

OSRO/LIR/903/SWE

“Emergency assistance for the food production and income generation of 5 000 urban and peri-urban inhabitants vulnerable to soaring food prices in 5 counties”

OCTOBER 18TH to November 3RD 2010



Project Evaluation Report

By Axel Drescher

February 2011

Table of Contents

Table of Figures	iii
Table of Tables.....	iii
List of Acronyms.....	iv
Executive Summary	1
1. Presentation of the project.....	4
1.1 Context of the project.....	4
1.2 Strategies of the project	4
2. Evaluation features.....	5
2.1 Objectives	5
2.2 Methodology: approach, sampling, tools	5
2.3 Key questions	6
2.4 Constraints to evaluability	6
3. Evaluation findings.....	6
3.1 Project design: relevance and appropriateness.....	6
3.2 Project implementation, efficiency and management.....	11
3.3 Effectiveness of the project	16
3.4 Potential impact, programme approach and perspectives of sustainability	20
3.5 Perspectives of sustainability	21
4. Conclusions and Recommendations	22
4.1 Project design and duration.....	24
4.2 Vulnerability and targeting of communities	24
4.3 Site selection.....	27
4.4 Impact of free hand-outs on communities.....	29
4.5 Gender.....	29
4.6 Seed selection	32
ANNEXES.....	33
A Terms of Reference	34
B Field Mission Itinerary	47
C Field Debriefing Notes from the team leader Axel Drescher.....	50
D Interview/Discussion Guidelines	56
E List of Contacts.....	57

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Crop performance Analysis	12
Figure 2: Percentage increase in food production from previous years.....	18
Figure 3: Income earned from sale of produce (expressed in Liberian Dollars)	19
Figure 4: Watering Cans and nurseries of a periurban farmer group in Montserrado County	23
Figure 5: Compost making was one of the most important training components of the project and very well received by the beneficiaries.....	23
Figure 6: Farming Community in Bong County	25
Figure 7: Large families often depend on one active person to feed them. In this case of Montserrado County (periurban Monrovia).	25
Figure 8: The use of open source GIS software in the EU-UPA project for mapping urban agriculture in Monrovia	27
Figure 9: Intra-urban micro-farming supported by the EU-UPA project with the German Agro Action (GAA) and CARE International.	28
Figure 10: Urban Agriculture; smallest space is used intensively for production	28
Figure 11: Successful female farmer in the periurban area of Monrovia. Her origin is from Lofa County and she came in 2002 to Monrovia. From the SIDA project she managed to buy roof sheets for her house, she increased the planting area and she could even hire workers to assist in clearing the field. She is on her best way to become a commercial farmer.	30
Figure 12: Large areas have been cleared for market oriented vegetable production.....	30
Figure 13: Farm size by gender.....	31
Figure 14: Production increased by gender	31
Figure 15: Sales increased by gender	32

Table of Tables

Table 1: Results of the training workshop evaluation carried out by the project based on the evaluation of one TOT workshop.....	14
Table 2: Progress against logical framework	16
Table 3: Beneficiaries according to counties.....	20

List of Acronyms

BADU	Bettie's Agriculture & Development Union
BUCCOBC	Buchanan Chill Community based Care
CAC	County Agriculture Coordinator
CARI	Central Agricultural Research Institute
EU-FF	European Union Food Facility Project
EU – UPA	European Union – Urban and peri-urban agriculture Project
ERCU	Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit
HDF	Human Development Foundation
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPM	Integrated Plant and Pest Management
IPs	Implementing Partners
LISGIS	Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
RADIO	Recovery Development Initiative
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TNA	Training needs assessment
UPA	Urban and peri-urban agriculture
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WOCHIDO	Women & Children Development Organization

Executive Summary

1. Project OSRO/LIR/903/SWE was funded by the Swedish Government and implemented between May 2009 and June 2010, with a budget of 522,229 USD, by the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit of FAO in Monrovia. The FAO Emergency Operations Service (TCEO) in headquarters was the project budget holder and operating unit, the Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service (AGPS) the Leading Technical Unit (LTU). The Agriculture Coordinator for Montserrado County was appointed as the focal person within the MoA to supervise the project's implementation. Nine NGOs were engaged in the project's implementation (both inputs distribution and training) in the original five targeted counties, while in Gbarpolu the project was jointly implemented by FAO, the MoA and the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD). In spite of the very limited time frame and budget of the project, it went far beyond emergency, especially by providing training to trainers (ToT) and farmers (ToF). While it is eventually pretentious to expect sustainability from giving hand-outs (seeds and watering cans) to communities, the training component achieved in fact sustained success among the beneficiaries.

2. The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the government's efforts in mitigating the impact of soaring food prices in Liberia through support to food production and income generation in urban and peri-urban areas. In that respect, the project has performed very well in peri-urban areas but not in "intra-urban areas": the project indeed majorly focused on peri-urban and peri-rural areas while neglecting the purely urban areas mainly located in the Capital city of Monrovia or in larger urban centres like Tubmanburg and Gbarnga.

3. The project's specific objective 1, to increase food production through provision of production inputs and promotion of best practices in secure and productive vegetable gardening, has been reached by and large. Nearly 100% of beneficiaries have increased food production through the project.

4. The specific objective 2, to improve the nutritional status of households with poor consumption and diet diversification due to high cost of food, is difficult to validate because no nutrition survey was carried out systematically. The objective to diversify vegetable production and household consumption has been reached.

5. Specific objective 3, to increase income generation for 5 000 households through the sale of surplus produce, has been reached for the majority of farmers involved in the project. The income earned by selling vegetables on the market varies a lot, depending on the size of the plots, proximity to markets and infrastructure. Nearly 50% from the representative sample of farmers earned small amounts of Liberian Dollars (less than 5 000 LD¹), while about 30% earned between 6 000 and 30 000 LD. Overall about 80% of the farmers have an increase of income earned through the sale of produce enabled by the project compared to the baseline study.

6. Based on its assessment and conclusion, the evaluation offers the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: As a general recommendation, the evaluations suggests to:

- invite local participation e.g. for identification of suitable beneficiaries, to help strengthen the commitment and support of the communities as well as social cohesion;
- improve market access, not only to established markets but also in the creation of new market opportunities (e.g. in form of farmer markets, road site markets etc.);
- improve storage facilities, post-harvest handling and to include value adding activities and related training.

Recommendation 2: Being aware of the very limited time frame, it appears anyhow important to avoid tensions and unrealistic expectations in the communities. Three

¹ 5000 Liberian Dollars are equivalent to about 75 US Dollars.

approaches could help make the selection of stakeholders more appropriate and eventually avoid tensions:

- i) Using a standardized vulnerability analysis approach, carried out by an independent consultant and not by the Implementing Partners.
- ii) Strictly reduce free hand-outs to the most vulnerable households.
- iii) Ensure appropriate communication within the communities regarding their rationale of the selection process and targeting choices, makes the selection of beneficiaries more transparent to the local population can help avoid social tensions

Recommendation 3: Make use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as an appropriate means to locate farmers and farmer groups, to help avoid duplications of efforts as well as to identify other farmer groups in need². Good start is made in FAO Liberia now taking the GPS points of the project sites. A next step of introducing these GPS points into a Geographic Information System is strongly recommended.

Recommendation 4: For future projects an initial survey is needed to identify the “intra-urban” farmers and their farming potential and needs. This would require a systematic stock-taking of existing urban farming systems (in Monrovia for example the urban lowlands), identification of key players, identification of other suitable farming sites and open spaces SWOT analysis of urban farmers, as well as existing policy frameworks and activities by state- and non-state actors. The FAO Food for the Cities (FFC) in the Headquarters has a lot of experience with intra-urban agriculture.

Recommendation 5: Recommendation 1, in section 4.2. on community targeting suggests to reduce free hand-outs to a minimum. In those cases when nevertheless items are distributed for free, distributions should not be done once only but at least twice for those who are in need - and this could apply to all emergency projects. A second round would allow farmers to continue training programmes, learn from best practices and draw consequences from own failures during the first distribution. A second round would also allow the implementing organisations involved to learn from experience and modify implementation methods. It has to be emphasized that the distribution of inputs essentially has to come along with capacity building measures. Capacity building needs time and continuous follow-up in order to ensure sustainability.

Recommendation 6: Gender need to be given more attention, not only in the project management and design but also, more importantly, in the field. It is recommended to work more closely with UNIFEM for example. Projects need a “watchdog” regarding some of the approaches. Here the employment of more female extension officers is required. Further disaggregation and proper analysis should be done using local knowledge. The discrimination of women in the communities needs to be addressed by the field workers.

Recommendation 7: For future projects it is recommended to move beyond seed distribution and to strengthen local seed production and preservation through involvement of local farmers and by supporting seed storage facilities. With respect to vegetable seed production closer collaboration with CARI and the WFP School Garden Program should be intended. It also appears important to make more use of the indigenous vegetables, e.g. fever leave, careless green and a local variety of eggplant, where leaves and fruits are eaten and which are preferred by the local people. Seeds of the local varieties are easy to propagate. Those traditional vegetables are an integrated part of the diet of many farmers

² In a long term, a GIS could also be linked to other organizations in order to better monitor different activities on the ground.

already and they are known to have higher micro-nutrient content as many „exotic” vegetables.³

This report gives a general overview on the project activities of the OSRO/LIR/903/SWE project, followed by key findings of the evaluation and corresponding recommendations.

The evaluator is grateful for the continuous support by the FAO Emergency Unit in Liberia and the FAO Evaluation Unit in Rome.

³ It is recommended to have a look at the publication: Shackleton, Pasquini and Drescher: African Indigenous Vegetables in Urban Agriculture, Earth Scan, 2009, also available at Google Books.

1. Presentation of the project

1.1 Context of the project

7. Since the signing of the peace accord in 2003, there has been a large influx of returning refugees and IDPs in the urban and peri-urban areas of Liberia. The increasing demographic pressure in areas with limited absorption capacity requires appropriate and effective responses. Before the war, the urban Liberian population relied heavily on market gardening for household nutrition and income generation. Market gardening is particularly beneficial in urban and peri-urban areas due to a smaller surface requirement and short vegetative cycles thus providing quick outputs. However after the civil war, a significant number of peri-urban households became net buyers of vegetables and poultry products due to lack of resources to rejuvenate their gardens and resume backyard poultry.

8. According to the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition (CFSN) Survey 2006⁴, only 7% of households in Monrovia had a vegetable garden, while in rural areas, every second household reported to have one. Likewise, only 20% households in Greater Monrovia owned chickens compared to 47% in the rural sample.

9. FAO's response strategy is mainly focused on three objectives: i) ensure uninterrupted supply of food and mitigate the impacts of soaring food prices; ii) maintain access to food and improved nutritional wellbeing for vulnerable populations and; iii) promote rapid domestic food production.

10. Given the strategy on soaring food prices, the government of Liberia with donor support seeks to rapidly support increased food production by Liberian farmers; so that domestic produce becomes increasingly available on the Liberian market. The project initially planned to assist 5 000 households in 5 counties. Based on the results of a rapid needs assessment following the opening of a major link road, the project was extended to Gbarpolu County to benefit 3 women groups engaged in the production and marketing of vegetables.

11. Project OSRO/LIR/903/SWE, funded by SIDA, was implemented between May 2009 and June 2010, with a budget of 522,229 USD, by the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit of FAO in Monrovia. The FAO Emergency Operations Service (TCEO) in HQ was the project's budget holder and operating unit, the Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service (AGPS) the Leading Technical Unit (LTU). The Agriculture Coordinator for Montserrado County was appointed as the focal person within the MoA to supervise the project's implementation. Nine NGOs were engaged in the project's implementation (both inputs distribution and training) in the original five targeted counties, while in Gbarpolu the project was jointly implemented by FAO, the MoA, and the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD).

1.2 Strategies of the project

12. The project's Specific Objectives were:

- To increase food production through provision of production inputs and promotion of best practices in secure and productive vegetable gardening;
- To improve the nutritional status of households with poor consumption and diet diversification due to high cost of food;
- To increase income generation for 5 000 households through the sale of surplus produce.

⁴ Republic of Liberia (2006): Comprehensive Nutrition and Food Security Survey (CFNSF)

13. The project planned to distribute four input packages according to the crop preferences of beneficiary farmers. Sweet potato vines and high germination seed varieties including legumes (groundnut and cowpeas) and vegetables (hot pepper, onion, collard, okra, tomato and bitter ball) benefitted a total of 5 154 households in six counties. Over 41% of the beneficiary households were headed by women. Training in secure market gardening were designed to directly benefit thirty three master trainers including fifteen staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and subsequently 1 250 farmers (twenty five percent of the total caseload).

14. In addition to increasing the availability of food for household consumption, project beneficiaries were to produce a sufficient surplus to sell their produce and generate income. Particular emphasis was laid to support the food production and income generation of the recent returnees, women headed households, organized community farming groups and women-based vegetable production and marketing groups.

15. The project aimed to target food insecure and vulnerable urban and peri-urban households, who had access to land but either needed external assistance to resume market gardening or remained largely dependent on markets for their food consumption. In addition, the project also planned to benefit some of those households who, no matter the land they owned, had been significantly affected by soaring food prices.

2. Evaluation features

2.1 Objectives

16. The Evaluation provides accountability to the Government of Liberia, FAO staff and SIDA, on the project's achievements, as well as the relevance and the efficiency of the approach used. The Evaluation also formulates recommendations and draws general lessons relevant for FAO's response to emergencies.

2.2 Methodology: approach, sampling, tools

17. The general approach of the evaluation was open-minded and participatory. Sharing of information and experiences from other projects and project evaluations was practiced as much as possible with FAO staff and stakeholders.

18. A range of tools was used, including:

- interviews with FAO staff backstopping the project in HQ
- consultation of existing project's reports and documents
- interviews with key stakeholders in Liberia, including: FAO staff, relevant Government agents, NGO implementing partners, UN agencies and other partners involved in humanitarian assistance and food aid
- semi-structured interviews (using a check list/questionnaire) in a sample of villages and to households which benefited from the project assistance
- semi-structured interviews (using a check list/questionnaire) to households which did not benefit from the project assistance, to identify any potential impact;

19. During the evaluation mission 4 counties were visited and a total number of about 35 semi structured interviews and focus group discussions were carried out. The interviewees included government officials, FAO staff and farmer groups in the different counties as well as SIDA officials and the EU Delegation in Liberia. The data collected are of qualitative nature, which derives from the character of group discussions and the limited and not representative number of beneficiaries interviewed.

20. The findings of this evaluation are based on a synthesis of interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs) and participant observation in comparison with the results presented in the OSRO/LIR/903/SWE-Narrative-Terminal Report July 2010 and the project objectives. This report is based on interviews with 150 randomly selected beneficiaries of the project.

2.3 Key questions

21. The key questions aimed towards the clarification the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the project:

- Was the project design needs-oriented?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of this project during implementation?
- Did the project deliver what it intended?
- Were the right groups and sites included?
- What are the lessons to learn from the project?

2.4 Constraints to evaluability

22. Generally there were no serious constraints during the evaluation process. However, difficult weather condition in combination with the bad condition of roads restricted the mobility. The consultant was provided an equal opportunity to interact with a range of beneficiaries including those experiencing very promising results to ones who were able to make only marginal gains from the project. In more remote areas, language barriers posed serious challenges where focus group discussions were facilitated mainly by local interpreters. It was expected to dedicate more time to the urban farming communities towards the end of the mission which was not possible because these farmers had not been adequately included in the project.

3. Evaluation findings

3.1 Project design: relevance and appropriateness

3.1.1 Relevance of objectives to needs

23. Liberia is a least-developed, low-income and food-deficit country. Extreme poverty – inability to meet the cost of food providing 2,400 kcal/person/day - affects 56 percent of the rural population and 29 percent of the urban population⁵.

⁵ Republic of Liberia 2007: Greater Monrovia Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS), Monrovia, July 2007 commissioned by the Ministry for Planning and Economic Affairs and carried by various organization including FAO, WFP, UNICEF and WHO

24. The trend to rapid urbanization continues, since many returnees from neighbouring countries prefer to settle in Greater Monrovia instead of returning to their original home counties. The preliminary results of the 2008 national population and housing census in Liberia revealed that over one third of the country's 3,49 Mio. inhabitants live in Greater Monrovia. The annual urban population growth of 4.5% is higher than the national population growth rate of 2.1%. Montserrado County, which hosts the capital Monrovia, is very densely populated with over 1,500 persons per square mile.

25. Today, households in Greater Monrovia are heavily reliant on imported food. The global rise of food prices impacts strongly on Liberia, especially the poor urban population. Rice and cassava are the main staple food crops in Liberia and more than 60 % of the consumed rice in Liberia is imported. Vegetables, fruits and animal products are scarce and the enrichment of the daily diet is a major goal to combat the malnourishment of large parts of the population. According to the Greater Monrovia Food and Nutrition Survey (2007)⁵, 14% of households in Greater Monrovia are food insecure and 16% are vulnerable to food insecurity, this adds up to one third of the population.

26. Food security data on Tubmanburg, another urban centre, are not available, but at County level (Bomi), it is alarming that households spend on average 79% of their expenditures on food (n=367), 43% of children under the age of 5 are stunted, and 54% of the population is highly at risk of food insecurity.⁶

27. The effect of rapid rises in food prices are felt more keenly in urban centres, in particular in Greater Monrovia, and has immediate political ramifications. The consumer price index increased by 14 percent between January 2007 and January 2008, and the cost of a typical food basket increased by 25 percent over that period. Given that half of the urban population's income is spent on food, the situation of the poorest urban families has seriously deteriorated. Local rice dominates consumption of rural households, whereas imported rice dominates in urban areas. Rice prices thus have particular resonance especially amongst urban households⁷. The urban population has a greater dependency on purchasing food from markets and is more dependent on a cash-economy while at the same time having less opportunities for own food production.

28. While rice is the most important food import, it is not the only food imported into Liberia. Of note are pulses, groundnuts and condiments imported from Liberia's neighbours, in particular Guinea. The Government of Liberia has formulated a strategy aiming at i) ensuring adequate supply of rice into the Country, ii) increasing food production iii) protecting vulnerable groups. Some priority actions include the reintroduction of school feeding in Greater Monrovia (with support from the World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO, expansion of nutrition interventions and cash/food employment project for vulnerable urban youth.⁸

29. Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) can play a beneficial role by providing an opportunity to integrate unemployed and resourceless migrants and IDPs into productive activities. A large proportion of the urban population is living in slums. Their survival often depends on emergency initiatives and food distribution. In this context, UPA activities can be an alternative or a complementary strategy to reduce their dependency on food aid and allow these urban squatters to practice agriculture activities to partially complement their diet and

6 Republic of Liberia (2006) Comprehensive Nutrition and Food Security Survey (CFNSF) commissioned by the Minister for Planning and Economic Affairs and carried by various organizations Department for International Development, FAO, WHO UNICEF), WFP, and others.

7 Republic of Liberia Government and UN Joint Programme on Food Security & Nutrition Republic of Liberia (2008) http://www.moa.gov.lr/doc/GOL_UN%20Joint%20Program%20on%20FSN_June08.pdf

8 Republic of Liberia (2008) The impact of high prices on food security in Liberia. Joint Assessment by Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geographic Information Systems (LISGIS), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the World Food Programme (WFP), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Concern, Danish Refugee Council, German Agro Action and Save the Children UK.

provide a minimum of cash income. At the same time, their involvement in productive activities will help to contain urban violence and social deviance, in a way that people are committed to these activities for improving their access to food and generating income (FAO/WB 2008).⁹

30. The strategy followed by project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE, focusing its efforts on supporting urban and peri-urban farming to mitigate the negative effects of high food prices is therefore in good adequacy with current country needs.

3.1.2 Appropriateness of project strategy

31. The project was implemented under the previous coordination arrangements, where a focal person was designated by MoA for each agriculture-related project. There are obvious downsides of such arrangements including the higher dependency on the focal persons to provide timely updates to higher level management within the Ministry. The focal person who, in the case of project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE, was the County Agriculture Coordinator (CAC) of Montserrado County, failed to coordinate project's activities within the Ministry.

32. To improve intra ministry coordination, the MoA has now, within the FAO/ European Union Food Facility (EU-FF) project, established a programme coordination unit, responsible for the coordination of all food security interventions. While noticeable improvements have been made, the coordination unit remains seriously understaffed, which undermines the unit's ability to provide timely support and oversight to development partners.

33. There is evidence that the MoA has been actively involved in the project's planning and implementation including the identification and selection of implementing partners, inception planning with IPs, inputs and training needs assessment, designing and imparting project trainings and field monitoring. The extension of project activities to Gbarpolu County was well coordinated with the Ministry of Gender Development at the Central and County Level and the Ministry of Agriculture at the County Level. The additional beneficiaries were however excluded from the training programme due to lack of resources.

34. With respect to the choice of types and varieties of planting material, the selection was based on the dietary preference and cropping possibilities. High risk inputs such as tomato and onion were only offered to a limited number of beneficiaries which is a prudent strategy.

35. The inclusion of groundnuts in particular was appropriate even though the seed productivity was undermined by issues at the implementation level.³⁶ The absence of tools was among the main production constraints mentioned by the beneficiaries. It was however noted that the absence of tools did not significantly undermine the beneficiaries' ability to utilize the inputs.

36. Some beneficiaries held a portion of seeds in stocks for mainly two reasons; a) planting in the following season and; b) testing the quality of seeds as a risk aversion strategy. Due to disruption of continuity in adaptive research resulting from war and lack of credible information on locally adoptable seed varieties there are obvious risks involved with the selection of appropriate varieties. The process is further compounded by the absence of seed certification in the country. The locally available seed is mainly imported from neighbouring countries from unknown sources. It is for this reason that varietal purity of some varieties cannot be ascertained. The choice of "Clemson Spineless" variety is vindicated by high production of okra. The inclusion of cabbage is also well matched with dietary needs

⁹ World Bank/FAO (2008): Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. A Concept Note on Urban Agriculture.

and income generating potential. Cabbage seeds are among the most expensive vegetable seeds in the market commanding as high as US \$ 25/10gram sachet. Direct procurement of sweet potato vines from farmer groups / cooperatives allowed a direct injection of capital in local agriculture based economy. This approach needs up scaling with the possible inclusion of other locally grown vegetables and leafy crops.

37. With respect to geographic targeting, the project had a major focus on peri-urban and peri-rural¹⁰ areas while neglecting the purely urban areas which are mainly located in the Capital city of Monrovia or larger urban centres like Tubmanburg or Gbarnga (see Chapter 3.2). According to the project design, the urban areas should have been included as project sites, which the author would have found appropriate. The reasons here fore are explained in Chapter 4.3.

38. The evaluator found the training programme to be well structured and needs based - albeit with ample scope for up scaling. Targeting households and communities is a good means to multiplication. The direct involvement of MoA and the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) in the development of training material has led to some form of standardization. The cascading of training from FAO to MoA/IPs and beneficiaries is rather effective and also a good strategy for building ownership over the training programme. This is a good step towards sustainability. But even better results can be achieved by encouraging farmer-to-farmer exchange of knowledge through demonstration and support to community activists. There should be a greater focus on women in the training programme due to their direct involvement in vegetable production. In fact, in most communities visited, vegetable production or market gardening is predominantly seen as a women's activity. Unfortunately no data on the share of women participating in the training workshops is available (see Chapter 4.5).

3.1.3 Consistency with other FAO activities / any relevant FAO strategic positioning

39. Since 2003, the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit (ERCU) has reached more than 100,000 Liberian farmers through a number of emergency interventions, including the distribution of production inputs, training of farmers, seeds multiplication, fabrication of agro-processing machines and blacksmith groups. The first three of these activities were implemented in the OSRO/LIB/903/SWE project.

40. Under the EU-funded Food Facility programme (EU-FF) in Liberia, a series of interventions are planned to assist farmers overcome access constraints to critical production inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and integrated pest management supplies) to promote the production and marketing of rice, vegetables and legumes. The project also builds the capacity of counterparts in resuming the production of quality seeds, the rehabilitation of lowlands and critical irrigation schemes, strengthening farmer groups and support to the coordination and monitoring of food security and nutrition in the country. The EU-FF can be considered as the direct successor of project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE and takes great benefit from the lessons learned in this project. In particular, the component of vegetable production derives direct benefits from this project, such as:

- improved input package composition with respect to selection of seeds (local varieties) and tools (two watering cans instead of one: hoes, wheel barrows etc. are included);
- improved training programme with a focus on farmer-to-farmer learning, introduction of demonstration sites and improved training material;
- appropriate selection of implementing partners and division of caseload;

¹⁰ Peri-rural can be considered as a transition zone between peri-urban and rural with more rural characteristics

- allocation of additional resources for IPs and MoA (the project in Margibi County is now implemented directly by MoA instead of NGOs);
- inclusion of school gardening in partnership with WFP;
- inclusion of additional counties in the training programme such as Gbarpolu and;
- inclusion of purely urban areas in the second round of inputs distribution – the intervention is now linked with the UPA project of EU through Care International and German Agro Action¹¹.

3.1.4 Coherence with national priorities

41. Most recent projects in Liberia have been planned and implemented in support of the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (FSNS), focusing on three key areas, namely: capacity development of Government officials; seed distribution and training of farmers; commercialization of agriculture and agro-enterprise development. In response to the soaring food prices, five national projects have been approved:

- the USD 6 million EU Food Facility;
- a USD 1.9 million project funded by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (OCHA) aiming at minimizing the crop losses of the 2008 rice cropping season;
- a USD 777,387 contribution to the Joint Programme (FAO, UNDP, WFP, UNIFEM), which has provided support to women groups, training to farmers, distribution of vegetable seeds, and procurement of agro-processing machines;
- a USD 2.5 million UTF project which supported food insecure smallholders in three regions and established seed banks; and
- the SIDA-funded project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE, in support to urban and peri-urban households.

42. In the National food and agricultural policy and strategy of 2008 the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of Liberia states: “Vegetables (exotic and local) are grown under nearly all farming systems including the swamps during the dry season. Urban and peri-urban vegetable production is also practiced albeit on a limited scale, taking advantage of the ready market in the urban centres. There is great potential for expanding vegetables, mangoes, and avocados production in Liberia because of available land, favourable climate and the comparative advantage of the domestic resource costs for the crops”. The policy strategy is to improve food availability and adequacy through self-reliance by establishing and supporting special initiatives, actions and programs directed at expanded access to essential inputs (planting materials, tools and equipment, fertilizers, agrochemicals), for rapid, increased production of staple foods: rice, vegetables, and tubers¹².

43. Given the strategy on soaring food prices (see Chapter 3.1.1)⁸, the government of Liberia with donor support seeks to promote a rapid increase of food production by Liberian farmers; so that domestic produce becomes increasingly available on the Liberian market. The response strategy is mainly focused on three key areas:

- To ensure uninterrupted supply of food and mitigate the impacts of soaring food prices;
- To maintain access to food and improved nutritional wellbeing for vulnerable populations and;
- To promote rapid domestic food production.

45. All these strategies are targeted by the OSRO/LIB/903/SWE project.

¹¹ This inclusion is already a result of this evaluation

¹² Food and agricultural Policy and Strategy – “From subsistence to sufficiency”. Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Agriculture, 2008 [<http://www.gafspfund.org/gafsp/node/570>] accessed Nov. 24, 2010.

3.1.5 Coherence with other international interventions in the sub-region / countries

44. There are on-going efforts by various organizations like FAO, WFP, the EU and NGOs (e.g. German Agro Action) to improve food production, value addition and marketing of agricultural products in Africa. FAO is implementing a regional programme funded mainly by the Government of Italy. The programme seeks to improve food security through commercialization of agriculture in 8 countries in Africa including Liberia. The project in Liberia benefits from the training programme developed under project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE and improved recently under the EU funded Food Facility. Additionally, FAO is collaborating with the Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme of WFP which creates market opportunities for smallholder farmers in 8 pilot countries including Liberia.

45. The Resource Centre for Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF) collaborates with CARE and Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action (WHH/GAA) in two EC supported programmes on the enhancement of urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) in Liberia. The programmes started in December 2009 for a period of three years, in partnership with HDF, Africa 2000, and the University of Liberia, and target urban and peri-urban producers and multiple stakeholders (like the city council, and the University of Liberia) in Greater Monrovia, Tubmanburg and Gbarnga. RUAF facilitates the development of a Multi-stakeholder process on Policy Formulation and Action Planning, and supports the organisation of farmers, the development of value chains and a better access for small scale farmers to financing. The FAO is collaborating with Care Liberia and German Agro Action to upscale their activities by providing inputs and technical training to beneficiaries in greater Monrovia area.

46. In addition to the EU funded project, the Joint Programme in support of the national response to Food Price Increases and the Food Security & Nutrition Strategy (UNJP/LIR/011/UNJ) has provided support to women groups, including 158MT improved seed rice, 14 power tillers etc. and training to farmers in improved crop husbandry, power tiller operation and management. In 2010 the project has completed distribution of 131 Kg of assorted vegetable seeds, 690 Kg cowpea, 16500 kg ground nuts, and 5 000kg NPK Fertilizer.

3.2 Project implementation, efficiency and management

3.2.1 Adequacy of inputs (timeliness, quality and quantity) including training

47. Most of seeds provided by FAO to the 5,000 vegetable farmers were of good variety but the local farmers faced problems with growing some of the crops:

- The ground nuts were of very poor germination rate (see chapter 3.2.2),
- The variety of hot pepper seeds given to the farmers was not the same as usually grown¹³; However being too hard for grinding and not spicy enough this pepper was not marketable. However beneficiaries were able to obtain sufficient hot pepper yields which were mainly used for household consumption¹⁴.

¹³ The local variety was not available in sufficient quantity on the local market

¹⁴ Regarding the inappropriate variety of hot pepper, the project was approved in May 2009 and distributions commenced in September. The procurements had to be finalized by July / August. The local market at that time did not have sufficient quantities of locally grown pepper seeds.

- Mixed results in growing onion and tomato (see Table 1) were due to the fact that most local farmers do not have experience in growing these crops. However some groups who had already experience with tomato growing for example the Tomato Camp in Palala – Bong County were pleased with the growth, production and shelf life of the Heinz-1370 variety.
- Sweet potato vine was given to farmers with the intention of growing to get tuber but farmers were growing it for the leave. This is due to a combination of factors including; a) hunger gaps which force some farmers to utilize leafy vegetables even before maturity and; b) due to the dietary habits in some communities. Some farmers were able to adopt the tubers on a commercial basis which led to extremely favourable results. While this differed from the original project intention, this has led to a short term improvement of the food security situation.

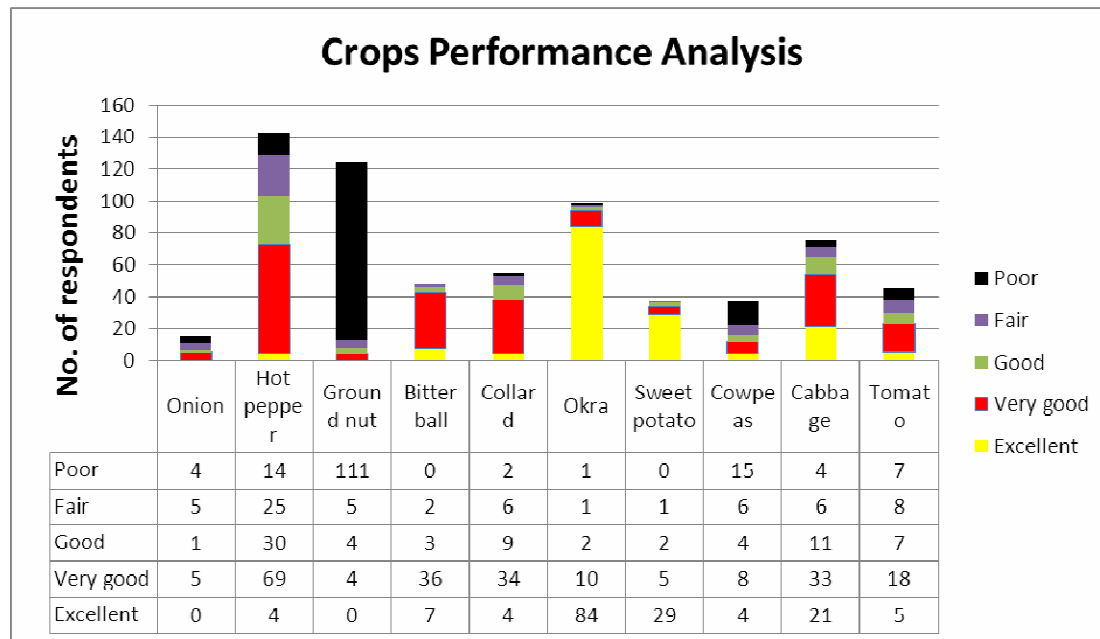


Figure 1: Crop performance Analysis

48. The project was innovative with respect to training. The training programme commenced with a comprehensive training needs assessment (TNA) study in the project counties. The TNA study involved 155 vegetable growers including 52 women in 5 counties. The purpose of the study was to review the existing agronomic practices and production constraints, to develop a needs-based training programme. The study revealed that vegetable farmers required technical assistance in site selection, seed production, nursery preparation, land preparation, seed planting, field maintenance, irrigation, harvesting and storage. The TNA also revealed the need to strengthen the MoA's role in the provision of extension services. With this background, a training of trainers (ToT) workshop was held followed by the training of farmers (ToF). 2 000 beneficiaries (40% of the total beneficiaries) were trained in secure production of vegetables and short cycle crops and compost preparation. The ToF was held in 50 sessions, each session spanning 3 days and involving 25 beneficiaries. As Table 1 shows the participants of the workshops were generally satisfied with the contents and quality of the workshops. However, from the field visits and interviews it is concluded that

- i) more training is needed with respect to animal husbandry (raising and feeding) and value adding.

ii) even though the flip chart used in the training sessions was very well designed, a modification of the training manual and the instruction leaflet (which is part of the input package) is needed. This is because the illiteracy rate in Liberia is pretty high at 58% adults 15 and above¹⁵. This requires different approaches to extension e.g. more visualization of key messages, less written text¹⁶.

3.2.2 Adequacy of procedures, efficiency of implementation in view of time and costs (includes procurement and support from HQ)

49. The procurement of inputs was carried out in conjunction with the HQs. Technical specifications were prepared and clearances obtained, procurement was done on competitive grounds. The selection of implementing partners was carried out based on a call for proposal shared between 33 agriculture-focused NGOs. Received 11 proposals and selected 9 for project implementation. The IPs mentioned not having received sufficient money for carrying out the project and had to invest own resources. While it is not uncommon to hear such complaints from cooperation partners there is a possible explanation for this statement: NGOs are heavily competing among each other. Work experience with FAO is a top reference for NGOs in Liberia. Therefore they would hardly reject offers made by FAO even when the amount they get is pretty low.

50. Groundnut seeds health was severely undermined by high humidity levels prevailing at the time of storage, transportation and distribution of inputs. This was further compounded by frequently delayed rains. The rainy season typically ends in August and dry season farming activities start in September. Since 2008, a significant change in rainfall patterns has been observed, stretching the rainy season up to end October, with occasional heavy rain events in November. This changing rainfall pattern had a direct and adverse impact on the seed health, germination capacity and productivity of certain crops including groundnuts. The project allocated additional 800kg of groundnut seeds in an attempt to achieve the desired production level but without success.

3.2.3 Performance of management: chain of command, M&E system and reporting, Human and material capacities

51. During the project cycle as well as at the end of the project, FAO established a continuous monitoring and evaluation process, represented by evaluation of training workshops, regular reports from the IPs and a final internal evaluation of the whole project. This is documented by the final project evaluation report, as well as by a great amount of reports from the partner organization, that fill several folders at the FAO premises. Several of these reports were screened and found to be well balanced regarding the pros and cons of the project actions.

52. The project tasks were well distributed among the Emergency Coordinator and the various local staff in FAO, responsible for training and M&E. The evaluator had the opportunity to observe the interaction between project leader, staff, Ministry, NGOs and beneficiaries. The impression was that the project leader is well known and well received by all parties.

¹⁵ Worldbank (2010) <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/habrdd/conditions/wafrica/liberia.htm>

¹⁶ During field visits it was observed that even some of the master farmers (trainers) could not read but members of the community could do so. Because of the hierarchical structure of the community it was not appropriate for those people to take over and read the text for the community.

53. In general communication between the different parties was good; however in particular some NGO and MoA staff should be urged to adapt a more respectful way of interacting with the beneficiaries. This is based on reports from FAO staff and own field observations. Among FAO staff there seemed to be no communication problems. However there were communication gaps within the Ministry of Agriculture. This was illustrated by a critique about the lack of reporting from FAO side. The Ministry mentioned that it did not receive the final report of the project. Obviously there is a problem of communication and project management within the MoA and among the appointed “focal points” and their respective supervisors, because FAO reported several times to the Ministry regarding the project.

54. At the end of the training a workshop evaluation was held to obtain first-hand.

Table 1: Results of the training workshop evaluation carried out by the project based on the evaluation of one TOT workshop

Key Areas of Workshop Evaluation	Participant’s Rating (%)		
	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Workshop contents	38%	45%	16%
2. Contents presentation	42%	40%	11%
3. Facilitators knowledge and skills	40%	44%	14%
4. General impression of the workshop	40%	51%	7%
Aggregate (%)	40%	45%	12%

55. It could be observed that the project initiated a strong learning process among the stakeholders particularly for FAO and NGO staff which will benefit future projects. The main learning experiences concern M&E (application of guidelines for M&E), training of trainers (trainers need incentives to disseminate their knowledge), training manuals (need more illustrations), distribution of inputs (seed packages must be sealed), etc.

3.2.4 Timeliness of preparation and implementation activities

56. Project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE was approved in May; the recruitment of the staff was done in the same month. The registration of beneficiaries commenced in July and ended in the month of August. After the TNAs had been held, the training resource material etc. was produced and the training plan was rolled out in August. The procurement of inputs started in May with technical clearances from Rome and inputs procured and germination tests, positioned for deliveries by September. The results assessment was prepared and the actual studies and the first draft report were produced in January – March. Assessments were held in November - December 2009 in Gbarpolu. The urgent procurement of inputs took place in December and the distribution in this county was implemented in January 2010. The input distribution was in accordance with the local agriculture calendar. Thus, overall the project activities were carried out in accordance with the initial time plan.

3.2.5 Cost- efficiency (costs per beneficiary)

57. The original service prize per household has been increased from 1.50 US Dollars (for emergency interventions) to 6 USD in the project and 10 Dollars under the EU-FF Project

plus additional costs. The adjustment for the unit prize is therefore absolutely correct. If the total cost of the project being USD 522,000 and are divided by the number of households 5,154 (including the 154 women in Gbarpolu) the cost per household overall comes to USD 101. The average household size of Liberia is currently 5.1. Thus the number of individuals benefiting from the project amounts to >26,000, which means the project costs approx. 20 USD per person.

For this amount, each household received:

- Seed package with various seeds
- Watering can
- Three day training workshop
- Training Manual
- Extension service

58. Additional outputs include 5 days training of trainers' workshop, institutional capacity building of project partners (FAO, NGOs and MoA). In view of these outputs, the project appears cost efficient.

3.2.6 Partnerships: Adequacy and performance of partners; adequacy of division of labour

The Implementing Partners (IPs)

59. The consultant had the chance to meet with four of the IPs in the FAO premises and in the field (HDF, WOCHIDO, RADIO, BADU). Generally the work of the IPs was appreciated by the beneficiaries. However in one county (Margibi) the beneficiaries rated the work of the MoA in the new project (EU-FF) higher.

60. In its own internal evaluation the FAO team in Monrovia concludes:

- As a lesson learned: "Implementing Partners did not follow the kit composition as provided by FAO or in accordance to FAO standard. As the result, some farmers got more seeds than what they were to get while others got less than what they were to get". This happened due to a lack of clear instructions and packaging system for seeds.
- As a recommendation: "That FAO put in place a system to avoid the implementing partners distributing seeds in an unorganized fashion"¹⁷. This has been done in the subsequent EU-FF project; here the input packages are sealed in order to avoid unorganized distribution.

61. According to the information retrieved from the NGOs, there is a high staff turn-over in these organizations. Having been trained by FAO as a trainer of trainers, the staff member automatically moves up in the hierarchy which can lead in a new and better paid job in another NGO or the Government.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

¹⁷ This has been put in place under the EU project where sealed input kits were provided to partners and improved monitoring was held at the field level by Monrovia based M&E and project management teams and out-posted project staff.

62. Overall the MoA considers the project as very important, even now after it has ended. It is from the part of the Ministry important to bring more farmers in vegetable growing, as there are not too many alternatives, apart from rice, charcoal and rubber production. The Ministry was fully involved in the training workshops and considers the training component as most important. However the Ministry focused on peri-urban farmers (“we are looking for farmers”) and has neglected the urban farmers because of a misconception of “urban agriculture”.

63. Points of critique were the lack of funding for the Ministry, particularly transport and some enumeration. From the project files however it is evident, that delivery of training and per diems for Monrovia-based staff was paid.

64. While travel and per-diem allowances were paid to the Ministry staff during field visits, better results could have been achieved by allocating monthly travel and fuel allowances to the relevant MoA staff at the Central and County level for the duration of the project. These arrangements are now in place through formal MoUs with the Ministry of Agriculture in Margibi, Bong and Grand Gedeh Counties, which has significantly boosted the morale and involvement of MoA in the EU Food Facility project. There is also recognition that project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE had limited budget to address MoA’s capacity needs. As mentioned above (see 3.2.3), there is a need to improve the communication within the MoA.

3.3 Effectiveness of the project

3.3.1 Output achievement level

65. The logical framework of the project was well designed and clearly structured. From the internal evaluation of the project, it is concluded that the verifiable indicators are well chosen and that outputs were by and large completed as planned, as show in table 2 below. Some of the targets have even been exceeded. No clear indication can be found for the indicator “diversified food items available for family consumption”.

Table 2: Progress against logical framework¹⁸

¹⁸ Table 2 is derived from the internal evaluation report

Planned Output	Verifiable Indicators	Target	Actual Progress	Remarks
<u>Outputs 1:</u> Increased production of vegetables, pulses and other short cycle food crops	Number of acres surface planted with provided inputs % targeted beneficiaries experience an increase in food production	2 750 acres planted 75% - 85% beneficiaries have increased food production	Approx 2 400 acres planted Almost 100% beneficiaries experienced an increase in food production	80% inputs fully utilized and 20% partially utilized the inputs package.
<u>Outputs 2:</u> Nutritional status and incomes of 5 000 households vulnerable to soaring food process increased and diversified through the consumption and sale of produce	% beneficiaries able to utilize the inputs during the planned cropping season commencing August 2009 Increase in household incomes generated from surplus production of vegetables, legumes and other short cycle food crops Diversified food items available for family consumption	At least 90% beneficiaries utilize inputs Upward trend from baseline Upward trend from baseline	80% beneficiaries fully utilized inputs Upward trend from baseline. Nearly 100% beneficiaries generated income (40% from LD 1 000 to LD 5 000, 20% from LD 6 000 to LD 12 000, 13% from LD 13 000 to LD 30 000 and 2% generated 30 000 to 50 000 from sale of produce)	20% beneficiaries partially utilized inputs The remaining 20% beneficiaries generated incomes but could not recall specific amount
<u>Output 3:</u> Awareness in secure and productive market gardening enhanced	Number of master trainers trained Number of beneficiaries trained in improved techniques in crop husbandry during project period % targeted beneficiaries adopt recommended best practices in market gardening	30 master trainers trained 25% beneficiaries (1 250 persons) trained 50% beneficiaries adopt best practices	33 master trained 25% beneficiaries trained (1 250 persons) through organized workshops Almost 90% trained beneficiaries adopted some best practices in specific areas	Include 15 MOA and 18 NGO staff No beneficiary was expected to adopt modern practices in their entirety considering limited duration of project and scope of training. Some adopted improved nursery preparation, some started to produce compost, some improved pest management practices. Very few adopted new practices in storage and seed preparation.

3.3.2 Evidence of effects on beneficiary food security: at individual level, community level, national level

66. The project's target regarding food production was to increase the food production of 75 – 85% of the beneficiaries. According to the survey of 150 beneficiaries and cross-checking through observation during the field visits, it can be stated that almost 100% of them experienced an increase in their food production. According to the farmer's statements, one main reason for increased production area seems to be the availability of higher quantities of seeds.

67. The field visit and interviews support the result that the project had a direct and positive impact on food production and income generation capacity of beneficiaries. Likewise, beneficiaries were able to generate income from the sale of surplus produce. According to the final assessment study, 45% of the beneficiaries experienced up to 25% increase in food production when compared with the previous year, 37% of the beneficiaries reported up to 50% increase and 13% experienced up to 75% increase in food production. A small portion 4% (mainly in Bong County) obtained almost double yields compared to previous years (Figure 2)¹⁹. This increased production can clearly be considered as a project impact as there were no other support programmes or projects targeting these farmers.

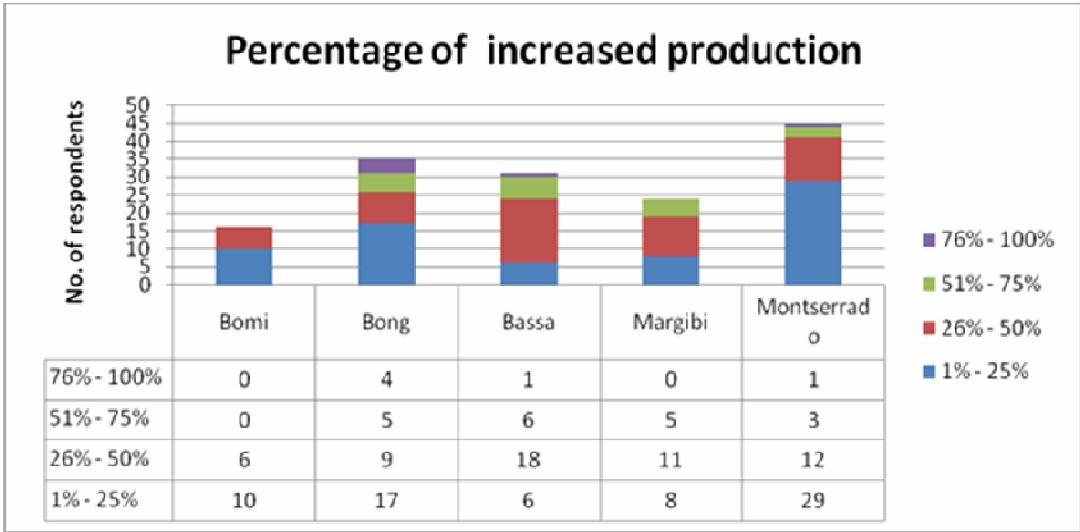


Figure 2: Percentage increase in food production from previous years²⁰

68. As apparent from the above graph, beneficiaries in Bong, Grand Bassa and Montserrado experienced a steady increase in food production. The vegetables produced in Bong, Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties are mainly sold in Monrovia where consumers have relatively greater purchasing power than those in the other parts of the country.

¹⁹ The data presented here is based on the estimates of farmers. No comparative data is available from the baseline study. Even in a baseline study the figures would have relied on farmers' estimates. However it is even surprising that for such a short term project a baseline study was carried out at all.

²⁰ Figures 2 and 3 are derived from the internal evaluation report.

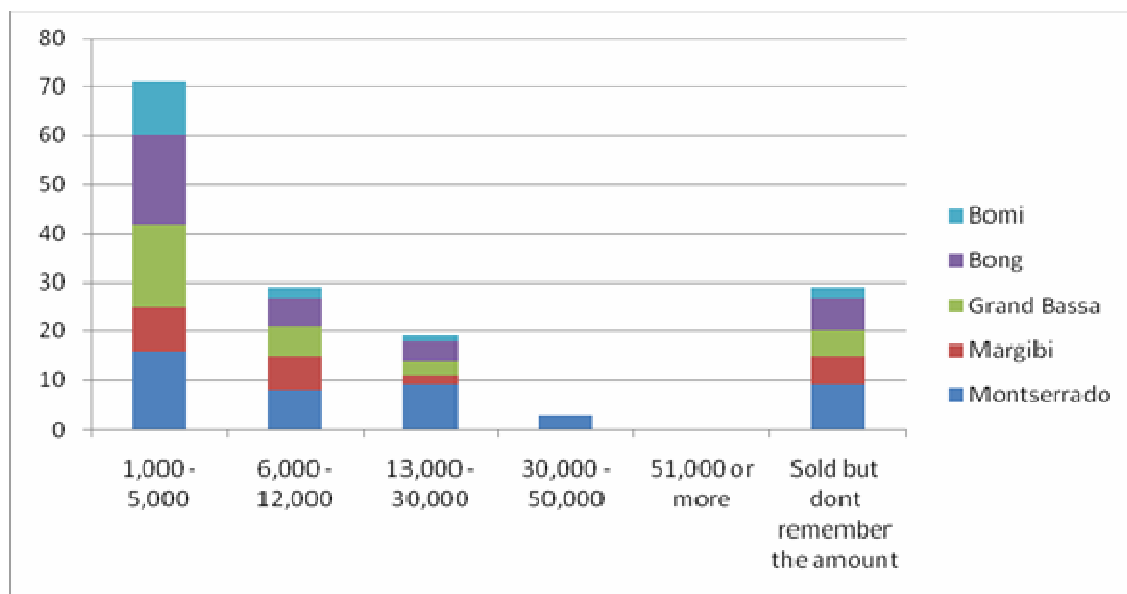


Figure 3: Income earned from sale of produce (expressed in Liberian Dollars)²¹

69. The income earned by selling vegetables on the market varies a lot, depending on the size of the plots, proximity to markets and infrastructure. Nearly 50% from the representative sample of farmers earned small amounts of Liberian Dollars (less than 5000 LD²²), while about 30% earned between 6 000 and 30 000 LD (compare to figure 3). Compared to the baseline survey 51 farmers of whom 16 are from Montserrado County experienced 1% - 25% increase in income from sales; 50 farmers experienced 26-50% increase in income, 16 farmers experienced an increase in income from 51-75% and 7 farmers of whom 6 are from Bong County experienced a 76% - 100% increase in income. Most of the remaining farmers experienced increase in income as well but were not able to quantify.

70. From the interviews and the internal evaluation it is concluded, that 50% of income earned is mostly spend on school fees and school uniforms; 28% of households spend some money on buying food, while 60% did not. Another priority relates to expenses on health care.

3.3.3 Targeting effectiveness

71. The project aimed to target 5 154 food insecure households (26 800 individuals) vulnerable to food price crises in urban and peri-urban areas in 6 densely inhabited counties namely Bong, Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado.

72. Particular emphasis was laid to support the food production and income generation of the recent returnees, women headed households, organized community farming groups and women based vegetable production and marketing groups. All these different groups could be found during the field visits, except the marketing groups.

73. However due to a misconception of some IPs a few beneficiary groups were artificially created just for the purpose of the project. Of course these groups are not stable and some fell apart after the project has ended.

²¹ Y-axis is number of respondents

²² 5000 Liberian Dollars are equivalent to about 75 US Dollars.

Table 3: Beneficiaries according to counties

County	Number of Beneficiaries			Implementing Partner (s)
	Total	Male	Female	
Bomi	500	333	167	RADIO
Bong	1 200	850	350	Catalyst, AEDE
Grand Bassa	1 000	602	398	BUCCOBAC
Gbarpolu	154	0	154	FAO, MOA and MOGD
Margibi	800	419	381	IRDO
Montserrado	1 500	840	660	HDF, WOCHIDO, BADU
TOTAL	5 154	3 044 (59%)	2 110 (41%)	

Source: Internal evaluation report

74. Very positive was the impression of the performance of the women groups. In most cases observed they appeared much better organized and empowered in terms of farm management and marketing than most of the men. This is because vegetable production is one main activity of women, while men are often still involved in wage labour especially in urban and peri-urban settings. Therefore women need to be included even more in follow up projects. "Only" 41% of beneficiaries were officially women (see Table 3). However in some cases women were registered through the men because men are generally the head of households in Liberia. Although the project is supposed to assist households, in terms of sustainability it still appears important who receives the training within the household. Generally this is the registered person and not the spouse.

3.4 Potential impact, programme approach and perspectives of sustainability

3.4.1 Evidenced impact from previous related projects and factor of likely future impact

75. The learning process during the project was highlighted by FAO staff Monrovia and the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as well. This process is related to a changing project approach in moving from emergency to recovery and development. New to the staff were the systematic assessment of farmer needs in vegetable production, the training needs assessment (TNA), and the development of the training manual based on these assessments. First time organic pesticides (made from hot pepper, soap and onions or pawpaw leaves, soap and kerosene) were promoted. The demonstration plots in the communities were used mainly to do the training on the agronomy side, now the training concentrates more on the marketing side on farmer-to-farmer learning. New were also some ethical considerations, like the provision of food and drinks for the farmers participating in training workshops.

76. These findings have now been successfully incorporated into the new project approaches, e.g. into the EU-FF Project. There is clear evidence that FAO staff and NGOs took a profit from the project in terms of how to change approaches in the future, how to avoid problems and how to do better data analysis and presentation.

3.5 Perspectives of sustainability

77. Having a strong focus on emergency relief the project cannot be considered as sustainable as a whole, but certain components contribute to the sustainability of the action. This is mainly the training component which had a sustainable impact on the farmers' management strategies. All farmers interviewed in the final assessment confirmed the usefulness of the training for improved vegetable production. This finding is also supported by the field observations that the use of elevated nurseries continues in most communities visited, the same applies to compost making. Through the enhanced use of organic pesticides and organic fertilizer, there is a positive impact on environmental sustainability of production.

78. The empowerment of women will have a lasting impact on communities, and the income created through farming activities will have a long term impact on household economy. A clear sign for a medium to long term impact is that 96% of farmers interviewed confirmed the continuation of vegetable production in the next season and basically all farmers visited had already started some production in October 2010²³. However, with respect to seed production, organic pesticide preparation and farm management, as well as marketing and value adding, more training is needed.

79. In view of mitigating the effects of soaring food prices on vulnerable populations in urban and peri-urban areas a one-time intervention can create a certain buffer in terms of own food production and income generation. However, additional intervention strategies are required which go far beyond a projects capability.²⁴

80. Be it emergency or recovery, to make this kind of action more sustainable a longer timeframe is necessary. Working with communities requires knowledge of these communities. This knowledge can only be gained in longer term relationship. The heterogeneity of the communities requires this even more. Although the newcomers have obviously been received very well by the communities, there is still a lack of trust and security in terms of housing and land tenure. For future projects it is recommended to strengthen the socio-cultural and socio-economic components of the activities in the field. The work is done with human beings and their social and human capital; this is why this needs to be addressed beyond the purely technical approaches of a project. This appears even more important regarding the many indigenous tribes in the country not receiving appropriate attention.

²³ A few farmers did not yet start the production because of continuous heavy rain fall, however confirmed that they will start soon respectively already started to prepare the gardens.

²⁴ These interventions are rather on a regional and global level and include regulations of markets as well as political interventions regarding food commodities speculation.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Regarding the **overall objective** of project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE, which was “to strengthen the government’s efforts in mitigating the impact of soaring food prices in Liberia through support to food production and income generation in urban and peri-urban areas” the project has performed very well in peri-urban areas but not in “intra-urban areas” (see p.27, paragraph 4.3).

Regarding the peri-urban sites, the project can be considered as a successful project, by reaching the farmers on the ground and improving the livelihood of most of the beneficiaries in close cooperation with the MoA and local NGOs. Despite the very limited time frame and limited budget the overall performance of this project goes far beyond emergency relief, especially considering the important activities of extensive training provision. A key element of the project is the successful capacity building on various levels: within the MoA, in NGOs, in farmer groups and for individual farmers and households, and even within FAO and especially the local FAO staff. The capacity building element is a key element in strengthening the government’s future efforts in supporting the agricultural sector in Liberia.

Regarding the intra-urban sites the project has failed. The project has completely overlooked the reality of intra-urban agricultural activities. As a consequence no urban farmers have been included as project beneficiaries.

Regarding the **specific objectives** the project results can be validated as follows:

Specific objective 1: To increase food production through provision of production inputs and promotion of best practices in secure and productive vegetable gardening;

This objective has been reached by and large by distributing seeds and watering cans, and by providing training to a large number of people. Nearly 100% of beneficiaries have increased food production through the project. Most stakeholders, except single exceptions²⁵ interviewed have received seeds, watering cans and training and sometimes also tools that were not budgeted for in the project. The training components most appreciated were the making of plant nurseries and compost making. Compost making and organic pesticides were new experiences and technologies for most of the stakeholders, never practiced before. Site selection, field preparation and transplanting were other components often mentioned.

²⁵ The few real exceptions were created by community members who wanted to take profit from the project but were not registered.



Figure 4: Watering Cans and nurseries of a peri-urban farmer group in Montserrado County



Figure 5: Compost making was one of the most important training components of the project and very well received by the beneficiaries.

Still there is a lack of training regarding animal husbandry. Nearly all visited groups mentioned the need for animals, but a lack of knowledge how to raise them and how to feed them. Often animals were mentioned in the context of soil fertility and manure (compost).

Specific objective 2: To improve the nutritional status of households with poor consumption and diet diversification due to high cost of food;

This objective is difficult to validate because no nutrition survey was carried out systematically. The objective has been reached through diversification of vegetable production and household consumption. While 28% of households spent some money on buying food, 60% did not spend any money on food and can therefore be considered self-sufficient.

Specific objective 3: Increase income generation for 5 000 households through the sale of surplus produce.

This objective has been reached for the majority of farmers involved in the project. The income earned by selling vegetables on the market varies a lot, depending on the size of the plots, proximity to markets and infrastructure. Nearly 50% from the representative sample of farmers earned small amounts of Liberian Dollars (less than 5 000 LD), while about 30% earned between 6 000 and 30 000 LD. Compared to the baseline survey data, overall about 80% of the farmers have earned more income through the sale of produce enabled by the project.

Specific conclusions and recommendations are offered regarding the following key issues: i) project design and duration, ii) vulnerability and stakeholder selection, iii) site selection, iv) the impact of hand-outs on communities, v) gender and vi) seed selection.

4.1 Project design and duration

Short term interventions always run the risk of neglecting long term perspectives and necessary time-consuming actions to ensure sustainability. Experience in this project has shown that for emergency projects there are benefits to extending project cycles over at least two seasons, to allow participants to learn from the experience in the first project cycle and follow up accordingly. In the same line, recovery and development projects should aim for longer term cycles (minimum 3+ years), which is necessary for closer cooperation with the communities involved.

Recommendation 1: It is generally recommended here to:

- invite local participation e.g. for identification of suitable beneficiaries, to help strengthen the commitment and support of the communities as well as social cohesion;
- improve market access, not only to established markets but also in the creation of new market opportunities (e.g. in form of farmer markets, road site markets etc.);
- improve storage facilities, post-harvest handling and to include value adding activities and related training.

4.2 Vulnerability and targeting of communities

Still the post-conflict situation in Liberia prevails. Many people have been displaced during the long civil war. Many of them still do not return to their places of origin and therefore are scattered around the country. From the field observations and the interviews with beneficiaries, the evaluator concludes that the general vulnerability of the communities is still on a high level. This is due to several factors:

- The communities are mostly very heterogeneous, including internally displaced people (IDPs), migrants from neighbouring countries and natives. Although the newcomers have been received very well by the communities, there is still a general lack of trust and security within the communities. This may hamper cooperative community action like joint purchase of inputs, production and marketing.
- Because of lack of space and access to land farms are often located in vulnerable places, especially in the more urban settings. High water levels prevent early planting of vegetables, and therefore the farmers are losing income. In lowlands there is a lack of proper drainage which prevents flooded areas from planting.
- Large families often depend on one key person who is doing the farming and produces the income. If this person for any reason becomes incapable to produce the whole family will be affected immediately.
- There is still a wide-spread lack of knowledge on farm planning and management, and animal husbandry.
- Access to markets is limited and difficult



Figure 6: Farming Community in Bong County



Figure 7: Large families often depend on one active person to feed them. In this case of Montserrado County (peri-urban Monrovia).

Despite the general impression of basically high vulnerability of project beneficiaries, it remains unclear to the evaluator which exact criteria have been used to select beneficiaries. It appears however as if the main indicators used were: farm size at minimum 0.5 acres, willingness to register, some potential of doing farming, widows, female headed households and women groups. These criteria appear basically the right ones to capture vulnerable groups, however there are individuals and communities, especially in the urban centres that do not have access to land but are vulnerable and want to do farming.

The general approach of the project seems to have been not to select households twice for a hand-out based activity, nevertheless some of the households included in the project are now also on the program of the EU Food Facility (EU-FF), while others are not. One criterion to include some groups or households in the EU-FF project was that they performed well in project OSRO/LIB/903/SWE. The rationale behind this decision is not clear to the evaluators. One would think it would be better to also include those households who did not perform well in order to allow them to learn from the experience. The rationale behind making this choice by the IPs is not clear.

The evaluators found that the decision not to allow farmers to be included in the activity a second time was erroneous as it failed to give an opportunity for farmers to learn from experience and thus limited the potential for sustainable results.

From the field and from NGO reports there is evidence that the selection of stakeholder created tensions and jealousy in the communities and that those who were not included in the project “were not happy”²⁶. One NGO (Buchanan Chill Community based Care-BUCCOBC) reports that “most farmers that were not registered continued to request for inputs that were distributed to the registered farmers”.

²⁶ The evidence derives from the interviews. All NGOs and several communities and farmer groups reported these tensions. Perhaps one would argue that this is rather “normal”, given the post-war situation in Liberia, however this needs to be mentioned. Perhaps a change in communication with the communities may avoid this in future projects.

Recommendation 2: Being aware of the very limited time frame, it appears anyhow important to avoid tensions and unrealistic expectations in the communities. Three approaches could help make the selection of stakeholders more appropriate and eventually avoid tensions:

- iv) Using a standardized vulnerability analysis approach, carried out by an independent consultant and not by the Implementing Partners.
- v) Strictly reduce free hand-outs to the most vulnerable households.
- vi) Ensure appropriate communication within the communities regarding their rationale of the selection process and targeting choices, makes the selection of beneficiaries more transparent to the local population can help avoid social tensions

Recommendation 3: Make use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as an appropriate means to locate farmers and farmer groups, to help avoid duplications of efforts as well as to identify other farmer groups in need²⁷.

Good start is made in FAO Liberia now taking the GPS points of the project sites. A next step of introducing these GPS points into a Geographic Information System is strongly recommended, to:

- trace project sites
- visualise geographic distribution of interventions
- allow specification of type of action (e.g. seed distribution, training etc.)
- avoid duplication of efforts or allow more focused action
- allow better communication with other organisations
- allow to identify places of concentration of aid activities
- allow to filter districts that have never been touched by the organization

The German Agro Action (GAA) together with CARE International and the European Union have already successfully started implementing a GIS-based mapping of UPA in Monrovia. Therefore, it would be reasonable to take advantage of potential synergies. The use of GIS makes even more sense when other organizations step in.

²⁷ In a long term, a GIS could also be linked to other organizations in order to better monitor different activities on the ground.

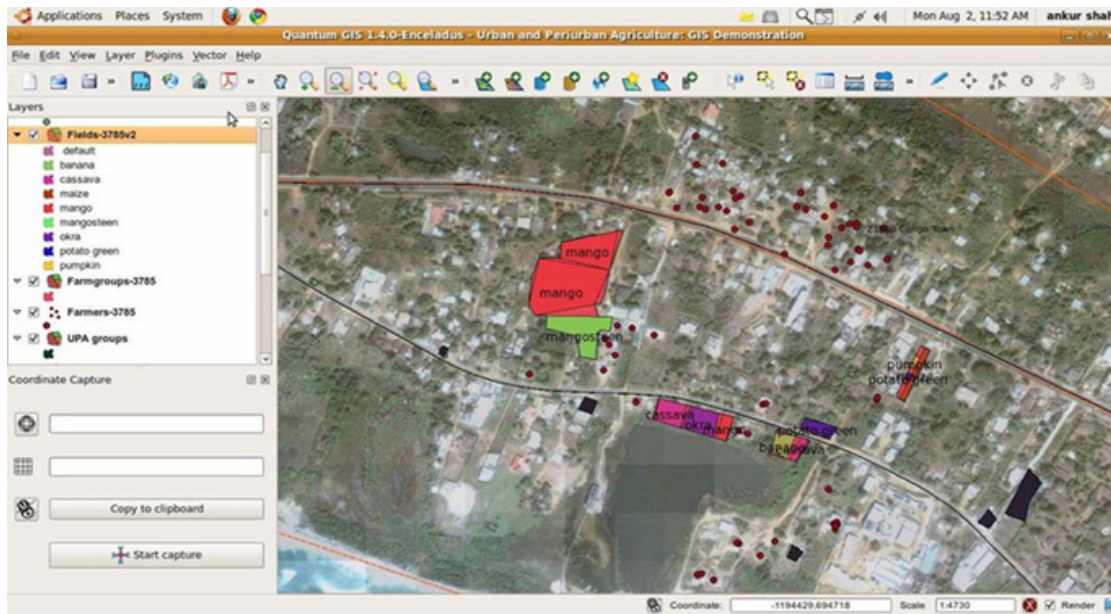


Figure 8: The use of open source GIS software in the EU-UPA project for mapping urban agriculture in Monrovia

4.3 Site selection

Urban and peri-urban areas should have been targeted by the project. In fact the project mainly concentrated on peri-urban to “peri-rural” areas and it was hard to find a project site that deserves the term “urban”. This is an indication that the concept of “urban agriculture” has not been clearly defined and understood by the implementing partner (IPs) as well as the MoA. As one of the MoA officials clearly pointed out: “we want to work with farmers”. This does of course not include the urban farmers, generally considered rather as “home gardeners”.

There is a need to stipulate the definition of urban and peri-urban areas and develop indicators to distinguish between these areas. The evaluator noticed a clear lack of understanding of this aspect. In fact, the project staff as well as the MoA officials believed that urban populations are mainly non-farming communities. Similar trends in geographic targeting were observed in the on-going interventions under the EU funded food facility project but the project management quickly reacted to this issue by including the urban areas in the second round of inputs distribution envisaged in January/February 2011.

For urban and peri-urban settings it is necessary to closely collaborate with the local authorities (City Councils) in order to achieve better integration and institutionalisation of UPA in the cities.

Regarding the different situation in the urban environment (limited plot sizes, limited opportunities for cash crop and staple food production, market access, etc.) a different approach should have been used for the urban farmers. This should be reflected in different input packages, smaller amount of seed, different seeds compared to peri-urban farmers, e.g. leak, spring onions, and other niche market products, as well as an emphasis on value adding activities.

Urban agriculture needs a different approach from rural or peri-urban agriculture:

- A focus on small and micro farming activities
- A special attention to women because they are even more than in rural areas the back yard gardeners
- A focus on close by market opportunities
- A focus on value adding activities
- An integrated approach considering small livestock that reflects the urban situation (lack of space, legal restrictions to certain livestock, closeness to market) which helps to close the nutrient cycle by providing manure for compost and enables recycling of organic waste. It is important to start small livestock keeping with small numbers of animals in order to avoid collapse of feeding systems or veterinary problems affecting large numbers of animals.



Figure 9: Intra-urban micro-farming supported by the EU-UPA project with the German Agro Action (GAA) and CARE International.



Figure 10: Urban Agriculture; smallest space is used intensively for production

Recommendation 4: For future projects an initial survey is needed to identify the “intra-urban” farmers and their farming potential and needs. This would require a systematic stock-taking of existing urban farming systems (in Monrovia for example the urban lowlands), identification of key players, identification of other suitable farming sites and open spaces SWOT analysis of urban farmers, as well as existing policy frameworks and activities by state- and non-state actors. The FAO Food for the Cities (FFC) in the Headquarters has a lot of experience with intra-urban agriculture.

Despite the selection of appropriate seed varieties which is now implemented in the EU-FF project, there is also a need to distinguish between “intra-urban” and “peri-urban” farmers and their potential. It appears important to make more use of the indigenous vegetables, e.g. fever leaf, careless green and a local variety of eggplant, where leaves and fruits are eaten and which are preferred by the local people. Those traditional vegetables are an integrated part of the diet of many farmers already and they are known to have higher micro-nutrient content as many „exotic” vegetables.²⁸

²⁸ It is recommended to have a look at the publication: Shackleton, Pasquini and Drescher: African Indigenous Vegetables in Urban Agriculture, Earth Scan, 2009, also available at Google Books.

4.4 Impact of free hand-outs on communities

Being passive recipients of donations for many years promotes dependency. The “wait and see” strategy undermines self-initiatives and self-help-driven-development process. This could be observed in quite a number of communities and was confirmed by various interview partners. People expect FAO to give any kind of support, even when they would be able to purchase some items on their own expenses. However, giving hand-outs to communities can also be an entry point to these communities. One NGO, the Women & Children Development Organization (WOCHIDO) says that giving seeds for free enhances the demand for other things also given for free. This can be confirmed from the field experience, many times demands for more seeds, tools, fertilizers and rubber boots came up.

Recommendation 5: Recommendation 2, in section 4.2. on community targeting suggests to reduce free hand-outs to a minimum. In those cases when nevertheless items are distributed for free, distributions should not be done once only but at least twice for those who are in need - and this could apply to all emergency projects. A second round would allow farmers to continue training programmes, learn from best practices and draw consequences from own failures during the first distribution. A second round would also allow the implementing organisations involved to learn from experience and modify implementation methods. It has to be emphasized that the distribution of inputs essentially has to come along with capacity building measures. Capacity building needs time and continuous follow-up in order to ensure sustainability.

4.5 Gender

The gender component of the project is relatively weak. It appears that this component has not been given the necessary attention. The gender ration of the project is 60% men to 40% women. In fact, women are the main players in vegetable production, responsible for all the major activities in the field, like planting, weeding, watering and harvesting, while men traditionally engage in clearing the fields and constructing the nursery. However the picture given by the project review figures is not too reliable: men are traditionally the head of the household in Liberia. If someone has to be registered for a project it is basically first the men. The women are still included in the project activities without being officially registered. In some cases of course the “wrong” persons got the training and afterwards transferred the newly gained knowledge to their spouse. Positively emphasized can be however that women farmer groups have been included in the project as well. However experience during discussion with farmer groups made clear that women are not very free to speak but get heavily influenced by male members.

As mentioned above this is perhaps the bias of the patriarchal structure of the Liberian society. One possibility to overcome this problem is to train and employ more female extension officers who may have a different viewpoint of the situation and role of women in the Liberian society.



Figure 11: Successful female farmer in the peri-urban area of Monrovia. Her origin is from Lofa County and she came in 2002 to Monrovia. From the SIDA project she managed to buy roof sheets for her house, she increased the planting area and she could even hire workers to assist in clearing the field. She is on her best way to become a commercial farmer.



Figure 12: Large areas have been cleared for market oriented vegetable production

Another indication for the lack of appropriate recognition of the component is that Gender disaggregation of data in the evaluation report was missing. Potentially, the disaggregation will lead to new insights in differences for example between male/female individuals and female/male farmer groups. This got confirmed after a first gender disaggregation of data was made during the evaluators stay in Monrovia (see Figures 13 – 15 below).

A closer look at these results should open new insights into where and how to look closer at gender issues in this project. Close to Monrovia the disaggregated indicators show a different situation than in the more remote counties. In Bong County there seems to be a problem with supporting the women farmers.

Recommendation 6: The recommendation regarding the gender issue is to work more closely with for example UNIFEM which is based in the same building as FAO. Projects need a “watchdog” regarding some of the approaches. Gender need to be considered not only in the project management and design but also, more importantly, in the field. Here the employment of more female extension officers is required. Further disaggregation and proper analysis should be done using local knowledge. The discrimination of women in the communities needs to be addressed by the field workers.

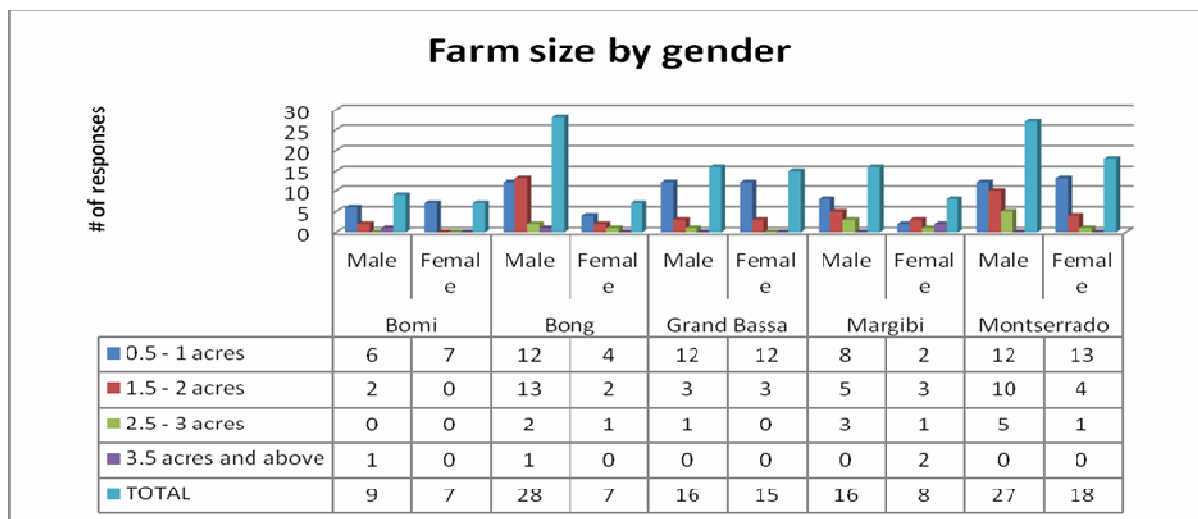


Figure 13: Farm size by gender²⁹

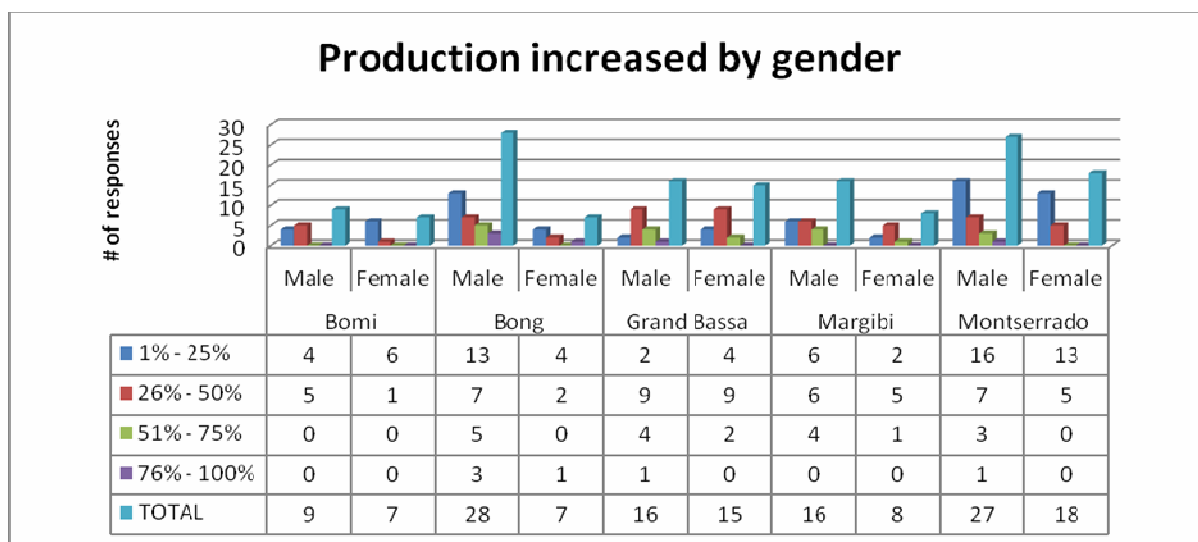


Figure 14: Production increased by gender

²⁹ Figures 13-15 are derived from the internal evaluation report

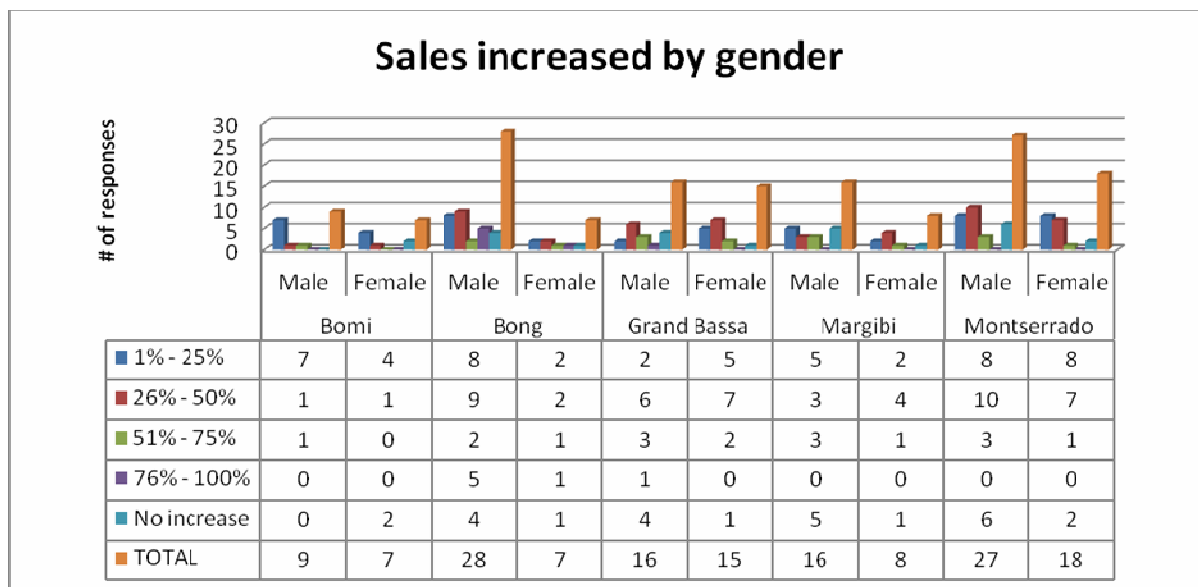


Figure 15: Sales increased by gender

4.6 Seed selection

The problems faced with the seed quality of groundnut and the seed variety of hot pepper are the following: For groundnut it is low germination rates due to prolonged very high humidity in project areas and poor storage conditions at farmers' premises. For the hot pepper it is the non-availability of sufficient local pepper seeds on the local seed market which required the purchase from international seed market.

Recommendation 7: For future projects it is recommended to move beyond seed distribution and to strengthen local seed production and preservation through involvement of local farmers and by supporting seed storage facilities. With respect to vegetable seed production closer collaboration with CARI and the WFP School Garden Program should be intended. It also appears important to make more use of the indigenous vegetables, e.g. fever leave, careless green and a local variety of eggplant, where leaves and fruits are eaten and which are preferred by the local people. Seeds of the local varieties are easy to propagate. Those traditional vegetables are an integrated part of the diet of many farmers already and they are known to have higher micro-nutrient content as many „exotic” vegetables.³⁰

As Liberia transits from emergency to recovery and eventually to development, appropriate strategies and sustained donor support are required to facilitate the transition process. Towards this end, the FAO emergency unit is presently developing a multi-year recovery and rehabilitation programme to provide a holistic assistance package to support the sustainable food production and income generation for food insecure urban households. Many of the lessons learned for the OSRO/LIR/903/SWE project are entering into this new project proposal. Some of the findings of this evaluation (like the support to intra-urban farmers) have already been applied to the ongoing FAO/EU Food Facility Project.

³⁰ It is recommended to have a look at the publication: Shackleton, Pasquini and Drescher: African Indigenous Vegetables in Urban Agriculture, Earth Scan, 2009, also available at Google Books.

ANNEXES

- A Terms of Reference
- B Field Mission itinerary/List of People Interviewed/FGD conducted
- C Debriefing Notes
- D Interview/Discussion Guidelines
- E List of contacts

A Terms of Reference

July 2010

**Evaluation of the “Emergency Support to the food production and income generation
for 5,000 urban and peri-urban inhabitants, vulnerable to soaring food prices in 5
counties”**

(OSRO/LIR/903/SWE)

Terms of Reference (Draft)

Acronyms

AGPS	FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CFSN	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
EOD	Entry On Duty
ERCU	Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit (of FAO in Liberia)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAPS	Food and Agriculture Policy Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HH	Households
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
LASIP	Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Program
LFSNS	Liberia Food Security and Nutrition Survey
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
NFSNS	National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NTE	Not To Exceed
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEDD	FAO Office of Evaluation
OpEH	Operation Eliminate Hunger

PRS Poverty Reduction Strategy

SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

TAD Trans-boundary Animal Disease

TCE FAO Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM United Nations Fund for Women

UNOPD United Nations Office for Project Services

USD United States Dollars

WFP World Food Programme

Introduction

1. The Evaluation of the project “Emergency support to the food production and income generation for 5,000 urban and peri-urban inhabitants, vulnerable to soaring food prices in 5 counties” (OSRO/LIR/903/SWE) is conducted within the framework of the Evaluation of SIDA-funded emergency projects approved in 2009, commissioned by the donor and to be carried out in 2010.
2. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent consultant, backstopped by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OEDD). A report will be produced and findings distributed and shared with the donor and stakeholders within the Organization, the national Government, and other partners.

1. Background

1.1. Country background

3. After 14 years of conflict, Liberia is at peace since 2003. A legitimate government is in place since January 2009: Government’s efforts coupled with international support have led to the extension of a civil authority throughout the country and to the gradual recovery of the economy. Real growth rates of 7.8% and 9.5% were experienced in 2006 and 2007, but the global financial crisis and delays in the resumption of full-scale mining and forestry operations limited economic growth to 7.1% in 2008. Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GDP of USD 160 (World Bank, 2009), 56% of the rural population and 29% of the urban population falling below the extreme poverty line (FSNS, 2008).³¹
4. Agriculture provides the mainstay of the economy and it now accounts for 42.2% of real GDP (Liberia PRS, 2006). 70% of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, and the majority of active workforce depends on agriculture for its survival. Most of the Liberians are subsistence farmers, growing rice and cassava crops on small family plot.
5. Agricultural and food production have increased in recent years as the sector slowly recovers, but yields are still well below the regional average and food insecurity remains high. The damage of the political unrest to the agricultural sector is still visible in the low productivity of the agricultural systems³², the disruption of the production due to the displacement of farming communities, the erosion of the marketing systems due to poor infrastructures and the lack of inputs and tools, and limited capacities in post-harvest processing especially among small farmers. 11.3% of the Liberians are food insecure, while 38% are considered highly vulnerable because of limited food consumption. The highest concentration of food insecure HH is located in rural regions in the south east, with a lack of social services and poor infrastructures contributing to the high prevalence.
6. The improvements in the households’ production and income have been countered by the sudden increase in food, fuel, and fertilizers’ prices in 2008, which have had a significant impact on people’s livelihoods, as - on average - about 60% of an household’s income is spent on food.³³ An estimated two thirds of the national consumption requirements

³¹ Joint Food Security and Nutrition Survey (LFSNS), 2009

³² The forecast of the annual percentage changes for agriculture and fisheries are just about 3.8%, compared to about 7% in 2007.

³³ Interagency Joint Assessment on High Food Prices, 2008

are covered by imported rice³⁴ and the gradual depreciation of the currency continues making the imports more expensive. In Monrovia, the price for a 50 kg bag of rice increased of about 68% in less than 9 months in 2008.

7. This has had a severe impact on an already critical nutrition situation: the 2007 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey indicated that 38.7% of children under five were chronically malnourished and 10% were under-nourished. The surge in food prices has forced many households to change food consumption patterns by compromising the quantity, quality and frequency of food intake. There is a marked absence of livestock products in diets, resulting in many people receiving 60% less than the recommended protein intake.

8. Since the signing of the peace accord in 2003, there has been a large influx of returning refugees and IDPs in the urban and peri-urban areas of Liberia. A significant number of households there have become net buyers of vegetables and poultry products, as they had not the resources to rejuvenate their market gardening and backyard poultry. Only 7% of the households in Monrovia have a vegetable garden and 20% own chickens, compared to 50% and 47% in rural areas³⁵. Therefore, while the rural population has been able to face the soaring food prices by producing their own food (food expenditures in rural areas have actually decreased by 14%), urban households could not due to the lack of adequate resources.³⁶

9. In the last few years, the Government has approved a number of programmatic documents, including the three-year Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (2007), the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (NFSNS, 2008) and Joint (UN³⁷-GoL) Programme on Food Security and Nutrition³⁸, the Food and Agriculture Policy Strategy (FAPS, 2009), and the Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Program (LASIP, 2009), which identified priority areas for intervention in line with the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

10. Encouraging diversification in the production and consumption of crops other than rice and cassava and promoting the local production of micronutrient-dense food crops (e.g. fruits and vegetables) and animal products are considered of utmost importance. The LASIP mentions them among the objectives linked to the achievement of the FSNS goal that “all Liberians have reliable access to the food they need and are able to utilise that food to live active and healthy lives”. The High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (2009) also stressed the provision of basic agricultural inputs and the promotion of IGAs for the improvement of urban and peri-urban agriculture production as two of the most compelling needs of Liberia.

1.2. FAO in Liberia

11. Since 2003, the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit (ERCU) has reached more than 100,000 Liberian farmers through a number of emergency interventions,

³⁴ This figure goes up to 92% in urban areas and 99% in Greater Monrovia, which hosts nearly one third of the country's population.

³⁵ Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSN), 2006

³⁶ The results of the 2008 joint assessment on the impact of high prices on food security revealed that severe food insecurity had doubled in poor urban neighbourhoods: the general consumer price index increased by 14% and food costs leapt by 22% between January 2007 and 2008. The number of HH with poorest food consumption in Greater Monrovia increased from 4% at the end of 2006 to 8% in June 2008 (West Africa CAP, 2009).

³⁷ FAO, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNDP, UNOPS, WFP, WHO, and the World Bank

³⁸ Under this national strategy, the MoA established the Operation Eliminate Hunger (OpEH) FAO provided support to, through the TCP project “Post-emergency accelerated capacity building for Liberia's national food security programme OpEH”

including the distribution of production inputs, training of farmers and blacksmith groups, seeds' multiplication, and fabrication of agro-processing machines.

12. Leaving aside two national projects specifically focused on HPAI and TADs prevention, all the recent projects in Liberia have been planned and implemented in support of the FSNS, focusing on three key areas, namely: capacity development of Government officials; seeds distribution and training of farmers; commercialization of agriculture and agro-enterprise development.

13. In response to the soaring food prices, five national projects have been approved: i) the USD 6 million EC Food Facility; ii) a USD 1.9 million project funded by OCHA aiming at minimizing the crop losses of the 2008 rice cropping season; iii) a USD 777,387 contribution to the Joint Programme (FAO, UNDP, WFP, UNIFEM), which has provided support to women groups, training to farmers, distribution of vegetable seeds, and procurement of agro-processing machines; iv) a USD 2.5 million UTF project which supported food insecure smallholders in three regions and established seed banks; and v) the SIDA- funded support to urban and peri-urban households.

1.3. Project's background

14. Since the end of the civil war in 2003, the Government of Sweden has been one of the most active donors supporting the process of rehabilitation of agriculture in Liberia, funding several projects dealing with inputs provision and training for war-affected farmer households, returnees and ex-combatants.

15. Starting from 2007, SIDA has funded two emergency assistance projects in urban and peri-urban areas of Liberia. The OSRO/LIR/704/SWE project (2007-08) supported 3,977 urban and peri-urban war-affected households in seven counties through training and seed distribution for vegetable and short cycle crop production. The success of the project, combined with large pockets of unmet needs, paved the way for a second intervention, which was not immediate though.

16. In response to the UN CAP for West Africa, and following the signature of the Framework Agreement between Sweden and FAO, Sweden donated SEK 4 million to FAO Liberia for emergency activities to be undertaken in 2009, which were allocated to the support of urban and peri-urban agriculture.

17. The overall objective of the OSRO/LIR/903/SWE project was to "strengthen the Government's efforts in mitigating the impact of soaring food prices in Liberia through support to food production and income generation in urban and peri-urban areas". Project activities were also expected to contribute to improve the nutritional status of households which suffered poor consumption and diet diversification.

18. The project aimed to accomplish its objective by providing agriculture inputs (vegetable seeds, leguminous crops seeds, sweet potato vines, watering cans and other tools) and promoting best practices in vegetable gardening. Project activities, as per the project document, included Training of Trainers (ToT) of MoA and IPs' staff, who would in turn train the beneficiaries in secure and productive market gardening.

19. The project planned to assist 5,000 households (26,000 persons) in five countries, notably: 1,500 households in Monrovia and Monserrado County, and 3,500 in the urban and peri-urban areas of Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa and Margibi countries. Based on the results of a rapid needs assessment following the opening of a major road to Gbarpolu County, the project was extended to that province to benefit three women groups engaged in the production and marketing of vegetables.

20. The project aimed to target food insecure and vulnerable households, who had access to land but either needed external assistance to resume market gardening or remained largely dependent on markets for their food consumption. In addition, the project

also planned to benefit some of those households who, no matter the land they owned, have been significantly affected by soaring food prices.

21. The project was implemented between May 2009 and June 2010, with a budget of 522,229 USD³⁹, by the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit of FAO in Monrovia. The FAO Emergency Operations Service (TCEO) in HQ was the project's budget holder and operating unit, the then Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service (AGPS) the LTU. The Agriculture Coordinator for Montserrado County was appointed as the focal person within the MoA to supervise the project's implementation. Nine NGOs were engaged in the project's implementation (both inputs distribution and training) in the original five targeted counties, while in Gbarpolu the project was jointly implemented by FAO, the MoA, and the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD).

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

22. The Evaluation will provide accountability to the Government of Liberia, FAO staff and SIDA, on the project's achievements, as well as the relevance and the efficiency of the approach used. The Evaluation will also formulate recommendations and draw general lessons as relevant on FAO's response to emergencies.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

23. The Evaluation will follow the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation⁴⁰ and assess the project against the OECD/DAC criteria (as in the ALNAP guidelines for the evaluation of humanitarian action)⁴¹ of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, connectedness, potential impacts (inasmuch as it will be feasible) and prospects for sustainability. It will also analyse the project's performance in terms of gender equality and social inclusion.

24. The evaluation will try to answer the following question:

3.1. Relevance of the project

- To what extent have project activities responded to the needs of the groups most vulnerable to soaring food prices?
- Was the focus on market gardening, and on urban and peri-urban areas, conducive to the goal?

³⁹ The original approved budget was of USD 490,000

⁴⁰ The UNEG Norms (2005) seek to facilitate system-wide collaboration on evaluation by ensuring that evaluation entities within the UN follow agree-upon basic principles. They provide a reference for strengthening, professionalizing and improving the quality of evaluation in all entities of the United Nations system. Built on the Norms, the Standards (2005) are intended to guide the establishment of the institutional framework, management of the evaluation function, conduct and use of evaluations. The Standards are also a reference for the competencies of evaluation practitioners and work ethics.(www.uneval.org)

⁴¹ Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria, 2006

3.2. Quality and realism of the project design

- Has the project been designed on the basis of an adequate needs assessment, in collaboration with the IPs and the FSN Secretariat? Was it implemented in the neediest regions, where food insecurity and dependence on markets were highest?
- Has the project adopted a right and well-balanced set of criteria (including needs, sufficient access to land and water, capacities of the affected population) to target different beneficiaries, in consultation with the MoA, local authorities and the communities? Were both inclusion and exclusion bias concerns taken into adequate consideration?
- Were recent returnees, women-headed households and organized community farming groups given priority, as planned?
- To what extent have affected populations and stakeholders in general been associated to the design of the project activities?
- Was the identification and selection of vegetables and other food crops based on the dietary preferences of beneficiaries?
- Was the delivery of inputs time-critically planned on the basis of the cropping calendar?
- Did the ToT target an adequate number of trainers, who were then involved in the distribution of inputs?
- Was the number of farmers invited to the training sufficient, and mechanisms for knowledge sharing put in place to guarantee that all the beneficiaries have the skills to plant, use and sell the produce?
- Was the training to beneficiaries well pondered over the degree of technical literacy and knowledge of the farmers? Did it answer the farmers' main knowledge gaps? Did it include both theory and field demonstration sessions, as per good practice?
- Was the work plan realistic, well designed, with clear roles and responsibilities defined? Did the implementation work plan allow for some flexibility?
- Was the Logical Framework designed in a way to help monitoring the project's activities? Were the risks and assumptions (as in the project's Logical Framework) pondered over?

3.3. Project management and implementation

- Has the project identified the most suitable implementing partners, through a transparent procedure? Were they adequately briefed on all the aspects of the project, as relevant?
- Has the administrative and technical support by FAO (HQ and Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit in Monrovia) been efficiently and timely provided?
- Was the reporting to the Government through the Focal Person⁴² timely, adequate and effective?
- Have any implementation gap and delay occurred? If so, what were the causes and what have then been the consequences? Has any remedial measure been taken and, if so, was it appropriate?
- Was the purchase of inputs most efficient, in terms of quality (technical specifications), time and location of delivery, source of purchase (local vs. imported)? Were the inputs distributed to beneficiary farmers as planned?

⁴² The Country Agriculture Coordinator from Monserrado Country

- Have training activities (both of trainers and farmers) been organized and implemented, according to the plan?
- Have training modules and manuals on project's activities been prepared and distributed?
- Was the link between the ToT and the following training straightforward, in terms of content and methodology?
- Was technical advice and monitoring regularly provided to target households, as needed?

3.4. Project financial resources and financial management (incl. delivery rate)

- Were the original budget allocations in the ProDoc adequate to the project objectives and activities?
- How much, why, and with relation to which components, has the project budget been revised?
- Were the project's financial resources spent in a cost-effective way? Did the project make recourse to quality local resources to the extent possible?
- Has the project experienced any delay in funds' disbursement and delivery?

3.5. Project outputs and results

- Has the project achieved its outputs and objectives, namely:
 - increased food production;
 - enhanced knowledge of best practices in secure and productive vegetable gardening;
 - reduced food aid dependency after harvest;
 - sale of surplus produce;
 - increased food consumption and diet diversification?

3.6. Gender and social equality

- Has the project design clearly reflected, in a participatory fashion, the differentiated needs of the affected population (women, men, different social groups)?
- Did the project planners adequately considered and analysed how gender relations will be affected by the project, and how the project could support specific and targeted livelihood strategies?
- Were women and women-headed households more favourably targeted by the project, as planned?
- Did the project end up empowering women and most vulnerable groups?

3.7. Capacity development

- Did the project support the development of local capacities, both of local officers and farmers, to ensure that the effects of the interventions are not lost?
- Has the project contributed enhancing the capacities of the NGO implementing partners?

3.8. Connectedness, prospects for sustainability and possibly up-scaling the project's results by the beneficiaries and the host institutions

- Has the project's planning and implementation adequately and effectively linked with other emergency input provision and other related activities by FAO in the country, to the extent relevant?
- Has the project been able to link immediate rehabilitation and medium to long term sustainable livelihoods and agricultural development?
- Are farmers able to continue vegetable production activities on their own, even without the project's financial resources and technical support?
- Has the training included any storage and marketing component, as to better integrate the distribution of emergency inputs into longer-term farm planning cycles?
- Did the project consider linking up the farmers with intermediaries and middlemen?
- Did the project use local input providers, to the extent possible, for sustainability and in order to stimulate the local economy?
- Have training materials and lessons learned been disseminated, as planned?
- Did the project foresee any sound exit strategy, with timelines, allocation of responsibility, and details on handover to government departments, NGOs and community groups, for what especially concerns the management of the investment and revolving funds?

3.9. Current and foreseeable impact/lasting changes of the Project

To the extent possible, given that the project was completed at the end of June 2010, the evaluation will attempt to identify the likely impacts of the projects, in particular as they relate to:

- increased income and related improvement in the livelihood conditions of the beneficiaries;
- improved nutritional status and malnutrition reduction.

25. Based on the above analysis, the Evaluation will draw specific conclusions and make proposals for any necessary further action by Government and/or FAO to ensure

sustainability and institutionalization of results and lessons learnt, including any need for follow-up action.⁴³

4. Methodology and Approach

26. The Evaluation will be conducted by an independent consultant, backstopped by an evaluation officer from the FAO Office of Evaluation (OEDD). The OEDD officer will accompany the consultant in his/her first week of contracted work and will facilitate his/her interactions with FAO and project stakeholders. In addition, the OEDD officer will assist in the development of the detailed evaluation methodology.

27. The Evaluation will adopt a consultative approach with stakeholders and triangulation as a key method for validation of information and evidence. A range of tools will be used, including:

- interviews with FAO staff backstopping the project in HQ (via email/phone);
- consultation of existing project's reports and documents;
- interviews with key stakeholders in Liberia, including: FAO staff, relevant Government agents, NGO implementing partners, UN agencies and other partners involved in humanitarian assistance and food aid (to the extent relevant);
- semi-structured interviews (using a check list/questionnaire) in a sample of villages and to households which benefited from the project assistance;
- semi-structured interviews (using a check list/questionnaire) to households which did not benefit from the project assistance, to identify any potential impact;

28. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)⁴⁴ framework will be one major analytical tool for assessment of project results.

5. Consultations

29. The mission will maintain close liaison with the FAO Representation in Monrovia, the MoA, and any implementing partner. The mission should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, however it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government or FAO.

30. The Terms of Reference of the Evaluation (prepared by OEDD) and the final draft report will be circulated to FAO concerned staff and the donor before finalization. Comments and suggestions will be incorporated as appropriate.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

⁴³ Any proposal for further assistance will include specification of objectives and major suggested outputs and inputs required.

⁴⁴ SWOT is a widely used strategic planning tool, useful also in analysis of projects and interventions, to assess their strengths and weaknesses and perspectives in the future. It is particularly used in focus groups, but it can be adapted to individual interviews as well.

31. The consultant will carry out interviews with stakeholders in the country and s/he will conduct the beneficiary assessments of project's activities. The consultant is responsible for his/her independent report, which may not necessarily reflect the views of the Government or of FAO.

32. The OEDD evaluation officer will finalize the Terms of Reference, in consultation with the donor and FAO concerned staff, and will ensure that the quality of the methodology applied and of the final product are in line with the UNEG Standards and ALNAP guidelines of evaluating humanitarian assistance interventions.

33. OEDD will make sure that FAO project staff and concerned stakeholders will be extensively consulted in the course of evaluation. They will also be asked to provide feedback to the first draft of the evaluation report, before submission to the donor and interested parties.

7. The Evaluation Report

34. Evidence collected by the Evaluation will be consolidated in a report, whose outline will be jointly drafted by the national consultant and OEDD on the basis of the above identified elements and first discussions with concerned stakeholders.

35. OEDD bears responsibility for quality assurance of the report and for submitting it to FAO within four weeks of the completion of the mission. Within two additional weeks, concerned parties will submit comments and suggestions, which will be included whenever appropriate to finalize the report.

36. The final evaluation report will be distributed to the donor and the Government and it will be a public document on the website of the FAO Office of Evaluation.

8. Evaluation timetable and organization of the evaluation mission

37. The evaluation is tentatively scheduled for the period 4 – 29 October 2010, including first draft report writing time.

38. The consultant and the OEDD Officer will first meet in Monrovia and will work together for a week on the finalization of the methodology and carrying out a few interviews with FAO and key stakeholders at government and non-government level in the capital city. Field visits will then be organized, up to a maximum of two weeks. If required, upon return from the field visits, the consultant will have additional meetings while drafting its preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

39. A first draft of the evaluation report by the national consultant is expected by 29 October and it will be circulated for comments by mid-November 2010.

9. Budget

40. The estimated budget for the Evaluation is of USD 20,000⁴⁵. This will cover: the consultant's fees (estimated 4 weeks of work); consultant's DSA and travel expenses within the country; OEDD officer' DSA (one week) and travel expenses (Rome-Monrovia-Rome).

⁴⁵ USD 4,000 for evaluation is already in the project's budget.

B Field Mission Itinerary

SIDA 903 PROJECT EVALUATION MISSION

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

OCTOBER 14TH to November 3RD 2010

MISSION OBJECTIVES:

- The overall objective of the mission is to evaluate the SIDA project implemented by FAO.

DAILY PROGRAMME

DESCRIPTION	Time	GEOGRAPHY LOCATION	DATE	ACCOMPANYING STAFF
Evaluator travels to Rome	11:00AM	Rome	Oct. 14 2010	
Meetings with FAO Staff in Rome	8.30 am	Rome	Oct. 15 2010	
Evaluator travels to Brussels	2:00 pm	Rome/Brussels	Oct. 16 2010	
Evaluation team arrives in Monrovia.	7:10 pm	RIA, Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 17 2010	Grant Brown will pickup team from Airport on UN - 0188
Introduction of evaluation team to FAO Liberia staff/office. During general staff meeting 10am	10:00am	FAO office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 18 2010	Mr. Razak to introduce team.
Briefing session with the FAOR or AFAOR (P) and the Emergency Coordinator.	11:00	FAO office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 18, 2010	Razak and Mr. Boiwu
Meeting with the emergency unit for review of travel plan and a brief presentation on the SIDA project.	12:00am – 2:00pm	FAO office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 18 2010	Mr. Razak and the project team in the conference room
Review of project documents (reports etc) and plan for the next day.		FAO office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 18 2010	Evaluation team
Meeting with EU Task manager for food security in Liberia.	9:00am	EU office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 19 2010	Mr. Razak and Alberto
Meeting with SIDA delegation in Liberia. Peter Samson - 06224324	2:00pm	SIDA office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 19 2010	Mr. Razak and Alberto
Meeting with WFP, Lansana - 06903189	10:00am	WFP office Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 20 2010	Mr. Razak and Emmanuel
Meeting with the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) Emmet Crayton -	1:00pm	MoGD office, Monrovia, Liberia	Oct 20 2010	Mr. Razak, Alberto and Evaluator

06937071				
Meeting with Monrovia based partners (BADU, HDF, WOCHIDO) in FAO conference room.	3:00pm	FAO office, Monrovia	Oct 20 2010	Mr. Razak and team
Travel to Bong		Bong County	Oct. 21 2010	Bong County
Meeting with CARI management, staff and technicians. Arrange through Mr. Chakanda – 0880637753	10:00am	CARI, Gbarnga, Bong County		Mr. Razak and Darlington
Visit to farmers in Panta district		CARI		Mr. Razak and Darlington
Leave Bong for Monrovia		Monrovia	Oct. 22 nd 2010	
Meeting with the Margibi CAC		Kakata	Oct. 22 nd 2010	FAO and evaluation team
Field visit to farmers in Margibi		Kakata	Oct. 22 nd 2010	FAO and evaluation team
Field visit to farmers in Bomi Meeting with Christopher D. Momo, County Agric. Coordinator Bai Kiazolu, Training Technician		Bomi	Oct. 25 th 2010	FAO, RADIO and evaluation team
Field visit to farmers in Montserrado		Montserrado	Oct. 26 th – 28 th 2010	BADU, HDF, WOCHIDO; FAO and evaluation team
Meeting with CARE Alberto Giani, Teamleader UPA		Monrovia	Oct. 28 th 2010	FAO and evaluation team
Meeting with MoA Montserrado County Agriculture Coordinator, Mulbah Bryant - 06674208,	10:00am	MoA office in Bensenville, Liberia	Oct. 29 2010	Emmanuel
Meeting with the FSN Joint Programme Secretariat (Mr. Tarnue D. Koiwou, Program Director FSN)	3:00 pm	MoA office in LIPSCO Monrovia, Liberia	Oct. 29 2010	Mr. Razak and Emmanuel
Visit to LISGIS (Map and GIS Company)	11:30 am	Monrovia	Oct. 30 2010	Evaluator
Meeting with ACDVOCA		Monrovia	Sept. 1 st 2010	FAO and evaluation team
Meeting with EU Delegation Adolfo Cires Alonso	12:00 am	Monrovia	Sept. 1 st 2010	Evaluator
Review and compilation of information.		Monrovia	Sept. 1 st 2010	FAO and evaluation team

Meeting with GTZ Representative	6:30 pm	Monrovia	Sept. 1 st 2010	Evaluator
Debriefing meeting with FAO	2:00 pm	FAO offices, Monrovia	November 2 nd 2010	Evaluation team
Depart from Hotel for Airport		Monrovia	November 3 rd 2010	FAO driver take him to the Airport

Note:

This programme was tentative for the visit of the SIDA project evaluators and has now been modified according to the decisions made during the mission.

During the first phase of the mission which includes meetings in Monrovia, the evaluation team and FAO will meet and collectively agree on a plan for the field mission to the Counties. The programme is open for the evaluation team to decide where to visit and who to speak with during the mission.

At the Airport

FAO driver, Grant Brown will be at the Airport to pick up the team on UN -188. He can be contacted on **06136543** or you may contact the Logistics officer, George Wilson on **0880700507** GSM mobile SIM card can be obtained at the Airport for US\$3.00 or less.

Contact person

1. Mr. Abdul Razak, Emergency Coordinator a.i. – 06784870 or 04962882
2. Mr. Alberto Digrazia, Emergency Consultant – 0880549488
3. Mr. John Emmanuel Paivey, National Project Coordinator – 06510436 or 077510436

C Field Debriefing Notes from the team leader Axel Drescher

1- Debriefing Session with the OSRO/LIB/903/SWE project team on Evaluation Mission to Liberia, Tuesday, November 2, 2010 in FAO Monrovia – Conference Room

PARTICIPANTS: FAO, WFP & MOA

AGENDA Mr. Axel Drescher to share his observations, suggestions and recommendation base on his involvement in the evaluation of project OSRO/LIR/903/SWE.

Debriefing of Evaluation Mission - Mr. Axel Drescher

The meeting started at exactly 2:15pm with Mr. Drescher displaying a year 1700 Map of West Africa showing Negro land and Guinea with the land that is now Liberia shown as Grain Coast. He explained that it was also referred to as the pepper coast and that the Map had caught his attention because Liberia that was sufficient in Pepper and Grain back then, is now a major importer of pepper and Grain. He went on to asked, why can't Liberia go back to been called the Grain Coast again? He noted that although Liberia transiting from emergency to recovery phase, noticeable gaps remain. A sizeable portion of the Liberian population continues to remain under-privileged and therefore need sustained support.

That been said Mr. Drescher asked the Staff that accompanied him to the field to explain to other participants, what they had learned during the various field visits with the consultant. He offered Mr. J. Kanie Merfee the opportunity to share his observations.

Lessons Learned on Evaluation Mission, held from October 24th to November 2nd 2010:

1. Mr. Merfee explained that the evaluation study was very interesting learning for him and the members of the team. In particular the field visit in Montserrado County with one of the implementing partners, Human Development Foundation (HDF). He said:
 - The first stop was at Bong Mine breach where we met a woman who had one lot of land for her farming activities, her vegetables were mainly planted in old pots, pans, tubs and buckets. Through her gardening activities, she is able to raise money to send her children to school. This woman is supported by the German Agro Action under the Urban Agriculture Project supported by the European Union (Food Facility)
 - The next stop was to Brewersville, there we met a farming group that had been a beneficiary of the SIDA project, called the Heritage Farm, and they were still cultivating their farm. The group is headed by Mr. Joseph Kanga. They had their vegetable on nursery and took the team to see the land that they intended to do their transplanting on.
 - Next the team visited Mr. John Kpatawee who was voted the most successful Farmer of the SIDA project and was even visited by Dr. Winfred Hammond and representative from the Norwegian Council but due to the change in implementing partners in the following projects, Mr. Kpatawee did not receive support under the on-going EUFF project, despite his intentions to continue commercial vegetable farming.. He informed the team that other farmers around him were chosen and even though he was left out of the EUFF project he was still working and trying to improve on his crops. Mr. Merfee said that after the visit with Mr. Kpatawee, Mr. Razak, the FAO Emergency Coordinator was informed of Mr. Kpatawee's situation and he immediately arranged for the delivery of vegetable seeds, tools and fertilizer to encourage the vegetable grower who had already cleared additional land in the anticipation of receiving more seeds during the current season.

- Base upon the request of Mr. Drescher to see urban fields, the next stop was at Barnesville, Bend & Stop. The vegetable field had standing water because of the raining season, but during the dry season it is a means of livelihood for vegetable farmers.
- The last stop was at Paynesville Zubah town, where they visited a group of rice farmers to whom FAO had donated a Rice thresher and has been dealing with them for three consecutive years. The group had just completed the harvesting of their crops.

Mr. Merfee concluded his report by saying that from the evaluation he has learned that the IPs targeted Peri-urban and peri-rural communities more that purely “urban” communities. He said that most farmers that had benefited from the SIDA funded project were still actively involved in business.

Mr. Isaac Stevenson who was also a part of the field Evaluation Team added that we also visited one of the most successful beneficiary women vegetable farmer under the SIDA funded project, through the profits from her vegetable garden, she started the construction of her own house. She continues to grow vegetables particularly sweet potato vines.

After Mr. Merfee’s report, Ms. Evelyn Yeye –Dada (FAO Admin and Finance Officer) enquired the reasons for the expulsion of Mr. John Kpatawee EUFF project despite his earlier performance in the SIDA project.

Mr. Merfee replied that it was largely due to the change in IPs and the gap in communication from one IP to another but he has now received inputs directly from FAO

2. Mr. Razak was the second person to share his observations and what was learned during the evaluation. He begun by giving a brief summary of that the background of SIDA project and how the project was implemented. He said the SIDA supported project was a small project funded in response to soaring food price crises with an aim to provide emergency assistance for food production and income generation to 5,000 Urban and Peri-urban farmers. He then went on to outline some key benefits of the project:

- The project was predominantly an emergency intervention but implemented in a manner to facilitate transition from emergency to recovery phase.
- Structured training and input packages were based on needs on the ground.
- Based on experience gathered from the project, particularly in the area of trainings, FAO has further improved its training program and improve all other aspects of implementation including M&E, implementing partners etc.
- Some of the SIDA beneficiaries were targeted under EUFF project

Mr. Razak stated that chief among the things that were learned earlier during the results assessments and also revalidated during this evaluation mission included:

- Okra seeds is now available on the Liberian market, the specific variety distributed by the project (Clemson Spineless) is now been sold for \$5usd as compare to the \$12usd it was been sold for previously. This means more farmers are demanding this variety and the seed suppliers are able to rely on sales volume rather than profit margins to benefit from this crop variety.
- The definition of Urban and Peri-urban need to be revisited for improved targeting Through the SIDA project we have identified the right variety of seeds that are suitable to a particular area; the challenge is that in Liberia there are no scientific trial results nor appropriate documentation to be able to determine which variety grows well in a particular geographic area.

Mr. Razak concluded by saying that the SIDA funded OSRO/LIR/903/SWE project was a success with respect to achieving specific results and service delivery.

After Mr. Razak statement Mr. Drescher thanked him and said that he also observed high baseline vulnerability among most beneficiaries. He also agreed that the definition of that Urban and Peri-urban needs to be well defined because there were differences. He said that he considers most part of Montserrado County as urban because it is closer to the capital city of Monrovia than the rural areas. In comparing this urban area with the more peri-urban and rural areas, there are clear differences to be observed, especially regarding the closeness of the market. This is also true if a gender disaggregation of data is done. He said that in the SIDA project there has not been a clear concept on what “urban agriculture” really is. He said, regarding the limited time of 11 month and the small budget, the SIDA project all in all was a good project meeting its objectives. However there are a few observations that he wanted to share. That been said Mr. Drescher proceeded with his power point presentation.

Presentation Points:

The presentation started with the graphs showing the increase in production and earning from the sale of surplus by beneficiaries. Dr. Drescher informed the participants that these graphs are extracted from the results assessment conducted by FAO and his observations during the field visit lead him to believe that these figures are valid.

Percentage of increase Production

Sales and the earnings from the sales

- Mr. Drescher stated that he learned that the earnings were mainly used to address high priority needs the first among them been school fee, food and health related expenditure.

Elevated nursery construction - Compost preparation and usage

- Mr. Drescher said that the elevated nursery making and heap compost and pit compost preparation have been widely understood and adopted by most farmers and is one of the successful things of the project, adding that composting is being done and they are using the compost in nursery and garden. He further said that the major problem is that they don't see the long term effect of it as it has to be used continuously to obtain optimal results. Another problem is that the manure which is an important ingredient of compost fertilizer is not readily available on the market. This short fall in compost making has to be addressed, maybe in a project geared towards livestock restocking or animal husbandry. He acknowledge that most importantly the farmer still remember what they learned which means the training methodology was appropriate

Value of Communities and Gender

- Mr. Drescher said that he noticed that the gender aspect was not taken into consideration in the implementation of the project, he said that there was a ratio of 40% to 60% women to men. He also said that there were issues in some communities between migrants, IDPs and locals. He said that there was a need to look at the clearer picture of vulnerability. Mr. Drescher also emphasized that the project needs to address the social needs of community members, he told participants that he had observed that some IP staff are not fully sensitized with the social aspects and therefore tend not to offer the farmers the respect they deserve. It is due to their lack of sensitization that they sometimes feel superior to farmers. He stressed the need to clarify to the staff of implementing partners that without farmers, they will not have a job. At this point speaking on the issue of gender, Mr. Boiwu stated that, if more women were targeted than men, they would still need the men to do the hard work. Mr. Paivey added that tradition also plays a major part in the selection process,

with more women feeling secure or protected if they work alongside men. Mr. Razak also pointed out that there was a gender focus but many women were represented by men who received the inputs on their behalf.

Mrs. Dada believed that Mr. Drescher's point were well taken and added that gender sensitization should be consider to increase women participation.

Mr. Razak speaking on the Social aspect of the project pointed out that FAO was considering adding social mobilization elements in the recovery programme.

Mr. Paivey came in to say that social workers inclusion into the project needs to take into account the soft side and the hard side in dealing with the communities. He pointed out that it was easier to carry out social work in development stage than in emergency. He want further to asked about migrant farmers leasing land, asking, how will they be found when the project in been evaluated after some years?

Mr. Drescher responded to this by saying that migrants should have the same rights as local residents and is not to be excluded. When the project is been evaluated in the future ,you take a sample of all the people ,both migrants and locals over the actual project beneficiaries and if the migrant have left the community, you will have to work with those you see.

Mr. Razak held that he thought that is better to target those that have given assurance of having access to land even though it is sometimes very difficult to determine. Besides vulnerability criteria, the ability to utilize inputs is foremost while selecting beneficiaries.

Mr. Drescher explained that in his experience it is easier to work with new communities than traditional communities because new communities were eager to get any support they could.

Mr. Drescher continue his presentation saying that:

A "Watchdog needed"

- He said that a "watchdog" is needed to address certain things (for example the gender issue) that are important for the project success. The watchdog will have to be from an independent source.

"Do it Twice"

- Mr. Drescher elaborated on this by saying, the emergency approach of distribution and moving away once the project is completed is not the right way, it must be done twice. He went on to say that framers, UN agencies and IPs should be given the chance or opportunity to learn from the project for the future so that they can learn from their failures and success. He said that when this is done farmers won't feel abandon after the project. He also observed the linkages between SIDA and on-going EUFF project.

Mr. Dada speaking on this said, she believed that the doing twice concept will have to be incorporated into the project documents from the onset of the project planning. This point was agreed to by Mr. Drescher.

Mr. Razak said that he agreed with Mr. Drescher a hundred percent, but sometimes donors are concerned about the cost of intervention versus number of beneficiaries. He said that the "Do it twice" concept was great but only when we are able to provide a blanket coverage or have the opportunity to fully sensitize communities which is time consuming He give an example; that if a farmer was left out the first time and left out the second time it would be like creating distinction within communities, those who successively benefit over two

cropping seasons and those who are entirely excluded. You appreciate that this creates resentment between those who were served and those excluded. . He said despite these challenges, you witnessed yourself that some SIDA beneficiaries in each community also received assistance under the EUFF while new beneficiaries were also included to ensure a larger number of vegetable farmers benefit from these interventions.

Mr. Drescher responded to this by saying that many did not actually need handouts but training. He also said that the approach of the Millennium Villages, where eventually \$150,000 each year goes in one village, while other villages got nothing did not make sense.

Thank you

Mr. Drescher thanked everyone for their support and ended his presentation.

Suggestion

Mrs. Dada commended Mr. Merfee on his reporting of what he learned on during the evaluation; she suggested that it be documented into a BTOR along with Mr. Stevenson's.

Recommendation:

I. FAO should incorporate the use of the GIS that is able to store information and pin point exact locations and serve as a database, these information can later be pass on to other projects. It is also very useful for locating farmers when there is a evaluation mission

II. FAO should invite the team of the EU-UPA project (German Agro Action and CARE) to share their experience on urban vegetable farming.

III. For small farmers different inputs and special attention should be paid to women

Closing Remarks

Mr. Boiwu thanked everyone especially to Mr. Drescher..

2- EU FOOD FACILITY JOINT PROJECT TEAM MEETING, November 2, 2010

NO.	NAME	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	E-MAIL ADRESS
1.	Abdul Syed Razak	Emergency Coordinator a.i -UNFAO	+231-6-784870	abdul.razak@fao.org
2.	John Emmanuel Paivey	National Project Coordinator EUFF-FAO	+231-6-510436	JohnEmmanuel.Paivey@fao.org
3.	J. Kanie Merfee	Deputy Training Coordinator	+231-6-592153	Kanie.merfee@fao.org
4.	Lara Eldredge	WFP		lara.eldredge@wfp.org

5.	Kees Houtman	UNDP	0880658292	Cb.houtman@plant.nl
6.	Axel Drescher	SIDA 903 Project Evaluator		axel.drescher@geographie.uni- freiburg.de
7.	Evelyn yeye Dada	Admin / Finance Officer		Evelyn.yeye@fao.org
8.	John T. Monibah	Communications Officer	076-714858	
9.	Isaac J. Stevenson	Training Technician	06-559015	ljstevenson2002@yahoo.com
10	Joseph Boiwu	AFAOR (P) /OIC	06-55891	Joseph.Boiwu@fao.org

D Interview/Discussion Guidelines

The questions below are selective to the situation, single interview, focus group discussion and interview partner (group of farmers, family or single farmer, male, female), member of an organization (NGO, Government, UN, EU).

Where possible, interviews were carried out separately with male and female members.

Evaluation optional questions for Farmers/Farmer Groups (F) and „Officials“(O)

- Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of this project? (F/O)
- How is the project linked to other activities and/or projects? (O)
- What was the reason to participate in this project? (F)
- Was this a useful project if yes/no why? (F)
- Do you have a nursery? (F)
- Do you prepare compost? (F)
- Did you earn money by selling your produce?
- How much of your harvest did you sell on the market? (F)
- How did you spend the money earned? (F)
- What were the major challenges faced? (F/O)
- How were the implementing partners selected? (O)
- How were the communities and individuals selected? (O)
- Are there any tensions between communities selected and not selected? (F/O)
- How was peri-urban defined and what criteria were used? (O)
- How was the gender component addressed? (O)
- Training was provided to farmers: how long and was it sufficient? (F/O)
- Any lessons taken from the previous project (2008-2009) taken and which ones? (O)
- What kind of seeds did you receive? (F)
- How was the quality of the seeds? (F/O)
- Who did the seed testing? (O)
- Who is the donor of the project? (F)
- Will you still benefit from the project in the next season/next year? If yes which benefits do you have? (F)
- Did you receive tools and what kind of? (F)
- How is the quality of the tools? (F/O)
- Where did you buy the tools? (O)
- In a new project what should be made different? (F/O)

E List of Contacts

FAO Rome

Evaluation Unit: Robert Moore, Anna Guerraggio, Aurelie Larmoyer
Emergency Operations: Fatouma D. Seid & Colleague
Agro-Industry Robert Van Otterdijk
Food For The Cities: Julien Custot

FAO Liberia

Syed Abdul Razak (Emergency Coordinator a.i)
Robert Chankanda (FAO Seed Specialist Assigned to CARI)
Bai Kiazolu (Training Technician – Bomi)
J. Kanie Merfee (Training Coordinator - Monrovia)
Darlington W. Vangehn (M&E Officer)
Issac J. Stevenson (Training Technician – Monrovia)Richard Sherman – (Field Technician –
Bong County)
John Emmanuel Paivey (Office Manager)

Care Liberia

Hubert Charles (Country Director)
Alberto Giani (Project Manager)

EU Commission Liberia

Adolfo Cires Alonso (Food Security And Rural Dev.)

Ministry Of Agriculture Liberia

Tarnue D Koiwo (Program Director)
Christopher D. Momo (CAC Bomi)
Sizi Z. Subah (Deputy Minister Technical)
Mulbah Bryant (CAC Montserrado County MOA's Designated Focal Person for The Sida
Project)Ms. Monica Honre (CAC – Bong County) Mr. Willer Cooper (CAC – Margibi County)

SIDA Liberia

Peter Svensson

World Food Program (Wfp) Liberia

Lansana Wonneh (P4P and Livelihoods Coordinator)

Ministry Of Gender And Development (Mogd)

K. Eric Yiesu (Programme Officer)

Central Agricultural Research Institute (Cari) (Bong County)

Robert Chakanda and Dr. Kai (Assistant Director General / Acting Director General – CARI)

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Christiane Hintzen – Country Director

Implementing Partners

Human Development Foundation (HDF)
Bettie's Agriculture & Development Union (Badu)
Women & Children Development Organization (WOCHIDO)

Recovery Development Initiative (Radio) (Bomi County)

Farmer Groups

Tomato Camp Farmers)(Bong County)
Palala Farmer Group (Bong County)
Nyafonfa Farmer Group (Margibi County)
Cinta Farmer Group (Margibi County)
Meryfar Community (Margibi County)
New Road Farmer Group (Bomi County)
Ganesi Farmer Group (Bomi County)
Badu Group Periurban Monrovia (Montserrado County)
Single Supported Farmer In Periurban Monrovia (Montserrado County)
Manana (Our Help) Single Male Farmer In Periurban Monrovia (Montserrado County)
Kabeh Dimoor Female Periurban Farmer (Montserrado County)
Female Urban Farmer In Monrovia (Montserrado County)
Periurban Farmer Barry Town Arcricultural Group (Montserrado County)
Ihg Africultural Group Mr. John Kpatawee (Montserrado County)
Barnesville, Bend & Stop: Heritage Farm Mr. Summer ((Montserrado County)
Wochido Group - Janet Nugar (Montserrado County)
Chicken Farm (Montserrado County)