**Informed consent to participate in Conservation International’s research on distant water fishing (DWF)**

**Liberia Case Study**

**High-level guiding questions (What we want to learn with the interviews)**

* Who is benefiting from Liberia’s licensing scheme?
* When and how were the fee structures for licensing foreign vessels developed?
* How are payments made, and how frequently are contracts reassessed?
* What are the specific terms of the licenses granted to foreign flagged vessels (I.e. tuna vessels and Chinese trawlers)?

**Informed Consent**

*Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is* **Dr. Alvin S. Jueseah,** *and I am currently working with Conservation International on a study about foreign fishing vessels in Liberia and how the foreign fleet may be impacting local communities. We are interested in knowing more about the government’s system of licensing for foreign vessels in Liberia, how it works, and what some current challenges might be.*

*Your input is very valuable for this study. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your perspectives and experiences relating to the licensing of foreign vessels. In this interview, we have a series of questions related to these topics that should take no longer than one hour to complete.*

*Your participation is completely voluntary; you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. The information provided will only be used in this study.* ***Your individual answers will be kept confidential and anonymous****,* and your name and any other personally identifiable information will not be recorded. *There are no correct or incorrect responses so please feel free to express your opinions and share your experiences. Once we finish the study, we will share the main results with you. Would you like to participate?*

**QUESTIONS:**

If you have any questions about the research now or during the study, please contact: Alvin Jueseah, phone number: +231775769795

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have a grievance related to the research, you may contact CI’s Ethics Hotline at 503 748 0567. 

**STATEMENT OF YOUR CONSENT:**

☐ I have read and understood the project information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐ I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this project and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason.

☐ I consent that information about me is treated as described in the above information about the project.

☐ I understand that participating in the project involves interview questions.

☐ I am over 18 years old.

Printed Name of Subject

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Subject's Signature       Date

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**Interview Questions**

**I. Introductory questions**

1. Tell us a bit about your experience / familiarity with Liberia’s fisheries licensing system
   1. When did you first become involved?
2. What do you know about the history of Liberia’s licensing scheme?
   1. When and how did it first develop?
   2. How has it evolved over time?

**II. Personal experience**

1. What is your impression of the effectiveness and efficiency of the licensing system? Why?
   1. Do you think the licensing system is equitable? Why or why not?
2. Are there any specific challenges of the licensing system that come to mind?
3. In your opinion how could the licensing system be improved?

**III. Financial**

1. How are payments made to the government?
   1. How often?
2. What is the typical price of a license, and how does the government determine how much to charge?
   1. Variations by vessel size/gear type/target species/type of access agreement or license?
3. What do these payments typically fund?
   1. Are these payments typically earmarked for specific programs or activities?
4. In your opinion, what is the relative financial importance of these licenses for the government?
   1. Are there other, more important sources of revenue?

**IV. Contracts**

1. Are there any specific stipulations or terms associated with these licenses?
   1. Variations by vessel size/gear type/target species/type of access agreement or license?
2. How are contracts/licenses enforced?
3. In general, do you have the understanding that there may be instances when the rules are not followed?
4. What happens when terms of a license are violated?
5. How frequently are licenses/contracts with foreign-owned vessels re-evaluated?
   1. What does the process entail?