



ISSUE 2

# Harvesting Progress: GROW-2 Highlights Sustainable Agriculture Achievements

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1. GROW-2 IS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

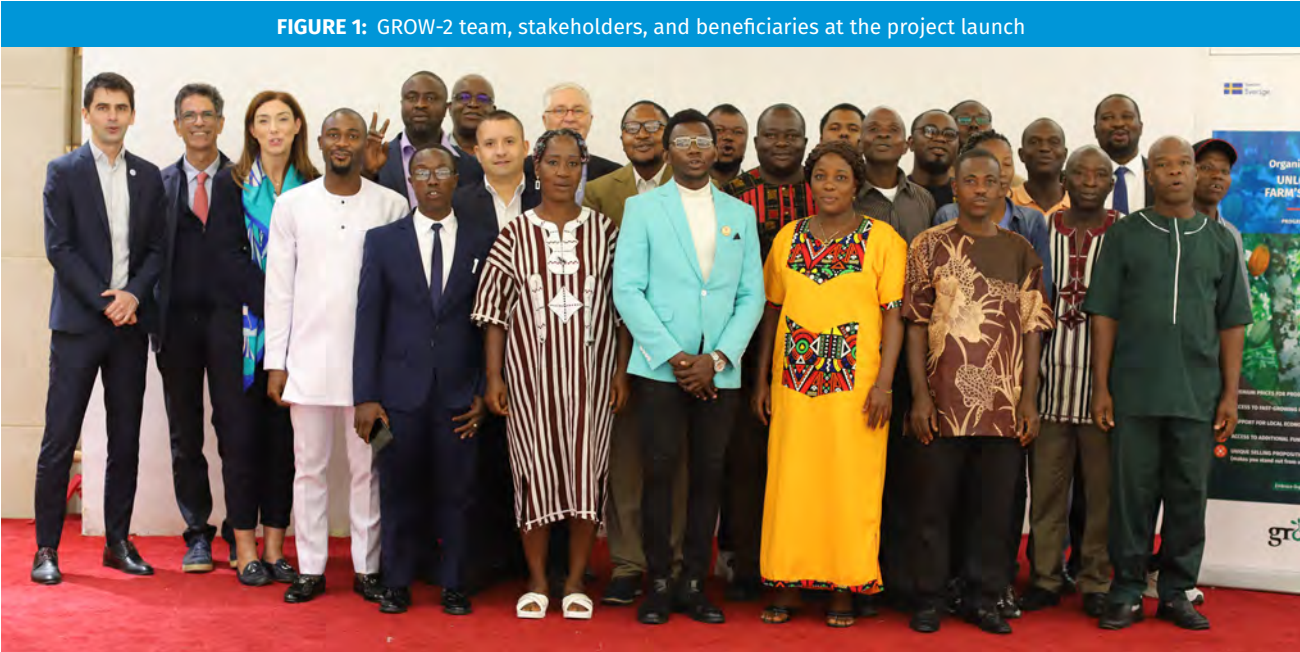


FIGURE 1: GROW-2 team, stakeholders, and beneficiaries at the project launch

On 19 September 2023, GROW-2 was officially launched at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex Conference Hall in Liberia. Funded by the Embassy of Sweden and implemented by UNIDO, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, GROW-2 aims to promote MSME development and employment opportunities in Liberia.

The event attracted a diverse array of participants from the agricultural sector, including government agencies, cooperatives, private sector entities and development partners. GROW-2 achievements were showcased, including the official presentation of organic certification to Liberation Chocolate and Boe-Kparblee cooperative.

Mr. Johan Romare, the Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Development Cooperation at the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia, reiterated the Embassy’s support and confidence in GROW-2. He further charged all partners to collaborate effectively to take advantage of the opportunities in the agriculture sector of Liberia.

Mr. Michael Titoe, representing the Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Jeanine Cooper, commended the GROW-2 achievements. He specifically praised the success in securing organic certification for two cocoa cooperatives in Nimba County. He urged continued support for farmers in Liberia and underscored the importance of sustained collaboration between the project and the Ministry of Agriculture in achieving sustainable agricultural development and economic growth.

One of the attendees could not contain his excitement, remarking, “I had no idea Liberian cocoa cooperatives were receiving organic certification. It’s great and a proud day for all of us.”

A young lady sampling snacks and drinks from three Liberian MSMEs (Evergreen, Bravo Sisters Enterprise, Jane Healthline) supported by GROW-2 to attend WACOMP Made-in-ECOWAS Exhibition in Ghana expressed her pride in the quality of the products and their packaging, “I am

amazed that these products were made and packaged in Liberia. The efforts of GROW-2 will undoubtedly propel our Liberian-owned businesses to greater heights.”

**“** I had no idea Liberian cocoa cooperatives were receiving organic certification. It’s great and a proud day for all of us.

Attendee at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex Conference Hall in Liberia.

**“** I am amazed that these products were made and packaged in Liberia. The efforts of GROW-2 will undoubtedly propel our Liberian-owned businesses to greater heights.

Attendee supported by GROW-2 to attend WACOMP Made-in-ECOWAS Exhibition in Ghana.

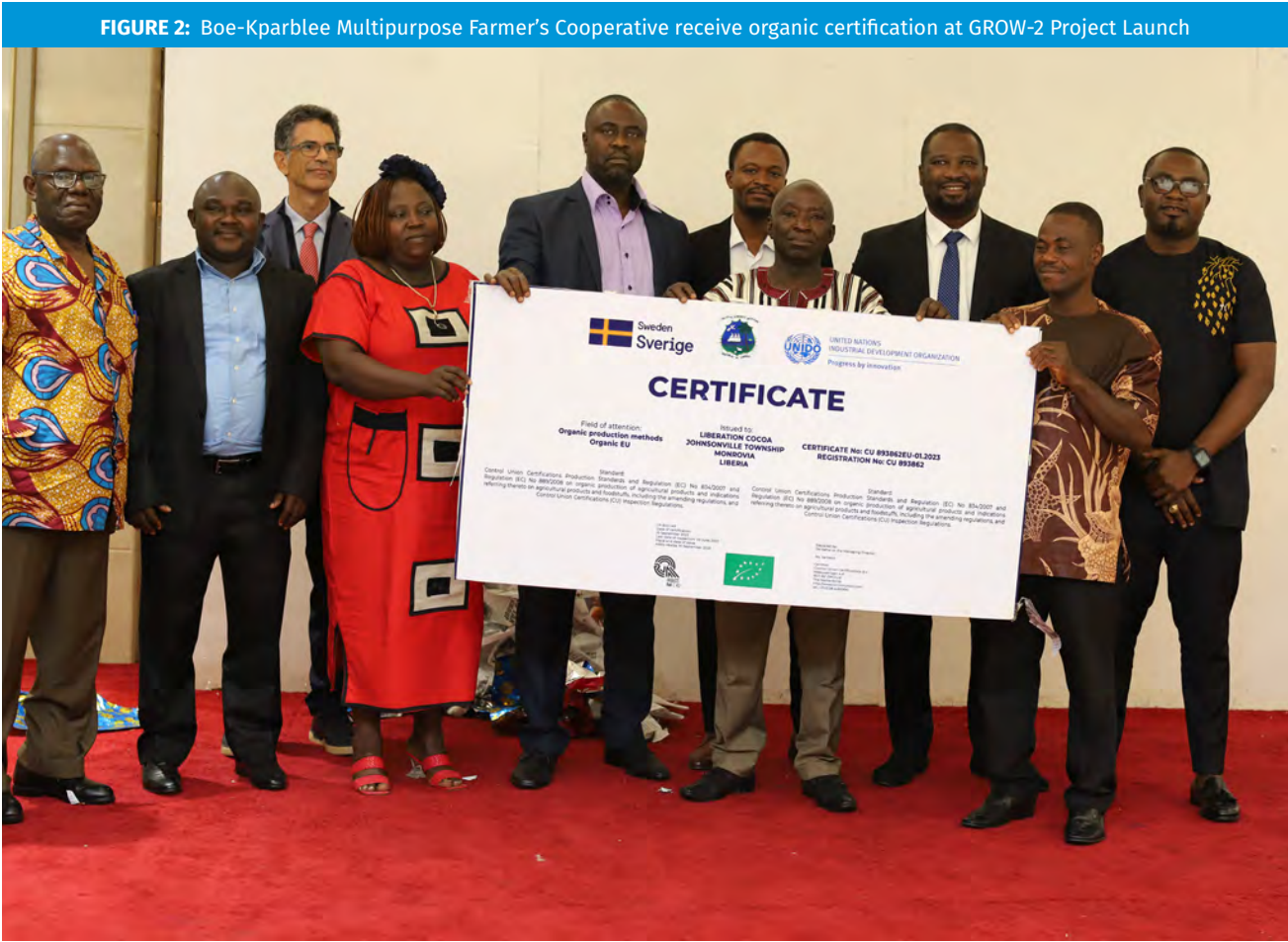


FIGURE 2: Boe-Kparblee Multipurpose Farmer’s Cooperative receive organic certification at GROW-2 Project Launch



## 2. HIGHLIGHTS FROM GROW-2'S INAUGURAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The inaugural meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for GROW-2 took place on 20 September 2023. The meeting aimed to evaluate the progress of the GROW-2 project from December 2022 to May 2023 for the cocoa, horticulture, and cassava value chains, highlighting challenges and proposed interventions. PSC members emphasized the importance of progressive qualitative improvements and collaboration between stakeholders.

As discussion unfolded, PSC members highlighted the accessibility of roads for cassava and vegetable farmers in rural Montserrado, suggesting the project focus on these areas for maximum impact. UNIDO affirmed plans to assess opportunities in Montserrado and Margibi counties, proposing tailored recommendations for horticultural interventions to be presented at the next steering committee. The meeting also delved into communication strategies, highlighting the importance of newsletters, brochures, and an active social media presence for project visibility.

**FIGURE 3:** PSC members during the meeting



## 3. TWO COCOA-PRODUCING COOPERATIVES IN NIMBA ACHIEVE ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

**FIGURE 4:** Left: GROW-2 team celebrates local cooperative's organic cocoa certification with former Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Jeanine Cooper. Right: Internal inspector reviews organic certification checklist with farmer as external evaluator observes



GROW-2 supported two cocoa-producing cooperatives to achieve organic certification. Nyor-Kwalokwakou's 575 farmers partnered with Granex and Boe-Kparblee's 440 farmers partnered with Liberation to apply for certification from Control Union, an international certification body.

This accomplishment reflects their commitment to sustainable production methods and compliance with international organic standards. Organic certification confirms adherence to specific standards for sustainable agriculture, such as avoiding synthetic chemicals and GMOs, maintaining organic farmland, keeping detailed records, and undergoing regular inspections. This certification provides consumers with assurance regarding the environmentally friendly and ethically produced nature of the crops while creating economic opportunities for farmers in organic markets.

The transition to organic certification required significant adjustments and learning, as the cooperatives navigated unfamiliar terrain and implemented changes to meet the requirements of organic certification. GROW-2 collaborated closely with them in addressing the non-conformities, ensuring thorough documentation of farming processes and mapping the farms of 1,015 farmers. The certification confirms the project's commitment to facilitating Liberian farmers produce high-quality organic cocoa, while also opening up new market opportunities.

Looking forward, GROW-2 will support the cooperatives to successfully navigate their recertification process.



4. INSIGHTS FROM EU DEFORESTATION REGULATION (EUDR) WORKSHOP

FIGURE 5: Industry stakeholders attend EUDR workshop in Monrovia



In pursuit of sustainable cocoa production and environmental conservation, GROW-2 organized a technical workshop on EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and Forest Degradation on 20 September 2023. The workshop aimed to foster cross-country collaboration in implementing strategies that align with these regulations. At the invitation of GROW-2, experts from the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod) visited

Liberia to share their knowledge on EUDR, outlining the measures and strategies to achieve compliance with the regulations.

A diverse range of stakeholders from both the private and public sector provided insights, experiences, and lessons learned on their path toward compliance.

Following the technical workshop, notable outcomes emerged, including:

- 1 Enhanced **awareness** and **understanding** of EU Deforestation and Forest Degradation regulations among Liberian cocoa stakeholders.
- 2 Strengthened **collaboration** between Ghanaian and Liberian cocoa industry players for knowledge-sharing and cooperative initiatives.
- 3 Identification of specific steps and **strategies** for Liberia's cocoa sector to align with EU regulations.

Looking forward, GROW-2 will facilitate coordination among donors, NGOs, and relevant organizations, with the objective of establishing common goals and support

mechanisms to help the cocoa sector in meeting EUDR requirements.

5. EUDR WORKSHOP RESULTS IN A DRAFT COMPLIANCE ROADMAP

FIGURE 6: Family photo of EUDR workshop participants



In August 2023, GROW-2 facilitated a constructive engagement between the Liberia Agriculture Commodities Regulatory Authorities (LACRA) and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) with the Ghana Cocoa Board (Cocobod). The purpose was to delve into discussions concerning the EU Regulation on Deforestation, which is effective from 31 December 2024 and could impact Liberia's cocoa exports to the EU.

Subsequently, a Cocobod technical team visited Liberia to assist in navigating the regulatory landscape. Held in collaboration with LACRA, a comprehensive technical workshop, on 21 and 22 September 2024, was dedicated to exploring the intricacies of the EUDR. It centered on contextualizing EUDR requirements within the Liberian framework to formulate a targeted national response. The workshop's attendees, including LACRA and CDA staff, cocoa buyers and exporters, were determined

to proactively address these challenges. Additionally, insights provided by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the Liberia Land Authority regarding forest types, forestry laws, and land management practices enriched the discussions.

All stakeholders demonstrated their commitment to collaborate and a desire to establish a national traceability system, paving the way for a more sustainable future for cocoa exports, and eventually, for all commodities required by the EUDR.

Looking ahead, GROW-2 plans to engage and secure buy-in from cooperatives to implement a national traceability system, which will enhance monitoring and control of cocoa production practices.



6. ADVANCING AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY:  
IFAD-GROW-2-IDH INITIATIVES IN LIBERIA



FIGURE 7: Liberia Cocoa Sector Stakeholder's Dialogue

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and UNIDO are actively working to enhance the agricultural sector's readiness for the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Through a series of strategic initiatives, the GROW-2 project has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for Liberia's agricultural sector to meet the requirements of the EUDR.

One significant milestone achieved by the GROW-2 project was the coordination of the National Cocoa Dialogue on 12 December 2023, in collaboration with the National Cocoa Private Public Platform (NCP3). This dialogue provided a crucial platform for sharing insights into the EUDR and outlining a roadmap for its effective implementation.

Moreover, the project has engaged in strategic partnerships, including leveraging the expertise of the Ghana Cocoa Board, to address various challenges related to compliance, sustainability, and financial accessibility in the agricultural sector. Key events such as the National Cocoa Dialogue and an Access to Finance workshop underscore the project's comprehensive approach to tackling these multifaceted challenges.

Furthermore, GROW-2, in collaboration with relevant organizations and government agencies, has played a leading role in establishing the Liberia Cocoa Traceability System (LCTS) and associated risk assessment mechanisms. Through collaboration with agencies like LACRA, as well as drawing on the expertise of the Ghana Cocoa Board, the project has developed a detailed implementation roadmap to advance these initiatives and ensure their effectiveness.

The GROW-2 project accomplishments include:

- 1 The development of the LCTS in collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board, LACRA, and other agencies, providing a blueprint for traceability and risk assessment in the cocoa sector.
- 2 Facilitating the National Cocoa Dialogue on 12 December 2023, which served as a crucial forum for disseminating information on the EUDR and engaging stakeholders in the roadmap towards compliance.
- 3 Organizing an Access to Finance workshop on 7 December 2023, aimed at connecting GROW-2 partners with financial opportunities, thereby addressing the financial challenges faced by MSMEs and promoting their growth and resilience.

These initiatives reflect the project's commitment to fostering a sustainable and economically viable agricultural sector in Liberia, with a particular focus on enhancing traceability, compliance, and financial empowerment.

Looking forward: As the GROW-2 project moves forward, the focus will increasingly shift towards the implementation of the strategies and frameworks that have been developed. This will include:

- 1 Continuous support and monitoring of the LCTS implementation to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with EUDR standards.
- 2 Further engagement with financial institutions and stakeholders to broaden access to finance for MSMEs, thereby enhancing their capacity to grow and contribute to a sustainable agricultural sector.
- 3 Building on the success of the National Cocoa Dialogue and Access to Finance workshop to maintain momentum in stakeholder engagement, education, and collaboration.

The project's ongoing efforts to navigate the complexities of EUDR compliance, coupled with its dedication to improving financial access, set the stage for a transformative impact on Liberia's agricultural sector by fostering an environment of compliance, sustainability, and economic opportunity.



## 7. LIBERIAN COOPERATIVES AND STAKEHOLDERS ATTEND SECOND INTERNATIONAL CLUSTER CONFERENCE IN GHANA

**FIGURE 8:** Liberia's Delegation at the International Cluster Conference in Ghana



The 2nd International Cluster Conference, organized by UNIDO-WACOMP Ghana was held on 22 August 2023 in Accra, Ghana. The conference served as a dynamic platform for knowledge sharing and networking, attracting a diverse range of participants, including Ghanaian Cluster members, government representatives, sector associations, international cluster experts, donors, and African business associations. In line with the project's commitment to promoting successful cluster development models and best practices, GROW-2 supported a delegation consisting of producers, policymakers, and other value chain stakeholders to participate.

The Liberian delegation, comprising representatives from Boe-Kparblee Multipurpose Farmers' Cooperative, Nyor-Kwalokwaku Multipurpose Farmers' Cooperative, Cooperative Development Agency (CDA), and the Liberia Agriculture Commodity Regulation Authority (LACRA), actively engaged in the conference proceedings. The presentations and discussions offered valuable

insights into successful cluster development models and best practices. Leaders of various clusters and experts from Ghana and across the region shared their experiences and covered topics such as joint actions for cluster competitiveness, the importance of standards compliance, innovative finance for MSMEs, international best practices in cluster approaches, and integrating MSMEs into continental markets through African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Prince Kolie, Director of Research and Statistics for CDA thanked GROW-2 for the invitation. He said, *"The networking opportunities and knowledge gained were beyond measure. I am confident that what my colleagues and I learned will enable us to effectively address technical issues surrounding cluster organization and development in our various fields."* He said, *"We are eager to serve as ambassadors for UNIDO in future projects within Liberia and look forward to continued collaboration in our various capacities."*

The Business Manager of Nyor-Kwalokwaku Multipurpose Farmers' Cooperative, Nuah B. Sohn, expressed gratitude to UNIDO for the opportunity to learn about best practices in cluster management. He remarked that hearing the success stories of cooperatives who thrived and succeeded through collaboration was inspiring. Sohn stated, *"We are eager to apply these learnings to enhance our cooperative's operations and contribute to the sustainable development of the cocoa sector in Liberia."* He extended thanks to UNIDO GROW-2 for the incredible opportunity and expressed anticipation for future collaborations.

Looking forward, the knowledge and experiences acquired in Ghana will undoubtedly be instrumental in GROW-2 endeavors to promote cluster opportunities in Liberia.





8. 1,802 LEAD FARMERS BENEFIT FROM GAP TRAINING

FIGURE 9: Farmers following the GAP training



Enhancing the technical capacity of producers is an important pillar of GROW-2. To achieve this objective, the project enlisted the expertise of a local consultancy firm to facilitate Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) program for farmers across the three value chains in Margibi, Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties.

The aim was to empower farmers with enhanced agronomic skills and insights to adapt to climate-smart agriculture. By promoting sustainable farming methods, farmers can better cope with changing environmental conditions. The expected outcomes include increased yield to meet market demands and better-quality produce with fewer post-harvest losses.

A total of 1,802 farmers, including 887 females and 915 males, benefited from the agronomic training facilitated by GROW-2. The farmers were organized across ten cooperatives, enabling effective knowledge dissemination and fostering collaborative learning.

Denise L. Karway, a member of the United Women Cooperative, expressed her gratitude for the training provided by the GROW-2 team, stating, “I am grateful to the GROW-2 team for bringing this training to us. Once we receive our certification, we will be acknowledged as organic cocoa farmers and receive a fair price for our cocoa. This is the most encouraging part.”

Odester Zuah from Nyor-Kwalokwakou in Nimba also thanked GROW-2 for GAP training, which helped them maintain their purchasing agreement. He said, “We are grateful to our partner, GROW-2, for taking the initiative to train our cocoa lead farmers. This training will help us a lot; we will extend it to other farmers in our respective communities and farmers will apply it on their farm to increase their yield.”

Looking forward, lead farmers trained will pass on their knowledge to other farmers in their communities, ensuring a productive season in the VCs.





## 9. VOICES FROM THE SECTOR

### Interview with Mr. Sumo Mulbah, Executive Director, Liberia Vegetable Sellers Association (LVSA)



#### 1 What is the role of the LVSA within the agricultural sector in Liberia?



LVSA is the mother organization for all vegetables and fruit sellers in Liberia. We have membership across almost all the counties in Liberia. As an association, we are responsible for the supply of most of the fruits and vegetables you find in the market. The association sources funding to improve the business of members, offers training where necessary, links members to farmers as well as trains farmers where necessary.

Through the work and service of our members, we help improve food security in the country

and provide a market for farmers to earn decent income from their farming activities. Apart from our roles as traders, most of our members “sponsor” farmers during the planting season to make sure that they have the needed inputs to farm. Despite our challenges, we hope as an association to improve and be a strong unifier within the agricultural sector, connecting vegetable and fruit sellers, advocating for their rights, and facilitating collaboration among stakeholders.

2

#### What opportunities do you see for the growth and expansion of the vegetable-selling industry in Liberia?



The vegetable-selling industry in Liberia holds immense potential for growth and expansion not only for the association but mainly for the farmers. Liberians are increasingly becoming cautious of what they eat and are now mostly looking for quality food and balanced diets. There is rising consumer demand for fresh and nutritious produce. Unfortunately, we import most of these high-valued fruits and vegetables from outside of the country which puts a lot of pressure on our members and sometimes eats into our profits.

Despite all of these, I can say that there are many opportunities for entrepreneurs to thrive in this sector. The increasing awareness of health and wellness among our people means that so many products from fruit and vegetables are being consumed and the need for value addition to our products will bring more rewards. For us as an association, we want these opportunities to improve our structures and be more innovative in supporting our farmers and promoting value addition in the vegetable supply chain.

3

#### What are some of the challenges that vegetable sellers in Liberia face, and how does the association work to address these challenges?



The vegetables and fruits market, like agriculture in Liberia, is faced with numerous challenges. As indicated earlier, one of the main challenges for us as an association is the low production of most of the high-valued crops that are in demand on the market. These crops such as tomato, onion, carrot, and bell pepper are not produced in large quantities locally, so we have to rely on imports, especially from neighboring countries like Ivory Coast, Guinea, Senegal, and Mali. Some supermarkets also import on their own. One main reason for this is because our farmers lack adequate knowledge to produce these crops, they

do not have the inputs needed and when they do, it is either not enough or the quantity is low. This is why as an association we work sometimes to support them with pre-finance to get the inputs they need. Other challenges include inadequate infrastructure, fluctuating prices, and lack of technical know-how. As an association, we are also challenged with institutional capacity building as well as training for our members. We are therefore looking to collaborate with development partners to empower vegetable sellers through the association with the necessary skills and resources as we try to overcome these obstacles.

4

#### How is GROW-2 cooperating with LVSA to overcome these challenges in the sector?



GROW-2 is one of the projects that sees the crucial role our association plays in the sector and has strongly collaborated with us. Having recognized our need to build the capacities of our team and members, the project is working with us to gain competence in leading and managing the association. We hope that with this partnership, our structures in Monrovia and across the country will be stronger to serve members. Again, with the support of the project, we are working to promote fair trade practices, which is something needed to increase trust between

us and the farmers. Our cooperation includes activities to ensure maintaining the quality of our fruits and vegetables for consumers, increasing market linkage for smallholder farmers as well as providing access to market information, especially on the prices and where farmers can locate our traders across the counties. We believe that this work with the project is very important and will help increase LVSA's contribution to the growth and sustainability of the vegetable industry in Liberia.



## 10. WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH (WUR) ON A SCOPING MISSION TO LIBERIA

FIGURE 10: Collection of soil samples for analysis



The typical Liberian farmer faces numerous constraints in farming, particularly concerning poor soil quality exacerbated by heavy rainfall, which further degrades the soil. Recognizing these challenges, the GROW-2 project has engaged various stakeholders, including farmers' cooperatives, processors, market actors, extension personnel, and tertiary institutions operating within the project landscape, in a comprehensive soil sampling assessment conducted by an international technical mission from Wageningen University & Research (WUR).

This mission aims to assess the challenges and threats to sustainable crop production intensification in cocoa,

cassava, and horticulture. The assessment covers various aspects such as crop varieties, inputs, yields, management practices, pests, diseases, and constraints. Additionally, the team will map local markets and collect soil samples for further analysis.

Mohamed Saryon from Sebehill Cooperative in Lofa thanked GROW-2 for bringing experts to collect soil samples. He said, "It is something we have been hoping for, and we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to GROW-2 for thinking in this direction. We sincerely appreciate the experts from WUR. The results from analyzing these soil samples will help guide us in our production activities,

which might mitigate some of challenges that lead to crops failure and subsequently increase our yields."

Abraham Morlu from Vornambeh Cooperative in Lofa expressed his appreciation, stating, "We want to extend our appreciation to GROW-2 for their commitment to ensuring farmers' success in their farming activities. Sometimes, despite putting in all our efforts, our yields cannot be compared to those of farmers in other African

countries such as Guinea, Ghana, and Ivory Coast. Perhaps it is our soil, but we are not certain. With the results from the analysis of the soil samples they have taken from our farms and bushes, we will know the exact cause of the low performance of our crops. This will enable us to correct it so that our yields can increase."





## 11. ACCESS TO FINANCE WORKSHOP SUPPORTS MSMEs FOR CREDIT WORTHINESS

FIGURE 11: Industry stakeholders attend Access to Finance workshop in Monrovia



In a bid to address the persistent challenge of limited access to finance faced by agri-MSMEs in Liberia, the GROW-2 project organized a Grant Facilitation Workshop on 7 December 2023. The workshop specifically focused on the Liberia Agriculture Commercialization Fund (LACF), which has allocated significant funding to support agribusinesses in Liberia. The primary goal is to stimulate agricultural development, promote agribusiness growth, and empower rural communities.

During the workshop, agri-MSMEs received valuable guidance on crafting effective grant proposals, navigating the application process, and engaged with financial experts from institutions offering financial packages for MSMEs. This interaction enhanced their ability to prepare documents acceptable to credit institutions. The workshop, attended by over 20 MSMEs, featured insightful presentations. Mr. Steven Marvie, Operation Manager of

the Ministry of Agriculture STAR-P project, provided an introduction to the LACF Grant Eligibility Criteria and Required Documentation. Mr. William Dennis, CEO of Business Start-up Center Liberia, shared expertise on Effective Grant Proposal Development, while Mr. Daniel Gayedyu, Managing Director of Right Bank Partners, highlighted financing opportunities at his Micro Finance Institutions.

This workshop marks a crucial step in introducing GROW-2 partners to financing opportunities and potentially addressing the financial challenges faced fostering their growth and resilience in the business landscape.

## 12. LIBERIA'S MSMEs TRIUMPH AT MADE-IN-ECOWAS EXHIBITION IN GHANA

FIGURE 12: Dr. Charles Sackey, Maryjane Daniels with Jane's Healthline and Ralph Nemenla Sonkarlay with Evergreen Enterprise



GROW-2 supported three MSMEs to join the maiden WACOMP Made-in-ECOWAS exhibition in June 2023. The exhibition was organized by WACOMP-Ghana in collaboration with the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) with the main objective of promoting products from ECOWAS and Ghana. Beyond promotion, the exhibition fostered value chain development, encouraged regional sourcing and a more vibrant regional market.

More than 90 MSMEs operating in the processed fruits, cassava, and cosmetics sectors showcased their products and services. Among them, Evergreen Enterprise Trading Inc., Jane's Healthline, and Bravo Sisters represented Liberia. They presented Liberian products and were encouraged to develop business networks in Ghana and the sub-region. The MSMEs also participated in workshops alongside regulators, financial institutions, and entrepreneurs; learning how to access funds or certify their products for the global market.

Mongar David of Bravo Sisters remarked, "The workshops focusing on finance, certification, branding, and

packaging offered practical insights. This joint endeavor between the EU, GEPA and UNIDO has equipped our team with the knowledge and connections to elevate Liberia's presence and impact within the global food system."

After the exhibition, GROW-2 team extended their visit to Fairafric, a prominent multi-million-dollar cocoa processing company in Ghana.

The visit provided the team with an understanding of the challenges within the cocoa value chain in Ghana, facilitating a comparative assessment of similar challenges faced in Liberia. The team visited cocoa farmers and buyers, gaining valuable insights into the cocoa industry in the region.

Furthermore, GROW-2 delved into the intricacies of Ghana's cassava production by embarking on visits to two processing factories. Here, the team was showcased their standard operating procedures and the equipment employed in the processing of cassava.



The MSMEs and participants gleaned several lessons from the experience, which they plan to apply to their businesses in Liberia:



#### CERTIFICATIONS

It was established that most of the products of businesses at the fair were fully certified and registered by the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) and Food and Drug Authority (FDA).



#### STANDARDIZATION

The Ghana Standard Labs approved most of the products from Liberia for sale in Ghana and the world. This was a new experience for many of Liberia's enterprises and business owners.



#### PACKAGING AND MARKETING

This was one area in which Liberia was well represented and commended for its high-quality design and packaging. Though most of their Ghanaian counterparts had unique and exquisite packaging, Liberia's stand was frequently visited by a diverse group of customers and stakeholders.



#### COLLABORATING AND PARTNERING

Lastly, the MSMEs anticipate collaborating and partnering with UNIDO. GROW-2 will open more avenues for Liberia in the global market. With UNIDO's support, they can significantly impact the world's food security.

Looking ahead, GROW-2 intends to support more of Liberia's MSMEs to access opportunities in regional and international markets.



### 13. GROW-2 CELEBRATES UNITED NATIONS DAY

FIGURE 13: UN Family at the United Nations Day



The GROW-2 project team joined the family of UN organizations at the United Nations building for the official celebration of the 78th UN Day in Monrovia on 31 October 2023. Former President, H.E. George Manneh Weah and top members of his cabinet, including Minister of Agriculture Ms. Jeanine Cooper and Minister of Commerce Ms. Mawine G. Diggs, and UN Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni were present to celebrate the contributions made by United Nations throughout the world and Liberia's successful transition from reliance on peacekeepers to becoming a development partner of the UN.

The former President touted Liberia's role in the formation of the UN and said the nation should be proud for being one of three African nations to sign the United Nations Charter along with 47 other countries. He thanked the United Nations and all international partners and friends for the "Support given during the country's journey to sustainable democracy."

The UN Day celebration, held under the theme "Rebuilding trust and solidarity," was significant, occurring just days before the runoff election for the Liberian presidency. Former President Weah commended the citizens for their dignified conduct during the electoral process.

UN Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni, highlighted Liberia's political stability since the civil war ended in 2003. She encouraged Liberians to take pride in their accomplishments. She said the following, "We celebrate big and small wins; that is what keeps people and countries moving. This country registered a relative economic growth of 4.8% in 2022, thanks to mining and a relatively good agricultural harvest." She added "We also understand that the Human Development Index (HDI) increased by 20.3% from 1999 to 2019. Although we know that due to COVID, global wars, high global inflation, and the price of fuel, further progress might have been affected."



FIGURE 14: Former Minister of Agriculture Ms. Jeanine Cooper with GROW-2 team



The day was filled with music and merriment as the GROW-2 staff joined the myriad of UN organizations and guests in a delicious organic lunch. The meal was sourced from farms throughout the counties and cooked by Liberia's finest chefs.

Looking forward, next year's UN Day presents an opportunity for the GROW-2 beneficiaries to showcase and share chocolate bars produced in Liberia from organic cocoa grown on their farms.

GROW-2 is pleased to announce the launch of the revamped project website!

We are excited to present a fresh look and improved online user experience for GROW-2 stakeholders. Our redesigned site aims to make navigation simpler and information more accessible for everyone. Discover our upcoming events, register to participate, and learn about opportunities to cooperate with us.



We invite you to explore the website at [grow2liberia.com](http://grow2liberia.com) and see what is new. Keep an eye out for further updates as we continue to enhance our online presence!







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