



President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (centre) and ITC Executive Director Arancha González (left) discuss the Liberia National Export Strategy on 26 November 2013 in Brussels.

## LIBERIA NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY

Having risen to numerous post-conflict challenges, Liberia is well positioned to engage with global trade and target markets to further develop its economy.

The first-ever Liberia National Export Strategy (LNES) is designed to help deliver wide-ranging technical, financial and human-capital support to the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sector.

The LNES aims to help diversify economic activities to ensure greater in-country value.

## FOR LIBERIA, BY LIBERIANS

The LNES was designed using a country-owned and stakeholder-driven process under the leadership of Liberia's Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), with ITC's technical guidance and overall project management.

The LNES was endorsed by stakeholders through a series of validation workshops in January 2014.

Collaboration with public-sector stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, and the private sector, including MSMEs and sector associations, constitutes the bedrock of the process. Civil-society organizations were also part of the consultative process.



## MSMEs: THE BACKBONE OF THE LNES

Historically, Liberia's growth has been fuelled by the commodity and extractive sectors, with the economy driven primarily by concessionaire-based activities.

The LNES seeks to increase the scope of smallholder activities. It aims to develop economic activities and improve livelihoods in rural areas beyond Monrovia.

MSMEs will play a crucial role in the implementation of the LNES in terms of resource mobilization as well as in implementing longer-term strategic aspects and day-to-day operational aspects of the strategy.

### Facts about Liberia's MSME sector

- The MSME sector includes an estimated 4,600 sole proprietorships.
- About 50,000 people are employed in formal enterprises.
- About 80% of Liberians work informally.
- **Cocoa:** The cocoa sector comprises some 30,000 smallholders, who have average holdings of 1–3 hectares. The sector accounts for about 13% of total agricultural employment. Smallholder exports of cocoa are virtually non-existent.
- **Fish and crustaceans:** Liberia imports nearly one and a half times the country's annual harvest of fish and crustaceans. Approximately 13,000 fishermen and 18,000 post-harvest handlers or processors work along coastal areas. Women dominate the downstream segment of the sector.
- **Rubber:** About 17% of agricultural households work in the rubber sector. Exports are driven primarily by concessionaire activity, with medium-sized operators and, to a lesser extent, smallholders involved in concessionaire operations. There is limited value addition and product or market diversification in exports.



## OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST-EVER LNES

### Priority Sectors

- Cocoa
- Fish and crustaceans
- Oil palm
- Rubber
- Cassava

These priority sectors have been selected because of their potential to significantly raise in-country value, to link to value chains and ensure a more equitable distribution of value.

All five are labour-intensive, agriculture-based sectors with strong potential to attract domestic and foreign investment in light of stable, or even increasing, demand in world markets.

### Functional Strategies

- Access to Finance
- Quality Management
- Trade Facilitation

Functional strategies are equally important to Liberia's economic future as are the selected priority sectors.

The cross sectors are expected to drive the development of value chains and regional integration beyond the five priority sectors.

### Additional Sector Export Strategies

- Tourism
- Furniture

Work has begun on additional Sector Export Strategies for tourism and furniture, which are expected to boost the value-added components of the economy and contribute to job creation.

## LIBERIA NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY

### Deliverables of the LNES

#### Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs):

- Implementable solutions that address root causes of weak export competitiveness
- Improved value-addition capabilities in export sectors
- Broad-ranging policy, institutional and technical support for exporters
- Assistance beyond current priority sectors, given the cross-sector focus of the strategy

#### Policymakers:

- An instrument to review and adapt national policies
- Emphasis on the stakeholder-driven model, underlining country ownership
- Builds upon existing national policies and ensures coherence of future planning

#### Institutions:

- Comprehensive assessment of the Trade Support Network, including analysis of redundancies, gaps and solutions
- Close cooperation with policymaking bodies, business-services and trade and technical-services providers

## ENTRY POINTS FOR DONORS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The end-to-end value-chain analysis embedded in the LNES delivers clear entry points for development partners. Implementation of the LNES will require continued support from Liberians and the international community.

MoCI and ITC are working jointly to liaise with development partners to define opportunities for collaboration.

- The robust needs assessment delivered by the LNES ensures alignment of Liberia-based projects with national priorities;
- Each sector's Plan of Action consists of projects that can be implemented and supported by development partners; and
- On average, each sector has 100 project ideas that address export value-chain constraints.

'The development of the National Export Strategy is a milestone in Liberia's efforts to integrate into the world trading system. Technical support from the International Trade Centre has enabled us to drive the strategy in a conscious and deliberate manner.'

Full ownership of the strategy allowed our staff and facilitators to mobilize stakeholders, particularly MSME representatives who will be integral to the process of making Liberia a competitive exporter of value-added products for the benefit of Liberians.'

**Candace B. Eastman**

Navigator, Liberia National Export Strategy  
Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry

'The Liberia National Export Strategy stands to increase the competitiveness of our export commodities, and hence export earnings, which will create employment and increase revenue in support of our Agenda for Transformation (AFT).'

Thanks to the International Trade Centre for the technical support to the Government of Liberia.'

**Florence A. Chenoweth**

Minister of Agriculture

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**International Trade Centre (ITC)**  
[www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org)

**Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)**  
[www.moci.gov.lr](http://www.moci.gov.lr)

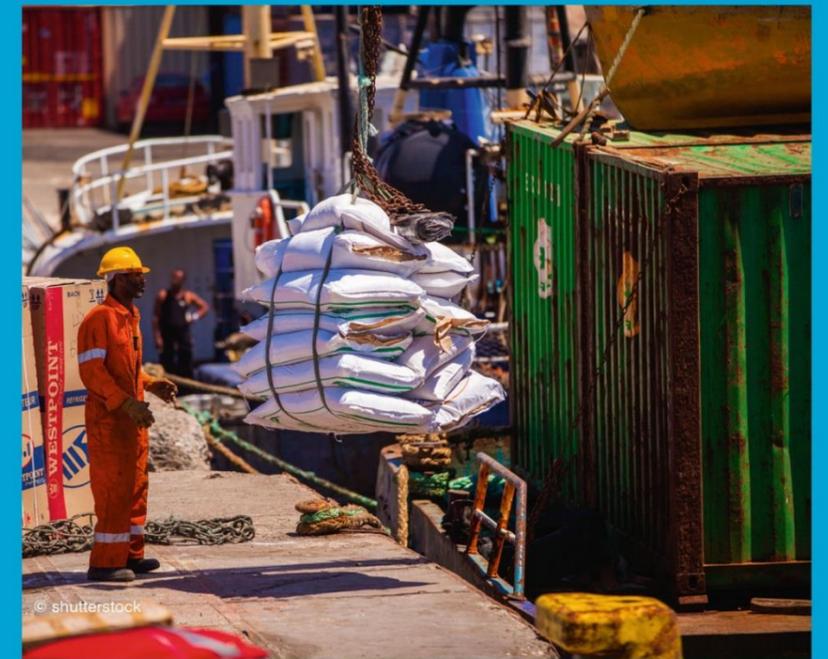


TRADE IMPACT  
FOR GOOD

50 YEARS

1964-2014

# Liberia National Export Strategy



Building an Export Culture  
By Liberians, for Liberians

