



PUBLIC SUMMARY REPORT NEW PLANTINGS ASSESSMENT

SIME DARBY (LIBERIA) PLANTATION Inc

**Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties,
Republic of Liberia**

Report Author

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1.0 Executive Summary

Sime Darby (Liberia) Plantation Inc. (Sime Darby) plans to develop 10,000 ha of land to oil palm at Bomi County and Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia. This development is a new planting that started in 2009 with reconnaissance fieldwork. A Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) and a High Conservation Value (HCV) Assessment were completed in 2011 which recognised the following:

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

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

Abbreviations Used

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

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

2.1 SEIA and HCV Reports

“Social and Environmental Impact Assessment for 10,000 ha of Sime Darby Plantation”, prepared by Green Consultancy Inc, Liberia.

“Assessment of HCV sites within Sime Plantations Liberia Inc.” prepared by Dr Yap Son Kheong, S.K. Yap Forestry and Landscape Advisory Services, Malaysia

2.2 Legal Documents

Environmental Permit No: EPA/EC/ESIA/001-0410, Issue Date 21/04/2010, EPA Liberia.

Evidence of Land Tenure: Lease of land issued by Government of Liberia in April 2009 for a period of

63 years with an option of renewal for 30 years; Maps and Boundary Markers.

2.3 Location Maps

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

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

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

The area of the new plantings is 10,000 ha. The new development will commence following the completion of the RSPO public notification period for review by stakeholders and is planned for completion within two years of the commencement date.

3.0 SEIA AND HCV MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING PERSONNEL

3.1 Organisational Information and Contact Persons

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

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

3.2 Personnel Involved in Planning and Implementation

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

The assessment of HCV sites was led by Dr. S.K.Yap with the assistance of a team of biologist, forester, social scientist and GIS scientist:

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

Project Location



Figure 1: Project Location

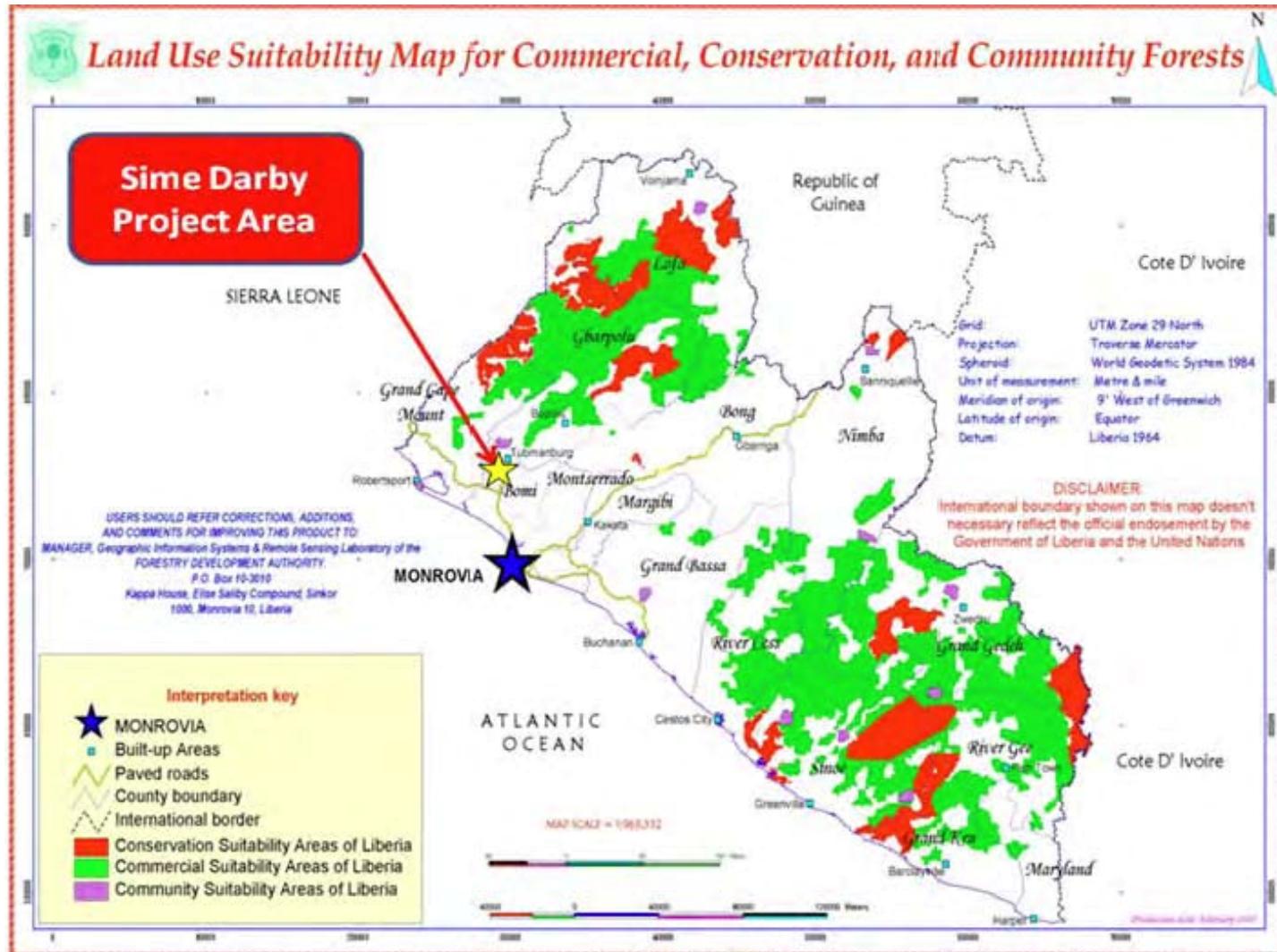


Figure 2: Landscape Level

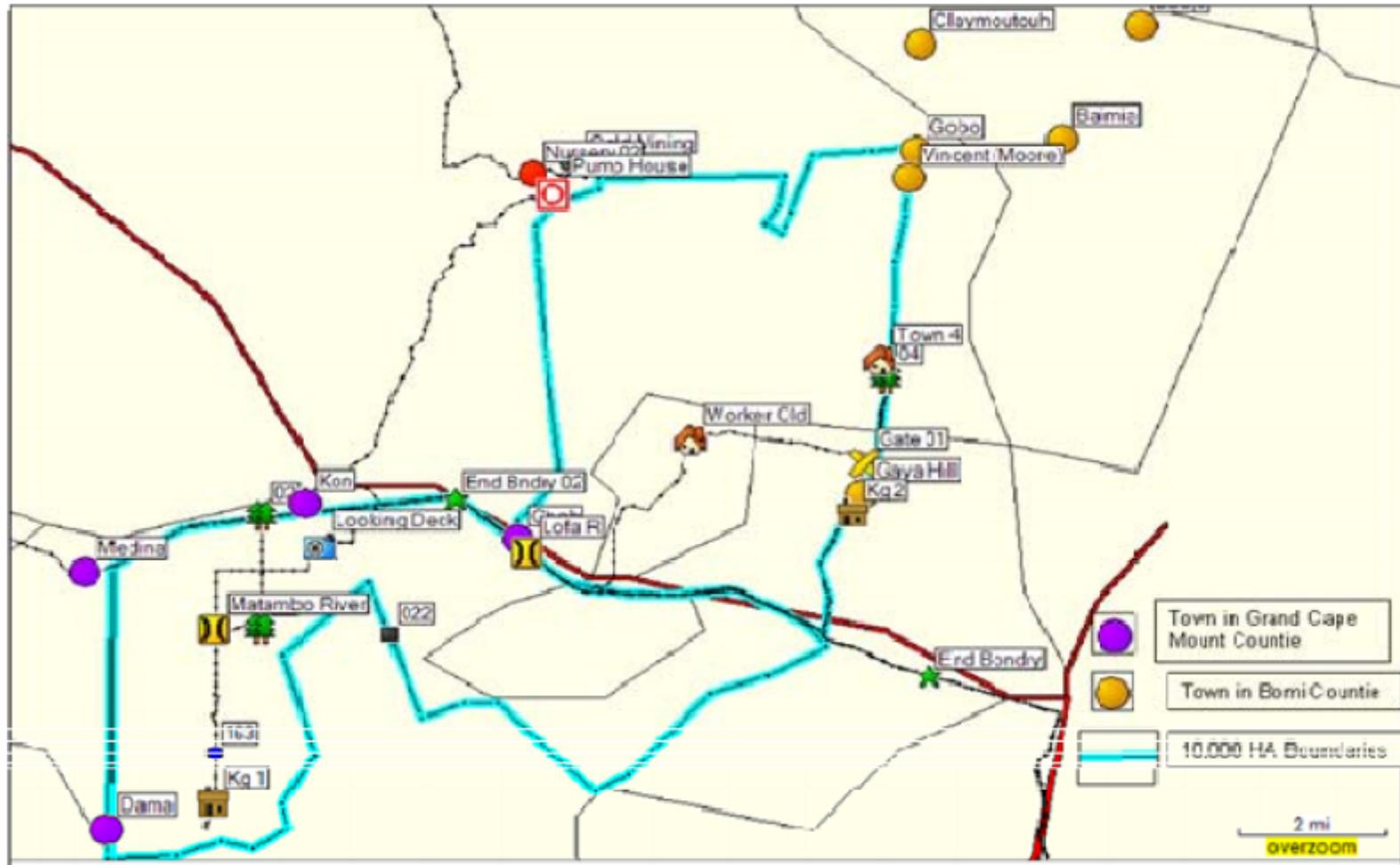


Figure 3: Location of Towns and Settlements with HCV 5 and HCV 6 Attributes

3.3 Stakeholders Consulted

Government Departments

Environmental Protection Agency
Ministry of Agriculture
Forestry Department Authority
Grand Cape Mount County
Bomi County

Public Meetings at Local Communities:

Grand Cape Mount County

Sinje	Vonzuahn
Dama	Madina
Kon	Moore
Gbar	

Bomi County

Gaya Hill	Zarmeyan
Gbasomoe	Baaja
Beafinie	Gobo
Vincent	Bala
Claymotuah	

4a SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION PLANS (SEIA)

The SEIA was completed in February 2010. The SEIA firstly collected baseline information on the bio-physical characteristics of the new development area, using data from existing sources where possible on climate, topography, soils, drainage, vegetation, fauna and land-use. The information from existing sources was supplemented with data collected by fieldwork.

The SEIA considered the environmental impact of land development, such as vegetation clearance and land disturbance for construction of roads, bridges, housing and the oil palm estate; water withdrawal for domestic water supply to housing and a palm nursery and the treatment and disposal of wastewater and solid wastes.

The environmental impact component of the SEIA considered the characteristics of the concession before development, including the topography, soils, drainage, vegetation and land use when evaluating the impacts. The SEIA considered the potential negative as well as the beneficial environmental impacts of the development and on the surrounding areas. The topography of the land is rolling to undulating. The dominant soils are lithosols, with surface deposits of laterite at some locations. The concession is drained by small streams that join the Lofa and Mahe Rivers that flow southwards.

Sime Darby will implement the SOP for New Development that is described in the Sime Darby Agricultural Reference Manual (2008), with the objective of achieving the same standard as its other operations in Malaysia and Indonesia. The Development Plan includes impact mitigation strategies such as the alignment of the road network in relation to the topography as well riparian buffer zones and protecting these from disturbance.

The Development Plan includes details of the soil conservation practices that will be implemented such as construction of planting platforms and terraces if necessary. Legume cover crop will be planted immediately following land clearing to establish groundcover vegetation. Sime Darby recognises that construction of roads is an important source of sediment erosion by rainfall runoff. To mitigate the erosion of sediment from roads, close attention will be paid to water management and road drainage. Roadside “turn-out” drains will be constructed at regular intervals related to the slope length for channelling rainfall runoff into the adjacent field. Sediment traps which will also serve as water infiltration pits, will be constructed approximately 15 m from stream crossings. The sediment traps will intercept the runoff and direct the water away from the stream. In addition, roads will be surfaced with laterite which is available from deposits within the concession, to form a durable, erosion resistant surface.

The Development Plan includes Sime Darby’s commitment to implement the zero burning policy that it has applied consistently at its operations in Malaysia and Indonesia. Land clearance will involve windrowing of vegetation along the palm inter-row. The implementation of zero burning will include training and awareness of the workforce and provision of appropriate fire-fighting equipment.

The SIA component of the SEIA commenced with a scoping study involving consultation with all of the communities that would be affected directly as well as indirectly by the development. Consultation involved public meetings at each of 16 communities. At the public meetings, Sime Darby representatives and the SEIA consultants described details of the proposed development and the changes that are likely to occur. The consultants recorded details of the meeting discussions, including concerns raised by local people as well as their aspirations such as the opportunity for employment and improved access to education and health services.

Records of the public meetings are held on file and a summary of each meeting and photographic record are included in an appendix of the SEIA Report. In addition to consulting with local communities, the consultants met with relevant Government Departments to discuss the oil palm development and the environmental and social impacts and impact mitigation strategies.

The SIA component of the SEIA took into account the requirements of Government and the feedback received from local communities on their concerns about the new oil palm development and their aspirations for improvements to their livelihoods. The information from the consultations has been used to develop impact mitigation strategies as well as to enhance beneficial outcomes for affected communities and people.

The oil palm development concession shares a border with an existing Rubber Plantation which employs a considerable number of local people. The land within the Sime Darby concession has been cleared and used extensively for shifting cultivation. Sime Darby will compensate people who currently reside within the concession with relocation to newly built housing as part of the compensation package.

Sime Darby will implement its SOPs for consultation and negotiation of compensation with local people. For situations where disputes arise, Sime Darby will apply the dispute resolution mechanism, consistent with its Social Policy. The dispute resolution mechanism will be communicated to affected parties through open discussions with the aim of reaching consensual agreement on the mechanism and lines of communication.

Sime Darby's dispute resolution mechanism involves talking with the affected parties with the aim of solving the issue through discussions. If resolution is not achieved through discussions, then Sime Darby will negotiate with the local peoples' representative institution of their choice. Sime Darby will keep records of all such discussions and meetings relating to dispute resolution. Provided that Sime Darby follows these procedures, the development is considered to be consistent with the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The Development Plan includes information on the housing accommodation that will be constructed for the resident workforce. Permanent houses will be built and supplied with water, electricity and sanitation services. Resident workers and their families will have access to facilities for health,

recreation and places of worship. The Plan includes information on the company's programs for training and occupational health and safety for developing a skilled workforce and a safe workplace.

The Environment Protection Agency of Liberia approved the SEIA and issued an Environmental Permit on 21 April 2010 for development of the 10,000 ha of land to oil palm.

4b SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION PLANS (HCV)

In the absence of a HCV Toolkit for Liberia, which has to be developed through a series of consultative processes with local data, classification and expert opinion, the generic Proforest HCV Tool Kit was adapted for the present study.

The Assessment did not identify any primary forest at the concession or any protected species of vegetation. From the assessment it was noted that the proposed site had been cleared of the natural vegetation for the previous rubber planting, as well as the many areas of shifting cultivation conducted by the local communities. Secondary vegetation had covered the area owing to the absence of maintenance during the country period of civil unrest.

From the assessment of the 10,000 ha of the proposed oil palm plantations it was observed that there was low biodiversity in both flora and fauna owing to the clearing of the natural forests during the previous plantation establishment as well as the many sites of slash and burn cultivation for cassava and corn conducted by the local communities. There were no sites with significant HCV attributes except for the riparian buffer belts (HCV 4.2) and the towns within the project sites (HCV 5 and HCV 6).

There were demonstrated efforts to protect of the waterways with well defined riparian buffer belts (HCV 4.2). These waterways were of importance to the local communities as source of water as well as transport system. The many towns within and around the project area had been identified and consultations held with the inhabitants during the assessment. The planted sites around these communities would be excluded from the plantation activities and protected under HCV 5. Sites of religious significance had also been identified and demarcated for protection under HCV 6.

The majority of the concession has been used for shifting cultivation and is covered by pioneer species and secondary regrowth. Remnant secondary forest occurs along the Lofa and Mahe Rivers. Inspection of a satellite image of the area indicated land use consistent with disturbance by shifting cultivation and remnant forest along the main river.

The assessment did not identify within the concession any rare, threatened or endangered species of fauna that are listed by IUCN or CITES. However three species of mammal that are protected under Liberian law, such as Water Chevrotain, locally known as “Water Deer”, Black Duiker – (*Cephalophus niger*), Royal antelope, locally known as “Foolish Deer”, were identified at the secondary forested habitat along the Lofa and Mahe Rivers. The low-lying floodplain along the river that forms a border with the concession will not be developed, but will be set aside as a riparian buffer zone and will be protected from disturbance.

The assessment includes the identification of all surface water resources within the concession and recommendations for the establishment of buffer zones and the measures to be taken to protect and maintain the quality of the surface water and riparian vegetation.

The assessment did not identify any HCVs at areas near the concession. A Rubber Plantation shares the south-east boundary with the concession and the surrounding land hosts the 16 villages whose inhabitants use the area for land-extensive shifting cultivation.

A map is available showing the buffer zone adjacent to the Lofa River that will be set aside and protected from disturbance. The area of land that will be set aside from development is approximately 500 ha.

The main objective of monitoring is to determine whether HCV management objectives are met as well as providing the management with up-to-date information on the HCV under its care. This allows intervention or ongoing adjustment of operation plans. Monitoring plans are derived from management objectives and written into the management plan.

Data gathered during the HCV assessment are used to determine what should be the generic and specific objectives of the monitoring program. A set of measurable indicators for each key value is to be developed. Monitoring activities can include social and biological surveys and direct and indirect observation.

The Results from the SEIA and HCV assessments have been incorporated into planning and management for the new plantings and related development that:

- is based on the free, prior and informed consent of local peoples whose lands are affected;
- provides for the maintenance or enhancement of all identified HCVs.

5.0 INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY

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



Mr Azmi Jaafar
Head, Liberia Project

Date: 16 MAY 2011

Signed for on behalf of:
BSi Group Singapore Pte Ltd



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Charlie Ross
Lead Auditor

Date: 16 May 2011