolution to the conflict required complete transparency of the process and a “One Voice, One Community” consensus as to how the Kpogblen Community desired to manage their Community Forest resources. In the event that a consensus could not be reached, it was made clear to the community that the FDA would not support or approve the development of a Community Forest. The daylong event, which was the culmination of months of negotiations and discussions, supported by USAID-PROSPER, ended with the community withdrawing the original two applications and drafting a new application reflecting “One Voice, One Community” for the proposed Kpogblen Community Forest. Representative Siaway concluded the event with a local parable that held true to the occasion: *The gathering of many turtles in the forest is a sign of resolution to come.*

The Kpogblen Community is currently proceeding through the 9-step process to become an Authorized Community Forest and looks forward to signing a Community Forest Management Agreement with the FDA within the next year, which will allow them to govern and control their own natural resources in the Martro and Kortro Forests in District 4, Grand Bassa Country.

Telling Our Story
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