



Community Development Action Plan Rewilding Maforki Ltd



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Executive Summary

Following a survey conducted at communities within the Rewilding Maforki Limited (RML) Project area, a report was published highlighting an initial assessment of communities. The report reveals that the asset base of local people in these communities is significantly limited and therefore limits livelihood options, income, and community infrastructural development. This document details the actions the project proponent will undertake in order to ensure the capacity, agricultural production, community infrastructure, and standards of living of people within the project area are improved. It further describes key areas the project proponent will take as a priority for community development implementation.

To ensure the sustainability of the project activities, RML will work closely in consultation with the community members for efficient community service delivery.

Strategy for Action

Employment

Based on initial assessment, the project area lacks profit-making institutions that can provide job opportunities for the people. Women and young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, and poor employment conditions within the project area. In Sierra Leone, the labour force participation rate among females is 51.1% and among males is 55.6% for 2022. This shows that since 1990, female labour force participation has decreased. Compared with labour force participation in other low-income countries, the gap between men and women is lower in Sierra Leone. Traditional smallholder agriculture is often low in productivity, and many young people do not consider it as a promising occupation for themselves.

To improve the employment situation of young people in rural areas, RML is set to provide job opportunities for about 5,000 local people both directly and indirectly, and as either permanent or casual workers within the project zone. People from outside the host communities will also be needed, chiefly for technically specialized skills which may not be available locally. Social groups including men and women will be given equal opportunities on a 50 - 50 basis to provide labour for land clearing, nursery preparation, planting, slashing, security work, etc. Where there is a need, the project proponent will outsource local contractors and mandate them to hire community members to provide the labour needed, in line with standard operating procedures of RML Company.

In addition to increasing the rate of employment opportunities in the project area, it will also help bridge the gender inequality gap for employment, giving everyone equal chances.

On the operations side of the project, young people may see opportunities of developing new careers and providing on-going services.

Furthermore, the project proponent will inform workers about their rights, and comply with national and international rules on workers' rights. These potential employment opportunities could increase income diversification and improve the standard of living within these communities.

The table below provides a summary indication of the employment strategy to accomplish our set goal of 5000 permanent and casual employment in the first 30 years of the project operations:

Activity	Frequency	Hands Needed	Total after 20 years
Nursery Operations	yearly	50	1000
Community Development Activities	quarterly	variable	-
Research/Data Collection Surveys	quarterly	20	400
Land Preparation & Planting	yearly	100	2000
Security Personnel	when needed	10	200
Technical/Management Staff	when the need arise	variable	-
TOTAL	-	-	3600

Access to clean and safe drinking water

Water, sanitation and hygiene challenges in Sierra Leone are the low levels of use of basic sanitation services, access to safe/quality drinking water and inadequate use of safe hygiene practices by children and their families. The determination of these priority concerns is based on the available evidence derived from the analysis of the national WASH situation. Only 16 percent of the entire population have access to basic sanitation services, 28 percent defecating in the open while 58 percent and 23 percent have no access to basic water services and practicing safe hygiene practices respectively.

Low access to WASH services significantly contributes to diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections (ARIs), and under-nutrition and worm infestations. It contributes to infections in health care settings and can lead to U5 morbidity and mortality and increased risk of maternal and new-born mortality. It can also lead to both boys and girls missing school due to sickness or the time taken to collect water for the family and reduced cognitive attention due to worm infestations. It can also pose additional challenges for girls due to concern over the use of toilets and how to manage their menstrual hygiene.

Throughout the project area, surveys conducted revealed that access to safe drinking water is a serious challenge for over ninety percent (90%) of the communities under consideration. Some communities completely lack any available source to access safe drinking water and therefore use contaminated water from streams and rivers. Some communities may have only one source which might be inadequate to serve a significantly high population, while others have to walk in packs through very long distances to nearby villages that are miles off. This poses a serious threat to especially the children, women, and young girls who are most vulnerable to predators such as rapists and child molesters and the general livelihood and health of the residents therein. This problem of accessing clean and safe drinking water has a series of life-changing repercussions if the proper cause of action is not taken.

Providing and supporting WASH facilities in particular the project area is therefore critical in improving child health, menstrual hygiene management and other women and girls interventions, reducing malnutrition - child stunting, child and women protection from violence and indignity among others.

The project proponent will collaborate with the relevant institutions to provide safe drinking water by constructing boreholes in all affected communities, and facilitating access to WASH facilities for all. This

exercise targets a minimum of 2 boreholes per community, with the potential to increase this number exponentially as communities expand and population increases, and as the project breaks new grounds. A total of 150 bore holes is estimated to have been constructed in a 30 year period of project life. This exercise is estimated to have the potential of impacting over 8000 households in approximately 100 different communities in the project area.

In the first year, a total of two (2) wells will be drilled in selected communities in Kasseh and Maconteh chiefdoms for a start. Every other year, there will be a maximum of 5 wells drilled in communities within the project area. RML will hire professional service provider(s), using the right procurement processes to undertake this task. Further training will be conducted by SALWACO, a government water agency for a community selected maintenance group with the required skills to provide proper maintenance for these facilities..

Agricultural Assistance

Rural development allows the improvement of rural communities' quality of life and prevents depopulation of regions affected by rural exodus. Economic stability achieved through action within the rural areas such as the project zone, and driven by agriculture is fundamental for the growth of a nation. Survey conducted in the project area shows that the local people are increasingly confronted to the following challenges related to agriculture and rural development:

- ❖ Enhancing food security.
- ❖ Enhancing agricultural productivity and farmer's incomes.
- ❖ Diversifying agricultural production systems.
- ❖ Promoting sustainable agriculture.
- ❖ Reducing the environmental impact of agricultural production.

Studies have also shown that agricultural development is essentially one of the most powerful tools to end extreme poverty and to feed a projected 9.7 billion people by 2050. Growth in the agricultural sector is two to four times more effective in raising incomes among the poorest compared to other sectors. Consequently, agricultural improvement and diversification activities that increase food availability and sustain economies were identified as a key focal area by project area communities during initial consultations and need assessment studies. This is due to the declining rate of agricultural production over recent years as a result of the effects of climate change, soil degradation, farmers' lack of basic knowledge in latest and improved farming methods and fewer farm inputs.

RML will collaborate with local non-governmental organisations providing agricultural capacity training and inputs to farmers in Port Loko District, Ministry of Agriculture, and get a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI). This way, the necessary inputs will be provided to farmers and the required training and capacity building will be provided to all beneficiaries within the project zone.

The project proponent aims to increase the productivity of agriculture through the training of farmers in improved farm practices and the provisioning of farm inputs to encourage sustainable farming practices. RML will work with local agricultural experts to provide capacity training sessions for farmers on best and modern agricultural practices. Agricultural seeds/planting materials such as rice, cassava, groundnuts, sweet potato and other inputs such as fertilizers will also be provided to farmers. The initiative is set to benefit over 1000 farmers in the project zone, resulting in improving food security and increasing the income level of households in these communities, as well as ensuring the rural-urban migration of young people who make up over 80 percent of the workforce is significantly reduced.

EXAMPLE RICE

Although the main crop produced on farms is rice as this is the staple food crop of villages, a variety of vegetables for consumption and/or sale are also grown.

The training will involve 250 farmers in 5 years. In 2024, 50 Lead farmers will be recruited and trained with each farmer having 5 follower farmers. Farmer field schools and demonstration fields will be organized periodically in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture. These schools will help farmers learn improved practices for growing and increasing yields of a variety of crops including upland/lowland rice, vegetables (such as sweet and hot pepper, okra, eggplant and bitter ball), groundnuts and cassava. The activity is principally implemented over a 2 year period of farming seasons. After the initial 2 years, the farmers will continue to be monitored and reviewed every 2 years to assess whether follow-up training or inputs are required. Whether such additional and tailored training and/or inputs are required will depend on the outcome of the monitoring.

During the first year the activity is focused around Farmer Field Schools and is divided into dry and wet season Farmer Field Schools. From December to May the Farmer Field Schools will focus on vegetable growing as this is the season it takes place. From June to November the Farmer Field Schools will focus on upland/lowland rice, cassava and groundnut growing as this is the season these crops are grown (one wet season crop is chosen by each forest edge community Farmer Field Schools). So over a one year cycle farmers will be taught how to improve yields on at least one dry season and one wet season crop. In the second year additional Lead Farmers and followers will be selected from the participants of the first year Farmer Field Schools to receive further training and spread knowledge acquired and enable the improved techniques to continue without the resources of the project. Each lead farmer will be provided with seeds, pesticides, implements, water access and extension services. After the 5-year period the activity will be reviewed for continuity. The farmers will be assisted to form cooperatives to grow crops for commercial purposes. They will be provided with start up capital and access to markets for self-sustaining enterprises.

Also, Sweet Potato and Cassava are considered as great alternative complement to rice; the staple food of communities in Sierra Leone. Sweet potatoes and Cassava in the project area account for almost 25% of household food in the rainy season, when rice becomes scarce and / or very expensive.

A similar approach to that of the rice farmer training will as well be applied to that of the cassava and potato farmers. After training an initial 50 lead farmers, they will in turn cascade the same training to other cassava and sweet potato farmers. A total of five hundred (500) farmers would have benefitted from the training and capacity building at the end of each ten year period. This way, households in all of the project zones will be food self-sufficient.

Soft loan Scheme

The Community Savings and Loan scheme has been considered as an initiative that can help communities develop and manage their own financial resources to enhance economic sustainability. These schemes are independent and self-managed by group members. Here, members save in variable amounts and can also borrow when in need for varying periods of time. These schemes provide social security for members and promote unity and social cohesion among members and communities. An additional benefit of this scheme is that member's equity can be shared in proportion to savings within specified time periods. The overall goal of the scheme is to empower participants to increase access and control over resources and use collective power to overcome social and financial barriers.

RML will provide training for selected community members on how to manage the scheme. The Scheme is set to involve and benefit more than 50 communities and not less than 500 indigenous people (70 percent of whom are women) within the project zone across the period of project implementation. This

will help communities improve financial sustainability by procuring soft loans that can be used for petty trading or investment in agricultural activities. This has a significant impact on women and by extension, children. They can either establish new businesses or expand on the old ones. This helps the women send their children to school and are able to provide basic school materials for them. It also ensures improved livelihood conditions and wellbeing of their children.

The scheme will follow the model of a village banking or Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) system. In the first year, 7 groups of maximum 30 members (involved in some small enterprise) each will be selected from participating chiefdoms and provide them with the startup capital.

These groups will be trained in financial management, record keeping and entrepreneurship. The activity will be implemented over a 2 year period, with the village banking groups receiving training and support throughout the 2 years. In the last 6 months of the 2 years, a group lead will be chosen from each group by its members to act as the future supervisor of their group. These group leads will be trained to support the setting up of new groups within their village (or elsewhere) and the project will run sustainably on its own, with the proponent assuming only a monitoring role.

In addition, these schemes, if well managed, will support community members to be economically empowered, thereby generating a ripple effect on the economic sustainability of the inhabitants of the project area.

School Support to Deserving Students

Formal education provides a means of building “human capital”, and especially the skills and knowledge necessary to participate effectively in the modern economy and society. Primary school education in Sierra Leone is free but most households in the project communities lack the financial resources to provide basic learning materials for their children. This has led to the low levels of formal education of local people in the project area.

Access to quality education, retention and completion of school remain challenges for children in Sierra Leone. These factors are compounded by poverty, gender discrimination; long distances to schools, perceived low value placed on education, negative social norms practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage (30 percent of women are married before age 18), teenage pregnancy, and an unsafe learning environment. The percentage of school age-out-of school children in primary, junior, and senior secondary is as follows: Primary school (18 percent), junior secondary school (19 percent), Senior secondary school (36 percent), UNICEF 2022 report.

Due to the many factors listed above, many children in Sierra Leone and especially the project zone fail to complete primary school or to make the transition from primary to junior secondary school (JSS). Completion rates stand at: Primary; 64 percent, JSS (lower secondary); 44 percent, SSS (upper secondary); 22 percent.

Furthermore, few opportunities exist for alternative education for out-of-school boys and girls, which could help them to acquire functional skills for sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment, in order to realise their full potential and contribute meaningfully to national development.

Starting in 2023, RML will therefore provide school support to 40 outstanding students each year, who pass the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) and the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) from randomly selected communities per implementation phase throughout the 7 chiefdoms in the project zone in the form of learning materials and a cash gift of SLe500 each for school upkeep at the start of every school year for 3 consecutive years in order for young people to access Junior and Senior secondary school education. A committee from among indigenes will be set to be responsible for the identification and selection of these outstanding and deserving students. The students will be periodically visited in schools by the designated committee alongside the RML team to verify whether they are

attending as stated and check the progress made by the students. More than 1200 young people in primary and secondary school alone, 60 percent of whom shall be girls will benefit from this project activities thereby making education accessible to all in the project zone. After a period of three years of school support the scholarships will be evaluated to determine its impact so far. Students who make it through senior secondary school and obtain university requirements will be further supported through university to gain the required skills for the job market. This provides further opportunity for employment of more local members of the community trained by RML.

This means that in the first year of scholarship scheme implementation, a total of 40 students (the top 20 N.P.S.E and the top 20 B.E.C.E students) will benefit. In thirty (30) years of project life, 1200 students would have been able to complete high school as a result of the RML School Support Program. On top of the 1200 primary and secondary school students, a minimum of ten (10) students who pass the West African Senior School Certificate Examination(WASSCE) in the fifth year (of scholarship provision scheme) and beyond, shall be trained throughout their university education at any tertiary institution within Sierra Leone.

Provision of Cook Stoves to Community Members

In Sierra Leone, wood biomass energy has been and continues to be the most available, affordable, usable and reliable source of energy for cooking across the whole country. Wood fuel is the traditional form of energy and is used almost exclusively by households for cooking food, palm oil processing, drying grains and seeds, fish smoking, heating and lighting of homes in rural areas, social gathering and other conventional activities. A nationwide survey by Statistics Sierra Leone clearly revealed that in the Northern Province alone, 96.25% of households and 3.04% of households used firewood and charcoal respectively for cooking purposes.

Aside from the adverse effects on the health of women and children, the use of wood for cooking also damages forests and accelerates climate change due to the greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions from wood fuels for cooking accounts for 1 gig tonne of CO₂ emissions a year, or around two per cent of global emissions. The cost to the environment and local economies is estimated at US\$2.4 trillion a year, according to the World Bank.

In order to further reduce the continuous use of plenty of firewood or the burning of charcoal in excess that contribute immensely to CO₂ emission, RML will collaborate with Smart Green Stove- Sierra Leone to procure and supply cook stoves to community locals who are most likely to contribute to more greenhouse emissions by clearing and burning trees for fuel. Each household will get two sets of cook stoves each. This way, we not only reduce the use of firewood but also the use of charcoal and the possibility of partial usage of wood as fuel.

Every year, 500 households will be supplied to communities within RML areas of operations. As a result of the provision of cook stoves, the risks associated with women and children who are most vulnerable to diseases and ailments associated with CO₂ emissions from the use of firewood and charcoal will be drastically reduced if not totally eliminated.

At the end of the first thirty years of project life, a total of about 15,000 cook stoves will have been supplied to 15,000 households in the project area. This will impact not only the lives of community members, but also reduce the amount of biomass used in cooking and by extension the amount of greenhouse emissions and hence positively impact the environment.

Gold Level Attainment

As a company, RML understands the importance of a positive community impact and therefore prioritizes the need to maintain all requirements to achieve that. Such considerations include but are not limited to our gender sensitivity in recruitment exercises, as well as the making of tailor made programmes to suit all. This inclusive approach enables women, the disabled/physically challenged, young girls and youth to have an equal opportunity to be recruited and participate in all our programmes and activities.

In addition to ensuring that we collaborate with the agriculture line ministry, local NGOs providing agricultural assistance to farmers, as well as Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) to promote better agricultural practices and capacity building to local farmers. RML will also implement specific activities for women and the physically challenged. Such activities will include soft loan schemes, the establishment of nurseries and enforcing a 50% female workforce requirement, the provision of groundnut seeds and other inputs for the groundnut farming exclusively for women and young girls.

As a major component of the Gold Level requirement, our community development action plan takes premium throughout our project implementation. The impact we hope to achieve in the community livelihood activities is set to be comprehensive and equally sustainable.

Implementation of project activities

The Implementation of community development project activities is based on the approval of the management of the Rewilding Company. However, the project proponent will intend to implement at least two of its planned activities on a yearly basis.

For effective implementation of the community livelihood project activities, RML plans to simultaneously implement all these project activities incrementally on a yearly basis. This will then mean that activities are implemented side by side with others. below is a breakdown of the activities:

NO.	ACTIVITY PROFILE	IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENT	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
01.	Agricultural Assistance	throughout project life	2023 - 2072
02.	Educational Support To deserving Students	throughout project life	2023 - 2072
03.	Provision of Access to Clean water (boreholes)	yearly	2023 - 2072
04.	Provision of Soft loans	yearly	2023 - 2072
05.	Employment	activity based	2022 - 2072
06.	Provision of Cook Stoves	yearly	2023 - 2072

Plan for Implementation

Action Steps	By Whom	By When	Resources & Support Available / Needed		Communication for Implementation
			Resources available	Resources Needed (financial/human/political)	
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will take action?</i>	<i>Implementation schedule</i>			<i>What individuals and organisations should be informed about/involved with these actions?</i>
Agricultural Assistance	SLARI/ LNGOs/ RML	2024	Land, Farmers	Seeds, tools, fertilizers and money	SLARI, community stakeholders, farmers heads
Educational Support to deserving students	Scholarship committee/ RML	September 2023	students, schools, teachers	money for lunch, uniforms, school materials	Heads of schools, scholarship committee
Provision of Access to Clean water (boreholes)	Professional service provider(s)/ SALWACO/ RML	October 2023	land, implementing partner	finances	SALWACO, development committee
Provision of Soft loans	Loan committee/ RML	2024	farmers groups, traders	finances, loan officers	Committee executives
Employment	RML Management	2022	employment vacancies	salaries	community liaison officers, personnel manager
Provision of Cook stoves	RML Management	September 2023	finances	Cook stoves	Smart Green Stoves

Monitoring plan

The project proponents will involve the beneficial communities at every stage of the project activity and develop a monitoring plan to quantify and document every project activity during implementation. This system will be designed to ensure on-going data collection and analysis, monitor the project milestones and indicators, regularly assess on a quarterly and yearly basis the progress in reaching set goals, and adapt project management and implementation accordingly. This will help reveal the changes or impact on the social and economic well-being of community members resulting from the implemented activity. To ensure an easier monitoring process, the table below will be used as a guide to track the progress of activities implemented and determine success.

Goal	Objective	Input(activity)	Output	Outcomes	Data Source
Ensure an improved health and livelihood of community people in the project area	Provide access to clean water for communities	collaborate with relevant service provider(s) to provide dug-up wells (boreholes) in communities	Illnesses as a result of unsafe drinking water consumption will be reduced by over 60%	Decrease in reports of water-borne diseases & an improved condition of living of inhabitants	Hospital records, physical observation and general well-being of people
Ensure food self-sufficiency, food security, and economic well-being	Provide agricultural support	Train local farmers on new and improved ways of farming	At least 50% of farmers consume food cultivated by them instead of buying imported ones, improved food security	More farmers will farm, demonstrate immense innovative agricultural skills and increase in rural income	Locally produced agricultural products available for consumption and sales, more income generation to provide basic needs.
Improve access, retention, and completion of basic education for children and positively impact child labour, early marriage, teenage unplanned pregnancy, human capital development	Provide educational support	Pay for school materials, and provide cash support to deserving students	An exponential increase in student retention and basic education completion rate recorded	More students complete senior school and enter tertiary institutions	WAEC results and School Report Cards/ Records
Typical loan schemes for economic empowerment, so other enterprises are supported.	Establish a soft loan scheme	Provide soft loans to people who predetermined criteria	Visible increase in farming activities, small scale businesses. economic stability	More land cultivation and an increase in farm yield, plus a good number of homes able to provide their daily meals and basic needs	More trading activities are clearly seen, and more agricultural produce comes to the markets for sales, rural income increase

Facilitate gainful employment and ensure a crime-free community	Provide employment possibilities to natives	Employ worthy members of the communities with the requisite skills	Over 50% of employable natives (especially youths) are employed, and a decrease in crime rate of over 30% recorded	Almost every employable native in the project zone are gainfully employed and able to provide for their families	Rural income increased, visible evidence of families being provided for all basic needs
Reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere by significantly reducing the amount of biomass burnt.	Supply Cook Stoves to community members in the project zone	1 Smart Green Stoves per Household in all of the project communities	A significant reduction of wood logging for charcoal and firewood.	More trees are saved from deforestation and hence a reduced count of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.	Surveys and direct observation and monitoring reports.

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