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GREEN SCENERY

Spatial Monitoring Report on SOCFIN Agricultural Company Sierra Leone Ltd. in Malen Chiefdom, Pujehun District, Sierra Leone

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GREEN SCENERY'S MISSION

Green Scenery strives to build capacities for positive attitude and behavior change towards human rights, peace and development in and across communities in Sierra Leone through a process that empowers people and adds value to their lives by:

1. Working in collaborative partnership with the relevant stakeholders;
2. Advocating for policy change;
3. Training and community empowerment initiatives;
4. Promoting the rights and interests of disadvantaged people.

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OVERVIEW: MAPS AND TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the onset of the phenomenon of large scale land acquisition for agri-business in Sierra Leone, after the first whistle was blown by Green Scenery, many studies have been conducted by various researchers, some to meet requirements for degree thesis, others for policy and development purposes. There is the fear in a school of thought opposed to large scale land acquisition that there is danger in corporate entities ascribing huge portions of land to themselves in the guise of investment and annihilating the actual land owners.

This school of thought holds the view that large scale land acquisition is alarming in scale and deleterious to ecologic functions and to the socio-economic wellbeing of communities directly affected by the phenomenon. Deforestation and changing biome are the leading factors that associates large scale land investments, which in turn may activate total environmental degradation (loss of biodiversity; water, air & land pollution of all kinds; food insecurity and adverse climate change effects).

Other factors such as conflict over land, conflict arising from unappreciated compensations, corruption due to interest in land deals, investors failing to meet their corporate social responsibility, demands of affected communities, loss of self created jobs in farming that support livelihoods of small holder farmers and community trans-boundary issues are other challenges pointed at by those not in favour.

The other school of thought in favour of the phenomenon postulates that huge transformations accompany the process of large scale investment in land for agriculture. This offers jobs where mainstream jobs are unavailable, improves infrastructural development and contributes to national revenue.

Howbeit, this work will not look into the issues presented by these schools of thought. What it intends to do is to bring further issues into the discussions. The issues of the accuracy of land sizes taken by the investors, whether the land taken in particular locations are infringing or not in other locations, how much land area is taken as against the total area of host communities. Therefore, this work is based on spatial attention of concern dealing with concessions of large scale land investments.

A prominent business, SOCFIN Agricultural Company (SAC) Sierra Leone Ltd. in Pujehun District, otherwise SOCFIN for this report, was prioritized for this monitoring exercise. For a number of reasons: the company has been a constant focus for Green Scenery in terms of monitoring, research and other forms of investigations; the company is now very advanced in its operations and has practically concluded planting its palm trees within the concession and issues have arisen from communities about their land areas and individual clan/family lands. SOCFIN

claims to total concession area of 18,481 ha in Malen chiefdom.[1] This monitoring exercise will be used to verify this assumption.

Both field data collection and desk research were performed to enhance credibility of this work. Details of how this work was carried out, is well detailed in the methodology.

[1] See SOCFIN's Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment 2015, p. 3.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To determine the extent (size and location) of the large scale land investment of SOCFIN Agricultural Company in Sierra Leone.

Objectives

The objectives of the overall activity are:

- To appropriately determine the actual location and size of SOCFIN's concession including its plantation by applying shapefiles that are used to map Sierra Leone's administrative boundaries.
- To decide which shapefiles to use in the exercise, given that more than one shapefiles is in existence and in use.
- To produce a suitable map showing the SOCFIN concession including the plantation area by using appropriate and acceptable methods.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Desk research

This exercise was performed to acquire materials such as picture maps and shapefiles showing the administrative boundaries of Sierra Leone's districts and chiefdoms as well as picture maps and the shapefiles of the concessional boundary of the plantation of SOCFIN.

During the compilation of shapefiles, it was discovered that more than one shapefiles of district and chiefdom boundaries exists. One derived from the Geography Department of the University of Sierra Leone (USL) and has been in use since the 1980s as determined by the shapefiles' metadata. Another one was commissioned by the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and produced by Darren Connaghan in 2014[2]. The most recent shapefile was commissioned by the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) et al and produced by the Kenyan geographer Cynthia Kainyingi[3]. The shapefile was released in 2015.

Upon interrogation of the three shapefiles, it was discovered that the OCHA and the ICRAF et al shapefiles were strikingly similar in shapes of polygons. These two shapefiles were dissimilar to the one derived from the Geography Department of USL. It was further learned that the OCHA shapefiles are in popular use by the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN agencies. Hence, for this Spatial Monitoring, Green Scenery chose to use the shapefiles of OCHA, which are in all properties the same as the ICRAF shapefiles. Conclusively therefore, whether the ICRAF shapefiles or the OCHA shapefiles are used, the same result will be achieved. The choice of using the OCHA shapefiles was due to the fact it is in current use in Sierra Leone by government and international agencies.

From the Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment (July, 2015) of SAC-Sierra Leone, the embedded map of "planting year – 2014" was obtained. This map was geo-referenced and digitized using Arc-GIS 10.1 to produce a shapefile. The Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment of 2015 also served as the reference source to determine the official sizes of the concession and the planted areas of SAC.

To determine which chiefdom administrative boundary shapefiles to use in this exercise, the SAC-shapefiles were overlaid with the three shapefiles described above (USL, OCHA and ICRAF et al) in both ArcGIS and Google Earth. Comparing the results, it was observed that with the USL shapefiles, the SAC map was seen to be encroaching in Bum and extensively in Bagbo chiefdoms. Given that Bum chiefdom is across the Maleni River, and the extent to which the encroachment appeared in Bagbo, gave an indication that the USL shapefiles may be problematic in accuracy. The shapefiles of OCHA (Connaghan) and ICRAF et al (Kainyingi) presented a

[2] See http://ebolageonode.org/layers/geonode%3Asle_admn_ad3_py_ocha_chiefdom
[3] See http://landscapeportal.org/layers/geonode:chiefdoms_py

different picture. Both aligned with the Maleni River serving as boundary between Bum and Malen in critical areas like Kortumahun that shares river boundary with Bum, depicting a well-fit overlay with SAC's map. This was further verified through ground-truthing and the use of Google Earth imagery.

Using Google Earth, SAC's plantation area was digitized. Three serial images of 2014, a reviewed version of 2016 and the updated version of 2017 were used to determine the outcome.

A comprehensive data analysis has been essential to put all the data together. This analysis comprised of assessing and integrating desk and field data, converting data into digital maps and carrying out contextual data analyses to produce a holistic report.

Ground-truthing

Three ground-truthing exercises were carried out to determine coordinates and to engage community stakeholders. The first ground-truthing was about seeking the alignment of GPS field data with the chiefdom boundary shapefiles of USL, OCHA and ICRAF et al to help us determine which of the shapefiles to use. After deciding to use the shapefiles of OCHA, the second ground-truthing was to collect GPS coordinates along boundary lines of key locations that are of concern to establish if SOCFIN is or is not confined to its concession area. The third and final ground-truthing was essentially meant to engage community stakeholders in those key-locations to determine their knowledge in the location of boundary lines it also served the purpose of further verification of field data.

Materials

The following were the materials used to conduct this spatial mapping exercise:

- Related existing data (literatures, shapefiles, soft copies of picture maps) from various authors and organizations.
- Computers and printers
- Mapping softwares (Google Earth, Arc GIS 10.1, QUANTUM GIS 2.8.2 & other Microsoft cooperation software)
- GPS units (GARMIN OREGON 650t)
- Micro-recorders
- Camera
- Field notebooks and writing aids

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Discussions

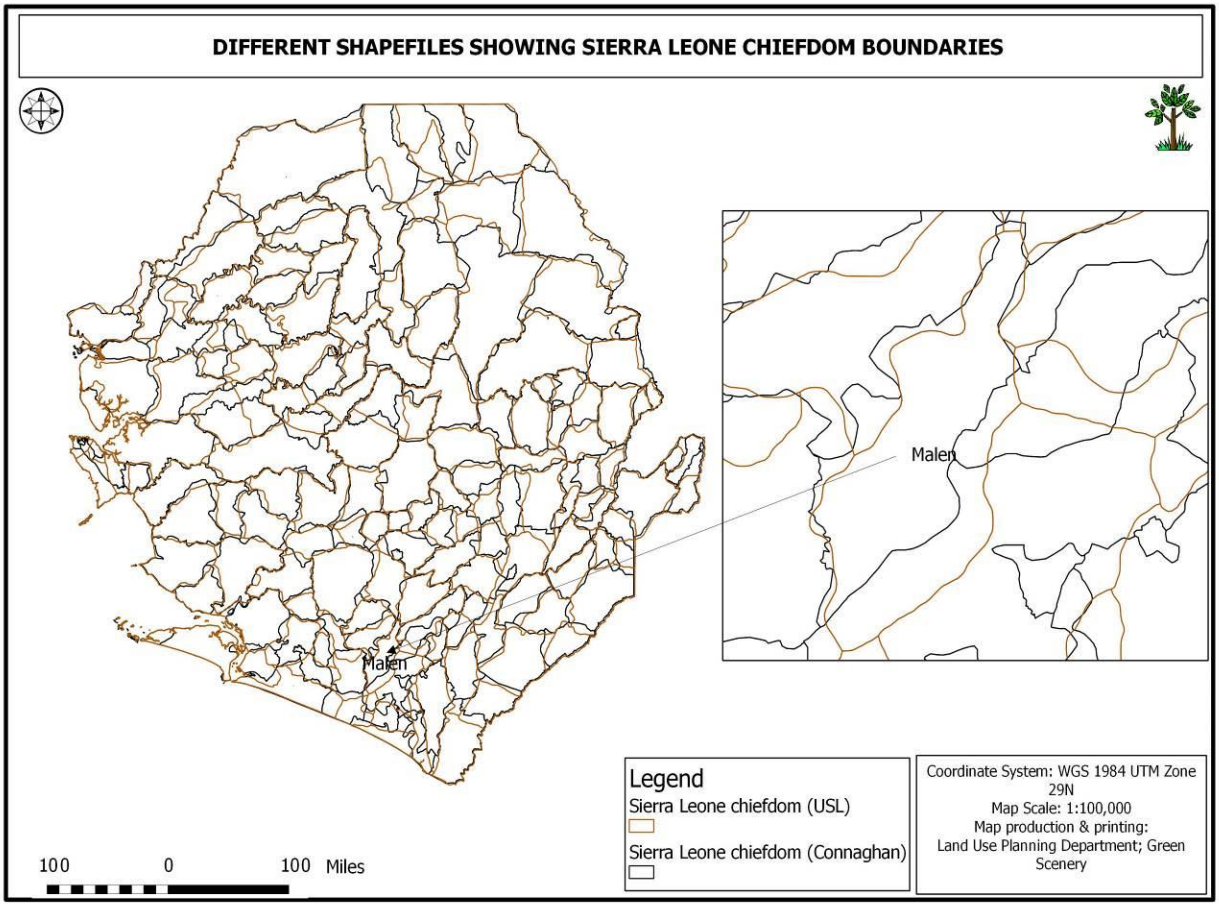
During this spatial monitoring exercise, encounters were made of at least three different shapefiles of Sierra Leone's administrative boundaries. It became difficult to determine which shapefiles to use until they were interrogated for proven accuracy. One of the shapefiles acquired was the USL shapefiles. This shapefiles appeared to have different features and structures. It conformed accurately with the external boundary of Sierra Leone, meaning that this shapefiles overlaid accurately the international boundary lines of Sierra Leone. Apart from that, the internal administrative boundary lines are markedly at variance with each other.

It was observed that by using this shapefile, information obtained may be less desirable considering levels of inaccuracies. For instance, this shapefile presented inaccuracies in boundary lines between Bum and Malen chiefdoms in the Kortumahun axis. The overlays were not consistent with field coordinates recorded in the Kortumahun area bounding the river. The shapefile was not consistent with the coordinates obtained in the Bum chiefdom across the river. To further interrogate the USL shapefile it was assessed against boundary lines in Bombali and Tonkolili; specifically in the Makari Gbanti and Malal Mara chiefdoms. Again, it was observed that the shapefile was inconsistent with key features like the river. Furthermore, the shapefile was not consistent with other locations such as those between Malal Mara and Kholifa Mabang.

It was concluded that by using the USL shapefile to assess the plantation site of SOCFIN it would present misleading information. For instance, SOCFIN would appear to be in Bum chiefdom across the river. The fact is that SOCFIN is not in Bum chiefdom considering that the river serves as the boundary between Bum and Malen chiefdoms. Also, the shapefile if used will portray that SOCFIN plantation do not share boundary with Panga Kabonde and Sowa chiefdoms, but in actual sense, this is not the case.

The other encounters of shapefiles were those of ICRAF et al (2015) and of OCHA (2014). Both shapefiles were encountered with some short time intervals. The first encounter was with the ICRAF et al files in May 2015, when the monitoring exercise commenced.

The cause for searching for shapefiles was warranted when it was observed that the new map of Sierra Leone produced by Statistics Sierra Leone showed the shape of Malen chiefdom different from that of previous maps like the one produced by the Geographic Information Section of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in January 2004. The discovery of the ICRAF et al shapefile further triggered the need to further check for other shapefiles. These searches lead to the discovery of the one of OCHA in June 2015. No other shapefiles were discovered after this.



Comparing shapefiles and deciding the appropriate ones for the exercise. The OCHA and USL shapefiles cannot overlay each other.

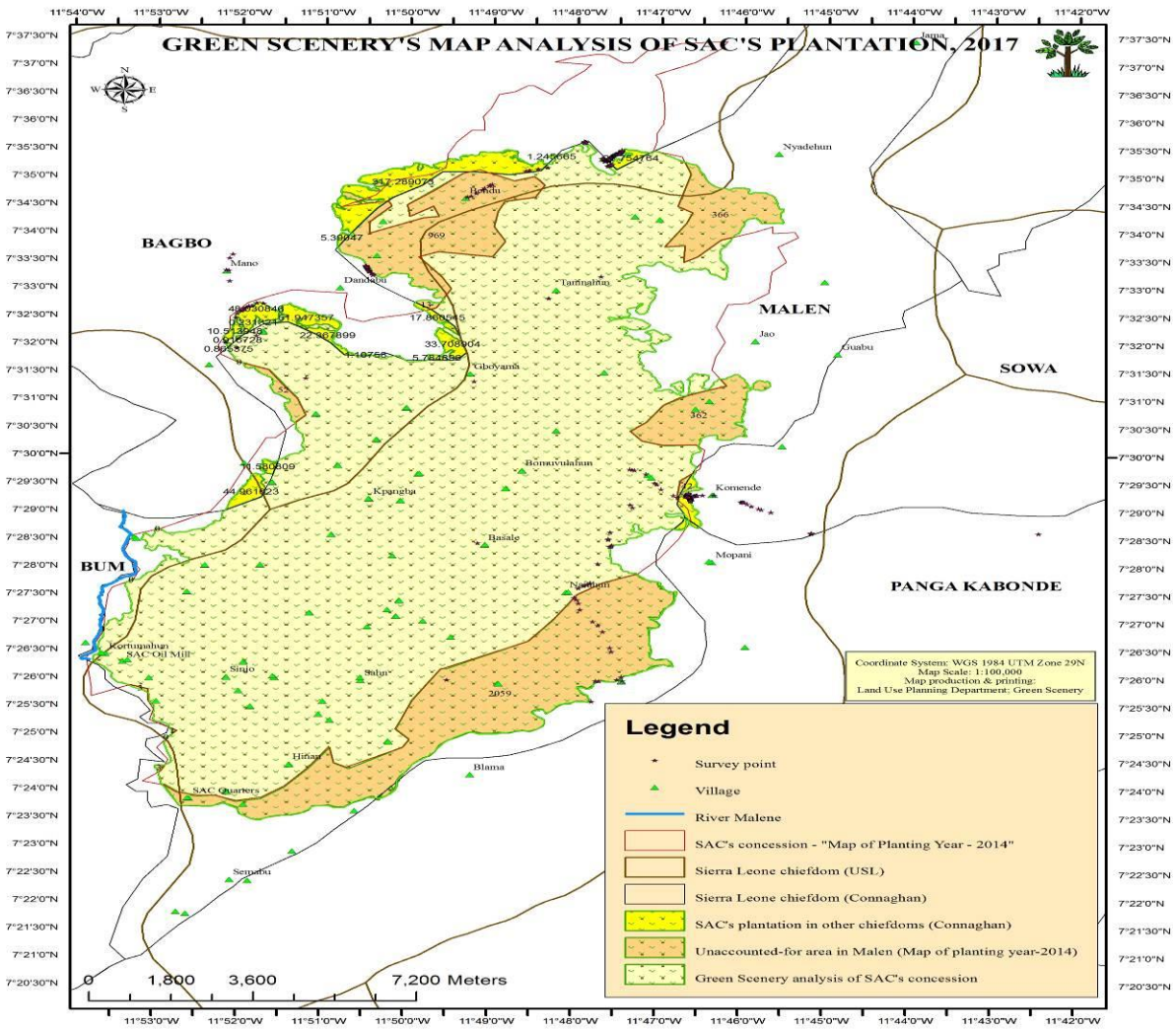
As already stated under Methods and Materials, the ICRAF et al and the OCHA shapefiles were found to have similar features, meaning that they overlay each other. After deciding to focus on the OCHA shapefiles, additional examinations showed that it provides a realistic picture of what obtains on the ground as well as how it compares with Google Earth. Furthermore, the ground truthing coordinates of the monitors overlaid the shapefile of OCHA. For instance, coordinates in Senehun, Bum, Kortumahun, Malen and the River Maleni in the Kortumahun axis are all consistent with the shapefile and with Google Earth. Similarly, coordinates in the Bendu junction axis as well as part of the access road between Bendu Junction and Bendu are consistent with the shapefile. In conclusion therefore, findings using the shapefile of OCHA are bound to present accurate results.

Findings

1. At least three shapefiles of Sierra Leone's administrative boundaries exist. Possibly more could be in existence. The ones of USL, OCHA and ICRAF et al are likely to be in regular use. Two of the shapefiles, the one of OCHA and the one of ICRAF et al are strikingly similar in features, while they are both dissimilar in features with the USL shapefile. The shapefiles of OCHA and ICRAF et al prove to be more accurate than the one of USL considering the spatial features of Sierra Leone.

2. Our analysis shows that SOCFIN accounts for a total of 18,326.59 ha in Malen and for 638.99 ha outside of the chiefdom. This translates into the following additional areas: Bagbo 595.94 ha, Sowa 34.61 ha and Panga Kabonde 8.44 ha[4].

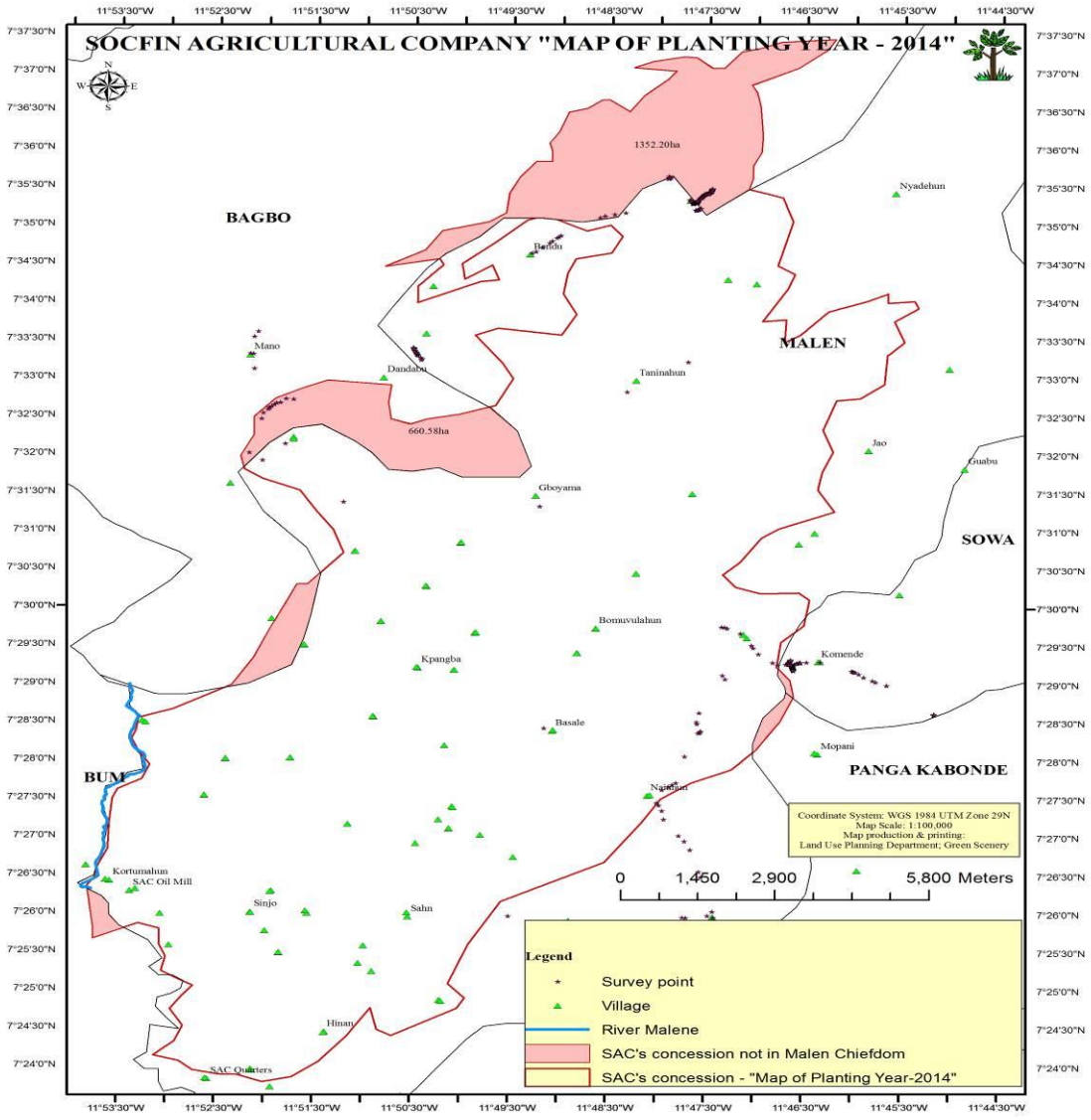
3. The analysis shows that SOCFIN has plantation areas outside its concession of 18,481 ha in Malen chiefdom, summing up to a total of 18,965.58 ha. The area is derived from the perimeter of the plantation, which accounts for by and large 117,105.54 m.



Map analysis of SOCFIN'S entire estate, including the plantation

[4] See Annex for the *Coordinates of Socfin's Plantation in other Chiefdoms*.

4. SOCFIN's map of planting year 2014 as found in their Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment of 2015 does not correlate with what exists on the ground.



SOCFIN's map of planting year 2014 does not correlate with ground truth

5. The total area of Malen is 27,642.2 ha and the total area of SOCFIN's planted area is 12,342 ha according to the company[5], therewith the plantation far exceeds half of the area of arable land of the chiefdom. Considering the concession area of 18,326.59 (our estimate) in Malen, only 9,315.61 ha of Malen chiefdom's land is unoccupied by SAC.

[5] See Annex for *Socfin's Response Letter*.

6. Ground-truthing shows that communities close to border areas between Malen and Bagbo, Malen and Sowa, and Malen and Panga Kabonde chiefdoms do not perceive SOCFIN to have exceeded their plantation out of Malen. For instance, two town chiefs in Dandabu Bagbo and Bendu junction have the notion that the SOCFIN plantation boarders in those areas are the boundary lines between Malen and Bagbo. Other communities as well as security personnel at the checkpoint between Malen and Bagbo carry the same perception. Furthermore, the Chief of Bendu Malen claims that the SOCFIN plantation borders the two chiefdoms in their location. In similar vein, the Chief of lower Senehun Sowa, like his counterparts, is of the view that the SOCFIN plantation is serving as border between Sowa and Malen chiefdoms in their location, even though a reservation was expressed that some contention arose over the boundary lines on the onset of the SOCFIN operation in that area. In Panga Kabonde, in the axis of Soso, youths informed that there was high tension between the authorities of Malen and Panga Kabonde over boundary lines on the onset of the SOCFIN operation. These same youth still expressed misgivings over boundary lines of SOFIN plantation around the Blama axis. They were of the strong opinion that the SOCFIN plantation jumped the chiefdom boundary of Malen into Panga Kabonde. However, scientific navigation of the chiefdom boundary lines as seen in the OCHA shapefile and through ground-truthing coordinates implies that community perception over boundary lines might be flawed.

ANALYSES OF SAC'S PLANTATION AS DETERMINED BY GREEN SCENERY
(including all updates)

Land sizes	Area (Hectares)	Percentages wrt size of Malen	Percentages wrt size of SAC's Concession
Size of Malen Chiefdom	27,642.20	100.00	0
Total size of SAC's concession	18,965.58		100.00
Size of plantation in Bagbo Chiefdom	595.94		3.14
Size of plantation in Panga Kabonde Chiefdom	8.44		0.04
Size of plantation in Sowa Chiefdom	34.61		0.18
Total size of SAC's plantation outside Malen (Bagbo + Sowa + Panga Kabonde)	638.99		3.36
Size of SAC's concession in Malen (18,965.58 – 638.99)	18,326.59	66.30	96.63
Size of land in Malen not occupied by SAC	9,315.61	33.70	

Matrix showing analyses of SOCFIN'S concession and plantation as determined by Green Scenery

ANALYSES OF SAC'S MAP OF PLANTING YEAR 2014 VERSUS MALEN CHIEFDOM

Concerned Land	Area (Hectares)	Percentages (%)wrt size of Malen	Percentages (%)wrt size of SAC's Concession
Size of Malen Chiefdom	27,642.20	100.00	
Size of SAC's concession in Malen	18,326.59	66.30	100.00
Total size of built-up areas in Malen	7,156.57	25.89	
Total size of arable land in Malen = (size of Malen – size of built-up areas in Malen)	20,485.63	74.11	
Size of built-up areas in SAC's concession in Malen = 25.89%	4,744.75	17.16	25.89
Size of arable land in SAC's concession in Malen = (Size of SAC's concession in Malen – size of built-up areas in SAC's Concession in Malen)	13,581.84	49.13	74.11
Size of arable land in Malen but outside SAC's concession (total size of arable land in Malen – size of arable land in SAC's concession)	6,903.79	24.98	

Matrix showing analyses of SOCFIN'S concession and plantation as determined by SAC's Map of Planting Year 2014

SYNTHESES OF FINDINGS

The syntheses section offers an analysis of processes, data, observations and responses proffered by SOCFIN. It brings out reasoning and deductions behind the reason and offers sense to where complex interplay of issues exists.

1. There are a number of shapefiles (map files) in use by various institutions and individuals to depict Sierra Leone's administrative boundaries. While it was observed that two are very similar in features, yet these shapefiles significantly differ from another in use. This significance of disparity can lead to inaccuracies. The USL shapefiles prove to be less accurate in features, therefore using it can lead to deviations that could have far-reaching effects in land use mapping and planning hence programming conflicts on the ground. The internal administrative boundary lines hardly overlap giving cause to chiefdom boundaries to shift contributing to disputes between chiefdoms over land. The choice of the more accurate OCHA shapefile over the USL shapefile cannot be over emphasized since it narrowed down the inaccuracies observed on the onset of the monitoring exercise and reduced discrepancies that otherwise would have lead to poor monitoring outcomes.

   To the issue of boundary lines SOCFIN in its response[6] asserted that:

   "It is a well-known fact that many boundaries in Sierra Leone are documented correctly and have no demarcation posts [have been] laid".

   While it is true that survey beacons are hard to find in boundary delineation at district or chiefdom levels, yet boundaries were established and well documented likely in or just after the British era. It is therefore important for the Government to locate or retrieve such vital information, which could be used to corroborate any GPS/GIS or shapefile accounts of boundary lines. Going by SOCFIN's assertion stands to indict the company because using the features of the map of Sierra Leone and its as-it-is boundary features implies that the company ascribed into its concession land belonging to Bo district (Bagbo) and Bonthe district (Bum), Panga Kabonde and Sowa. However, the ground situation is different; SOCFIN'S plantation is seen to be located in Bagbo, Panga Kabonde and Sowa only.

   Shapefiles derived from USL are older than those produced by ICRAF et al (2015) and OCHA (2014). The files of OCHA show some homogeneity with SOCFIN's map files particularly when indicating concessional edges along chiefdom boundaries that align

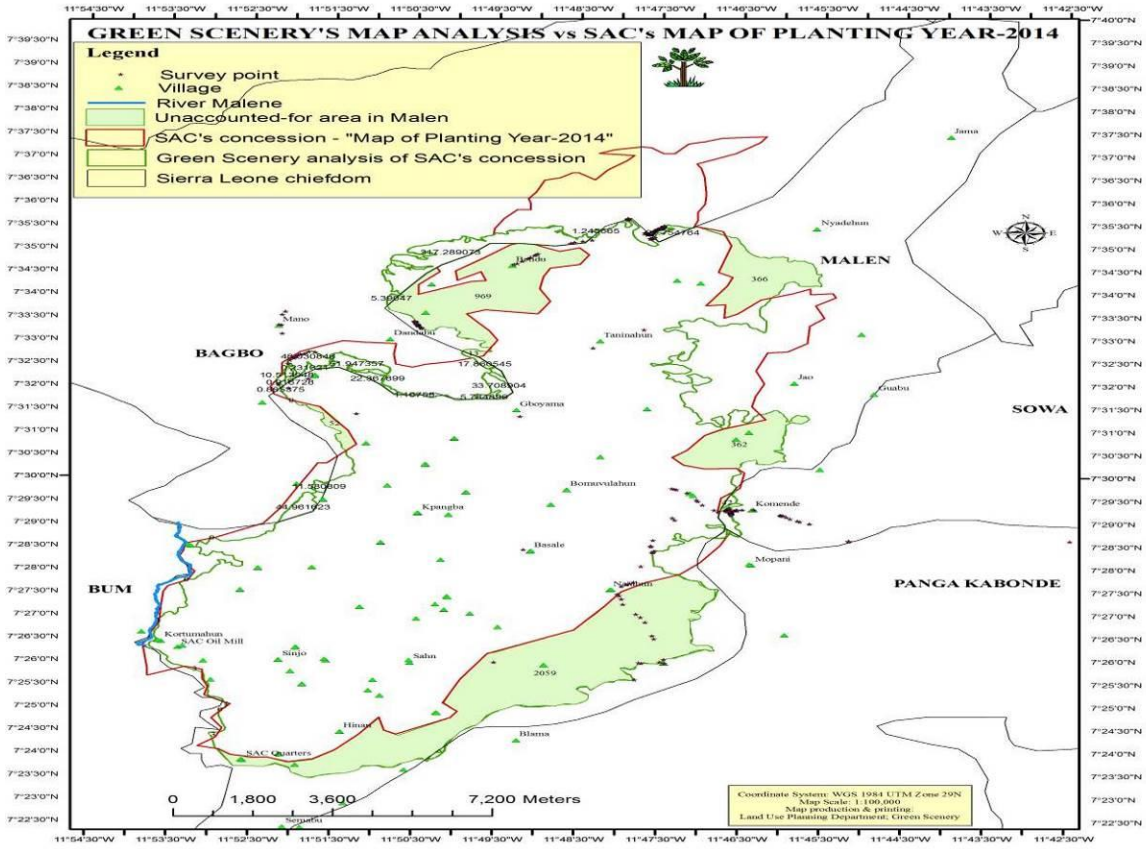
[6] See Annex for *Socfin's Response Letter.*

with river courses/water bodies. Therefore, using OCHA files for this study is seen to be more appropriate, hence the findings on the SOCFIN plantation in the above mentioned three Chiefdoms and not four chiefdoms.

Geo-referencing SAC's Map of Planting Year 2014 with the OCHA shapefiles and the GPS coordinates taken during ground-truthing, it was discovered that a significant area of SOCFIN's plantation lies in Bagbo chiefdom, Bo district by a total of 595.94 ha. Other instances discovered from this exercise but with much lesser areas are Sowa chiefdom, which has 34.61 ha and Panga Kabonde, which has 8.44 ha.

The concession area of 18,326.59 ha (our estimate) in Malen closely correlates with the official claim of 18,481 ha[7] impressing that the two figures are in close proximity. However, when the plantation areas in the three other chiefdoms are considered the total concession area soars to 18,965.58 ha.

2. In another instance, using SAC's Map of Planting Year 2014, our analysis shows that in Malen Chiefdom an area amounting to some 2,600 ha outside the map was planted with palm trees belonging to SOCFIN. What this implies is that the area is unaccounted for since it exists outside the official SOCFIN map of 2014.



Planted areas of palm trees in green seen outside the SOCFIN map of 2014

[7] Spectator Newspaper 5/7/2016.

This issue was brought to the attention of SOCFIN for their reaction. The company reacted to Green Scenery's discovery of the unaccounted for land area outside concession area as indicated in their map stating that:

"there is one area on the Pujehun road which has some uncertainty and due to this SAC has refrained from occupying this area..."

During ground-truthing, the Pujehun road was tracked in the Naiahun axis within the estate using GPS so also were the boundary areas of the unaccounted area which were further validated by Google Earth. The estimated area was determined to be 2,663.1ha. Green Scenery's investigation shows that on both sides of the Pujehun road within the indicated area, palm trees are planted which are conjoined to the SOCFIN estate. If as stated by SOCFIN that the area was uncertain and thus not occupied, whose palm trees are those growing on that land? Who then planted them? Keen observations of the palm trees in that location show that they are of the same variety as those of SOCFIN.

Furthermore, with the advancement of SOCFIN's plantation in the other parts of the chiefdom, namely upper Malen, other areas (Nyandehun, Jao and Bendu axis) have been discovered planted outside the company's official map as seen in their due diligence report of 2015.

3. SOCFIN further claims that it

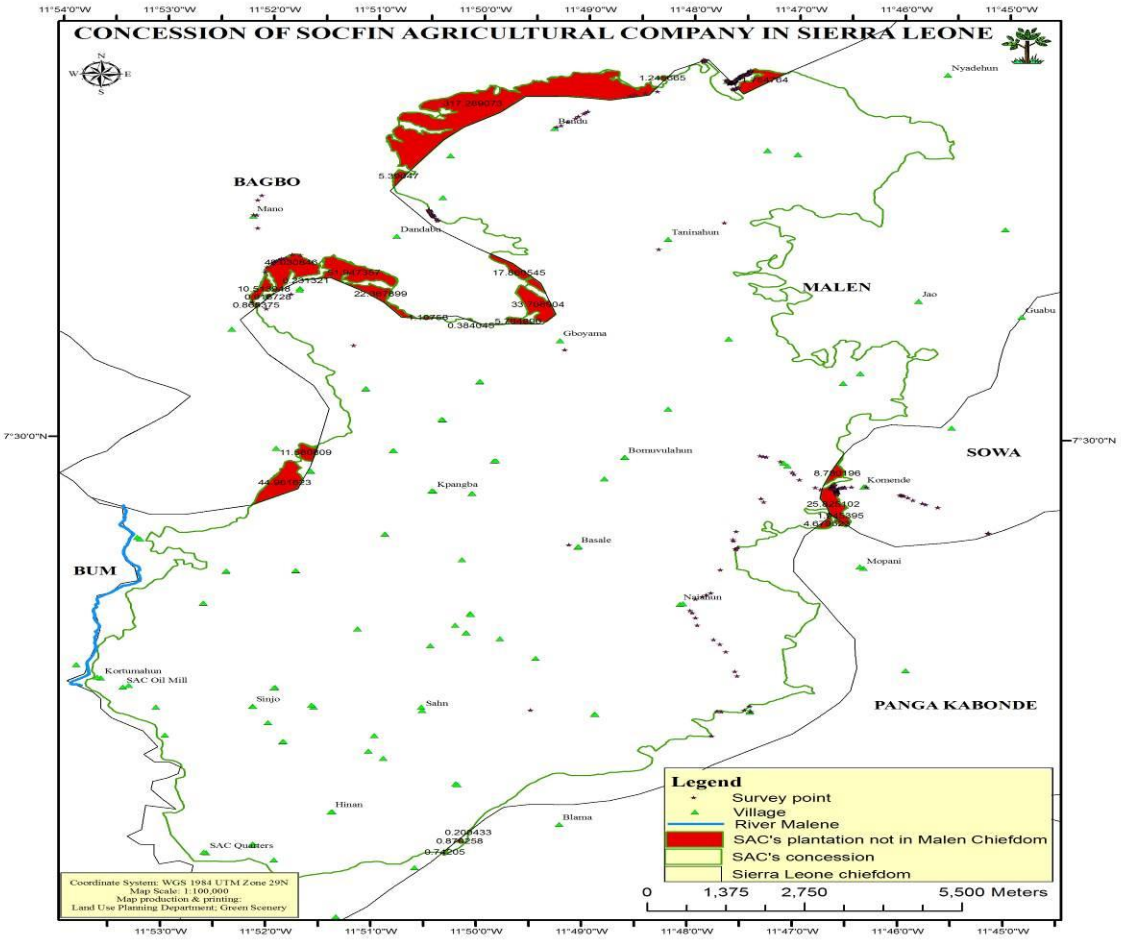
"pays for land lease amounting to 18,481 Ha however only utilizes 12,342 Ha. Areas of swamp for IVS production and biodiversity, green belts around villages, protected forests, villages etc. all not utilized by SAC are compensated in the annual lease".

Paying for land that is not been used by SOCFIN still puts it in its concession and control which makes it tantamount to disallowing communities access to it. This land must not be a contested area and payment for it should be stopped while allowing citizens of Malen to utilize it. Interestingly SOCFIN claims to be paying for 6,139 ha more, the question of interest regarding the extra 6,139 ha over the 12,342 ha is who is benefitting from lease payments made for it? Given the lease rent of US$ 12.50 per hectare, the 6,139 ha are fetching US$ 76,737 or Le 575,527,500 every year (Take $1 = Le 7500). Who receives such payments? Is the central government aware of such payments?

On the issue of green belts and protected forests, it is very difficult to distinguish what the company claims to be protected forests and green belts around villages. Communities have claimed that SOCFIN's palm trees can be seen behind homes in some villages. Green Scenery has observed palm trees immediately behind a primary school in Sinjo village. The claim of ignoring the 500 m buffer by SOCFIN was a cause for a scientific study. In that study, Genesis Tabang Yengoh et al have shown that SOCFIN's assertion

in its ESIA report that it will maintain 500 meters of buffer zone between villages and their plantation was ignored.[8] The company's claim of a green belt, protected forests and biodiversity is therefore questionable.

4. From these analyses and evaluations, SAC shows characteristics of having more land under concession than what they are claiming officially. The size of the concession in Malen chiefdom sums up to an approximate area of 18,326.59 ha. The plantation is further observed to be in three other chiefdoms: Bagbo, with 595.94 ha, Sowa with 34.61 ha and Panga Kabonde 8.44 ha. The total land under concession is therefore approximately 18,965.58 ha. It is still not clear how SOCFIN acquired land from Bagbo in such large proportion as the company had shown little interest in that chiefdom.



SOCFIN plantation (red) in other chiefdoms. Figures indicate area sizes in hectares

[8] Read: "Land access constraints for communities affected by large-scale land acquisition in Southern Sierra Leone" by Genesis Tambang Yengoh • Frederick Ato Armah, 2014.

In one of its public presentations, Green Scenery had asserted that SOCFIN now controls over 50% of Malen chiefdom with an area of just over **27,000** ha. Green Scenery was accused by SOCFIN for presenting wrong figures. Green Scenery's field monitoring has proven this, with SOCFIN now admitting payment for an area amounting to 18,481 ha.

5. SOCFIN further responded that:

"On the 15th March 2014 Green Scenery lead by their Executive Director Joseph Rahall and a delegation of 27 parliamentarians and the Chief Whip came to Sahn Malen with no notice given to the SAC management. SAC presented to the delegation all documentation of SAC's agreements and maps for this meeting" and SAC has provided on numerous occasions to officials all this documentation including our last meeting Green Scenery arranged in March 2014. All this documentation can be obtained from the Registry Office in Freetown if it is required"

Green Scenery will not comment on Parliamentary protocols alluded to by SOCFIN. But with regards to the response on the maps and related documents presented to the delegation of parliamentarians on the 15th March 2014, Green Scenery wishes to clearly state here that those documents account only for 6,500 ha and do not portray the current total of land (18,481 ha) under concession as determined by SOCFIN's recent reports.

6. SOCFIN also noted that

"…communities on both sides of the Chiefdom are consulted to determine the boundaries. SAC has no disputed boundaries into other Chiefdoms. SAC suggests you confirm this with the authorities such as the Pujehun and Bo District Council."

From all indications in our assessment of this spatial monitoring, there is no way the company's plantation cannot go beyond Malen into Bagbo, Sowa and Panga Kabonde Chiefdoms. If there is doubt as expressed it will be useful to cross check this by professionals during which all concerned (SAC, the Government, chiefdom/community authorities, land owners and users as well as CSOs) will participate in validating the boundary lines of SAC plantation in that given chiefdoms[9]. This validation would be a hallmark to transparently handle this issue thus avoiding future trans-boundary conflicts. We make this assertion because from our findings it can be noted that community people seem to have misconceptions about the real chiefdom boundaries.

[9] See Annex for the *Coordinates representing area sizes of the Polygons*.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the principles of the new National Land Policy, there should be an extensive project to map individual chiefdom boundaries (if possible individual town/village boundaries) in the country and this should be done using efforts of central government, local government, civil society and communities. This recommendation is in line with the recent call by Paramount chiefs in a conference of Paramount chiefs in Makeni.

Given that unaccounted for areas seem to exist as has been determined by this exercise, it will be necessary to carry out further monitoring exercise in the locations to determine the company's actual concession and to undertake an investigation to ascertain whether SOCFIN's concession actually falls within Bo district, in Bagbo, Sowa and Panga Kabonde chiefdoms.

SAC should review both their land lease agreements and concession boundaries with the prevailing communities with leadership from government and participation of land owners and civil society organisations to ensure transparency and satisfaction of all parties. As part of reviewing the land lease agreement, SAC should also consider undertaking individual family/clan land demarcations from which an 'Acknowledgement Agreement' can be formulated directly between the company and individual land owners.

There is need for government to review existing shapefiles of the Sierra Leone administrative boundaries with the intention of officially approving a single version that meets standards for universal operations. There is also a strong need for a comprehensive land use mapping of communities like Malen Chiefdom to achieve enduring land use plan for locals.

This monitoring serves as a lesson and must not be limited to SOCFIN's operation but must be replicated to other areas affected by large scale land acquisition for agri-business and possibly other investments.

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Google Earth satellite image; US Dept. of State Geographer; ©2016 Google; ©2009 GeoBasis-DE/BKG; Data SIO, NOAA, US Navy, NGA, GEBCO.

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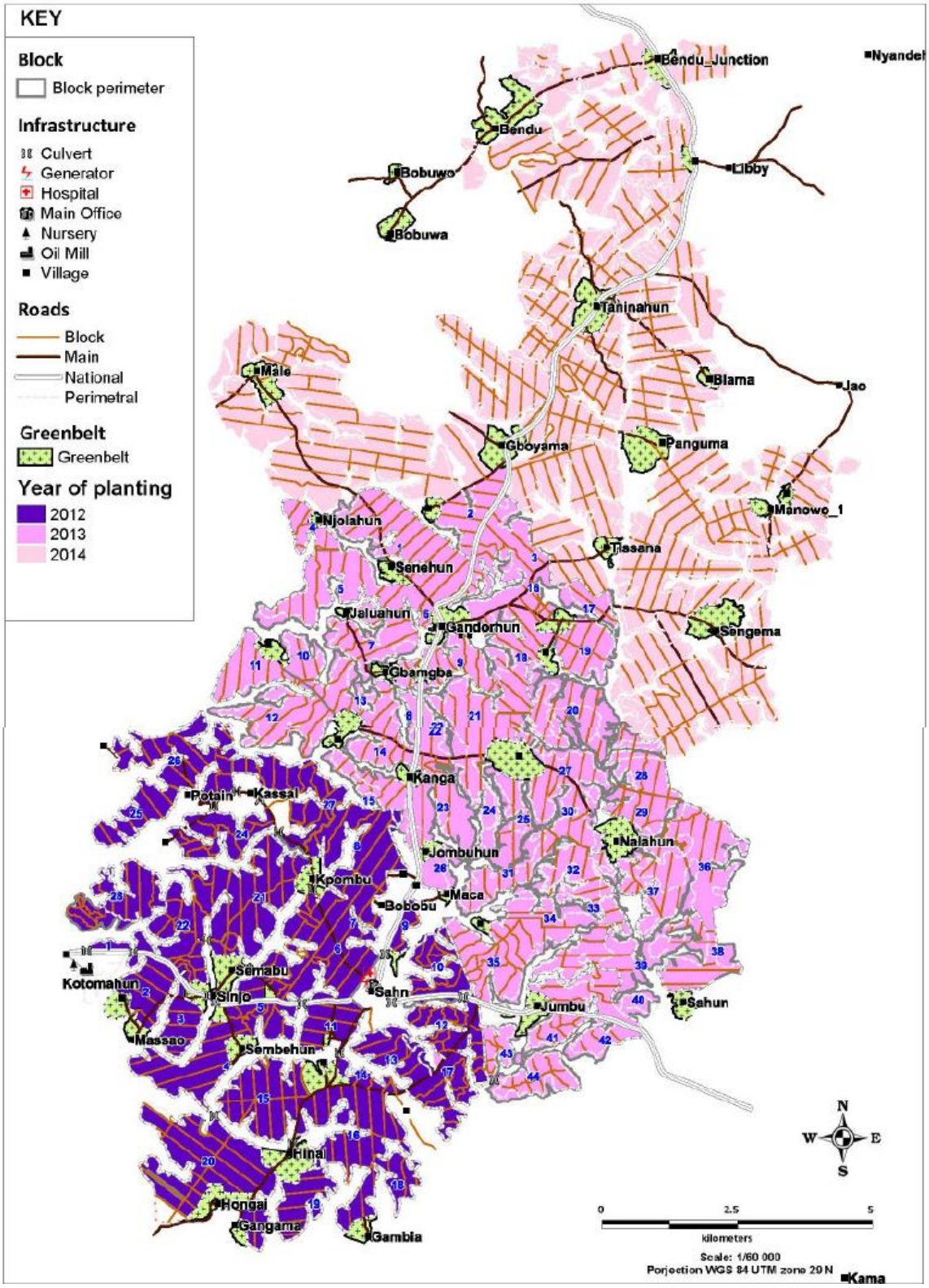
Land access constraints for communities affected by large-scale land acquisition in Southern Sierra Leone 2014: Genesis Tambang Yengoh, et al.

Annex:

I. MAP OF SAC PLANTATION FOR PLANTING YEAR 2014



"SAC Sierra Leone Ltd – Map of Planting Year – 2014", Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment in 2015

II. COORDINATES OF SOCFIN'S PLANTATION IN OTHER CHIEFDOMS

COORDINATES OF SOCFIN'S PLANTATION IN OTHER CHIEFDOMS				
LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LAND_NAME	AREA (HECTARES)	AREA/CHIEFDOM
7.488275	-11.865064	Bagbo_1	44.96	BAGBO = 595.94
7.496231	-11.860663	Bagbo_2	11.58	
7.532855	-11.869132	Bagbo_3	0.87	
7.534926	-11.867257	Bagbo_4	0.92	
7.536781	-11.867920	Bagbo_5	10.51	
7.542104	-11.864354	Bagbo_6	48.03	
7.542371	-11.856223	Bagbo_7	51.95	
7.539173	-11.861202	Bagbo_8	0.23	
7.535962	-11.849648	Bagbo_9	22.37	
7.529728	-11.842032	Bagbo_10	1.11	
7.529288	-11.835122	Bagbo_11	0.38	
7.528827	-11.827470	Bagbo_12	5.78	
7.533302	-11.824583	Bagbo_13	33.71	
7.542853	-11.828656	Bagbo_14	17.86	
7.564572	-11.846716	Bagbo_15	5.39	
7.580072	-11.835951	Bagbo_16	317.29	
7.589478	-11.804944	Bagbo_17	1.29	
7.590787	-11.788303	Bagbo_18	21.57	
7.479405	-11.776082	Panga_1	1.95	PANGA KABONDE = 8.44
7.479083	-11.778462	Panga_2	4.68	
7.402332	-11.834568	Panga_3	0.20	
7.400218	-11.835883	Panga_4	0.87	
7.397229	-11.838337	Panga_5	0.74	
7.491327	-11.777218	Sowa_1	8.78	SOWA = 34.61
7.485492	-11.778312	Sowa_2	25.83	
TOTAL			638.99	638.99

III. GREEN SCENERY LETTER TO SOLICIT INFORMATION FROM SOCFIN

Green Scenery

31 John Street, P.O. Box 278, Freetown, Sierra Leone.
Tel 232 22 226216. Cell: 232 76 601979. Email: contact@greenscenery.org Web: www.greenscenery.org

The Country's Natural Resources Are Natures Gift To Us What We Make Of Them Are Our Gift To Posteritv

The General Manager,
SOCFIN Agricultural Company Sierra Leone Ltd,
Sierra Leone,

Date: 30th June, 2016.

Dear Sir,

SUB: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

I write to you as the Executive Director of Green Scenery to express our organisation's continued interest in your company's operations in Malen Chiefdom. We read in the Spectator Newspaper of Tuesday 28th June 2016 that your company is not opposed to CSO engagement and even encouraged CSO among other stakeholders to continue to partner with SOCFIN. Understanding that our engagement has always been that of monitoring, we are encouraged by this pronouncement and we hope to see past cooperation reinstated between our two bodies.

Green Scenery is using this opportunity extended to CSO to enquire about some issues that are still creating doubts in our monitoring activities. We hope you will spend a small time to shed some light on our questions.

Farming for Food Security

Your company stated in one of its publications that it has embarked on agriculture as a measure of addressing food security for the Malen people after taking away most of their land. In this regard you stated that hectares of flooded plain has been ploughed and are ready for planting and that it will target 1,400 persons. Please clarify for us the area of flood plain under cultivation and the location of the farm site(s) of this good initiative. Giving an impression of the spatial range of beneficiaries will be very helpful. Malen Youth Development Union (MAYODU) recently raised concerns to your company about ''withdrawal of tractors from farmers in the 'bata' cultivation leaving land not harrowed.'' In addition, we have been informed that only selected community members benefit from the rice seed loans for cultivation in the flooded plains. Please throw some light on these.

Scholarships

We are elated about the Company's award of scholarships to deserving children in schools. Newspapers have on many occasions carried accounts of this action. What we wish you to shed more light on are the following:

- The category of scholarships,
- Names of beneficiaries,
- Communities they hail from and
- The schools they attend?

The labour issues

We are informed that the tasks assigned to casual workers or labourers are not commensurate to daily work time or pay. Meaning that labourers are spending more time on completing a daily task than is required, making them

Branch Office: 22 Sam Street, Lewabu Section, Bo City.

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lose out on their daily wage – to make up for the time, we are made to understand that some casual workers feel compelled to enlist their children on the plots assigned to them. This we believe is encouraging child labour on your plantation. We would want to understand what constitutes a task meant for daily wage labourers and how much they get paid per day.

The transportation

It was learnt that vehicles meant to transport workers to various locations in the estate has been withdrawn and workers are since challenged to cover long distances to their work locations. This is now causing many workers to start their working day very early in the morning, a situation they claim impacts negatively on their health.

The concession area

In our assessment of your concession area, having used two map types (shape files produced by Cynthia Kanyingi and another one derived from the University of Sierra Leone) and interpolating those data in Google Earth and GIS, the following observations have been made:

1. SOCFIN shows a characteristic of having more land under concession than what the company had been claiming on the recent "SAC Sierra Leone Limited – Map of Planting Year – 2014". This was observed when SAC map was georeferenced and observed using both Google Earth and ArcGIS 10.1.
2. SOCFIN seems to be not only located in Malen Chiefdom. SAC's concession is located in two chiefdoms (Bargbo and Malen) when Cynthia Kanyingi's files were used and in three chiefdoms (Bum, Bargbo and Malen) when the USL files were used. Applying Cynthia Kanyingi's shape files (which seem more appropriate) and the "SAC Sierra Leone Limited – Map of Planting Year – 2014" (currently available in the company's Environmental and Social Due Diligence Assessment in 2015) in GIS, 1,965.7 hectares (or more) of portions of SAC's concession area are located in Bargbo Chiefdom.

Because of the aforementioned discrepancies, we kindly request for SAC's most recent map files to establish facts and ensure transparency of determining SAC's actual concession dimension.

Finally, your call for cooperation is timely, as we have requested your company's participation in CSO activities in Pujehun on many occasions. Among other things, CSOs recently organised awareness-raising events on the UN FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) in Pujehun and other districts in the country. Those events passed without your participation. We hope that you will in future honour CSO invitations.

While we look forward to substantiating your call for greater cooperation, I remain,

Yours truly,

Joe Rahall.

Joseph Rahall
Executive Director.

Branch Office: 22 Sam Street, Lewabu Section, Bo City.

IV. SOCFIN'S RESPONSE LETTER

AGRICULTURAL COMPANY SL LTD

13B Madongo Town
Off Mail Road
Congo Cross
Freetown
Plantation – Sahn Malen, Pujehun District

Green Scenery
31 John Street
Freetown

23rd July 2016

Ref: Your letter Request for information

Dear Sir,

We acknowledge receipt your letter dated 30th June 2016.

Socfin Agricultural Company (SAC) is always looking to work with Non-Governmental Organizations that can provide real assistance to communities in the basic needs of food security and developing lively hood through interventions such as micro-credit to improve the lives of communities.

It should be noted that SAC has now employed a new Community Liaison Manager, Mr. Joseph Belmoh t supersede Mr. James Pesima who now is seriously ill and was forced to stop working due to poor health.

Farming for food security

One of SAC's key goals is to ensure adequate food is grown to strengthen food security in the Chiefdom. This intervention is done through low land mechanical rice cultivation and Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) production. In 2016 SAC provided a substantial amount of rice seeds for low land rice farming and for IVS production.

It should be stated all land ploughed under the program was harrowed and this was cleared up in a meeting held with representatives of MOYUDU. In certain cases individual requests were made to plough land which was not carried out and these situations often lead to allegations and misunderstand.

Scholarships

The scholarships handed out are for all students who have written their BECE examinations and have achieved an aggregate of 30 or less. The students come from all over the Malen Chiefdom. There is only

one school in the Chiefdom who writes BECE which is MJJS. In addition SAC provides transport to Pujehun and feeding for the week to all students writing BECE examinations.

Labour issues

Plantation work as well as other agricultural work around the world is carried out using tasks. This permits the worker to work hard and complete the task and leave their place of work and return home. SAC uses international standards for task sizes as used in other African and Asian countries. SAC's tasks are all lower than these standards. SAC regularly revises tasks based on the ever changing conditions in the plantation. SAC does not permit helpers to assist and completely prohibits any form of child labour. In some cases particularly during the start of the rains some workers leave their work early to go and work in their field creating this impression that tasks are not obtainable. This issue is regularly discussed with the NUPAW Union and the Chiefdom Administration to find common ground for both parties.

Transportation

When SAC began with the development of the project large numbers of workers were needed to be concentrated in one area for operations such as brushing and all the planting operations. SAC has now transformed from development activities to maintenance and harvesting operations. This requires smaller number of workers spread over the entire area of the plantation. It is also the policy of the Company to employ local people from villages in the plantation who have leased their land and to stop transporting in people from outside that take the employment of local community people. The proximity of work for local community people is close as there are some forty muster points around the plantation. In cases where workers were living in Sahn town and were working outside, most have now relocated to their areas of work. The point in question are those few who are reluctant to move or change and continue to ask for transportation. Reducing transportation of people is also critical in our Health & Safety policy which looks to mitigate the risks of accidents to happen. SAC's HSE department has gone a long way to address driving safety in the area and moving large numbers of people on a daily basis only increases these accidental risks where driving standards are low.

Concession area

On the 15th March 2014 Green Scenery lead by their Executive Director Joseph Rahall and a delegation of 27 parliamentarians and the Chief Whip came to Sahn Malen with no notice given to the SAC management. SAC presented to the delegation all documentation of SAC's agreements and maps for this meeting. The meeting was dissolved by the Chief Whip who accused the Executive Director of being in contempt of parliament for not tendering Green Scenery's documentation as a term of reference for that meeting. SAC has provided on numerous occasions to officials all this documentation including our last meeting Green Scenery arranged in March 2014. All this documentation can be obtained from the Registry Office in Freetown if it is required.

It is a well-known fact that many boundaries in Sierra Leone are documented correctly and have no demarcation posts have been laid. In this case used by the Government and SAC, communities on both sides of the Chiefdom are consulted to determine the boundaries. SAC has no disputed boundaries into other Chiefdoms. SAC suggests you confirm this with the authorities such as the Pujehun and Bo District Councils and SAC is surprised this is being investigated when there has been no know issues. SAC questions why Green Scenery is using SAC as the entity for this investigation when there is no known issue around it.

There is one area on the Pujehun road which has some uncertainty and due to this SAC has refrained from occupying this area.

Further it must be stated that SAC pays for land lease amounting to 18,481 Ha however only utilizes 12,342Ha. Areas of swamp for IVS production and biodiversity, green belts around villages, protected forests, villages etc. all not utilized by SAC are compensated in the annual lease.

SAC calls for cooperation with all institutions however as a Company we would like to see good will and honesty prevail and not the damming interventions Green Scenery have done in the past by writing to the Environmental Protection Agency of S/L to revoke the Company's license, try and bring the Company into disrepute as seen on the 15th March 2014. All these interventions which did not succeed due the inaccuracy and unsubstantiated claims and often made up or hear say claims creates lack of trust between your institution and SAC. Further to this SAC sees Green Scenery not adhering to their impartial and unbiased code of conduct and continues to be influenced by political connotations. We hope your institution will be more observant to the general protocols and business ethics as most other organizations display to begin and develop this trust again.

Yours sincerely

Philip Tonks

General Manager