



Republic of Liberia
Ministry of Agriculture
Comprehensive Assessment of the Agriculture Sector
Volume 1 - Synthesis Report



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN LIBERIA (CAAS-Lib)

Volume 1 - Synthesis Report

Liberia 2007

FOREWORD

Since January 2006, the Government of Liberia has been committed to consolidating peace and accelerating the country's economic recovery. An Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS), which elaborates the overarching national priorities of peace and security, economic revitalization, rehabilitation of infrastructure, delivery of basic services, and the rule of law and governance, will be replaced in 2008 by a full Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The agriculture sector is expected to contribute meaningfully to the priorities of poverty reduction, food security, employment, increased personal income, and foreign exchange. Unfortunately, the contribution of agriculture to national economic growth and development has been limited over recent years by structural constraints, inadequate policies and civil conflict.

To facilitate development of the food and agriculture sector and to assess the role and contributions of the sector in meeting both urgent and longer term expectations during the process of recovery and development, Government decided to review the sector. The review was performed to provide much needed reliable information and analysis of the status, potential, constraints and opportunities of the sector. This information was intended to inform decisions on policy, strategies, programmes and activities in the sector.

The Comprehensive Assessment of the Agriculture Sector of Liberia (CAAS-Lib) project, which was led by the Ministry of Agriculture, had support from FAO, the World Bank and IFAD, and the collaboration of national agencies and other interested parties. A National Steering Committee established for the purpose provided policy guidance and advice.

The Assessment process utilized an extensive mix of national and international expertise from a wide range of sector disciplines, and applied scientific, consultative and participatory tools to generate and analyse information and data from the sector. The Assessment Team travelled throughout the country to carry out a broad consultation exercise. They discussed issues, findings and options with stakeholders in both rural and urban areas, including those in public and private sector institutions and other organizations.

The findings from the field studies and other data generating activities were discussed at Regional Workshops in the country to broaden and deepen the scope of consultations and participation in the Assessment, and at the same time to strengthen national ownership and sustainability of the outcomes.

A National Workshop was held on 28–29 May 2007 with participation from public and private institutions, farmer groups, civil society organizations and development partners; the presence of Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentarians was significant, as was the high quality of contributions from all participants. The event provided a valuable opportunity to stakeholders, who freely and openly discussed and exchanged views and experiences on policies, strategies and options for development and growth of the sector. The Workshop also validated the overall Assessment Report and recommendations, and emphasized a framework of actions to follow the Assessment.

The final Synthesis Report has passed a rigorous consultation process and will provide a valuable source of information, data and analysis to assist stakeholders in the revitalization of

the agriculture sector. The report is presented in two volumes – the first is a Synthesis Report and the second volume contains various sub-sector studies.

The findings and recommendations from the assessment have strengthened our resolve to move with utmost speed and determination to take advantage of the opportunities that are outlined in the report, and especially to encourage our partners to support us in the ensuing action plan for agricultural growth and prosperity.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to FAO, the World Bank and IFAD for their unstinting technical and financial support in ensuring that the assessment process was concluded successfully.

Indeed a new dawn of evidence-based decision making and action in the agriculture sector has emerged in the country. I invite everyone to assist Liberia to move in that direction.

**Christopher Toe
Minister for Agriculture
Republic of Liberia**

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The process benefited from regional consultations and a national validation workshop in May 2007, which had substantial stakeholder participation that provided a valuable contribution to the analysis and recommendations. A joint World Bank–FAO–IFAD–GoL peer review also took place, during which experts reviewed the Synthesis Document and made constructive suggestions for its improvement.

The project benefited from the dynamic leadership, guidance and contributions from the Honourable Minister for Agriculture Christopher Toe, who was the Chairperson of the project steering committee, and received support and key inputs from all the Deputy Ministers and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Liberia. The steering committee members, international and national experts, project managers and the technical and support staff of FAO, the World Bank and IFAD contributed to the success of this effort. Dr Dunstan Spencer, the team leader, and Dr Othello Brandy, his national counterpart, lent their unstinted efforts to coordinating the work and providing technical contributions towards the completion of this project. The support team is gratefully acknowledged, particularly Ms Agnes Perkins of FAO, Monrovia, and Ms Laura Battista and Ms Ana Maria Galvan of TCAS, FAO, who bore the brunt of recruitment and other logistic issues. The latter two are also acknowledged for their patient editing and secretarial support throughout the project period.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
ACRONYMS	X
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	XV
 I. INTRODUCTION.....	 1
A. Background	1
B. Objectives and Approach	3
C. Outline of the Report	7
 II. THE LIBERIAN STATE AND ECONOMY	 8
D. Historical Perspective	8
E. Livelihood and Well-being of Liberia's Rural Population	11
F. The Government's Efforts to Support Economic Recovery	16
 III. THE FOUNDATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	 17
G. Climate and Water Resources	17
H. Land and Soil Resources.....	20
I. Land Tenure	23
J. Climate Change, Agriculture and the Environment.....	26
K. Rural Infrastructure	28
L. Liberian Farming Systems	31
M. Food Crop Value Chains.....	36
N. Tree Crop Production.....	46
O. Fisheries	48
P. Livestock Production	52
 IV. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN AGRICULTURE.....	 54
Q. Agricultural Input and Output Marketing	54
R. Export (Tree) Crop Marketing	62
S. Rural Financial Intermediation	65
T. The Ministry of Agriculture.....	69
U. Public Expenditure and Agriculture.....	75
V. The Agricultural Research System	75
W. Agricultural Education.....	78
X. NGOs and Community Based Organizations	81
 V. MOVING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – POLICY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.....	 82
Y. Contemporary Evidence of Agricultural Growth and the Poor	82
Z. Operationalizing a pro-poor approach: Transformation – not just Recovery – of the Agricultural Sector	84
AA. Private and Public Sector Roles in the Provision of Agricultural Services	86
BB. Making the Government Budget Work for Agricultural Development.....	87
CC. Food Production, Food Security, Safety Nets and Nutrition	89

DD.	Maximizing the Contributions of Tree Crops to Economic Development.....	91
EE.	Increasing Fisheries Production and Revenues.....	94
FF.	Increasing the Contribution of the Livestock Sector	97
GG.	Policy on Agricultural Imports and Exports	98
HH.	Institutional Reforms	98
II.	Making Markets Work.....	105
JJ.	Opportunities and Guidelines for Investment.....	112
REFERENCES.....		117
ANNEX 1: COMPOSITION OF CAAS-LIB STEERING COMMITTEE.....		121
ANNEX 2: MATRIX OF PROPOSED INVESTMENT PROJECTS		122

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Trend in Real GDP 1970–2005.....	9
Figure 2	Composition of Exports 1979–2005	10
Figure 3	Gender Division of Labour in Food Crop Production	14
Figure 4	Rainfall Map of Liberia	18
Figure 5	Land Cover in Liberia in 2004.....	21
Figure 6	Village Accessibility; October 2005.....	30
Figure 7	Transport Costs for Passengers to Monrovia.....	31
Figure 8	Broad Farming Systems in Liberia	32
Figure 9	Household Production of Upland and Swampland Rice.....	33
Figure 10	Vegetable Value Chain	37
Figure 11	Cassava Value Chain	38
Figure 12	Upland Rice Value Chain	39
Figure 13	Disposal of Food Crop Harvest by Rural Households.....	40
Figure 14	The Contribution of Markets to Livelihoods	56
Figure 15	Agricultural Input Distribution Channels	58
Figure 16	Location of Markets by County	59
Figure 17	Distribution Channels of Imported Rice	61
Figure 18	Liberia Nominal Export Prices, 1962–2005	63
Figure 19	General Schematic of Current Liberian Smallholder Rubber Marketing Chain....	63
Figure 20	General Schematic of Current Liberian Smallholder Cocoa Marketing Chain	64
Figure 21	General Schematic of Current Liberian Smallholder Oil Palm Marketing Chain	65
Figure 22	Sources of Credit to Rural Households.....	66
Figure 23	Organizational Structure of Ministry of Agriculture	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Sector Composition of GDP (percentages).....	9
Table 2	Imports and Exports for 1979–2005 (US\$ million).....	9
Table 3	Livelihood Profiles and the Composition of Incomes; 2006	13
Table 4	Vulnerability, Incomes and Livelihood Profile in Liberia.....	15
Table 5	Soils of Liberia.....	20
Table 6	Agricultural Land Capability	22
Table 7	Statistics on Land Holdings	24
Table 8	Liberia’s Road Network.....	29
Table 9	Rice and Cassava Production; 1990–2004.....	35
Table 10	Household-reported Constraints to Agricultural Production	41
Table 11	Strengths and Weaknesses and Comparative Advantage of Selected Food Crops	42
Table 12	Domestic Resource Cost Estimates: Rice, Root Crop and Vegetable Production	45
Table 13	Comparisons of DRC Calculations for Rice Production in West Africa.....	45
Table 14	Estimate of Livestock Production (1,000 head).....	53
Table 15	Import of Meat Products – Year 2005/06	54
Table 16	Closing the NEPAD Financing Gap	88

ACRONYMS

ACDB	Agricultural Cooperative Development Bank of Liberia
ACDI	Agricultural Cooperative Development International of the USA
ADB	African Development Bank
ADP	Agricultural Development Project
ARC	Agricultural Research Committee
AFLI	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
AFRACA	African Rural & Agricultural Credit Association
AGOA	African Growth & Opportunity Act (USA)
AGRIMECO	Agricultural Mechanization Company
AVRDC	Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre
BCADP	Bong County Agricultural Development Project
BNF	Bureau of National Fisheries
BoB	Bureau of Budget
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CAAS-Lib	Comprehensive Assessment of the Agricultural Sector of Liberia
CAES	Central Agricultural Experiment Station
CAF	College of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Liberia
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CARI	Central Agricultural Research Institute
CARS	College of Agriculture, Rural Development and Sociology, Cuttington University
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDA	Cooperative Development Authority
CDC	County Development Committee
CFC	Community Fisheries Centre
CFSNS	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIAT	International Centre of Tropical Agriculture
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Research Centre
CLUSA	Cooperative League (USA)
CMC	Cash Management Committee
CMC	Contracts and Monopolies Commission
CMP	Change Management Programme
CORAF	Conference des Responsables de la Recherche Agronomique Africaine (West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development)
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CST	County Support Team
CU	Cuttington University
DDC	District Development Committee
DECE	Department of Extension And Community Empowerment
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DOPC	Decoris Oil Palm Corporation

DP	Development Partner
DRC	Domestic Resource Cost
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Investment Study
EAC	A Liberian company formerly owning part of the LBDI
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FFS	Farmers Field School
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme
GoL	Government of Liberia
GRT	Gross Registered Tonnage
HQ	Headquarters
IARC	International Agricultural Research Centre
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agro Forestry
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development of the United Nations
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFDC	International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFS	International Foundation for Sciences
IITA	The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ILO	International Labour Organization of the United Nations
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
iPRS	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
IRAT	Institute de Recherche en Agronomie Tropical
IRD	Institute of Research and Development (France)
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
ISN	Interim Strategy Note (World Bank)
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
LACE	Liberia Agency for Community Development
LBDI	Liberian Bank for Development and Investment
LCADP	Lofa County Agricultural Development Project
LCCC	Liberia Cocoa and Coffee Corporation
LCUNA	Liberia Credit Union National Association
LEAP	Local Enterprise Assistance Programme
LED	Local Economic Development
LiMFU	Liberia Marketing and Farmers Union
LINNK	Liberian NGOs Network
LMA	Liberia Market Association
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LPMC	Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation
LPPC	Liberia Palm Products Corporation

LRDA	Liberia Rubber Development Authority
LRRI	Liberia Rubber Research Institute
LU	Livestock Units
LWS	Lutheran World Service
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCI	Ministry of Commerce & Industry
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MF	Micro Finance
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIS	Management Information System
MIS	Market Information System
MISTOWA	Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations Network and Project in West Africa (IFDC's)
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NCBA	National Cooperative Business Association (USA)
NCRDP	Nimba County Rural Development Project
NEPAD	New Partnership for Agricultural Development (African Union)
NERICA	New Rice for Africa
NFC	National Federation of Cooperatives
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMTIP	National Medium Term Implementation Programme (NEPAD)
NPC	National Palm Corporation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NSA	Non State Actor
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PAM	Policy Analysis Matrix
PEA	Participatory Extension Approaches
PFM	Public Financial Management
PRRA	Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSI	Pre-Shipment Inspection
R&D	Research and Development
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security (FAO)
TA	Technical Assistance
UL	University of Liberia
UN	United Nations
UNCCA	United Nations Compensation Claimants Association
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UoL	University of Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WARDA	West Africa Rice Development Association
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WOCCU	World Council of Credit Unions, Inc. (USA)
WTO	World Trade Organization
WVI	World Vision International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Comprehensive Assessment of the Agricultural Sector in Liberia (CAAS-Lib) provides an evidence base to enable appropriate strategic policy responses by the Government of Liberia (GoL) and its development partners in order to maximize the contribution of the agriculture sector to the Government's overarching policy objectives¹. It is based on rigorous qualitative and quantitative analyses combined with broad participation and consultations with stakeholders. The findings of CAAS-Lib are contained in two volumes: the Synthesis Report is contained in Volume 1, while the Working Papers prepared for each of the sub-sectors and thematic areas reviewed are contained in Volume 2. A summary of the main findings and recommendations relating to policy opportunities and challenges for sustainable agricultural development in Liberia is given below.

2. **Pro-poor focus:** Given the strong relationship between growth in agricultural productivity and poverty reduction, future efforts in Liberia need to focus on productivity-enhancing measures with a pro-poor focus that increase incomes. Growth based on extensification using traditional technologies is generally not profitable and has damaging implications for the environment. Given the low level of assets possessed by most Liberians, future efforts need to address the question of access to assets (i.e. land, knowledge and inputs) in addition to providing opportunities and an enabling environment. Liberia needs to make concerted efforts to preserve and consolidate its emerging stability by focusing on interventions to ensure food security and poverty alleviation at the community and household levels. Improving access to food and generating sustainable, remunerative activities and employment are crucial to this process.

3. **Transformation of agriculture:** GoL and donors will need long-term sustained engagement in order to realize the transformation of Liberian agriculture for the benefit of smallholders. 'Transformation' in this sense means the conversion of a system characterized by an economically concentrated commercial plantation sector coexisting with large numbers of poor farm households involved in low input/low output (shifting) cultivation to one in which there is broad-based farmer participation in integrated, productivity-driven cash-crop/food crop systems. It is essential that the country avoids falling back into old patterns of growth and development based on natural resource extraction industries and a heavily concentrated plantation and commercial agricultural sector. Operationalizing this approach will require strategic direction, systematic processes and greater participation from a wide cross-section of Liberian and regional actors in order to move from specific policy and programme pronouncements to a set of concrete actions and investments that are specific to population groups and geographical areas.

4. **Public/Private Roles:** A government's provision of public goods is arguably more important in countries emerging from conflict because it has a stronger immediate impact on outcomes in the sector. At the same time a strict adherence to arguments on the provision of public good may undermine essential ingredients of economic recovery. The decision of GoL to retract public institutions from direct involvement in implementation represents a major change from the pre-war period when direct intervention in production and marketing was common. Nevertheless, experience across Africa in the last two decades has underscored the

¹ Forestry is not covered in CAAS-Lib because it has been comprehensively reviewed recently and policies have been formulated as part of the Liberia Forest Initiative.

importance of critical public functions in supporting value chain development and performance. This has involved investment in public goods such as R&D, strategic direction, coordination, supervision, regulation, monitoring and accountability. Simply withdrawing and assuming that the private sector will come in has been shown not to work. Determining the type of public goods to provide in an effective and sustainable manner is a difficult but very important task for GoL

5. Improving rural incomes, food production, food security, safety nets and nutrition:

Because the majority of Liberians are net buyers of food, reducing the real cost of food should be a major food security objective of GoL. The use of improved technology to raise yields will be crucial if real incomes are to increase for both net food buyers and net producers. *In the short term* the emphasis should be on continuation of GoL and NGO distribution programmes for seeds, tools and livestock to recapitalize smallholder agriculture. These should be complemented by matching grants to encourage small-scale productive investments that have a clear collective goods component and/or externalities (small-scale irrigation, drying floors, etc.). Increases in vegetable and fruit production will help to improve the nutrition of poor households, in addition to increasing incomes. *In the medium term* high expectations are placed on the recently developed NERICA programme and the availability of improved technology that can increase rice yields (improved husbandry, better irrigation, assured supply of inputs, etc.) as well as on small-scale mechanization. This is because large-scale mechanization of food crop production has failed in Liberia and is unlikely to be successful under current conditions.

6. Because malnutrition is likely to remain endemic in Liberia a specific nutrition strategy is required. Immediate efforts must centre on monitoring and responding to the problem of acute malnutrition, particularly in central and south-eastern regions, where the prevalence of wasting exceeds 10%.

7. **To enhance the contribution of tree crops** to the Liberian economy *short-term priorities* should include public-private sector dialogue aimed at arriving at solutions to critical issues that impinge on tree crop development, such as land tenure (options of leasing, licensing and other forms of conveyance) and the role of the out-grower plantation scheme; developing a model concessions contract and policies on divesting ownership of existing parastatal plantations; establishment of a GoL/NGO grants programme to support rehabilitation of existing viable smallholder plantations. *In the medium/long term* the emphasis should be on promotion of the widespread adoption of improved techniques in smallholder cocoa and coffee, and a nucleus estate-cum-smallholder strategy for oil palm (where the global demand for biofuels offers exciting opportunities) and rubber.

8. **In the fisheries and livestock sectors** *short-term priorities* include the conducting of basic studies (Fishery frame survey, PAM analysis of livestock systems, etc.); formulation of a national fisheries and aquaculture policy and strategy to strengthen the country's maritime and fisheries laws and regulations; and support of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance activities by UNMIL. *In the medium term* the focus should be on building up the human resources of BNF; establishment of strong collaboration at sub-regional, regional and international levels, especially for scientific research and sustainable management of shared fisheries resources; launching of special programmes to develop artisanal fishery; establishment of Community Fisheries Centres to encourage the private sector and other financial institutions to make investment credit available to artisan fisheries workers, especially women; and establishment of a number of pilot animal production centres in

selected villages that will train local entrepreneurs in modern livestock production techniques and businesses.

9. Policy and institutional reforms: GoL should maintain its liberal policy towards food imports and exports, with careful attention to the effects such a policy has on the incentive system for domestic food production. It should continue moving towards full adoption of ECOWAS Common Tariffs.

10. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) needs to embark on a Ministry-wide Change Management Programme that will enable it to be transformed and modernized relative to its pre-war role and function. MoA aims to become an effective and efficient organization that focuses its energy on its most important or core function – to develop and maintain an enabling institutional framework that promotes economic development and civil society. It will be critical to avoid establishing rigid structures within MoA that impede its ability to evolve and reallocate effort in response to changing conditions.

11. The central focus for renewal of the extension system should be on building a pluralistic and participatory agricultural advisory and extension service. The extension system needs to transform from the transfer of technology model to a pluralistic extension system that involves multiple public and private sector service providers using Participatory Extension Approaches.

12. In rebuilding Liberia's agricultural R&D system *short-term priorities* should concentrate on 'quick win' measures that focus on reinitiating adaptive and applied research, capacity building activities (human and physical), formation of strategic alliances and partnerships with key stakeholders, resource mobilization, and the development of a long-term strategy for national agricultural research for development. Given its limited financial and human resources, CARI should rationalize its current activities by transferring some of the activities to other institutions. In the medium term there is a strong need for a fully integrated agricultural research, extension and education system in Liberia.

13. Further actions to enhance the agricultural education system over the medium to long term are needed, including the development of a strong curriculum for both secondary and college agricultural training programmes with flexibility to respond to location factors and industry/employee demands, training of agriculture education instructors at all levels, and development of partnerships between the training institutions that, for example, allow students to take courses at other campuses.

14. Improvement of the marketing system in Liberia requires collaboration between the public and private sectors, including farmers' organizations, to take direct actions such as improving access for distribution through improved transport, especially road and rail networks; improving the market institutions; improving the physical infrastructure of marketplaces; putting in place appropriate market information services; risk mitigation measures after a detailed study of past experiences and lessons learned; more indirect actions such as increasing the supply of produce through increased agricultural production, improving access to credit, etc.

15. Mainstreaming gender: Despite advances on the legislative and public policy front regarding women's rights at the national level, complex community arrangements and longstanding traditions continue to restrict development opportunities for women at the local

level in rural areas. Improving the access of women to land, credit, inputs and extension services, and promoting women's involvement in new economic areas in Liberia will contribute to rural growth. GoL should ensure that any agricultural development strategy includes women at the centre, empowers them and creates an enabling environment so that women can fully contribute to and benefit from rural growth and the poverty reduction strategy (PRS).

16. Information and analysis for improved decision making: 'Evidence-based policy making' is the new mantra, reflecting the fact that the effectiveness of policy and programme decision making is usually no better than the quality of the data and empirical analyses used in the decision-making process. This report highlights (i) the paucity of data for analysis and planning, and (ii) the importance of developing the capability of the GoL, in partnership with others, to analyse, monitor and modify the complex and dynamic interactions between policies, institutional reform, technological change and human capital development.

17. Making the Government budget work for agricultural development: Creating a supportive environment for pro-poor growth and private sector-led agricultural development requires the correct volume and pattern of public expenditure. Liberia is committed to meeting the Maputo goal of allocating 10% of its budget to the agricultural sector. An indicative simulation suggests that meeting the Maputo commitment is within reach and that, with buoyant revenues, this implies substantial scaling up of resources for agriculture. However, given current capacity constraints, questions remain concerning the absorptive capacity to effectively utilize a significant increase in resources. Previous work has emphasized the importance of phasing assistance to match a steady increase in capacity, and it will be important to ensure a coordinated scaling up that matches resources with capacity.

18. Opportunities and guidelines for investment: Fostering sustainable growth in agricultural commodity value chains will require substantial public and private investment in order to improve their productivity and competitiveness in national, regional and international markets. Investment could conceivably come from a combination of domestic savings and external resource inflows. Domestic savings can be generated in the public sector through lower consumption and fiscal discipline and from private individuals and organizations through higher incomes and increased saving. External investment can come from foreign direct investment, return of capital flight and foreign aid. While numerous factors have been identified as important determinants of national and foreign investment, investors' perception of risk and the ability to earn and keep their returns in a given country or zone appears prominently at the top of every list.

19. This Synthesis Report gives an indication of priority short- and medium-term activities that should feature in the planned food and agriculture policy and strategy as well as in the PRS. The detailed sub-sector reports in Volume 2 also contain suggestions for investment projects, which are summarised in the matrix in Annex 2. GoL will need to carefully prioritize the investment programme within the framework of projected available funding for the PRS.