

# The Community Rights Law

The Community Rights Law of 2009 (CRL) with Respect to Forest Lands is an act which protects community rights. It gives communities the right to manage their forest lands. It was created to provide rules for managing community forests and the legal protection for communities located in or around forests to access, manage, use and benefit from their forest resources.

## Community Rights

What rights does your community have?

- Communities have the right to control the use, protection, management and development of community forest resources.
- Communities have the right to enter into small-scale business contracts with respect to the harvesting of timbers and non-timber forest products on community forest lands under laws issued by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA).
- Any company that FDA have pre-qualified will have to discuss and agree with communities on fair social benefits for all.
- Communities will have the rights to at least 55% of all income coming from large-scale business contracts between communities, the FDA, and other parties for logging on community forest land.
- Communities have the right to full management of forest resources if they have done the 9 steps to establish community forest issued by the FDA.



Community Forestry is a way that local community people can have a part to play in making decisions for themselves about managing their forest resources while making sure the forest can be kept for future generations.

## Nine Steps for Your Community Forest Certificate

**Step 1** Your community can get a community forestry application from the FDA and apply to them for forestry license with a non-refundable fee of \$250.00.

**Step 2** The FDA will post a 30-day notice for a survey to see what is in the community forest and how you use your forest.

**Step 3** Your community will work with the FDA to survey the forest and determine what is in your community forest and how you use your forest.

**Step 4** The FDA will post a 30-day notice for the process of helping the community to show where your neighbors' forest boundary end and where your community forest's boundary starts.

**Step 5** The FDA will work with your community to show where your neighbors' forest boundary ends and where your forest boundary starts.

**Step 6** The FDA will work with your community to produce a map of your community forest and post the map in your community and your neighbors' community for everyone to see.

**Step 7** If there is a problem with the survey and the community forest boundary results, the FDA along with other government representatives, your community and neighbors will work to solve the problem.

**Step 8** The community has now completed the process to apply for the rights to manage their community forest, and FDA gives the community permission to organize itself into an Authorized Forest community.

**Step 9** The FDA and your community will sign a document, called a Community Forest Management Agreement (CFMA). This gives your community the right to manage your forest.

### Following steps

The Community Forest Management Body prepares the Community Forest Management Plan and submits to FDA for approval.

Once FDA approves, the Community Forest Management Body begins to implement the Community Forest Management Plan.

## Community Responsibilities

Communities also have a part to play to look after the forest!

- Communities have a duty to manage community forest resources in a way that is good for future generations.
- Communities have the duty of preparing Community Forest Management Plans in keeping with requirements and specifications contained in regulations and guidelines issued by the FDA.
- Communities have the duty to make sure there is full participation from all members of the community, and that the process is fair and clear.
- Communities need to report, and account, to the FDA on how they manage their community forest resources.
- Communities need to ensure that all income and other benefits are issued for the development the entire community and not just a few.

## Summary

- Communities own forest resources
- Communities manage the forest
- Communities must communicate with the FDA
- Communities can sign contracts with companies. If they do, communities must receive social and financial benefits from companies
- Communities have the right to up to 55% of revenues from activities
- Communities need to contribute to protecting the forests
- Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and participation of the community is a must



Sustainable Development Institute, Duarzon Village, Margibi County, Liberia.  
+231 886 844 041, managementteam@sdiiliberia.org, [www.sdiiliberia.org](http://www.sdiiliberia.org)



Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development, Margibi County, Liberia.  
+231 886 685 914 / +231 770 032 143, sesdev2009@gmail.com, [www.sesdev.org](http://www.sesdev.org)



Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), 1c Fosseyway Business Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 9NQ, UK,  
+44 1608 652 893 info@forestpeoples.org, [www.forestpeoples.org](http://www.forestpeoples.org)



This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the EU.