

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA)
OF
SIERRA TROPICAL LTD'S AGRICULTURAL PROJECT IN LUGBU CHIEFDOM, BO
DISTRICT**



PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE WORKSHOP REPORT

Prepared by

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For

Sierra Tropical Ltd

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Sierra Tropical Ltd (STL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dole Asia Holdings Pte. Ltd., a Singapore based Agro-processing Company which is a leader in growing fruits and vegetables, and marketing or processing them throughout the world.

STL proposes to embark on an agro-processing project involving large scale planting and processing of tropical fruits in Sierra Leone using approximately 15,000 hectares. It is envisioned to be fully integrated from cultivating, growing and harvesting pineapple, mango, papaya and other tropical fruit and processing them into manufactured products.

The project will initially grow up to 4,335 hectares of leased land in Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo District, and will be implemented in phases, starting with the development of a pineapple nursery, spreading out in phases to eventually cover the maximum area desired and possible.

The project warrants a comprehensive ESIA which will depict the associated environmental, social and health impacts of the project as stipulated in the EPA Act, 2008 as amended in 2010.

In compliance with the laws of Sierra Leone, the project needs to be carried out in a manner that minimizes the potential negative social and environmental impacts and maximizes the benefits. This can be achieved through the ESIA Process which the consultant, CEMMATS Group Ltd. (CEMMATS), an experienced Environmental Assessment consultancy with vast experience in conducting similar studies in various sectors locally and internationally, has undertaken.

Prior to the commencement of a project/operation that may impact the environment and communities, EPA-SL requires that an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is carried out for the acquisition of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) license. In line with these requirements, STL contracted CEMMATS to conduct the ESIA study which also involved the development of Environmental and Social Management Plans.

The results of the study were compiled in 3 draft report volumes which have been submitted to EPA-SL. As part of the EIA Licensing process, EPA-SL requires that the results of the ESIA studies are presented to project stakeholders in a Public Consultation and Disclosure Workshop. For this project, the results of CEMMATS' assessments were presented to project area communities and stakeholders during a workshop held in Sumbuya.

1.2 Public Consultation and Disclosure Process Brief

The main objective of the PCDP is to establish a program for multi-directional communication between STL and stakeholders, throughout the lifetime of the project.

The emphasis of the process is to ensure implementation of a formal program of communication in an objective, simple manner, to focus efforts on improving communication among the project management, the project community, major stakeholders and interested parties.

Consultative meetings with relevant stakeholders were conducted during the baseline ESIA studies and surveys carried out by CEMMATS.

The EPA-SL normally requires that the results of the ESHIA report are discussed with communities after submission of the draft reports to the Agency in a Public Consultation and Disclosure process. This report presents details of the proceedings and outcomes of the workshop held in Sumbuya, on the 8th August, 2018.

1.3 Methodology

Sumbuya Town was selected as the most central location to hold the workshop, in order to best target communities within and around the project area

Following approval from EPA-SL to conduct the workshop, the following steps were taken to ensure maximum participation by the public:

1. Copies of the ESIA and ESMP Reports were submitted for public viewing at:

Freetown:

- The Environment Protection Agency - Sierra Leone (EPA-SL) office, 21 Old Railway Line Brookfields, Freetown;
- CEMMATS Group Ltd Office, 7a Cantonment Road, Off Kingharman Road, Brookfields, Freetown

Bo:

- Bo District Council Office; Bo
- Sumbuya Town *Barrie*¹

2. Advertisements for the Workshop were published on radio and in national newspapers as follows:

Media Type	Media Name	Information Format	Dates/ Frequency	Number of Publications/Broadcasts
<i>Print</i>	Awoko Newspaper	Public Notice	25 th and 31st July, 2018	2

¹ Local Meeting/Court House

Media Type	Media Name	Information Format	Dates/ Frequency	Number of Publications/Broadcasts
	Salone Times	Public Notice	28 th July and 7 th August, 2018	2
	Premier News	Public Notice	28 th July and 7 th August, 2018	2
<i>Electronic</i>	Kiss 104 FM Radio in Bo	Public Notice	25 th July to 8 th August, 2018	14
	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service - Bo	Public Notice	25 th July to 8 th August, 2018	14
	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service	Public Notice	25 th July to 8 th August, 2018	14

- Letters of invitation were sent to the project stakeholders, government institutions and interested parties prior to the workshop.

2 OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP

This section describes the statements and presentations made by the workshop participants.

The workshop was conducted in English and translated into Mende and started off with opening prayers (Muslim and Christian), followed by introduction of local authorities and representatives of STL and CEMMATS.

A copy of the workshop programme can be found in Annex D of the appendices.

2.1 Statements

2.1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks – Harold Tucker, Mayor Bo City

The Workshop Chairman welcomed all stakeholders and thanked them for making it point of duty to attend and for their anticipated contributions. He explained the purpose of the meeting which he said was to discuss the outcome of the ESIA study carried out by CEMMATS Group

Ltd on STL's project, as well as to ask questions and obtain further clarification. He asked local residents to support and encourage Sierra Tropical in the implementation of such an investment in their communities. He expressed his anticipation that the company would support the President's top priority agenda of free and quality education in areas of infrastructure and water and sanitation for schools.

2.1.2 Statement by the Paramount Chief Lugbu Chiefdom – P.C. Mohamed Alie Nallo

The Paramount Chief expressed his sincere gratitude to STL for bringing such an investment to his people and chiefdom. He called on his people to stand and applaud the company for their initiative and choice of project location. He echoed the statement made by Bo City Mayor calling for residents to lend their support to the project. The P.C. took the opportunity to announce his resignation as Chairman of the Conflict Redress/Resolution Committee previously established to mediate between STL and the local residents on issues of contention. He noted that the agreement between STL and the landowners is a bit complicated and requires interpretation by a competent lawyer. He highlighted the fact that the chiefdom has its own lawyer to advise and defend the chiefdom where necessary in such situation.

2.1.3 Statement by the Chairman, Bo District Council - Joseph M. Bindi

The Bo District Council Chairman explained the purpose of the meeting, which he described as a platform for the ESIA consultant to explain findings from their ESHIA study, and for STL and Project Affected Persons (PAPs) or interested stakeholders to dialogue. He explained that it provided an opportunity for both sides to agree on a roadmap for the sustainable implementation of the Project's interventions within the proposed communities. Mr Bindi went on to explain that the ESHIA consultant would have the opportunity to explain to participants, the potential impacts of the project and their proposed mitigation measures.

He advised participants to listen keenly and make salient contributions by asking questions, raising concerns or making suggestions.

Mr Bindi suggested to participants that the positive impacts of the project may outweigh the negative impacts. He highlighted this as the reason why the project should be implemented, as creating employment opportunities and livelihood improvement are among the numerous positive impacts the community and other parts of the country could benefit from the project.

2.1.4 Statement by the Resident Minister, Southern Province - Mohamed E. K. Allie

The Resident Minister informed the gathering that as a government representative, he was attending the meeting to ensure that the right thing is done and in compliance with the national law. He noted that government would further monitor the process to ensure that the local people benefit greatly from the project. He assured that the government is ready to fully support the full

scale implementation of the project. Mr Allie thanked the landowners for giving their land to Sierra Tropical to undertake such a massive agricultural investment and that they, as a government, would ensure the landowners got what they deserve in exchange for their livelihood portfolios.

Mr Allie furthered his statement by admonishing local residents to give their full support the project as the success of the project also greatly lies in their hands; he explained that even though the project proponent may have wonderful intentions/plans, if the local residents failed to give their support to the Project, it would not yield good dividends. He informed the meeting that there are new policies geared towards enhancing people-centeredness and the protection of the environment in a more sustainable manner. He highlighted this as one of the main reasons an Environmental Impact Assessment is conducted for such projects, as it informs the project design and further guides its implementation. He expressed satisfaction over the resignation of the Paramount Chief as Chairman of the Chiefdom's Conflict Resolution Committee explaining that this would allow people to make more independent decisions themselves. Mr Alie advised the committee to quickly elect or select a new chairperson and submit the name to the P.C and other stakeholders concerned. He informed the meeting that he had received complaints about supervisors within STL for not treating junior staff workers well; he expressed his concern about that and admonished the company to look into those issues and try their best to resolve them.

The Resident Minister expressed his anticipation that employment opportunities would be designed in such a way as to prioritise local residents, whom he described as the utmost PAPs (their land given for the project). He further explained that the employment opportunities for local residents would divert potential conflict related to land given to the company. He encouraged local residents to provide support to the project in any way they could, which would help the execution of project's interventions. He noted that the government is ready and willing to work with the P.C to utilize any money given for chiefdom development to the full extent.

2.1.5 Statement by the Representative of the Bo District Agriculture Officer – Kai Sesay

Mr Sesay extended greetings from the District Agriculture Officer (DAO) who, he informed the meeting, was absent as a result of another equally important assignment coinciding with the workshop. He noted the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) was very pleased with private sector investment in agriculture and especially with companies intending to diversify crop production and processing within the country. He encouraged local residents to work cordially with STL as there are benefits and opportunities they would enjoy from the company in the near future.

2.1.6 Statement by the STL Director of Agriculture Operations – Andrew Brooke Smith

The STL Director expressed his gratitude and thanked all stakeholders for attending the meeting as he noted the meeting provides a platform for discussion, consultations, negotiations and clear understanding of issues and of the project itself. He assured stakeholders that they, as company, were making it a priority to meet all their obligations towards the local people and to the country as a whole. He informed that as part of the Company's commitment, they had started some rice farming for the benefit of the local community residents, although this was not part of their operational schedule. He informed that decision to implement the rice farming project was made in consultation with local stakeholders as a result of growing demand for rice in communities within STL's operational area.

Mr Brooke-Smith informed participants that the company had to date provided 500 jobs for local Sierra Leoneans and that more jobs are would be available as they expanded their planting areas. He made a commitment on behalf of the company, to provide additional community assistance as the project progressed into its full operational scale. He listed road rehabilitation, educational assistance and livelihood restoration among potential projects to be implemented.

2.1.7 Statement by the Representative of the Member of Parliament Constituency 078– John Abu

Mr Abu apologised on behalf of the Member of Parliament, whom he explained was absent as a result of another important assignment; he however assured participants that the MP considered the workshop of equal importance which is why he decided to send a representative. Mr Abu informed that the MP's message was an appeal for communities to fully accommodate and work with STL so that the project could be fully implemented and the local communities would realize more benefits from the company. The MP relayed his hope that employment opportunities would be provided in favour of local residents as this would help mitigate issues of conflict and violence within the communities. He also expressed his anticipation for the company's support towards the improvement of local infrastructures and livelihoods of the PAPs.

2.1.8 Statement by the SLIEPA Project Officer – Aiah C. Nyandebo

In a brief statement, Mr Nyandebo stated that the project is in line with SLIEPA's core objectives which include to bringing private sector investment to Sierra Leone. He assured that SLIEPA was in full support of the project and encouraged community stakeholders to come on-board and give their support to the project.

2.1.9 Keynote Address by the Assistant Deputy Director EPA SL – Paul Lamin

Mr Lamin extended greetings to the participants on behalf of the Executive Chairperson whom he said would have loved to present for the disclosure but was unable to attend due to other engagements.

He explained to participants that prior to the commencement of any project that may affect the environment and communities, it is mandated by legislation that an ESIA (or ESHIA) study be conducted; if approved by EPA-SL, the project would be issued with an EIA Licence to proceed.

Mr Lamin described the requirements and process for securing an EIA licence, which he informed, is laid out in a “checklist” prepared by EPA-SL. He explained that the process requires that assessments are carried out to investigate the environmental, social and health impacts of the planned operations on ecosystems, the physical environment and communities within the Project area. He continued that a report is to be prepared at the end of the study and submitted to EPA-SL for review. If approved, the proponent would then be requested to conduct public disclosure meetings with relevant stakeholders on the findings and recommendations of the study, and incorporate comments, suggestions and requests made during those meetings into a public consultation and disclosure report. Finally, all reports pertaining to the ESIA study would then be forwarded to the Board of EPA-SL for a decision to be made on the issuance of the licence

He informed participants that the workshop was an important aspect of licence process, and encouraged the people to be confident in making their comments, contribution or suggestions that would bring maximum benefits to themselves and their communities.

2.2 Presentations

Rashidu Sinnah of CEMMATS provided an overview of the ESIA Process which was followed by presentations, as follows:

- ⇒ 1st Presentation: Environmental Baseline, Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures
(Leonard Buckle - CEMMATS Group Ltd)
- ⇒ 2nd Presentation: Socio-Economic Baseline, Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures
(Rashidu Sinnah - CEMMATS Group Ltd)
- ⇒ 3rd Presentation: Technical Description of Project
(Andrew Brooke-Smith– STL)
- ⇒ 4th Presentation Environmental and Social Management Plans
(Leonard Buckle- CEMMATS Group Ltd)

Copies of presentations are attached in Annex F of the appendices.

2.3 Interactive Session

An open discussion session was carried out to obtain participants' various opinions on the presentations, statements and project as a whole.

ISSUE	QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS	RESPONSES
<p>Land Issues</p>	<p><u>Morie Ndawa - Community Stakeholder, Moforay</u> We want to know how land is acquired for the project; are they bought or leased?</p>	<p>All lands are acquired through land lease agreements.</p>
	<p><u>Jinna Campbell - Community Area Head, Bamba</u> Some of us have land which has been registered for quite some time but for which we are not receiving any payment or compensation. We are afraid to farm in those areas as they have been measured already. Shall we continue our farming activities in those areas? Is the company not interested in the land anymore? If the company is interested in the land, when do they intend utilizing it?</p>	<p>All lands which have been surveyed but yet to be cultivated can be used by respective landowners at the moment, when the need arises for the company to use the land, sufficient time notice would be communicated to the various authorities.</p>
	<p><u>Abdul Vandil - Community Stakeholder, Gelehun</u> We are not clear on compensation issues and land area measurement and we need more clarification on this.</p>	<p>Compensation is done in accordance with national law, and taking into consideration pre-determined government rates. STL has however decided to add a little more to the prescribed rates.</p>
	<p><u>Hawa Dauda - Town Chief, Gainga</u> We are seeing a lot of operations going on in bushes but we haven't received anything in relation to those operations and we want know why.</p>	<p>All lands in use by Sierra Tropical have been duly paid for. We would however, try to see you after this meeting to determine which area you are referring to</p>
<p>Employment Opportunities</p>	<p><u>Chief Joe Luseni Town Chief, Boama</u> We want know if the employment opportunities are only for those communities who have given their land or it is for the entire chiefdom? Because communities where the project hasn't stretched to have got nobody employed by the company at the moment. This is cause for concern to us and we are also willing to give</p>	<p>Employment opportunities are for everybody from within the chiefdom. We are however giving priority to those whose lands have given at the moment. There will come a time when we would have reached full scale operations and the company would employ everybody from within the communities.</p>

ISSUE	QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>our lands.</p> <p><u>Abdul Vandi - Landowner Gelehun</u> We are demanding the company to give priority to land owners in terms of employment opportunities.</p>	
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p><u>Morie Juana - Former Councillor Ward 283</u> How does the company intend to manage buffer zones established as highlighted in the presentations? What measures are in place to ensure that these buffers are not destroyed?</p>	<p>The buffers cannot be used by the Sierra Tropical to undertake any activity and we would also encourage local residents maintain the buffers.</p> <p>The buffer zones are included in the leased areas and are under the protection of the company. The company will not use them and the local residents are encouraged to also keep out of the buffer zones and not use them or cut down trees within the buffer zones</p>
<p>Grievance Redress</p>	<p><u>Amie Rashid - Regent Chief</u> My people and I are not aware of and not included in the Conflict Resolution Committee that the P.C was just referring to. We feel neglected in this case as landowners within my own chiefdom.</p>	<p>The committee has just been started. We are going to form sub committees at the different village levels that would involve all stakeholders including landowners and village residents.</p>
<p>Worker Welfare and Condition of Service</p>	<p><u>Matta Mustapha - STL Employee</u> We are not clear on the number of hours that we are supposed to work per day; this also includes when to start work and when to end for the day.</p> <p><u>Morie Vandi – STL Employee Community Stakeholder</u> The supervisors of the company do not respect us in the field and we want to know if that's the instruction</p>	<p>There are 7 working hours in a day. Work is to start at 7:00am and ends at 3:00pm for all field workers. We do expect all workers to be at work by 7:00am. We are however flexible that if a worker can complete the allocated task per day before 3:00pm, then they can leave for their homes.</p> <p>We always encourage the supervisors to treat workers respectfully. We will call all of them again to another supervisory training session and promise you that after that training, their behaviour will improve.</p>

ISSUE	QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	given to them by the bosses?	
Other	<u>Hassan Bangura - Town Chief Sumbuya</u> Is there any incentive for the chiefs? How can the chiefs benefit from the project?	There are no incentives for chiefs as the chiefs are expected to work to serve their people.

3 Conclusion

The PCDP Workshop for the Sierra Tropical Ltd Agricultural Project was successfully conducted on 8th August, 2018, drawing representation from project community and institutional stakeholders in Sumbuya Town and surrounding communities (see appendices for attendance list).

The workshop was conducted predominantly in Mende, using translators, to ensure that community stakeholders fully understood the details of the project and to encourage questions/comments.

Presentations were made, describing the technical, environmental and socio-economic aspects of the project, followed by interactive question and answer sessions.

Generally, participants were most concerned about employment opportunities, the possibility of providing them with electricity, and socio-economic issues related to landowners and community development. Questions fielded by participants were responded to by representatives of STL and CEMMATS.