



LARGE SCALE LAND ACQUISITIONS PROFILE

LIBERIA

This country profile presents the Land Matrix data for Liberia, detailing large-scale land acquisitions and transactions that:

- entail a transfer of rights to use, control or own land through sale, lease or concession;
 - cover 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 agricultural, forestry and other purposes. Mining operations are excluded.
- The objective of this country profile is to present the data at national level and to make it available to a broad panel of stakeholders, as well as to enhance broad engagement and data exchange, facilitating the continuous improvement of the data. The data used in this profile was downloaded on 16 January 2017.¹

¹ Land Matrix Liberia deals database: [click here](#)

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Table 1: Key socio-economic and institutional indicators.

BASIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	
Population (million, 2015) ¹	4.5
Total land (million hectares, 2016) ²	9.6
Total agricultural land (million hectares, 2013) ³	2.7
Total agricultural land (as a % of total land, 2013) ⁴	28.03
Contribution of agriculture to GDP (% , 2012) ⁵	38.84
Food imports (% of merchandise imports, 1984) ⁶	25.01
Food exports (% of merchandise exports, 1984) ⁷	8.56
INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES	
Political stability rank (2014) ⁸	-0.63
Voice accountability rank (2014) ⁸	-0.29
Government effectiveness rank (2014) ⁸	-1.37
Control of corruption rank (2014) ⁸	-0.78
Investor protection rank (2014) ⁹	147

¹ <http://data.worldbank.org/country/liberia>

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html>

³ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.AGRI.ZS?locations=LR>

⁴ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=LR>

⁵ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/liberia/agriculture-value-added-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html>

⁶ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TM.VAL.FOOD.ZS.UN>

⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TX.VAL.FOOD.ZS.UN>

⁸ http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/#Liberia

⁹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16204/19984.pdf>



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)
Concluded (Contract Signed)	13	1 426 480	1 324 376	92.84
Concluded	13	1 426 480	1 324 376	92.84
Intended (Under Negotiation)	1	80 000	n.a	n.a
Intended	1	80 000	n.a	n.a
Failed (Contract cancelled)	2	134 344	134 344	100
Failed	2	134 344	134 344	100

Note: There are no deals for the following statuses: Oral agreement, expression of interest and failed negotiations.

- A total of 1 324 376 ha are under contract by foreign investors, equaling 14% of total land in Liberia.
- Investors obtained nearly 93% of the intended size.
- The average size of the concluded deals is 101 875 ha, which is greater than the average for both failed (67 172 ha) and intended (80 000 ha) deals.
- The government has cancelled two contracts. One contract was cancelled due to the collapse in the project during the overthrow of the Kadhafi regime. The other contract was cancelled as the investor was in arrears with tax payments and is permanently barred from engaging in commercial forestry activities in Liberia.

Table 3: Number of concluded deals according to contract size.

SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	FREQUENCY
8 000 – 20 000	3
20 000 – 50 000	4
50 000 – 80 000	2
80 000 – 120 000	1
>220 000	4

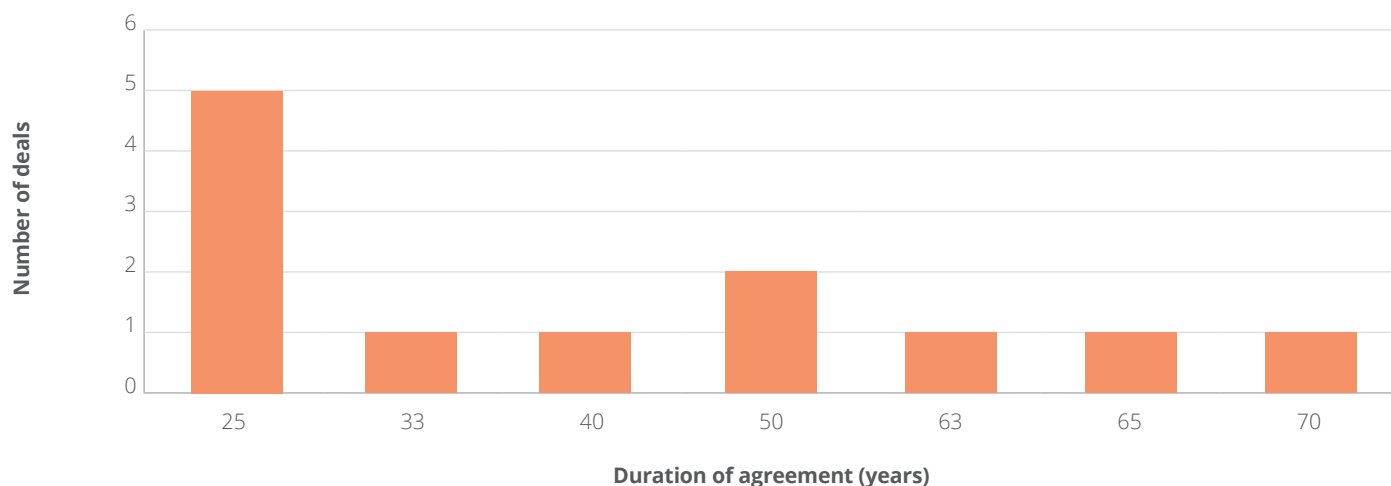
- Concluded deals vary greatly in size, ranging from 8 000 ha to 253 670 ha.
- The large majority of deals are less than 80 000 ha (70%).
- There are also four very large deals (more than 220 000 ha).

Table 4: Nature of deal (concluded deals).

NATURE OF DEAL	NUMBER OF DEALS
Lease / Concession	11
Exploitation license	2
Total	13

- The large majority of the concluded deals are leaseholds (85%).
- The exploitation licenses are for forestry deals, but forestry can also be done on concessions.

Figure 2: Duration of agreement for concluded deals.



N=12

- Duration of the agreements for the concluded deals ranges from 25 - 70 years.
- In 42% of the cases, the duration of agreement is 25 years.

Table 5: 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)
Start-up phase	2	56 953	28 477	n.a	n.a
In operation	9	898 183	99 798	31 905*	5 318
Project abandoned	1	250 000	250 000	n.a	n.a
No information	1	119 240	119 240	n.a	n.a
TOTAL (deals or ha)	13	1 324 376	101 875	31 905	5 318

* N=6

Note: There are no deals for the status project not started.

- The majority of the deals are active, 85% (start-up phase and in operation).
- Activities for all these deals started within four years of signing the initial contract.
- Only 5.8% of the area under contract is currently under production (of cases in which the area under production is known).



Figure 3: Concluded and failed deals over time (2000-2016)².



- The highest number of deals and the largest size under contract were concluded in 2009 (five deals covering 891 167 ha).
- Two cases experienced a change in size after the initial contract was signed. One contract was initially signed in 2008 and the contract size was reduced by 10 117 ha in 2014, due to a community protest against the expansion of the plantation. The other contract was initially signed in 2010 and increased by 30 000 ha in 2013.
- Two contracts were cancelled in 2010 and 2013, which were originally signed in 2008 and 2009 respectively.
- No known new contracts were signed after 2014.



INVESTORS AND INVESTOR COUNTRIES

Table 6: Investor countries (concluded deals)³.

INVESTOR COUNTRIES	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	NUMBER OF DEALS CONCLUDED
Malaysia	339 240	2
Italy	310 932	2
Netherlands	250 000	1
Singapore	220 000	1
United Kingdom	69 251	2
Japan	48 153	1
Côte d'Ivoire	43 800	2
Nigeria	35 000	1
France	35 000	1
Luxembourg	8 000	1

- Overall, 14 investors from 10 countries are engaged in LSLAs in Liberia. One investor is involved in more than one deal.
- Investors from Malaysia have the largest size under contract.
- The largest deal was concluded by an investor from Italy, with a size under contract of 253 670 ha for wood and fibre.
- African investors are involved in three deals only, with a total contract size of 78 800 ha, or less than 1% of the land under contract.
- There is no involvement by domestic investors in any of the concluded deals.

² Note: This graph shows the increases (positive values) and decreases (negative values) in land area for concluded and failed deals (contract cancelled), thus the total number of deals is higher than 13. Two cases experienced a change in size after the initial contract was signed (one increase in size in 2013 and one reduction in size in 2014). Two contracts were cancelled in 2010 and 2013.

³ Note: In cases where investors from multiple countries are involved, the deal and the total size of the deal is assigned to all investors. One deal has investors from multiple countries, leading to a total of 14 investors.

Table 7: Dynamics of deals by investor type (concluded deals)⁴.

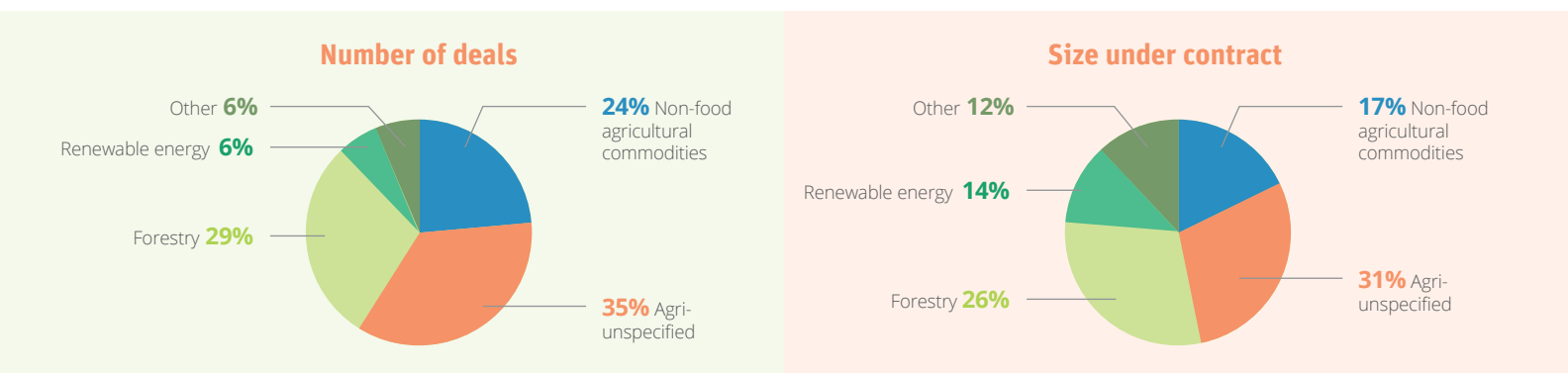
INVESTOR TYPE	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	NUMBER OF DEALS CONCLUDED	AVERAGE (HECTARES)
Stock-exchange listed company	609 204	8	76 150
Private company	404 240	3	134 746
No information	310 932	2	155 466

- Stock-exchange listed companies are the major type of investors in Liberia, followed by private companies.
- According to available information, private companies have an average size larger than stock-exchange listed companies.



AIM OF INVESTMENT⁵

Figure 3: Aim of investment (concluded deals)⁶



- Agri-unspecified crops (palm oil) concern the largest number of deals (35%) and the largest size under contract (31%).
- Land for forestry concerns the second largest number of deals and size under contract.
- No deals for food or agri-fuel crops have been recorded in Liberia.

Figure 4: Concluded land acquisitions by category of production, according to implementation status⁷.



- The highest percentage of operational deals (42%) is for agri-unspecified crops.
- The one deal for renewable energy has been abandoned.

⁴ In cases where a deal involves investors from different investor types, the deal and the full size of the deal are assigned to each investor type. No deals in Liberia have multiple investor types.

⁵ Intention of investments include: non-food agricultural commodities (rubber), agri-unspecified crops — crops which can be used for multiple our poses (mostly palm oil), renewable energy, forestry (for wood and fibre and for carbon sequestration/REDD) and other intentions.

⁶ Note: Individual deals list up to two different intentions. We count the number of times an intention is mentioned. For 13 deals we report 17 intentions. The size under contract is divided equally by the number of intentions.

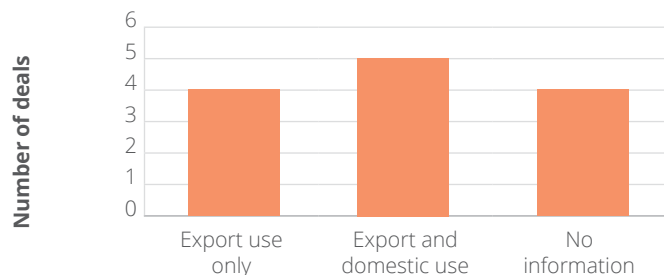
⁷ Four deals have multiple intentions, resulting in a total of 17 intentions for 13 deals. This figure reflects the implementation status per intention.

Table 8: In-country processing of concluded deals.

IN-COUNTRY PROCESSING	NUMBER OF DEALS
Yes	8
No	1
No Information	4

- Most of the deals include in-country processing, where this information is known.
- Palm oil and rubber are processed in-country.

Figure 5: The destination of production from concluded deals.

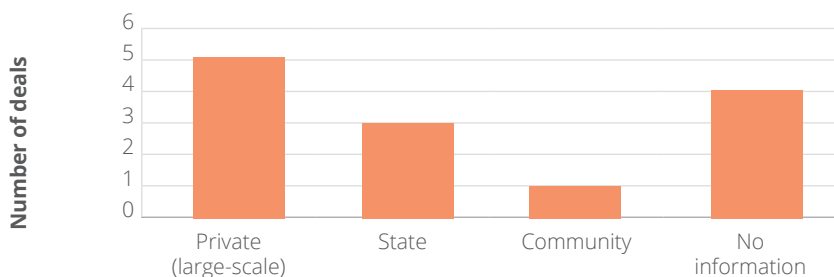


- 31% of the deals supply the export market only.
- No deals serve only the domestic market.



FORMER LAND USE, TENURE AND OWNERS

Figure 6: Former legal land owner for concluded deals.



- The majority of former land owners are private owners, where this information is known.
- The deals which were formerly owned by private investors were either owned by foreign investors before 2000, but the land was abandoned, or the original deal was only concluded after 2000, but subsequently changed owners.

Table 9: Former land use for concluded deals.

FORMER LAND USE	SIZE UNDER CONTRACT (HA)	NUMBER OF DEALS CONCLUDED
Commercial (large-scale) agriculture	577 089	6
Combination*	233 962	2
No information	513 325	5

Combination includes smallholder agriculture and forestry.

- Most deals were under commercial agriculture prior to acquisition, where this information is known.



POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

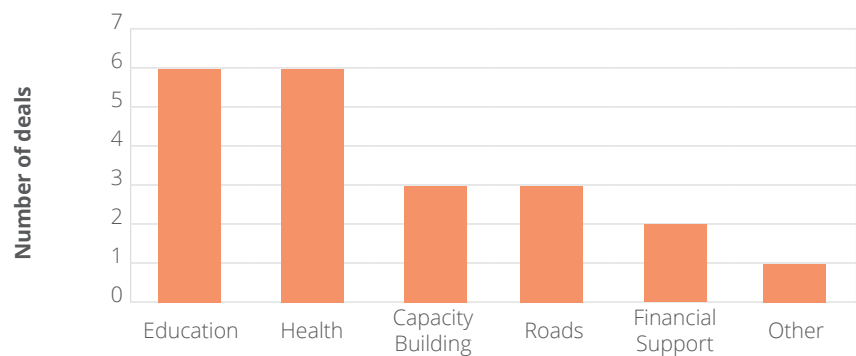
Table 10: Contract Farming in concluded deals.

FORMER LAND USE	NUMBER OF DEALS	NUMBER OF FARMERS	CONTRACT SIZE (HECTARES)
Yes	8	34	113 611
On the lease	4	N.I.	60 517*
Not on the lease	4	34*	53 094*
No	1	n.a.	n.a.
No Information	4	n.a.	n.a.

- The majority of concluded deals involve contract farming, where this information is known.
- The majority of deals with contract farming schemes are for non-food agricultural commodities (rubber) and agri-unspecified crops (palm oil).

*N=1, #N=3, N.I. =No information

Figure 7: Reported domestic benefits in concluded deals⁸.



- Benefits promised to communities predominantly include education and health facilities, capacity building and roads.
- It is not clear to what extent the benefits promised have been delivered.
- Data on community consultation and reaction is too scarce to provide meaningful information.

N=9

⁸ In cases where a deal has more than one benefit, each benefit is assigned to this deal. There are 21 benefits from 9 deals.

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:

- Water usage
- Number of projects with reported evictions
- Involvement of the community in pre-contract negotiations
- Compensation received by communities
- Foreign and domestic employment (planned and actual)

CONTRIBUTE!

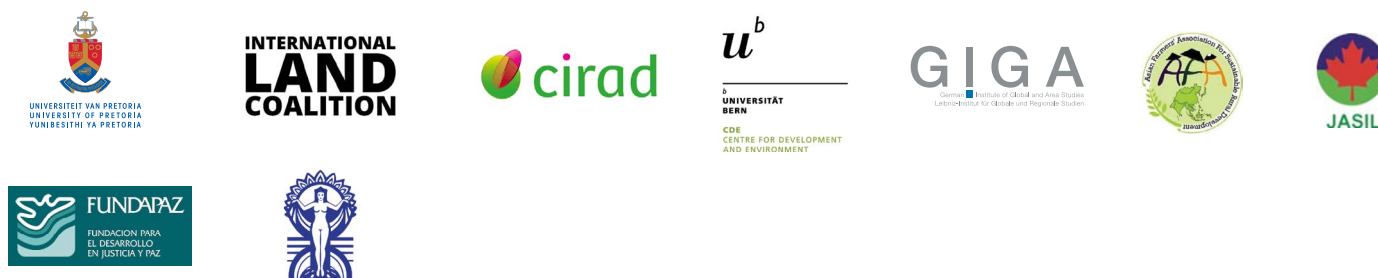
The purpose of the Country Profile brief is to enhance data and data quality. Please help us to achieve this by directly contributing to: www.landmatrix.org

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
- Add comments on existing land deals www.landmatrix.org
- Contact the Africa team: africa@landmatrix.org

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