



# LARGE SCALE LAND ACQUISITIONS PROFILE

## SIERRA LEONE

This country profile presents the Land Matrix data for Sierra Leone, detailing large-scale land acquisition (LSLA) transactions that:

- entail a transfer of rights to use, control or own land through sale, lease or concession.
- have an intended size of 200 hectares (ha) or larger.
- have been concluded since the year 2000.
- are affected by a change of use (often from extensive or ecosystem service provision to commercial use).
- include deals for agriculture, forestry and other intentions - excluding mining operations.

The objective of this country profile is to present LSLA data at national level to a broad panel of stakeholders, stimulating broad engagement and data exchange, facilitating the continuous improvement of the data. The data used in this profile was downloaded on 9 September 2016.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Land Matrix Sierra Leone deals database: [click here](#) (31 transnational deals and 3 domestic deals)

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**Table 1:** Sierra Leone's key socio-economic and institutional indicators

BASIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	
Population (million, 2015) <sup>1</sup>	7.23
Total land ('000 hectares) <sup>2</sup>	7.23
Total agricultural land (million hectares, 2015) <sup>2</sup>	3.9
Total agricultural land (as a % of total land, 2015)	54.7
Contribution of agriculture to GDP (2014, %) <sup>1</sup>	59.2
Food imports (% of merchandise imports, 2014) <sup>3</sup>	10.97
Food exports (% of merchandise exports, 2014) <sup>4</sup>	4.04
INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES	
Political stability index (2014) <sup>5</sup>	-0.22
Voice accountability index (2014) <sup>5</sup>	-0.31
Government effectiveness index (2014) <sup>5</sup>	-1.22
Control of corruption index (2014) <sup>5</sup>	-0.95
Investor protection rank (2014) <sup>5</sup>	22

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/sierra-leone>

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.AGRI.ZS?view=chart>

<sup>3</sup> Index Mundi, Sierra Leone, Food Imports, <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/sierra-leone/food-imports>

<sup>4</sup> Index Mundi, Sierra Leone, Food Exports, <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/sierra-leone/food-exports>

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, [http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?Report\\_Name=WGI-Table--Vietnam-&id=19e1cd0d](http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?Report_Name=WGI-Table--Vietnam-&id=19e1cd0d)

# CONCLUDED LAND DEALS FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY IN SIERRA LEONE



Figure 1: Concluded land deals for all intentions, excluding mining, in Sierra Leone.

- Project not started
- Startup phase (no production)
- In operation (production)
- Project abandoned
- No information



## OVERVIEW OF LARGE-SCALE LAND ACQUISITIONS

**Table 2:** Dynamics of international large-scale land acquisitions according to negotiation status.

	NUMBER OF DEALS	INTENDED SIZE (HECTARES)	CONTRACT SIZE (HECTARES)	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (% OF INTENDED SIZE)
Contract Signed	23	881 230	647 999	73.53
Oral Agreement	1	126 000	126 000	100
<b>Concluded</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1 007 230</b>	<b>773 999</b>	<b>76.84</b>
Expression of Interest	3	711 900	n.a	n.a
Under Negotiation	4	690 117	n.a	n.a
<b>Intended</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1 402 017</b>	<b>n.a</b>	<b>n.a</b>
Failed (Negotiations failed)	0	0	n.a	n.a
Failed (Contract cancelled)	0	0	n.a	n.a
<b>Failed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>n.a</b>	<b>n.a</b>

- A total of 773 999 ha are under contract by foreign investors, equaling 1.43% of the total arable land in Sierra Leone.
- Concluded deals are smaller in size than their original intention (obtained 76.84% of the intended size).
- The large majority of concluded deals are leaseholds for 5 - 50 years (84% of cases with information on lease duration).
- The deals which are still under negotiation commenced negotiation from 2007 - 2012, while the deals in which there was an expression of interest commenced in 2011 - 2013; it is not clear at this stage whether these deals will be concluded.
- There are no records of failed deals in Sierra Leone.

**Table 3:** Number of concluded deals according to contract size (hectares).

SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	FREQUENCY
<5 000	11
10 000 - 50 000	9
80 000	1
120 000 - 130 000	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>

- Concluded deals vary greatly in size, ranging from 110 ha to 126 000 ha.
- 12.5% of the concluded deals are larger than 100 000 ha and account for 47% of the total area of concluded deals.

**Table 4:** Concluded deals according to implementation status.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS	NUMBER OF CONCLUDED DEALS	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	AVERAGE SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	CURRENT SIZE UNDER PRODUCTION (HA)	AVERAGE SIZE UNDER PRODUCTION (HA)
Project not yet started	3	100 218	33 406	n.a	n.a
Start-up phase	2	21 110	10 555	n.a	n.a
In operation	11	440 194	40 018	16 152 <sup>†</sup>	2 019
Project abandoned	2	45 000	22 500	10 000 <sup>°</sup>	10 000
No information	6	167 477	27 913	n.a	n.a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>773 999</b>	<b>32 250</b>	<b>26 152</b>	<b>2905.78</b>

<sup>†</sup>N=8 deals

<sup>°</sup>N= 1 deal, size before abandonment

- Just over half of the concluded deals are active (start-up phase and in operation).
- These deals were brought into operation within two years of signing the initial contract.
- Two deals have been abandoned stating multiple reasons; labour disputes, poor yield, funding for project withdrawn and export timber ban.
- Only 5.9% of the area under contract is currently under production (only cases with known area under production).

**Figure 2:** Concluded deals over time (2000 to 2015).



Note: 8 deals were excluded as the year the contract was agreed is unknown.

- Foreign land acquisitions started in 2006 and peaked in 2010 and 2011, both in terms of number of deals and size under contract.
- In 2011, eight deals were concluded covering 198 000 ha.
- The largest deal was concluded in 2010 by a Portuguese investor, with a size under contract of 126 000 ha for agrifuel, food and agri-unspecified crops.





## INVESTORS AND INVESTOR COUNTRIES

**Table 5:** Investor countries (concluded deals).<sup>2</sup>

INVESTOR COUNTRIES	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	NUMBER OF DEALS CONCLUDED
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	187 356	6
Portugal	126 000	1
United States of America	120 000	1
India	80 903	2
Singapore	80 000	1
Canada	46 255	1
Switzerland	44 000	1
Netherlands	41 418	2
United Arab Emirates	21 000	1
Luxembourg	17 812	1
China	7 345	4
Nigeria	1 000	1
Mauritius	800	1
Finland	800	1
Viet Nam	110	1
Germany	110	1

- Overall 24 investors from 16 investor countries are engaged in LSLAs in Sierra Leone.
- Investors from United Kingdom are engaged in the most deals covering the largest area. Chinese investors are involved in the second highest number of deals but at a much smaller size.
- An investor from Portugal is involved in the single largest deal per size under contract.
- African investors do not play a large role in land deals in Sierra Leone; only two deals involve investors from Nigeria and Mauritius.
- None of the deals by foreign investors engage domestic investors.

**Table 6:** Dynamics of deals by investor type (concluded deals).<sup>3</sup>

INVESTOR TYPE	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	NUMBER OF DEALS CONCLUDED
Private Company	537 713	14
Stock Exchange-Listed Company	22 157	3
Investment Fund	1 250	1
No Information	215 379	7

- Private Companies are the major type of investors in Sierra Leone, followed by stock exchange-listed companies.
- The investor type of many investors is not known (no information).

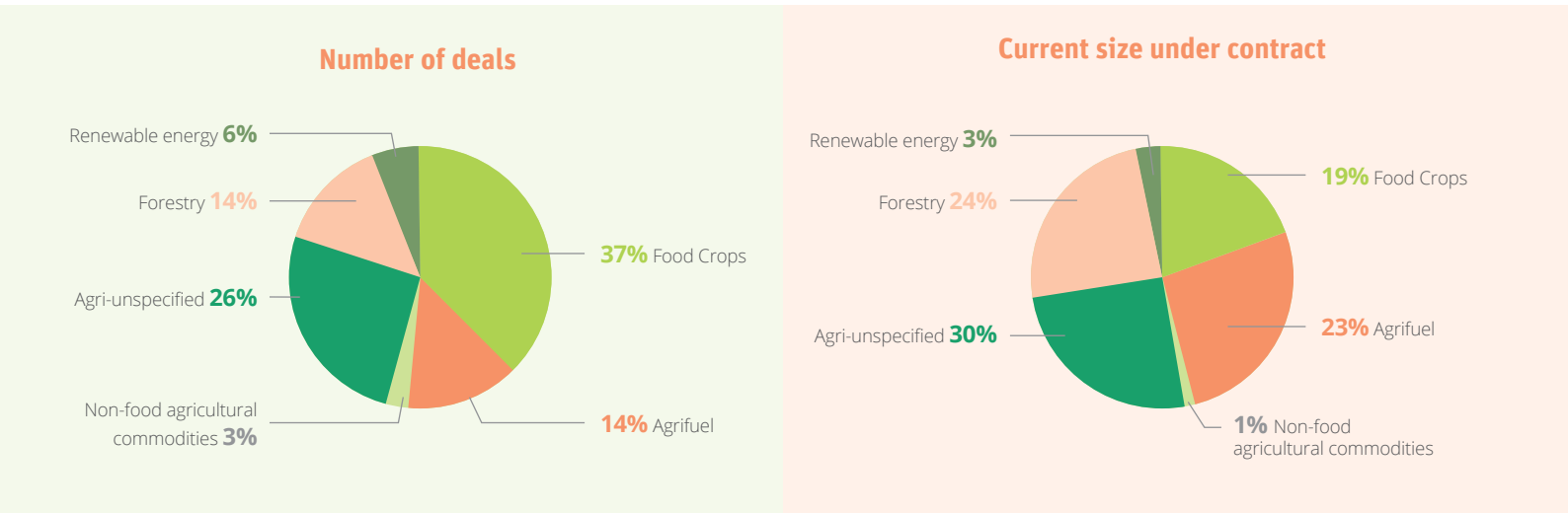
<sup>2</sup> In cases where investors from multiple countries are involved, the deal and the total size of the deal is assigned to all investors. Thus total number of concluded deals and sizes can be larger than table 1.

<sup>3</sup> In cases where a deal involves investors from different investor types, the deal and the full size of the deal is assigned to each investor type.



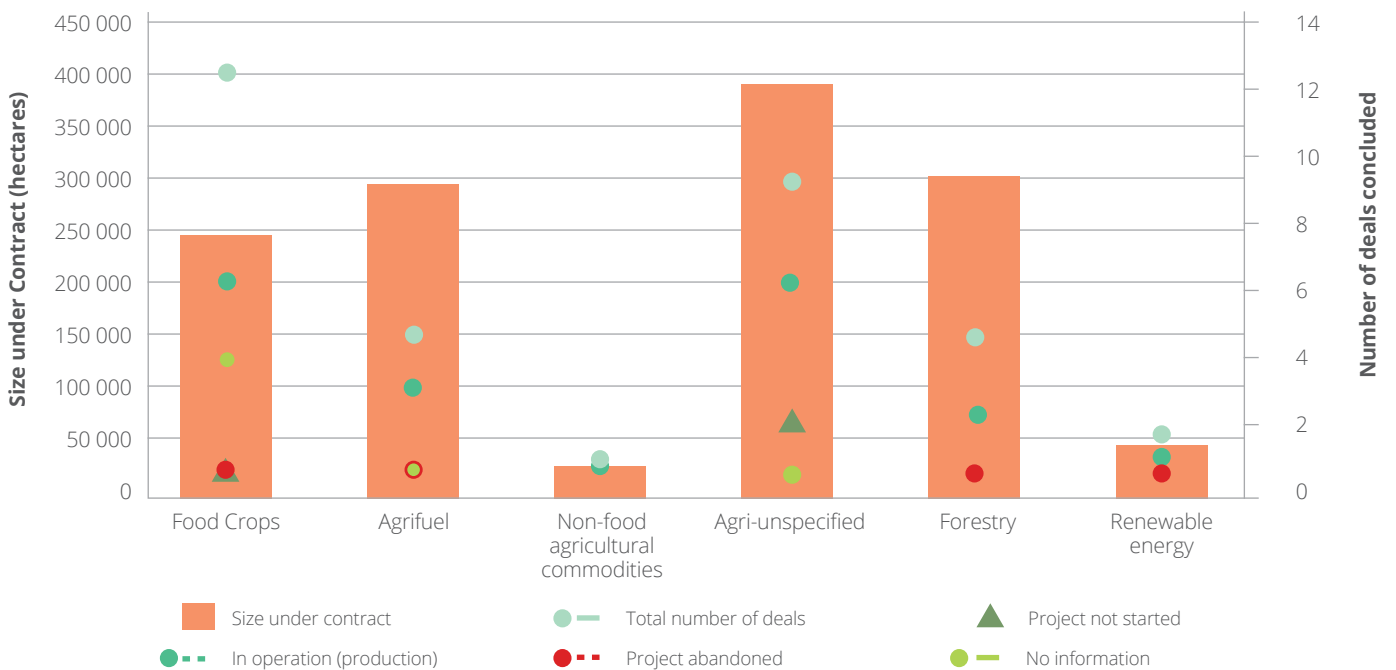
# AIM OF INVESTMENT<sup>4</sup>

Figure 3: Aim of investment (concluded deals).<sup>5</sup>



- Food crops concern a large number of projects (37%), however a small corresponding size under contract (19%).
- Deals for the production of agri-unspecified crops (all for production of oil palm) cover the largest size under contract (30%).
- Agrifuel and forestry deals involve a large portion of the size under contract but a smaller corresponding number of deals.

Figure 4: Concluded Land acquisitions by category of production, according to implementation status.



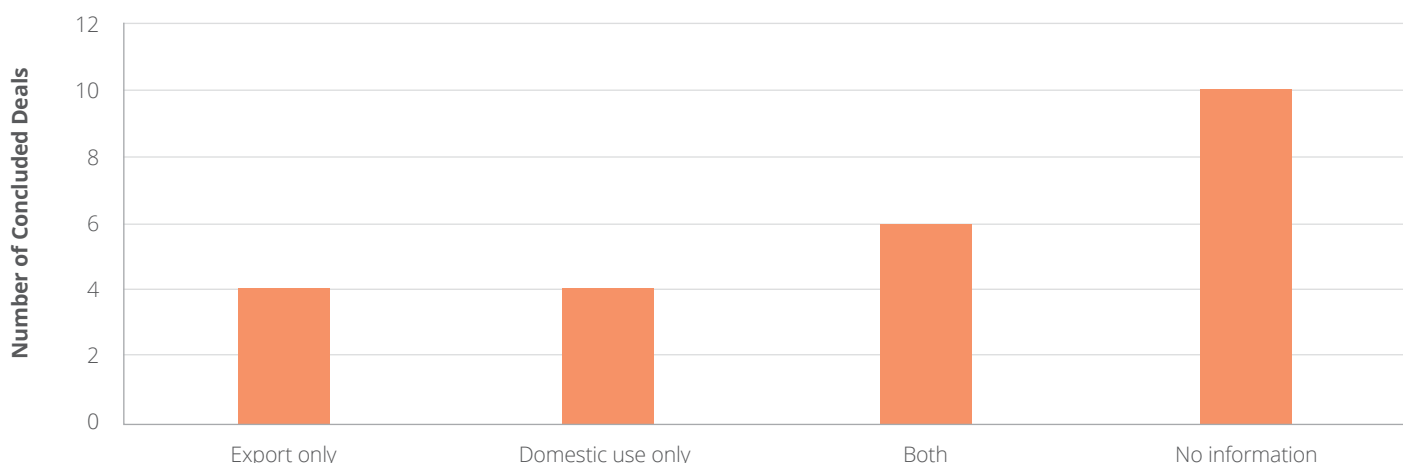
- The majority of deals are in operation for all intentions, except renewable energy.
- Projects for food crops, agrifuel crops, forestry and renewable energy have been abandoned.

<sup>4</sup> Intention of investments include: food crops only, agrifuel crops only, non-food crops only (e.g. cotton or tobacco), agri-unspecified crops - crops which can be used for multiple purposes (mostly palm oil), renewable energy, forestry, livestock (including fisheries) and other intentions. There are no deals concluded for livestock and other intentions in Sierra Leone.

<sup>5</sup> Note: Individual deals list up to three different intentions. We count the number of times an intention is mentioned. For 24 deals we report 35 intentions. The size under contract is equally divided by the number of intentions



**Figure 5:** The destination of production from concluded deals.



- Most cases involve both domestic use of produce and export.
- Destination of produce is not known in a number of cases (no information).



## FORMER LAND USE, TENURE AND OWNERS

**Table 7:** Former land use for concluded deals.

FORMER USE	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	CONCLUDED DEALS
Smallholder agriculture	231 894	5
Commercial (large-scale) agriculture	41 966	3
Combination*	41 218	1
Forestry	22 000	2
No Information	436 921	13

\* Smallholder agriculture and commercial agriculture

- Most concluded deals, for which former land use is known, have acquired land that was formerly used for smallholder agriculture (29.9% of the total size under contact).
- The majority of former land owners were private parties or communities, where this information is known.
- Former use information is not known for many of the deals.



## POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

- Community benefits promised under the projects included; education, financial support, health, roads, capacity building and productive infrastructure.
- It is not clear to what extent the benefits promised have been delivered.

**Table 8:** Contract Farming in concluded deals.

CONTRACT FARMING	NUMBER OF DEALS	NUMBER OF FARMERS	CONTRACT SIZE (HECTARES)
Yes	4	12 800	30 115
Not on the lease	4	12 800 <sup>†</sup>	30 115*
No	9	n.a	n.a
No Information	11	n.a	n.a

<sup>†</sup> Number of deals=3, \*N=2

- The majority of concluded deals do not involve contract farming, where this information is known.
- Data on community consultation and reaction is too scarce to provide meaningful information.

## DATA FIELDS WHICH WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS COUNTRY PROFILE DUE TO A LACK OF DATA

Please help us enhance the data, by contributing to the following fields:

- In-country processing activities
- Water Usage
- Number of projects with reported evictions
- Involvement of the community in pre-contract negotiations
- Compensation received by communities
- Actual community benefits
- Foreign and Domestic Employment (planned and actual)

### CONTRIBUTE!

The purpose of the Country Profile brief is to enhance data and data quality. Please help us to achieve this by directly contributing to: [www.landmatrix.org](http://www.landmatrix.org)

### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

If you would like to comment, contribute to the data, or obtain additional information.

- Contact the Land Matrix directly on [www.landmatrix.org](http://www.landmatrix.org)
- Add comments on existing land deals [www.landmatrix.org](http://www.landmatrix.org)
- Contact the Africa team: [africa@landmatrix.org](mailto:africa@landmatrix.org)

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