



**ACTION PLAN**  
FOR CROSSBORDER  
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION  
Côte d'Ivoire - Liberia  
2013 - 2016

Building resilience, peace and stability on the border between Côte d'Ivoire  
and Liberia through improved livelihoods and social cohesion.

December 2012

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The joint cross-border partnership would not be possible without the support and enthusiasm of the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It has grown out of evidence based provided by different UN cross-border assessment and studies carried out in 2012 between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia on security, stabilization and food security, as well as research done by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

The proposed action plan is in line with the agreed framework of interventions established in July 2012 during a food security cross-border meeting organized by the Food and Organisation of United Nations in San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire.



## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CEI</b>	Independent Electoral Commission
<b>CFA</b>	Franc of French Colonies in Africa
<b>DDRR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion, and Reintegration
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugees Council
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FRCI</b>	Republican Forces of Côte D'Ivoire
<b>GoL</b>	Government of Liberia
<b>IDP</b>	Internal Displaced Population
<b>NGO</b>	Non Gouvernemental Organisation
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugees Council
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNMIL</b>	UN Mission in Liberia
<b>UNOCI</b>	UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

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# FOREWORD

For many years, the United Nations has been engaged in addressing violence and tension in the border region of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire through peacekeeping and humanitarian support. Today, both UN missions work closely together and with both Governments to foster greater stabilization, paving the way towards sustainable development.

At the peak of the 2010 Ivorian post-election crisis, humanitarian agencies assisted over 700,000 internally displaced persons in Côte d'Ivoire and 200,000 refugees in Liberia, as well as their generous host communities. Though nearly two thirds of the Ivorian refugees have returned home, they – and many others on both sides of the border – continue to face challenges of hunger, fragile peace, and underdevelopment.

For the future stability of this vital and resource-rich border region, several factors go hand in hand.

With food security a persistent challenge, the livelihoods of the population at the border depend on accessing and exploiting the region's plentiful natural resources. But as long as land access and tenure are compromised, there is likely to be less investment in agriculture. Moreover, unresolved land disputes will continue to carry the seeds of renewed conflict. Gains from economic development will remain fragile as long as divisions between communities remain and social cohesion is lacking. The United Nations is committed to helping strengthen the resilience of the population in the border region through a collaborative approach that links food security, social cohesion and land tenure.

As the border populations also depend heavily on crops and other goods being traded and sold across the frontier, their food security is intimately linked to peace in this region. Our aspiration is to increase stability by strengthening the livelihoods of communities, groups and households in fragile areas along the Liberia Côte d'Ivoire border. The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition proposes a three-year programme to pilot an innovative stabilization approach, with an emphasis on food security. Food security alone will not create stability; therefore, food security interventions combined with improved access to livelihood and social safety nets are important steps out of poverty as well as being instrumental in addressing triggers of conflict.

The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition builds upon the close collaboration between the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Efforts to bring greater food security to populations on both sides of the border can reinforce the capacity of local government to maintain cross-border relations and to build trust between citizens and their local authorities. We believe decision-makers in Monrovia and Abidjan will be further encouraged in their bilateral efforts towards the political, social and economic progress that will spell a peaceful and prosperous border region.

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# 1. SUMMARY

In November 2010, Côte d'Ivoire held presidential elections – a long awaited democratic step anticipated by political forces - since the war in 2002. The Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the international community accepted the results in December 2010, but violence spiraled, including in the border region with Liberia. This region has seen repeated refugee flows over the decades, as well as border crossing - as a coping mechanism when livelihoods are threatened or simply for better economic and social opportunities.

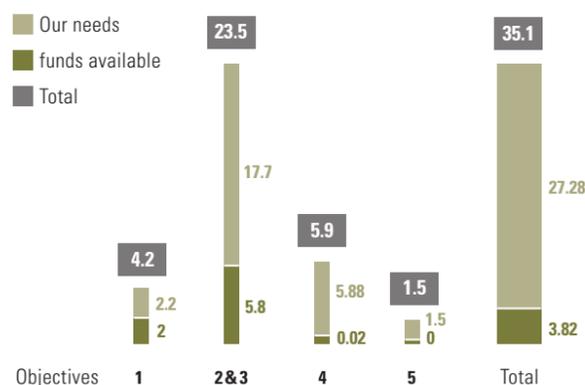
The border region straddles the Cavalla River and is rich in natural resources including gold, diamonds and timber. With numerous water points across the region and direct access to the ocean, the soil is fertile and fish thrive in its rivers and lakes. Despite its natural wealth and fertile lands, food security remains a major concern within the region. Evidence collected in 2012 shows how food and social insecurity are tied to land conflict and weak social cohesion, problems which persist throughout the region.

The governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs of both countries have been working to address the needs of this vulnerable population. Until now, however, humanitarian actors on both sides of the border have tended to view their interventions primarily in a short-term perspective, and through a national lens, with little or no exchange between the two countries. The proposed interventions to be piloted for the coming three years reflect the cross-border realities of the situation, integrating root causes of conflict, namely weaknesses in food security, social cohesion and land tenure.

Evidence-based programming aims to achieve two main objectives: 1) coordination, transparency and accountability throughout the implementation process, and 2) a rigorous impact assessment that can feed into future evidence-based policy-making. The five programme objectives of the plan will take into consideration the unique needs of the target populations in four Liberian Counties and two Ivoirian Districts:

## ESTIMATED FUNDING

Budget in Million USD



The budget is a provisional estimation of cost. A revised and complete will be formulated by partners before end of 2012.

The five programme objectives of the plan will take into consideration the unique needs of the target populations in the four Liberian counties and three Ivoirian regions in which the project will be implemented:

### OBJECTIVE 1:

To support communities, vulnerable groups and households to identify, understand, and plan responses to land and food security issues, reinforcing social cohesion and promoting stability.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

To improve the social and economic resilience of communities, vulnerable groups, and households through increased access to land, markets, financial services, safety nets, remedies for managing disputes as well as through increased productive capacity to respond to market demand.

### OBJECTIVE 3:

Prevention, detection and quality management of acute malnutrition in the Liberian-Ivoirian border region.

### OBJECTIVE 4:

To strengthen the capacity of government authorities to maintain cross-border relations in order to promote socio-economic stability and a transparent legal framework for land administration and land dispute-resolution in the border region.

### OBJECTIVE 5:

To utilize evidence-based programming and to advocate for integrated social cohesion, land tenure, and food security in the Ivoirian-Liberian border region.

The programme has been roughly estimated to cost around USD 35 million for the three-year pilot period, based on the agreed set of objectives and outcomes established during the San Pedro cross border meeting in 2012. The breakdown presents an estimation of the calculated cost from partners to guarantee field operations to secure government objectives. During the next stage government allocation and resources will be considered and programme costs revised accordingly, together with more detailed formulation of interventions. Significant fundraising and additional partners will be needed.

This programme grew out of a May 2012 stakeholder meeting in Monrovia on cross-border food security. A core group of food security actors working on both sides of the border - including the respective offices of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), FAO, WFP and UNICEF in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia – was established to launch an integrated food security programming process. The first steps included a joint assessments and a joint project formulation process.

The present Action Plan is based on the set of strategic principles defined in Monrovia and formalised in San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire.

The programme will be government-led, through the Ministries in charge of Regional Cooperation Côte d'Ivoire and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Liberia, and its implementation will be done by the respective technical Ministries and local authorities based on agreed activities within their remit of competencies and responsibilities - its budget is expected to be channelled through UN agencies.



## 2. BACKGROUND

*NRC, DRC, FAO, WFP and UNICEF have years of on-the-ground experience, both in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. These organizations work closely with both governments, and are already active in the administrative regions and counties in the border region targeted for the pilot programme. In cooperation with local and national governments on both sides of the border, the integrated program was designed to strengthen government authority and capacity at border level. Evidence from piloting this integrated model is expected to influence future interventions in the region.*

### **Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia in 2012**

Côte d'Ivoire plunged into turmoil after the second round of Presidential elections on November 28, 2010. The political stand-off between incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara deteriorated into open military conflict and a humanitarian crisis. There was violence between supporters of both candidates, and renewed tensions between the North and the South of the country, as well as inter-ethnic violence in the West and in Abidjan. Although Gbagbo was arrested on April 11, 2011, ethnic tensions in Côte d'Ivoire continued, with violence in Duékoué, among other areas rekindling inter-ethnic conflict and leading to additional displacement. At the height of the crisis, the United Nations estimated that more than one million people fled their homes, with over 250,000 taking refuge in neighbouring countries and about 700,000 displaced internally (UN-OCHA, 2011). The western part of the country suffered more violence and destruction than other regions, largely due to the historically contentious issues of land access and ownership. Consequently, a perception of instability prevails, discouraging farmers from investing in agricultural production.

Despite the massive returns which started in June 2011, more than 80,000 people remained internally displaced in Côte d'Ivoire in August 2012 (OCHA, 2012). By November 2012, 65,000 Ivorian refugees remained in Liberia with 80% being women and children, including some whose wish to return has been thwarted by the recent violence and intercommunity tensions. As one report notes, "Without adequate community-dispute prevention mechanisms in place, it is hard to envision a sustainable repatriation and reintegration of Ivoirian refugees into their home communities<sup>1</sup>."

With Ivorian refugees in Liberia deriving mostly from ethnic groups with political ties to ousted former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo, and with ex-combatants among their numbers, the arrival of refugees had implications for the host population. Generous host communities had to share their meagre food and seed reserves with those refugees not living in camps, worsening the "lean" season, compromising livelihoods and reducing production assets for host families. These host communities are also absorbing Liberians who fled Liberia during the during its civil

1 - Land Disputes and Food Security in the Liberian-Ivoirian Border Region, NRC 2012



war and are now returning subsequent to the discontinuation of their refugee status..

The situation of Liberia is made more difficult by its own civil war background. Fourteen years of conflict left education, health, and social welfare systems broken and an infrastructure in tatters. For an entire generation, the war prevented Liberia's children from realizing their full potential. Liberia's conflicts included widespread use of child combatants and sexual violence. Exacerbating all of these challenges is Liberia's pervasive poverty, which cuts across all areas of development. Recent global food and fuel price shocks, lingering impacts of the war, and longstanding social and economic disparities have left 48% of Liberian households in extreme poverty. An additional 16% of households are below the absolute poverty line, making them vulnerable to slipping into extreme poverty after experiencing a global or localized shock.

The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition for 2012 to 2016 is people-centred and aims to strengthen the influence of state authority in the interests of stability and coherent programming on both sides of the border.

A long-standing problem, food insecurity has been exacerbated by many years of conflict on both sides of the Ivorian-Liberian border.

### Food Security and nutrition

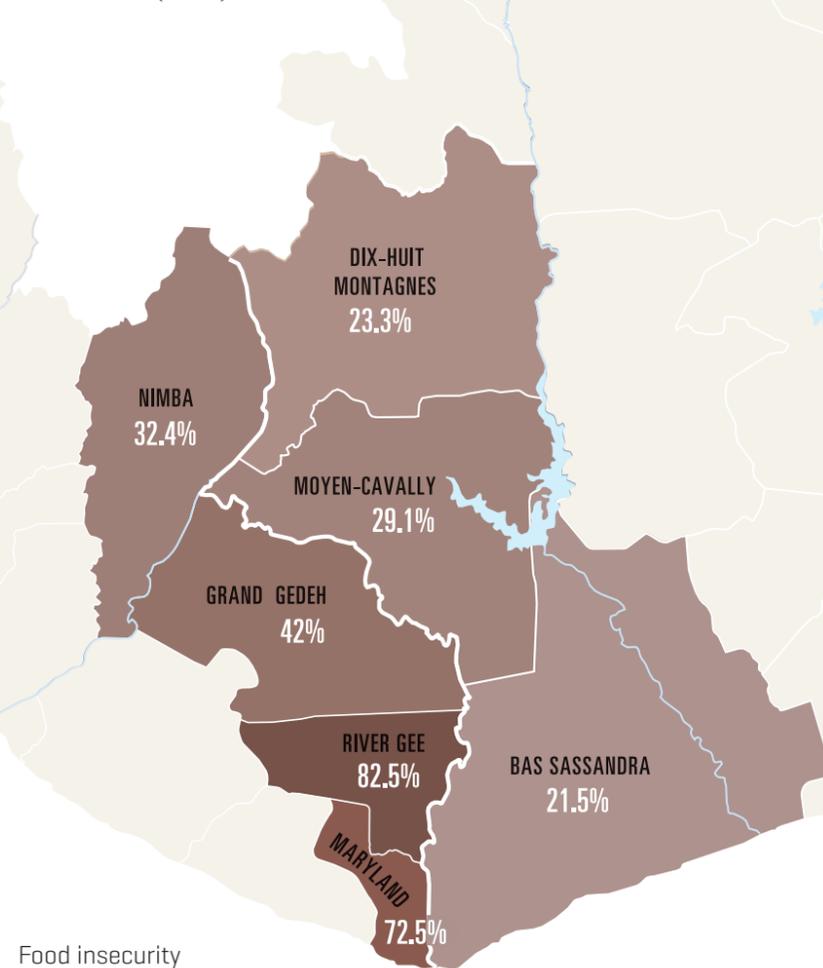
In Liberia, the large influx of refugees put tremendous pressure on both the fragile border communities and what was already a volatile food security situation. The increased consumption of local food stocks led to a premature lean season in 2012, forcing some Liberian households to consume their rice seeds, as prices for rice and other key commodities soared: the price for local rice in refugee-affected areas doubled between October 2010 and April 2011 (FAO's On the Border Line, 2012).

Malnutrition continues to be a major public health problem in Liberia. It is the principal underlying cause of child mortality, accounting for up to 44 percent of all child deaths in the country (UNICEF, 2012). In fact 250,000 children in Liberia suffer from chronic malnutrition while approximately 17,500 children suffer from acute malnutrition. An assessment made by UNICEF in Grand Gedeh and Maryland Counties in August 2011 revealed that acute malnutrition rates are lower among the refugee population than among Liberians living in the border region. However, stunting remains an enduring problem with more than 40 percent suffering from chronic malnutrition and almost 60 percent of children suffering from anaemia.

The state of nutrition of Liberian children is affected by infant and young child feeding and care practices

prevailing in the country. seven out of ten infants are sub-optimally breastfed in Liberia, meaning that apart from breast milk, they are also given water, fluids and other foods as early as two months. As a result of this practice, more than a thousand infants die annually. Among children six to 23 months of age, only half receive complementary foods while one-tenth receive the minimum adequate diet.

In Côte d'Ivoire, according to the results of the Evaluation Mission on Food Security in Emergency Situation (EFSA, June 2011), the rate of food insecurity rose from 12.6% in 2009 to 29, 30 % in June 2011, including 6.9% severely food insecure and 22.4% moderately food insecure, with acute malnutrition in the West, South East, Central East and North East. The results of the SMART survey in July 2011 showed a level of global acute malnutrition considered "precarious" in the poles North Central, South West, Central West, North and North East, exceeding the 5% threshold. Poles North and Northeast have a prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) above the threshold considered "critical" (> 40%). The poles for Northwest and West prevalence are above the threshold considered "serious" (> 30%).



Food insecurity in 2010

*The Presidents of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia met in Abidjan last September 2012 and shared their joint concern about the instability along their shared border, which could spill over to affect regional security if not handled through concerted regional action. The proposed Action plan can be a constructive example of coordinated support for the stimulation of intra-community trade and the economies of countries in the region.*

Humanitarian experience shows that in emergencies affecting Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, human and financial resources are weak and insufficient to cope with providing necessary lifesaving responses and to address chronic vulnerabilities. Infant and child feeding suffer from the increased physical, emotional and mental stress on women. Women with infants and young children therefore need the extra support and means to be able to better care for their children.

Food insecurity coping strategies include child marriages, child labour, "survival sex", prostitution and child trafficking. The threat of forced school drop-out, early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS among serious health issues will affect social growth and the ability of families to overcome poverty.

Good nutrition is essential for the survival, growth and development of children. Multiplied thousandfold, it has a great impact on the nation. Good nutrition improves physical and intellectual capacity, which in turn increases the ability to access resources, improve household food security, and later allow to access better jobs and living conditions. Eventually, these children can help boost socio-economic development.

Malnutrition, on the other hand, deters economic prosperity. The present value of productivity loss resulting from stunting in Liberia is estimated at US\$14.7 million annually (UNICEF, 2011) while there is at most 5 percent reduction in productivity due to anaemia among women. When quantified it represents a value of US\$150 million on productivity loss over nearly a decade. These losses are great, and Liberia's recovery will be more difficult when opportunities for improved intellectual capacity and increased productivity are overlooked.



## Land tenure

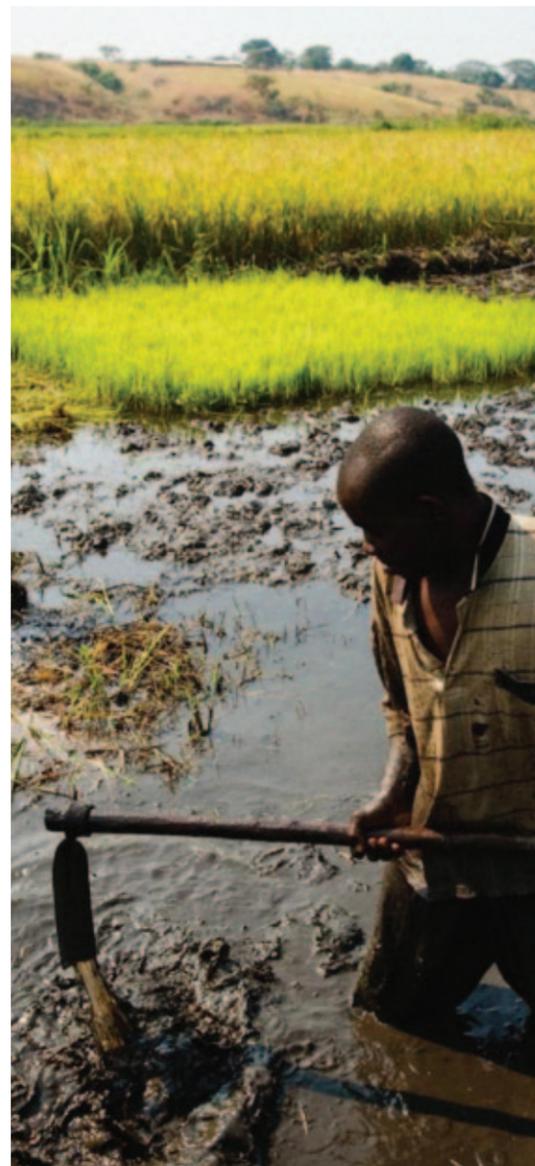
Food insecurity is further compounded by issues of land tenure and access to land. In both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the weaknesses in land administration compromise food security because the most important agricultural input necessary, land, is violently contested. Violence associated with land tenure disputes occurs throughout the border region of western Côte d'Ivoire and south-eastern Liberia. Capitalizing on political instability, some elements used the Ivorian post-election crisis of 2010-2011 as an opportunity

to settle old land tenure scores. As a result, Liberia's Ivorian refugees report that land disputes and land occupation are a major reason they are reluctant to return to Côte d'Ivoire.

On the other side of the border in Liberia, land issues often have roots in the civil conflict which ended in 2003. In some cases, social cleavages between age-sets, ethnic groups, and men and women overlap with land disputes making them sensitive and in some cases intractable. The arrival of tens of thousands of Ivorian refugees increased the strain on Liberia's existing mechanism for land administration and land dispute resolution. While the government and host communities coped as best they could, land disputes continue to present a threat to Liberia's stability now and in the future. This is likely to worsen the land ownership and vulnerability status of women and children in particular, considering that Liberia has a significant proportion of female-headed households in the aftermath of the civil war.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the 1998 land law provides a statutory framework for land administration. In Liberia, the Land Commission is overseeing a land reform that aims to strengthen property rights of both individuals and communities.

*In both countries, formal statutory systems co-exist with local informal and customary institutions also involved in land administration and land dispute resolution. Throughout the border region increased transparency, coordination, and collaborative dispute resolution can help governments and communities manage the challenges brought on by these complex institutional frameworks in an effort to reduce conflict and achieve humanitarian goals, including food security.*



## Social cohesion

Targeting food security, economic stability, and land issues among affected, at-risk populations deals with key root causes of instability and conflict. However, these interventions will not be sufficient without accounting for other factors that lead to tensions within communities, such as poor social cohesion. Social cohesion conflict drivers may be understood but must be addressed to prevent potential community tensions and other far-reaching health or social consequences that impact on both countries' recovery efforts.

Often those with the least access to food, economic initiatives, land, and other resources are the most at risk for violence, abuse and exploitation<sup>2</sup>. Reports show that both in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire the unequal access to resources and power imbalances can be the result of misperception of gender roles or age as well.

Additionally, the porous border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire remains a source of livelihood, facilitating the cross-border movement of people and goods. At the same time, it also permits illicit activities, including the movement of armed groups. There are large numbers of youth who lack sustainable livelihood opportunities, thereby making them susceptible to involvement in high risk behaviours, illegal activities, or, even, recruitment into armed conflicts.

Both sides of the porous Ivorian-Liberian border share the same ethno-linguistic groups, high rates of inter-marriage and an integrated regional economy. In fact, many of the refugees supported by host communities

identify themselves as members of the same ethnic group as their hosts. Both countries are undergoing different national reconciliation processes. Both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia must address prevalent ethnic tensions: the Liberian side of the border is home to the Mandingo, Gio, Krahn and Grebo ethnic groups while the inhabitants of the Ivorian side of the border are predominantly Malinke, Yacouba, Guere/We and Kru.

While these vulnerable groups struggle to access basic resources and quality services, the state capacity in the region remains constrained, leading to additional resentment and increasing tension. At-risk areas are also defined by a lack of resources and qualified personnel in the health, legal, security and social welfare sectors. Unequal access to services has been reported to exacerbate existing perceptions of disparity. Incorporating social cohesion strategies into food security, economic and land-related interventions is essential to make livelihood interventions sustainable and to promote stability within these areas.

Community-based services must be emphasized, strengthened and available to the most vulnerable, and those targeted for food security, social and economic safety nets should receive information regarding such services in order to address the holistic needs of communities and vulnerable groups in the long-term.

<sup>2</sup> - Including children and youth, women, those living with disabilities, and aging persons

## Agricultural Production in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

economic transformation of the region is integral to the production of two key cash crops: cocoa and rubber. Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest exporter of cocoa, while Liberia is a world leader in rubber production. The agriculture sector is central to the economy of the two countries, accounting for 42.8% of Liberia's GDP in 2008 (Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Programme, 2010) and 22.9% of Côte d'Ivoire's GDP in 2010 (World Bank). Although both countries boast very fertile soil, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire remain dependent on food imports. Farming, a low-technology livelihood activity, is not generally seen as means to financial independence; most households produce at the subsistence level and are net food-buyers.

The border region shares an agricultural calendar as well as ethnic groups. It displays commonalities between people and goods traded across the border. Knowledge and technology are not however shared the same fluid way between the border. The potential of a unified cross-border Farmer Field School (FFS)

can mitigate some of the root causes of conflict, and in an integral program address some of the negative attitude towards farming and income generating activities associated, namely the low production rates of farming in the region.

This initiative has a great potential to help address land tenure conflicts along the Liberian-Ivorian border, as well as to increase the interest of the youth for Agricultural production, including at-risk rural youth, developing their skills in value chain production approach (from production to market), and strengthening their organizational capacities.

# 3. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

*The Cross-Border Food Security Plan is founded on the premise that all action must be spearheaded and led by the government and its entities in the respective counties/districts, with humanitarian agencies providing support.*

## The border region in 2012

For the past twenty years, the Mano River Basin<sup>3</sup> has been subject to violence and political upheaval leading to food insecurity, underemployment and weak access to primary education and other essential services.

Formal organisations such as African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and the Mano River Union (MRU) are important for improved regional security, but their reach is limited. The Mano River Union (MRU), importantly, promotes economic development and regional integration among the four nations of the Mano River Basin, namely in agriculture to safeguard food security in the sub-region. The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition aligns with those regional objectives, and will be structured around a framework of principles established in Monrovia in May 2012.

This innovative action plan is people-centred, while at the same time promoting trust and credibility for the extension of state authority in the region, in particular those areas traditionally without a strong state presence. It embraces the central importance of informality<sup>4</sup> as the driving force in economic, social and political action in the Mano River Basin.

*Those principles set the tone for new approaches addressing key conflict drivers and improving human and food security interventions along the Ivorian-Liberian border. The participants -- representing government, NGOs and United Nations agencies from Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia -- agreed on the following eight cross-border principles, henceforth referred to as Monrovia principles:*

### 1 Strengthen state authority and public trust

Food security is seriously compromised by insecurity along the Ivorian-Liberian border. Illegal taxation and checkpoints are a considerable problem for livelihoods, as are corruption and impunity. At the same time, peoples' trust in state authorities remains low, and state presence and capacity are weak. Sustainable solutions to food security require securing natural resources, such as land, and to guarantee appropriate market access. United Nations agencies and food security actors need to work in line with the respective UNDAF objectives with the governments of both countries to help build state capacity and rebuild public confidence in state authorities.

very strong in certain areas of the border region, and has potential for further development. Cash and food crop production will need to take into account the complex and fragile land tenure situation, and must not undermine the protection of classified forests. Local and national authorities need to be strongly involved in programmes to promote economic opportunities, including cash crops. In areas where forest resources are already under strain, the modernisation of food crop production and the promotion of short-cycle livestock production can be a viable alternative to cash crops and provide greater protection of forests. The development of small-scale industries for the transformation, handling and transport of goods, as well as the rehabilitation of feeder roads would also go a long way in boosting the economic development of the region.

### 2 Engage in cross-border partnerships on social cohesion and land tenure

Food security interventions can contribute to the mid- and long-term stabilisation of the Ivorian-Liberian border region if they integrate social cohesion and land tenure concerns in programming. Food security actors need notably to take into account the social groups and the socio-economic dynamics, such as female involvement and youth employment, of their intervention areas, as well as land tenure conflicts and other issues that are not only a national challenge, but of a cross-border stabilisation nature.

### 4 Ensure medium to long-term interventions

The current challenges in the border region require medium- to long-term solutions of at least three years. Transitioning from the humanitarian to the recovery and development phases, food security actors need to start tackling the root causes of food insecurity and vulnerability helping build resilience to future shocks. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), modelled on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is structured around outcomes, four of which are already strongly echoed in the aims of the cross-border initiative.

Both governments shall access and share enough evidence based information from the field to improve decision makers at central level, to promote dialogue across the border, and ensure coherent livelihood interventions in each country. Policy decisions taken on one side of the border can offer, if well informed, suitable opportunities for the livelihood across the border, as well. Adequate exchange of information allows both governments to secure and maximize socio-economic benefits in the target region.

Malnutrition is an immediate result of food insecurity. Vulnerable population easily become affected by slight instability in the border region's economic, trade and agricultural activities. Therefore, there is a need to further strengthen, scale up nutrition and set a platform to effectively organize advocacy, education, communication, and service delivery on nutrition complementing food security programs.

### 3 Support economic transformation and cross-border trade

While food security is our main goal, the sustainable economic transformation in the border region will require more attention. Cash crop production is already

In post-conflict situations, education can be a protective factor against future and/or additional conflict as it is the most powerful tool to develop the economic and social skills necessary to generate sustainable livelihoods for successive generations. Education is deeply implicated in processes of socialization and identity formation and can act as an important vehicle for social cohesion.



Nutrition and food security actors work together to actively educate and inform communities on good nutrition especially among infant, young children and for pregnant women – Regular community outreach can empower families towards improving their health, nutrition and living conditions.

As household food security improves, food security and nutrition actors must ensure that families are taking steps that each member of the family is well-nourished and healthy. The availability and accessibility of nutritional services at the community and health facility level that will complement food security activities as needs of the family be put in place. This will encourage families to fully participate in economic activities and invest in the same time in their health, good nutrition and generate social wellbeing.

### 5 Tailor interventions to specific profiles of refugees and IDPs

There are specific target groups in the border region that will require tailor-made food security interventions and support. These include returnees from Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, refugees not willing or able to return, IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire and former combatants, as well as households hosting IDPs and refugees. Target group criteria's will take into account the needs of both labour constrained and labour endowed households. The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition must provide support to these groups taking into account their specific background and the challenges that they face. These populations will benefit from timely and reliable information on the presence and activities of humanitarian actors. Food security actors, namely Local authorities, FAO, WFP and agriculture-oriented NGO's need to participate in and make use of platforms to share information with populations and stakeholders across the border.

Platforms are already available, such as an FAO humanitarian database mapping agriculture interventions in the Liberian border. Those systems can capture wider livelihood evidences from both sides, if properly developed and improved. In Côte d'Ivoire recent agricultural market and pricing information systems supported by WFP and FAO can also be either replicated or harmonized with systems in Liberia. This would allow not only for suitable exchanges, but for more reliable evidence based information that can support decision making processes.

### 6 Focus on particularly vulnerable areas along the border

A number of areas along the border are considered particularly vulnerable, due to the presence of former combatants and mercenaries, illegal economic activities, high numbers of refugees and IDPs, among them vulnerable women and children, land tenure and other conflicts. These areas need to receive increased attention by food security actors, since many of the opportunities or threats on one side of the border are interrelated to the activities carried out by segments of the population across the border. Food Security partners are prepositioned to monitor and identify suitable sustainable livelihoods and income generation interventions across the border.

### 7 Adopt community-based approaches

All interventions should be focused on strengthening the capacities of communities to develop and sustain durable solutions. Both governments have national policies that envisage already suitable public extension services that must link to agriculture research and technology. The implementation of those policies still needs support from food security partners to ensure that target communities must be enabled to provide for their members the best technological options through public network, and other services available to communities. Community support must be inclusive of all social groups, including women's, youth, and children present in and around the village.

### 8 Focus on key priorities

While the challenges along the border are many, food security actors should focus on a small number of priorities. These include the restoration and expansion of key productive assets, reducing extreme socio-economic vulnerability, as well as the transfer of adequate knowledge, based on a bottom-up approach [namely, through Farmer Field Schools]. Improving nutrition should be a major outcome of all food security interventions and should also be complemented with critical essential nutrition interventions.

The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition is guided by the human-rights based principle that interventions must be developed with the communities and local authorities. The dual approach of bottom up (people-centred) and top down (national systems) for such an ambitious set of objectives requires partners to be present in the border regions, and to work closely with government authorities at different levels.

The programme will generate enough evidence based information from the field to support decision-makers in Monrovia or Abidjan. For instance, the accurate economic implication for livelihoods when government is compelled to close their borders or restrict trade for a period of time. Both governments can access and use data to adjust measures or mitigate any economic impact, with or without social implications at the border level.



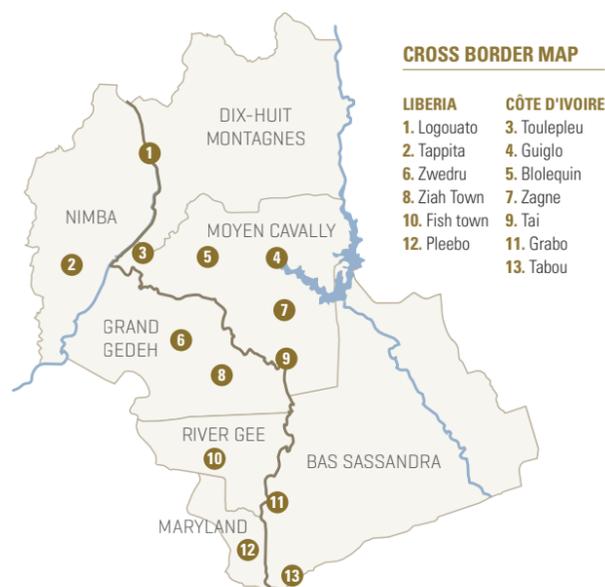
The proposed pilot strategy will be comprised of several periods, with an initial quick transition from a humanitarian approach to building resilience in a medium term perspective to sustain effectively development efforts envisaged by both government with a longer term perspective. Some partners will work at the village or county level to address the needs of entire communities or to target the most vulnerable; others will support governments through systems-strengthening. Regardless of approach, the organizations will meet in the middle, in a two-pronged intervention.

3 - International association established in 1973 between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1980, Guinea joined the union and later in 2008 Côte d'Ivoire joined MRU.

4 - politicians and political parties, military, finance, Non-Governmental Organisations, national and international actors, secret societies, businessmen, religious leaders, militias, and trade unions.



# 4. THE INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK



The cross-border initiative is a joint programme between United Nations system and international organisations, led by the Ministry of African Integration and Ivorian Abroad in Côte d'Ivoire and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Liberia. Its implementation will increase the space for dialogue between governments to share their experiences, and exchange lessons learned.

In early 2012, The Liberian and Ivorian Ministries of Agriculture conducted an annual harvest assessment covering 2011. This assessment, carried out with the support of UN partners, NRC and DRC provides much of the solid evidence for the present action plan.

The action plan will be driven jointly by both governments. Its implementation will involve not only strategic support from the government authorities, but will also entail an accounting of their public resources in order to achieve a realistic set of proposed objectives.

Partner organizations and agencies already have a

strong presence on the ground in targeted cross-border areas and, will support the governments to implement and benefit from the innovative integrated approach to be piloted. Each partner will address a particular issue (or set of issues) in the target areas, in line with government priorities.

## The institutional context

This initiative is informed by nationally defined sector priorities and objectives already expressed in key government policy documents, and will adopt elements of the national frameworks – such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) for Liberia and the National development Program (PND) for Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition to these national frameworks are the aforementioned Monrovia Principles, the outcome of the follow-up to a March 2012 meeting of United Nations Country Teams and United Nations missions from Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. While the Abidjan meeting focused on a comprehensive and global framework for cross-border collaboration, the Monrovia meeting focused exclusively on cross-border collaboration of the food security sector. While the 2013-2017 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Liberia and the 2013-2015 for Côte d'Ivoire are being finalized, the 2008-2012 UNDAF for Liberia and the 2009-2013 UNDAF for Côte d'Ivoire will be used to guide this programme.

Other institutional frameworks will be referred to throughout the programme design process. The programme will take into account the assistance frameworks of each organization and will operate in accordance with the Do No Harm principle. It will also adhere to the Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF), which defines standards and procedures for maintaining organizational accountability to stakeholders.

## The vision

Our common goal is to implement activities that will lead to strengthening the livelihoods and resilience of communities, vulnerable groups and households in fragile areas along the border of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

## The targets

An August 2012 meeting in San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire identified approximately 60 potential target communities; the activities of partners, however, will occur in selected communities where government authorities agree interventions will have the most impact. This selection process, expected to conclude by the end of 2012, will be guided by 13 areas of concern (see map).

The southeast is one of the regions facing higher challenges in Liberia; more so in the Ivorian-Liberian border region. The cross-border initiative will address the most vulnerable communities and individuals in this region, including refugees, IDPs, returnees and hosts in the four counties of Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland in Liberia, and the two administrative regions of Montagnes, and Bas Sassandra in Côte d'Ivoire.

Depending on the conditions and nature of vulnerabilities, the “most vulnerable” communities<sup>5</sup> and beneficiaries will be prioritized along with those who have received insufficient or no humanitarian support. Criteria for selecting beneficiaries will build upon the existing action of government and humanitarian partners in the field. While criteria may vary by intervention, there is room to utilize the existing criteria from the activities of all actors to develop a comprehensive strategy that reaches the most vulner-



able communities. Furthermore, it allows partners to consider groups who have been underrepresented and underserved in the past, such as the elderly and disabled.

This target area represents four Liberian counties and two Ivorian administrative regions, and is expected to reach a maximum of 100,000 direct beneficiaries in the pilot phase.

5 - The Liberian social cash transfer experience will build upon the tried and tested census-based vulnerability and poverty assessment approach to targeting vulnerable household which has been implemented successfully in Bomi County pilot for a period of two years, and will be expanded to Maryland County soon.

	Objective 1	Objectives 2 & 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Food security	Understand and plan response plans to land and food security	Economic resilience through access to technology, markets and financial services	Strengthen the capacity of government authorities to maintain cross border socio-economy	Evidence based programme implementation at cross border level
Land tenure		Equity increased access to land and natural resources	Transparent legal framework for land administration and land dispute-resolution	
Social cohesion	Reinforcing social cohesion among communities	Social resilience through remedies for managing disputes and through safety nets	Improved civic relations at the local and national level between communities and the government	

# 5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition will link traditionally separated targets under a unified logical framework. For example, communities targeted by FAO and WFP for food security will overlap with the communities UNICEF targets for social cash transfer. Programme funds will be channelled through United Nations to make this one consolidated programme with partner components, with a sustainable exit plan. The pilot is not intended to finance funding gaps in ongoing programmes in the region.

Funding for this programme will be utilized to implement an innovative model of Farmers Field Schools that integrates social cohesion, food security and land dispute resolution actions. Farmers' Field Schools (FFS) are an extension approach built upon principles of adult education and experiential participatory learning processes. A typical FFS involves practically-oriented field study processes in which groups of farmers (20 - 30) with a common interest get together on a regular basis to study the "how and why" of a given situation, under the guidance of a facilitator. They make regular field observations, relate their observations to the ecosystem and natural resources available to them, discuss access and combine their local experience with "new" information before making appropriate decisions. The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition will use the FFS to bring together groups of beneficiaries in its target area to discuss issues and possible solutions that they themselves can implement.

This systematic learning process is guided by situation specific but holistic curricula that follow natural cycles of a particular subject or community problem that requires collective action. All training activities in a FFS, emphasize food security and self-reliance through sustainable production practices and better entrepreneurial skills, income generation for either short and long term enterprises or collective marketing in order to ensure economic empowerment of the participating farmers. The FFS approach will be tailored under the Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition to ultimately allow participants to address the some of the underlying drivers of conflict and mitigate

tension in the border region between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, including land tenure, social cohesion, and natural resource based livelihood opportunities from their own local perspectives, and tackle them through a participatory, community based approach.

The components are as follows :

**The first component** of the pilot cross border food security and nutrition programme will be to identify the vulnerable communities through a careful needs assessment and conflict analysis conducted by government authorities<sup>6</sup> , together with the humanitarian partners in both countries. Based on this, the field teams will determine with local authorities which communities are most in need of support, and the nature of such support. In order to address food security, land and property rights, and social cohesion, communities will be approached through appropriate local traditional practices, while sensitised on formal procedures on how to access and utilize community resources. A participatory dialogue will be developed that includes all stakeholders – Liberian, Ivorian, and other nationalities – in the decision and the implementation process.

The second component will focus on launching new activities, or the continuation of previous activities that promote resilience, including skills for conflict management and transformation, at local levels. The integrated, cross-border approach of this component seeks better coherence and complementarities on both sides of the border, sets it apart from previous programmes.. New baseline surveys will be conducted to determine the available socio-economic and natural resources in each vulnerable community, which will inform a series of activities will be initiated and synergised to address food security, social cohesion and land tenure.

<sup>6</sup> - Such as the National Inter-ministerial Committees on programme management in Côte d'Ivoire.



Social cash transfers component will target labour constrained and extremely poor households that will include children, female headed households, the elderly, the sick and the disabled with predictable and consistent bi-monthly cash transfers to boost their food consumption levels and access to essential social services.

The delivery of essential nutrition services (3<sup>rd</sup> Objective) will complement these activities in order to promote and ensure the delivery of cost-effective specific nutrition actions at specific periods in a child's growth and development. It will aim to strengthen nutrition service provision as part of the critical health services package, contribute towards the reduction of the high burden of morbidity and mortality due to malnutrition among women and children and thereby, further reduce vulnerability of families. Intergenerational effects of good nutrition can greatly improve a nation's economic growth

**The third component** will promote activities across and potential complementarities. It will seek coherence of approaches at the border and increase agriculture and food security information sharing between governments to promote the use of information and communication technology. During this period, the relationships and capacity of local authorities and actors across the border will be fostered via exchange visits, periodic meetings and stakeholder consultations (agro-markets, rural finances and policies, etc). The cross border food security and nutrition efficiency of interventions is expected to be improved during the implementation process, improving activities and outputs based on evidence collected from the field, defining what contributes better to achieve proposed objectives.

**The fourth component** utilizes the results from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to create effective programming across the border enhancing dialogue between authorities and stakeholders. Baseline and end line surveys will be conducted to assess the strength of each programme's activities as well as their respective weaknesses. This comprehensive evaluation will attempt to isolate the effect of this integrated, cross-border approach. As a result, programming becomes more consistent, based on data and research. Evaluations and periodic mapping activities will also allow for expansion of services to new communities and phasing out those who have become less vulnerable.



## The Keys programmes

The integrated and results-based approach will entail regional decision-making and community-level implementation. The agencies and organizations involved will balance support through a bottom-up approach with systems that work top-down.

### Cross border partnership to accelerate our interventions

Coordinated partnership is essential to our intervention. The leadership and commitment of government authorities is indispensable to build upon and be integrated with what is already being done by many partners on the ground. Government, NGOs, donors, civil society organizations and beneficiary groups will be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition. A core group of food security actors working on both sides of the border –the offices of WFP, FAO, NRC, DRC and UNICEF in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia – is available to assist both governments to move the process forward at central and at the field level; the group has already conducted joint assessments and collaborated on the project design. As the project moves through the pilot stage, other food security actors may be invited to join efforts to strengthen cross-border collaboration based on the eight actions defined in the May 2012 meeting in Monrovia.

This collaboration will also help to attract national- and international-level attention to our model.

### Community-level coordination as an engine for sustainability

Coordination of evidence-based information and efforts across the border will entail a bottom-up approach, ensuring greater ownership on the part of the communities, and local authorities. The direct involvement of beneficiaries - community-based organizations, women's groups, cooperatives, etc – in the cross-border implementation process is foreseen as an effective means to promote the sustainability of the action. During the next step of the formulation the adequate relationship of economic transformation with the private sector will have to be specifically addressed.

## Monitoring

Monitoring will be an important component for programmatic quality control. It will be an integrated part of the programme implementation to measure the impacts of the projects on beneficiaries.

Each implemented activity will be examined in relation to baseline data. Indicators will be developed in order to measure progress, to correct any programmatic deficiencies, and to restructure actions as necessary.

A joint Monitoring and Evaluation unit of the two countries will be responsible for monitoring the entire initiative on both sides of the border. Each of the programmes will be evaluated at the start of the pilot and during three midterm evaluations that will provide periodic evidence that can ensure timely delivery of results and outputs.

Annual surveys will be conducted to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the activities under each project. This comprehensive evaluation will attempt to isolate the year-on-year impact of the cross-border initiative. As a result, programming will become more robust, based on data and research. Evaluation and periodic mapping activities will also allow for expansion of services to new communities and phasing out services to communities that have become less vulnerable.

### Cross border communication

Information sharing will occur at all stages of the coordination and implementation of this programme. Capacity-building activities will take place at the beginning of each project in order to facilitate exchanges of information. Lessons learned will be disseminated at the end of each phase of the programme in order to share field experiences with the partners and other actors. Each document with systematically highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each action, thus serving as recommendations for improving future actions. The communication strategy will have two main objectives:

- a. To showcase the results of cross border programming and joint food security programme to targeted audiences in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.
- b. To highlight the role of the Government of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of UN and partners, in combating the instability in the border region, paving the way to sustainable development in the region.

# 6. STRENGTHS & EXPERTISES

*Each partner organization brings a wealth of experience and added value to this cross-border initiative.*

Both governments at central and local level are familiar with the root causes of past conflict in the border region between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Both, are politically committed to stabilize the border region between their two countries. Decentralization and state authority remains a challenge, but it is an imperative for both governments. The Cross-Border Action Plan for Food Security and Nutrition will not promote relevant socio-economic transformation without the active participation and resources from government authorities. Government and partners must yet define the adequate balance of support that can secure the leadership of local authorities in setting out intentions, priorities and objectives for local economic development, especially in terms of service provision to those vulnerable segments of the population.

FAO has been devoted to reestablishing agriculture livelihoods in the region together with a variety of stakeholders. The resilience focus of FAO coordination work derives mainly from the field experience and joint understanding acquired during 2011 with partners such as WFP, DRC and NRC in Liberia and in Côte d'Ivoire.

Overall UNICEF in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia promotes the development and strengthening of integrated systems as a highly effective approach to addressing the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by women, children and their families in fragile and unstable environments. The country programs have an equity focus aiming to support the Governments' ability to build systems that contribute to sustaining peace. In particular, the programmes focus on education, health, water, sanitation, hygiene, social services and safety nets. The 'systems' component focuses on

strengthening key structures and mechanisms that address inequities in services and vulnerabilities in an integrated manner with the purpose of bolstering the ability of the respective Governments to deliver essential services.

WFP has emergency operations on both sides of the border and showed strong capacity during the last two years:

- to improve the food security of Ivorian refugees, IDPs and host communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia;
- to stabilize moderate acute malnutrition rates below 5 percent among children aged 6-59 months in the refugee, IDP and host populations;
- to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable host populations Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia adversely affected by the political crisis of 2010/2011 and alleviate their food insecurity during the lean season.

To reduce the burden on a very vulnerable host population already suffering from inadequate employment or low wages, compounded by high food prices, and in order to restore and rebuild livelihood opportunities, WFP provides food assistance to vulnerable and food-insecure households in the border area through food-for-assets (FFA), and other activities. WFP uses food support to build the human capital of communities through school meals and to rebuild the livelihoods of rural families by helping smallholder farmers to rehabilitate agricultural assets with a focus on rice production. Combining each agency's agricultural expertise, WFP and FAO will address nutrition and food security more directly, identifying and targeting beneficiaries together and merging their interventions to amplify impact. UNICEF will support lifesaving nutrition interventions through improved service delivery and provision of supplies.

The results of the 2012 nationwide comprehensive food security and nutrition survey (CFSNS) in Liberia and the Emergency Food Security Assessment for the

Western Regions of Côte d'Ivoire (EFSA) were jointly undertaken by the Government, WFP, FAO, UNICEF and partners and is anticipated to be available by January 2013. The assessment will provide updated information on the food security and nutrition status of Ivoirians residing in the four refugee-hosting counties and Liberians outside the camps. The findings will help guide the targeting and assistance to be provided to populations affected by the refugee crisis. A joint assessment mission (JAM) by WFP, UNHCR and partners is also planned for November 2012 in the border region, with preliminary results expected in December. This will benefit from the recent SFSNS and EFSA and will contribute towards a plan for future assistance to refugees and the host population.

NRC will provide food security and livelihoods, and land dispute resolution expertise. In addition to its comprehensive humanitarian interventions in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, including emergency shelter, education, first response to sexual and gender based violence, civil documentation, and WASH in both refugee/IDP camps and host communities, NRC has developed expertise in housing, land and property rights. NRC started its Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) project with a focus on housing, and land property rights in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia since 2006. ICLA uses collaborative dispute resolution, education, advocacy and rigorous monitoring and evaluation to mitigate existing land disputes and prevent future conflict.

DRC first started working in Maryland County in south east Liberia in 1998 and has since expanded. The organization has been active in Côte d'Ivoire for many years. DRC's activities in the region focus on the protection, return and reintegration of Liberian and Ivorian refugees and IDPs, within a context of emer-



gency response, general recovery and reconstruction, and peace building at the community level. DRC has already been working with at-risk youth, women, community leaders and local community-based members to address social cohesion in the border region.

		OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVES 2 & 3	OBJECTIVE 4	OBJECTIVE 5
ROLES	NATIONAL GOVERNMENT	Lead and establish suitable participatory dialogue	Improve public services and legal framework for equal and transparent access to natural resources	Strengthen cross-border cooperation to increase state authority and economic development	Provide reliable evidence based information to inform decision makers at national level
	UNITED NATIONS	Identify causes, actors and dynamics of conflict and livelihood tensions	Promote suitable resilience livelihoods opportunities	Promote social and economic synergies across the border, at local and central level	
	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	Mobilize communities to prepare response plans in line with traditional authority and procedures	Implement interventions for economic and social resilience at local level	Improve livelihoods and enhance civic relations at local and central level	

## 6.2. THE CALENDAR

	2012	2013				2014				2015			
	Qtr 3 & 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Programme Management			Midterm Evaluation				Mid-term Evaluation				Mid-term Evaluation		
Objective 1	Participatory dialogue												
	Community plan developed												
	Outcome of dialogue disseminated												
Objective 2	Establishment or expansion of Farmer Field Schools (FFSs), P4P initiative and home/school gardens												
	Training in agricultural technology, nutrition and food diversification, land and property rights, and dispute resolution through FFS												
	Establishment of price- and marketing-monitoring systems and dissemination of this information through ICT												
	Construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure through WFP's social safety net												
	Establishment or expansion of demonstration sites												
	Sensitisation on financial products and income-generating activities and establishment of VSLAs												
	Social safety net programmes started – social cash transfers, cash for work, cash for technology, etc.												
Obj. 3	Provision of life saving nutrition interventions and roll out of ENA packages												
Objective 4	Preliminary visits by border-region stakeholders												
	Periodic visits between regional, local, and border-region stakeholders to share information, best practices, lessons learned												
	Advocacy of a comprehensive migration policy with the government												
Objective 5	Baseline survey												
	Comprehensive review of value chain				Annual survey				Annual survey				Annual survey
		Periodic mapping of border region											
						Expand to newly defined vulnerable areas				Expand to newly defined vulnerable areas			

## 6.3. RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

L'initiative transfrontalière adoptera une approche axée sur les résultats, nos objectifs programmatiques prennent en compte les risques et hypothèses listés ci-après :

Risk	Impact	Mitigation	Assumptions
Political instability in Liberia and/or Côte d'Ivoire	Restraint on the part of donors as well as supporting partners; disruption of government; leading to increased vulnerability and greater food insecurity.	Collaboration with partners to show financial consistency; support to government partners; promote collaboration with civil society.	Government stability; progressive economic stability and growth; governmental commitment.
Weak governance in Liberia and/or Côte d'Ivoire	Limits desired results; reduces stakeholder motivation.	Reinforce effective management and accountability systems; promote transparency in decision-making processes.	The continuation of existing anti-corruption campaigns; accountability systems are in place;
Programmatic financial constraints	Reduction in the coverage and breadth of interventions.	Foster donor awareness and support communications; provide current data to mobilise resources; hold an event to discuss financial opportunities.	Continued engagement of donors; sustained dialogue with partners; integrated interventions.
Weak implementation capacity	Slows progress and compromises results; may eventually cause misunderstandings and duplication of efforts; can lead to errors in beneficiary selection.	Perform a needs assessment and build capacities according to needs [technical, managerial]; perform monitoring and provide ongoing national technical support.	Implementation partners and key stakeholders are willing to participate in capacity-building efforts and open to the adoption of best practices and improved approaches; donors are willing to support capacity-building.
Disease damages crops and livestock	Reduction in production; augments nutritional deficiencies; reduction in the income of beneficiaries.	Support early-warning systems; strengthen organizations that monitor and fight against crop and livestock diseases.	The government continues to monitor and fight against crop and livestock diseases.
Poor coordination of interventions	May lead to duplicated, inefficient efforts; confusion among beneficiaries and implementation partners.	Strengthen coordination capacity; support and broaden awareness and information-sharing.	Stakeholders are willing to collaborate; the decentralized, county-level government authorities are committed to the initiatives' priorities.
Poor adoption rate	Recommended practices for improving livelihoods are not sustained.	Awareness and engagement of beneficiaries and partners; build capacities.	Informed and voluntary participation among stakeholders.

