



Case Study

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN LAND USE IN LIBERIA

Kpanyan Statutory District in Liberia's coastal south faces challenges including economic instability, inadequate critical infrastructure, land degradation and climate change. Land use is a contentious topic in Liberia, as historically, the people who traditionally lived on the land were not formally recognized as the owners. In 2018, a new Land Rights Act was passed into law, whereby communities could become legal owners of their traditional homelands. To claim their land rights, communities are required formalize their land claims and develop a Land Use Plan that accounts for the interests of all members of society.

In December 2019, Kpanyan became the second district in Liberia to have its land use plan validated by stakeholders including the Liberia Land Authority (LLA).

With the support of IDH, in summer 2020, the Liberia Land Authority officially certified six communities in Foya as land-owning communities. The law recognizes local communities' right to own their customary land and guarantees them full legal protection as private

landowners. The six communities together occupy more than 55,000 hectares of land in the northern county on the borders with Guinea and Sierra Leone. The communities can now govern and manage their land collectively, according to their own by-laws administered by a representative local body.

In June 2020, IDH entered into a co-funding agreement of US\$402,000 with a Liberian-owned company, the Agricultural Infrastructure and Investment Company to promote the production and processing of lowland rice in Foya.

The project targets 600 smallholder rice farmers and will rehabilitate 4 dams in the district to ensure water supply all year round. The project is encouraging farmers to use the lowlands rather than continue the traditional shifting cultivation that has led to serious forest loss in the district.



It wasn't easy from the start but today we are laughing. Thanks to IDH's bottom-to-top approach, which means starting with the community. It is one important difference between IDH and other NGOs. We started this journey with IDH and today, the Land Authority is here with us.

Moses Sonjor

Assistant Superintendent for Development of Foya



ACHIEVEMENTS & FUTURE GOALS



500,000 hectares of customary community land under land use plans and full community ownership



Facilitating PLUPs in Kolahun and Vahun Districts in Lofa County, covering 262,462 hectares and supporting communities in both districts to formalize their customary land claims.



24,400 fruit tree seedlings targeted for production and out-planting within the communities covered



Facilitating PLUPs in Wedcarba and Jaedeppo Statutory Districts in Sinoe County, covering 307,808 hectares