

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement serves as a means to keep project stakeholders informed about project activities, potential project impacts, and strategies to minimize these impacts during the ESIA stage. It enables stakeholders to express their concerns about project activities and offer feedback. This feedback is carefully considered when planning project activities and devising measures to address and alleviate any issues.

This section offers an outline of the stakeholder engagement efforts conducted for the Project. Additionally, it summarizes the key aspects of stakeholder engagement and the procedures followed for addressing grievances.

5.1. Notice of Intent

In accordance with the ESIA Procedural Guidelines (EPA, 2022), a Notice of Intent was published in three newspapers for three days for three days, as follows (see Appendix A).

- Oracle newspaper, on March 5, 6 and 7, 2025
- New Dawn newspaper, on March 5, 6 and 7, 2025
- Hot Pepper newspaper, on March 5, 6 and 7, 2025

The Notice of Intent included information on the nature of the project, its location, activities, and the project proponent. No input was received from the public following the publishing of the Notice of Intent.

5.2. ESIA Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation

5.2.1. Stakeholder Identification and Mapping

During the undertaking of the ESIA, project stakeholders were identified and mapped as described in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Stakeholder identification and mapping

STAKEHOLDER	POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT	INFLUENCE	INTEREST	MEASURES	ASSUMED EXPECTATIONS	TOOLS
AFFECTED PARTIES						
Communities in the Project Area of Influence (PAI)	Disruption of social fabric and social life, disruption of security, job opportunities	Medium	High	Community engagement programs, security measures, employment opportunities	Security maintenance, social benefits	Community meetings Focus Group Discussions
Structure owners and landowners	Potential physical displacement, economic displacement, property value changes	High	High	Transparent land acquisition process with fair compensation, regular consultations	Resettlement and compensation plans	Public meetings, grievance mechanism, compensation agreements
Farm owners and local farmers in the PAI	Loss of agricultural land, changes in livelihood sustainability	High	High	Fair compensations Alternative land provision Livelihood restoration program	Compensation Access to agricultural resources Sustainable livelihood options	Community Consultations Surveys GRM
Fishermen	Changes in fishing areas, impact on livelihood due to port expansion	Medium	High	Consultations with fishing communities, mitigation of access issues	Sustained fishing livelihoods, access to compensation	Engagement with fishing unions, alternative livelihood plans
Hunters, herbalists, and Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP) users	Loss of access to natural resources, impact on traditional practices	Medium	High	Compensation mechanisms, sustainable resource use plans	Sustained access to resources, cultural heritage protection	compensation mechanisms
Business owners in the PAI	Increase in business opportunities, possible rent or land value changes	Medium	High	Business forums, transparent market engagement	Economic growth, increased customer base	Business engagement forums, transparent policies
INTERESTED PARTIES						
Local Authorities (Paramount Chiefs,	Need for coordination on land use, local governance concerns	High	Medium	Regular stakeholder meetings, clear land use policies	Project transparency, participation in decision-making	Public consultation meetings

STAKEHOLDER	POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT	INFLUENCE	INTEREST	MEASURES	ASSUMED EXPECTATIONS	TOOLS
Town Chiefs, elders, community leaders)						
County Authorities (Superintendents and Commissioners)	Local governance, conflict resolution, stakeholder coordination	High	High	Stakeholder coordination meetings, governance engagement	Transparent governance, community development support	Consultations
Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)	Regulatory oversight on mining impacts	High	Medium	Regulatory compliance discussions	Compliance with mining regulations	compliance reporting
Ministry of Public Works	Infrastructure development, road and facility maintenance concerns	Medium	Medium	Infrastructure planning sessions, mitigation strategies	Infrastructure stability, community development	Infrastructure planning consultations, maintenance partnerships
Ministry of Gender and Social Development (MoGSD)	Social impacts on vulnerable groups, gender-based concerns	Medium	High	Inclusion of gender-sensitive measures in social programs	Social protection measures, gender equality in employment	Grievance Redress Mechanism
Ministry of Labour	Labor rights concerns, employment regulations	Medium	Medium	Clear labour agreements, worker protections	Fair employment terms, labour law adherence	Consultations
Ministry of Transport	Increased traffic Road safety concerns Regulatory compliance	Medium	Medium	Road safety measures Mitigating traffic congestion Compliance with transport regulations	Minimal disruption to existing networks	Compliance reports Consultations
Ministry of Agriculture	Land use and agricultural impact, potential displacement	low	High	Agricultural sustainability programs, compensation mechanisms	Continued agricultural production, fair land use policies	Consultations
Liberia Land Authority	Land acquisition processes and compensation mechanisms	High	Medium	Compensation planning, clear land title processes	Clear land acquisition and compensation policies	Land registry discussions, grievance redress mechanisms

STAKEHOLDER	POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT	INFLUENCE	INTEREST	MEASURES	ASSUMED EXPECTATIONS	TOOLS
Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental concerns, pollution control, and biodiversity protection	High	High	Environmental impact monitoring, pollution control strategies	Environmental responsibility, biodiversity preservation	Consultations, Environmental monitoring
Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs)	Civil society monitoring of social and environmental impacts	Medium	High	Partnerships in monitoring and advocacy	Compliance with social and environmental regulations	NGO consultations
National Immigration Board	Regulatory oversight on cross-border workforce management	Medium	Medium	Policy alignment discussions, immigration coordination	Smooth immigration and work permit processes	Cross-border policy discussions
East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR)	Potential environmental impacts, biodiversity loss, restrictions on access	High	High	Environmental protection programs, conservation plans	Environmental conservation, minimal ecological disruption	Environmental impact monitoring
Gba Community Forest	Community resource management, conservation concerns	Medium	High	Community resource co-management, engagement programs	Sustainable forest use, benefit-sharing mechanisms	Community meetings
Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association (LAFA)	Changes in fishing zones, economic impact on fishermen	Medium	High	Consultations with LAFA, alternative livelihood plans	Protection of fishing livelihoods, fair compensation	LAFA engagement meetings, compensation agreements
National Port Authority - Buchanan	Port expansion, impact on trade logistics	High	High	Port infrastructure improvements, regulatory compliance	Improved port efficiency, business growth	Regulatory discussions
Forestry Development Authority	Forest conservation, impact on biodiversity	High	High	Conservation strategies, sustainable resource use plans	Biodiversity preservation, responsible forestry practices	Forest protection discussions, impact assessments
National Immigration Board	Cross-border workforce concerns, migration management	Medium	Medium	Policy alignment, border control collaboration	Regulated workforce management, fair migration policies	Regulatory compliance discussions, cross-border agreements

STAKEHOLDER	POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT	INFLUENCE	INTEREST	MEASURES	ASSUMED EXPECTATIONS	TOOLS
Women's Groups	Gender equity, social development, labor rights	Medium	High	Women's empowerment programs, labor protections	Social inclusion, improved labor conditions	Gender inclusion programs, capacity-building workshops
Resettlement Committee	Resettlement planning, community participation	High	High	Transparent resettlement processes, participatory planning	Fair resettlement	Resettlement committee discussions, feedback mechanisms

5.2.2. Stakeholder Engagement Methodology

The consultation exercise was undertaken using the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) technique. This approach assumes that information and data collected is true. The rapid focus allows a lot of information to be gathered quickly but does not allow for intensive confirmation and correlation. As such this approach gathers as much information in as wide an area as possible but cannot provide in-depth calculation of impacts without further studies – e.g., precise numbers of impacted persons cannot be estimated until a final design is investigated. The aim is for a series of indicative overviews.

For this ESIA, engaging stakeholders was done through various channels as follows:

- **High-level stakeholder consultations** (HLSCs) during which key stakeholders at national and County level were consulted. Details and findings of the key stakeholder consultations are presented in Section 5.2.3.
- **Community consultations** were carried out with all communities in the Social Area of Influence (SAI) that are expected to be directly affected by the Project. These consultations began with town hall meetings, followed by focus group discussions and interviews with key informants. Details and findings of the community consultations are presented in Section 5.2.4.
- **Focus Group Discussions** (FGDs) included women, youth, chiefs and elderly, people relying on ecosystem services, transport union, and mining related personnels. Details and findings of FGDs are presented in Section 5.2.5.
- **Key Informant Interviews** (KIIs) were conducted with key individuals able to provide broader insight into potential impacts and offer specific details on community issues and background context. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix D.1.
- **Radio broadcasts** announcing the surveys and consultations.
- **Household Surveys** (HHS) were also used to collect information for the social baseline and the biological baseline. The methodology for this and the data collected is presented in Section 8. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix D.2.

5.2.3. High-Level Stakeholder Consultation

Four HLSCs were held at the national and county levels, as shown in Table 5-2. One meeting was held at the national level and three at the county level. These consultations aimed to brief administrative stakeholders on the Project's design, planned activities, and possible impacts. The purpose was to gather their feedback, answer questions, and listen to their suggestions and concerns. By introducing the Project at this stage, the consultations helped inform local authorities, so they could prepare communities for the upcoming surveys. This process also encouraged community participation and acceptance of the study.

Each meeting started with a representative from Earthtime providing a short introduction to the Project, including background information, location, and expected impacts. The discussion then focused on stakeholders' views and concerns about the Project. An interpreter was present at all county-level meetings to translate all comments and discussions into local languages, making sure that traditional leaders could fully take part. The attendance sheets are presented in Appendix B, while the presentation can be found in Appendix C.

Key issues raised during these meetings are summarized in Table 5-3, and photos from the consultations are shown in Figure 5-1.

Table 5-2 Summary of high -level stakeholder consultations held

NO.	LOCATION	DATE	ATTENDEES	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES		
				Male	Female	Total
1	Nimba - Sanniquellie	March 18, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthtime • Ivanhoe Liberia • Key stakeholders 	28	3	31
2	Bong County	March 25, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthtime • Ivanhoe Liberia • Key stakeholders 	20	5	25
3	Grand Bassa - Buchanan	March 28, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthtime • Ivanhoe Liberia • Key stakeholders 	49	5	54
4	Monrovia	April 4, 2025,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthtime • Ivanhoe Liberia • Key stakeholders 	8	2	10

5.2.3.1. Context

Community perceptions of the Ivanhoe initiative must be understood in the context of past infrastructure investments and concession agreements in Liberia. Before the civil war, companies like Firestone and LAMCO were required to provide employment and establish company towns for their workers. These companies were required to offer health care, education, housing, water and sanitation, and electricity services, and were expected to be responsible for building and maintaining these facilities.

Following the civil war, the concession agreement with AML also required the company to restore health, education, and housing services for the former LAMCO community in Yekepa. This approach reflected the government's limited financial capacity to deliver services, especially in rural areas. As a result, communities now expect that all companies investing in Liberia will create jobs and provide similar social services. However, Ivanhoe Liberia's role is different—it will not be producing goods in Liberia, but rather transporting ore from Guinea to a laydown area at the Port of Buchanan. While this will generate some employment, it will not meet the high demand for jobs. Therefore, communities are primarily focused on gaining access to job opportunities. Environmental concerns are acknowledged, but they are generally seen as a lower priority compared to employment.

5.2.3.2. Summary of Issues

The representatives attending the County HLSCs understand their roles in guiding and supporting local communities. They are able to provide a broader perspective, which contributes to long-term planning and addressing community-wide concerns. A summary of the key issues raised is provided below. Table 5-3 outlines each issue, its location, and the corresponding response is also included.

5.2.3.2.1. Employment

Employment opportunities are the most urgent need. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of skills training, technical education, and scholarships to prepare people for work. Community leaders and local government officials all stressed the importance of hiring local people and providing opportunities for advanced learning. Many community members lack the necessary skills or certification to qualify for even semi-skilled jobs. Therefore, work and training must go hand-in-hand. There is also a strong expectation that Liberians will be prioritized for employment, with minimal use of foreign labor.

5.2.3.2.2. Environmental Damage

Community representatives raised concerns about the environmental impacts, especially noise, vibration, and dust—already experienced by those living near the current railway. They fear that increased ore transport by Ivanhoe will worsen these problems. Dust in particular affects crop production by reducing yields and nutritional quality, which in turn affects the health of both people and animals.

5.2.3.2.3. Benefits

There was a great deal of interest in how Ivanhoe will benefit the counties, especially through the County Social Funds (CSF) and possible community development programs. Stakeholders have high expectations and want to be involved in decisions about how benefits are distributed. Transparency in how Ivanhoe manages and allocates benefits is essential. Since this approach is relatively new for some counties, a strong system will be needed to meet both local expectations and international governance standards.

5.2.3.2.4. Cumulative Impacts

A major concern raised was the cumulative impact of Ivanhoe's operations on top of the existing effects caused by operational mining companies in the project area. Communities along the railway have already suffered significant disruption, and there is deep concern that expanded rail use will increase these challenges. In Nimba, where communities will also be affected by the haul road, the Tokadeh stockpile, and rail loading sites, people are particularly worried about further land loss, increased noise, and general disturbance.

Table 5-3 Summary of issues articulated during the high-level stakeholder consultations

NO.	LOCATION	NO. ATTENDEES	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	RESPONSE
1	Nimba	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the Liberty Corridor be built? Access to internet cabling along the track? Environmental issues: dust, vibration Is the only activity transporting ore? Where will Ivanhoe Liberia be based? Concerns about ore washing polluting water Concerns over ArcelorMittal's damage being worsened What are the benefits for the county? And will communities be involved in determining where the benefits go? Impact on wildlife in the ENNR? Will haul road be separate from public roads? Mechanisms to ensure local hiring? Will training be provided? What happens to affected people and environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Liberty Corridor may be needed in 5 years and would be implemented by the National Rail Authority. Internet cabling is not currently considered. ESIA survey is measuring dust/vibration and will make recommendations to reduce impacts. Ivanhoe Liberia will only transport ore, not mine. Ivanhoe Liberia will be based in Monrovia. Ore washing will occur in Guinea, not Liberia. Ivanhoe Liberia will follow EPA rules; communities will be informed. Benefits: CSF, local employment, mitigation. Design aims to avoid ENNR and minimize impacts. Haul road will be separate; crossings will be managed. Intention to prioritize local employment; consultations ongoing. RAP team will be investigating training needs. Compensation and livelihood restoration will be addressed.
2	Bong	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will there be a Community Liaison Officer (CLO)? And will they be from Bong County? <p>Will there be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal benefit sharing across counties? Concerns about AML's transparency Has rail strength been assessed? Will Ivanhoe pay AML to use the line? When will operations start? What about house damage from vibration? Will vocational schools be built? Will youth be hired? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, a CLO will be appointed. Community agreements are not finalized, negotiations are ongoing. Division will be proportional; Bong feels excluded. Ivanhoe will ensure transparency with signed agreements. Feasibility study ongoing; rail designed for 22 mt/year. No payments to AML; National Rail Authority to manage line. Aiming to start by October. Compensation will be paid for damages, but clarification is needed. No guarantees yet for how the community development programs will look like or what the County social funds will cover. Mechanisms for local hiring are being developed.

NO.	LOCATION	NO. ATTENDEES	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	RESPONSE
3	Grand Bassa	54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will County Environmental teams be involved so that our own issues are relayed? • Will Ivanhoe reconstruct the local power plant and invest in the infrastructure? • Investment in youth and job training? • Stakeholder engagement plans? • Assurance of implementing mitigation measures? • Worker insurance and safety? • How many jobs are there for Grand Bassa? • Liberty Corridor plans? • Health and cultural considerations? • Vocational Training Centre? • Plans for rail-affected people? • Relocation plans within 5 years? • Recommendations: youth education, scholarships, capacity building • Inclusion of fishing communities? • Differentiation between foreign jobs and Liberian jobs? • Subcontracting local companies? • Disability inclusion? • Integration of this survey with past ones? • Need for bridges over rail for emergency traffic? • Concern about low wages under the Decent Work Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental teams are involved via ESIA. • Investment in infrastructure is planned. • Youth programs will be developed over time. • Ongoing stakeholder engagement planned. • Stakeholder input will inform mitigation plans. • Ivanhoe will enforce the Decent Work Act. • Around 3,000 contractor jobs and 600 direct jobs across 3 counties. • Liberty Corridor plan targeted for 2030. • The CSF will address health, education, training. • Compensation and relocation plan in place; relocation is a last resort. • Fishing communities are being consulted. • Disability and other needs under review. • Infrastructure like bridges will be considered. • Wage concerns acknowledged.
4	Monrovia	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments



(a) County meeting in Nimba County on March 18, 2025



(b) County meeting in Bong County on March 25, 2025



(c) County meeting in Grand Bassa on March 28, 2025



(d) HLSC in Monrovia on April 4, 2025

Figure 5-1 Photos from the high-level stakeholder consultation held

5.2.4. Community Consultations

Due to the time scale available and varying perceptions of impact across the different project areas, the consultation approach was adjusted to suit each location. More in-depth investigations were carried out in towns expected to be affected by new construction, while a lighter approach was taken in areas impacted primarily by the railway. In all selected communities, town hall meetings were held to discuss specific local concerns. Details are presented in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4 Summary of project components, locations, and impacts

PROJECT COMPONENT	COUNTY	TOWN(S)	IMPACT
Haul Road: These towns will lose land and incur environmental impacts.	Northern Nimba	Yekepa	• Loss of land
		Camp Four	• Loss of agricultural land/ livelihood
		Liagbala	• Encroachment on cemeteries
		Gbapa	• Encroachment on sacred forests and creeks • Increase dust, noise, vibration
Tokadeh stockpile and rail extension inside AML concession and rail yard.	Northern Nimba	Gbapa	• Increased dust, vibration and noise
		Zolowee	• More subcontractors • Light pollution
Increased frequency of trains along existing track	Nimba	Towns along the track in Nimba, Bong and Grand Bassa	• Increased dust, vibration and noise
	Bong		
	Grand Bassa		
Stockpile and operations at Port*	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	• Increased dust, vibration and noise • Light pollution, encroachers onto port extension reservation
Port Operations*	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	• Disruption to fishing community livelihoods

* This includes fishing communities

The communities consulted are listed in Table 5-5, and photos are provided in Figure 5-2. Each selected community was introduced to the project through a Town Hall Meeting, followed by smaller focus group discussions. These meetings were well attended and led to lively and meaningful conversations. The consultation program was arranged to focus more attention on areas expected to experience the greatest impacts.

In Nimba, Town Hall meetings were held in all communities directly affected by the construction of the haul road. In Bong, consultations took place in a sample of communities likely to be affected by the increased frequency of trains passing through or near their towns. In Grand Bassa, the focus was on communities most likely to be impacted by project activities. Access to some communities was limited due to the closure of the St. John's Bridge and, more generally, by the poor condition of local roads across all counties, which restricted travel within the available timeframe.

At all events, interpreters were present to communicate in local languages, which improved understanding and inclusiveness. Refreshments were provided after each meeting. Communities selected their own meeting places, and participation was open to everyone.

Each consultation followed roughly the same agenda. This included:

1. Prayer
2. Introduction of Earthtime consultants and community members
3. Purpose of meeting (reading of the communication from the Minister of Public Works)
4. Description of the project
5. Description of the survey components
6. Questions and concerns from community members
7. Closing remarks and leaving prayer

The meetings offered an opportunity for all stakeholders hear about the project components in the County, to express their concerns, emphasize noteworthy social, environmental, and economic project-related matters, and establish a shared understanding of how to tackle these significant concerns moving forward.

Table 5-5 Summary of community consultations by county, location, and attendance

NO.	COUNTY	COMMUNITY	DATE	NO. ATTENDEES		
				Male	Female	Total
1	Nimba	Gbapa	March 17, 2025	61	24	85
2		Zolowee	March 18, 2025	43	12	55
3		Liagbala	March 19, 2025	20	22	42
4		Camp Four	March 20, 2025	58	10	68
5		Yekepa	March 21, 2025	18	6	24
6	Bong	Yila	March 24, 2025	14	9	23
7		Greenhill Quarry	March 24, 2025	30	10	40
8		Zoweinta	March 24, 2025	33	6	39
9		Botota	March 24, 2025	38	6	44
10		Yapea	March 24, 2025	18	3	21
11	Grand Bassa	Rock Crusher Community	March 24, 2025	11	2	13
12		Custom Beach Communities – Big Fanti Town - Buchanan	March 27, 2025	24	21	45
13		Small Fanti Town – Buchanan	March 28, 2025	16	28	44
14		Peace Community – Buchanan	March 29, 2025	26	18	44
			Total	410	177	587



a) Batota – Bong County



b) Zoweinta – Bong County



c) Yorpea – Bong County



d) Yela-Lamco Camp – Bong County



e) Liagbala - Nimba



f) Rock Crusher – Nimba



g) Yekepa - Nimba



h) Zolowee – Nimba



i) Gbapa – Nimba



j) Camp Four – Nimba



k) Big Fanti Town – Grand Bassa



l) Small Fanti Town – Grand Bassa

Figure 5-2 Photos from the community consultations

5.2.4.1. Summary of Issues Articulated During Community Consultations

The main concerns and questions raised during the community consultations, as well as the expectations and project positives mentioned are listed in Table 5-6. Below is a summary of the issues relayed:

- **Employment and skills training:** The urgent need for employment was clear across all communities. Local employment is perceived as the only positive benefit, with all other

project-related impacts viewed as negative. Opportunities for work are scarce, and many individuals also lack the necessary skills to be employable. High dropout rates, particularly among teenage boys seeking work and income, have contributed to the rise of youth groups with low education levels, no skills, and limited prospects. All communities expressed a strong desire for employment training, expanded schooling, and access to tertiary education for their young people.

- **Community preferment for employment:** All communities expressed a strong desire for a mechanism that ensures preferential employment of their residents. This can be achieved using community contracts to engage local labor. This issue is further addressed in Section 9 on mitigation.
- **Environmental concerns:** Noise from train horns emerged as a major concern. Residents reported that the sound is deafening—even at a distance of 25 meters from the track—and disrupts sleep. During train passages, pupils are unable to hear their teachers, and families cannot hold conversations. Communities also voiced fears about increased dust, house vibrations, and light pollution.
- **Compensation:** Communities expect full and fair compensation for any losses. Many have abandoned efforts to seek compensation for damage to their houses from other operational mining companies in the area and now want to ensure that any future losses or environmental damage are properly addressed and compensated.
- **Livelihoods:** Livelihoods are affected to varying degrees in all communities. Residents expect to be consulted on appropriate mitigation measures. The greatest impacts are observed in Nimba, along the haul road, and potentially near Buchanan Port, where shipping activities may conflict with fishing livelihoods.
- **Road and rail safety:** This concern was raised consistently across all communities. People are particularly worried about the safety of those crossing the haul road and railway, especially as ore transport activities increase.
- **Distrust stemming from past experiences:** Every community expressed concerns about broken promises by previous organizations. This has serious implications for how Ivanhoe should shape its future policies and engagement practices.

Table 5-6 Summary of issues articulated during community consultations

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Gbapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on where the road will pass through • Concern about impact on diamond and gold mining activities • Expectation for job opportunities for local people • Uncertainty about whether the land has been demarcated • Interest in understanding how to make bids • Preference for a railway instead of a haul road • Request for promises to be documented and signed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of farmlands • Mining creeks are unaffected • Expect local jobs • Expected start date within 6 months • Expect training on how to take part in procurement • MOUs with communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment
2	Zolowee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about whether the haul road will be used by Ivanhoe to transport items other than iron ore • Concern over the selection of only a sample of households for interviews • Questions about the selection process for focus group members • Interest in the number of local job opportunities that will be available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned over how concerns will be transmitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employment
3	Liagbala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about relocation of traditional people living behind the track, especially those east of the rail line • Uncertainty about the fate of town lands that extend east beyond the track • Damage to houses caused by neighboring mining companies machinery and concern about their condition • Need for safety measures as children cross the track after school to reach farms • Request for clarity on the benefits the community will receive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation for damaged houses • Need safety measures for people crossing the track • Safe drinking water supply • Stronger houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that the water supply flowing under the track may be affected, risking access to drinking water Recognition of the creek as a sacred site Concern about stronger winds after deforestation potentially blowing off roofs, with no plan in place 		
4	Camp Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about the duration of haul road usage Anticipation of increased dust, noise, and vibration levels in the town Concern over sections of the track passing through the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) Grievance over farms taken by the ENNR without compensation Request for information on community benefits Interest in training opportunities for unskilled workers Questions regarding the width of the Right of Way (RoW) Request for MoU with the community outlining benefits Need for medical facilities for local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job opportunities Skills training Health and education provision Ivanhoe to work with the community to enable workers to be found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job opportunities
5	Yekepa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about farm inspection procedures near the haul road and potential access restrictions Request for benefits for those living near the haul road Demand for fair and transparent allocation of job opportunities Concern over whether Guinean workers will be prioritized for jobs Need for mitigation measures to reduce dust, vibration, and noise impacts Request for details on accommodation and services employers will provide to employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation for loss Fair and equal access to job opportunities Dust limitation Training and skills for women and Youth Expect direct cooperation between the communities and the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job opportunities

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
6	Yila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibration from train activity is damaging houses; employment is needed to support rebuilding • Request for skilled workers to be recruited from local communities where possible • Concern about cattle and other livestock being killed by the train • Interest in the timeline for when the company will begin work • Need for a new school so children do not have to cross the track for education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employment • Need a new school building • Need a telecoms tower to improve connectivity • Compensation • Request for Ivanhoe to start community programs before beginning rail freight operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities
7	Greenhill Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community previously supplied hand-crushed stone to neighboring miners and does not want other communities to take over their stone market (note: there is a lack of understanding that new construction is not planned for this phase) • The community considers their location unsafe and requests relocation before additional trains run, along with safety measures to protect children from the rail • Employment processes should be transparent, with no favoritism or selection by gang leaders or local elites • Request for Ivanhoe to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the community • Need for the rail access road to be a coal tar or paved road • Need for training opportunities for both men and women • Request for the company to provide a community bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for contracts to supply stone • Expectation for Ivanhoe to help build schools and hospitals, and to provide clean drinking water in communities • Demand for transparent employment processes • Request for an upgraded haul road • Expectation of ongoing community engagement • Request for the company to provide electricity and other essential social services • Need for skills training opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities
8	Zowienta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about if Ivanhoe is to repair damage to houses caused by neighboring mining companies before ore trains begin operating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for employment opportunities • Request for training programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Opportunities

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation for Ivanhoe to provide training opportunities within communities • Questions about whether Ivanhoe will use the same railroad as AML • Request for compensation for families of individuals allegedly killed by trains (including cases in Bong County where corpses are placed on the tracks to claim train-related deaths) • Demand for direct compensation to affected communities rather than through County-level disbursement • Question about whether Ivanhoe will retain the same Community Liaison Officer (CLO) as AML • Need for relocation of people living near the rail line to safer distances <p>Distrust in Ivanhoe's ability to fulfill promises, based on previous unfulfilled commitments by other mining companies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) be selected from affected communities rather than from Gbarnga • Request for bridges over the rail line and security checkpoints at road crossings • Proposal to establish a Vocational Training Center (VTC) in Zowienta • Emphasis on local employment • Demand for equal pay for equal work between foreign and local workers, specifically referencing Indian workers performing manual labor 	
9	Yopea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about excessive noise from train operations • Question about whether the same track used by AML will be used • Train blockages on the line prevent timely access to hospitals • Lack of trust in the government to negotiate benefits on behalf of the community • Need for job training opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for a hospital and school to support those affected by noise, and for the town to be relocated away from the track • Desire to negotiate directly with the company • Call for local training, including a VTC and access to international scholarships • Need for a reliable water supply • Request to relocate the school to reduce exposure to noise • Demand for a fence to prevent animals from accessing the track • Request for a designated community representative and a signed MoU with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
10	Botota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about how houses affected by noise and vibration along the track will be protected or supported Request for the community car road to be upgraded, as mentioned by several community members Need for a training center to prepare residents for employment and provide scholarships to affected communities Lack of trust in due to previous experiences with other mining companies operating in the area, and expectation that Ivanhoe may also neglect community needs Request for clarification on what Ivanhoe has agreed upon with the government or other stakeholders Desire for fewer train passes due to disruptions to cross-rail activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation that Ivanhoe will construct its own rail line to create more jobs Proposal for the establishment of a Vocational Training Center (VTC) Expectation that farms will be damaged by the project Preference for the Ivanhoe Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to be a Bong County resident and speak Kpelle Need for awareness programs on road and rail safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment
11	Rock Crusher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question about whether Ivanhoe will construct its own access road Expectation for compensation to be provided to affected people Request for youth training opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation is expected to include relocation away from the rail line, along with new housing and livelihood support Expectation for a bridge to be built over the track to allow safe crossing Expectation for Ivanhoe to build a school and provide safe drinking water Expectation for Ivanhoe to rebuild the community's access road Preference for employment selection to be conducted through local chiefs rather than the Labor Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment
12	Big Fanti Town*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for cooperation with Ivanhoe, as fishermen operate near the port at times Concern about potential impacts on fish catches and overall livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation to be included in negotiations at the County level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
13	Small Fanti Town*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for clarification on the location of the new port Desire for employment opportunities for local workers Expectation that sea erosion will worsen due to port dredging works Concern that community land will be affected during dredging activities Dredging mud turns the sea red, making it difficult or impossible to fish Concern about bribery in job allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation for the empowerment of young people Request for protection measures against sea erosion on community beaches Need for shipping arrangements that allow fishermen to leave and safely anchor before entering the port Request for outboard motors to enhance fishing livelihoods Expectation for the company to employ local residents, train youth, and hire skilled individuals from the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment
14	Peace Community**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is located along the rail line Request for the company to prioritize employment of individuals from affected communities Noise and vibration levels are reported to be very high in this area Question about whether Ivanhoe has signed a concession agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for Ivanhoe to build a Vocational Training Center (VTC) in the community Proposal to relocate the community away from the rail line Request for employee health benefits, including on-site first aid and ambulances Request for support to improve the school located near the track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment
<p>* The community is a fishing community located near the port</p> <p>** Rail community</p>				

5.2.5. Focus Group Discussions

A series of FGDs were held following the Town Hall meetings in Nimba and Grand Bassa. Three main groups were consulted in each of the primary focus towns: Chiefs and Elders, women, and youth groups. Additional focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted with other specialist groups such as ecosystem services. More details about each group are presented from Section 5.2.5.1 to Section 5.2.5.5.

5.2.5.1. Women Focus Group Discussions

Women FGDs were held after each community consultation. A total of 7 discussions were held with women from different ages and backgrounds in Nimba and Grand Bassa (Table 5-7 and Figure 5-3). Each discussion was attended by 10 to 30 women, with a total of 119 women involved. The issues articulated during the FGDs are summarized in Table 5-8.

Table 5-7 Women focus group discussions

NO.	COMMUNITY REPRESENTED	DATE	NO ATTENDEES
1	Gbapa	March 17, 2025	30
2	Zolowee	March 18, 2025	10
3	Liagbala	March 19, 2025	10
4	Camp Four	March 20, 2025	12
5	Yekepa	March 21, 2025	13
6	Big Fanti Town*	March 27, 2025	28
	Small Fanti Town*		
7	Peace Community	March 29, 2025	16
Total			119
* Held together at the same time			

FGDs with women offered a safe environment for them to voice their worries, worries, and anticipated outcomes related to the Project. Insights from these discussions supplemented and broadened the feedback and concerns articulated by the communities during previous consultations. Moreover, it furnished a broader understanding of the circumstances surrounding women in the project area, contributing to the social baseline. The issues mentioned in the consultations were recorded and taken into consideration in which several measures were suggested to minimize these challenges in the mitigation measures. Questionnaires can be found in Appendix D.3.1.



a) Fanti Town – Grand Bassa



b) Zolowee - Nimba



c) Liagbala – Nimba



d) Gbapa – Nimba



e) Yekepa - Nimba



f) Camp Four - Nimba

Figure 5-3 Photos of women focus group discussions

Table 5-8 Summary of issues articulated during focus group discussions with women

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Gbapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are primarily engaged in farming and petty trading and are responsible for feeding their families • The health clinic offers limited services; a new facility is expected to open soon • There is no access to safe drinking water • Most women have low levels of literacy • Hunger and physical abuse from men are linked to unemployment • Women express the need for skills development and employment opportunities • Women have equal access to land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of open swamp lands suitable for rice cultivation and poultry farming • Recommendation to hire local women for roles such as cooking, washing, and cleaning for the company • Existence or need for a savings and credit scheme • Need for literacy training and practical skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and work
2	Zolowee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women engage in farming and petty trading, often traveling to Sanniquellie, Guinea, and Ivory Coast to purchase goods for resale • Single mothers are unable to send their children to school due to lack of funds • Unemployment among women is high • The soil quality in the area is poor • The community is severely affected by noise, vibration, and dust • Women have equal access to farmland as men • There is no access to safe water or sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health facilities are urgently needed • Compensation is needed for damaged houses, and the community should be relocated • Crop damage should be compensated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and employment
3	Liagbala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation • No employment opportunities available for local women • Absence of a health facility and high school in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for local employment • Need for livelihood support programs • Request for skills training opportunities • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work
4	Camp Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access to safe drinking water or sewage facilities • Most women in the town are unemployed; children and women suffer from hunger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for local employment opportunities • Need for livelihood support programs • Request for skills training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills training prevents women from gaining employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of compensation for losses 	
5	Yekepa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees from outside Nimba have abandoned local women, leaving them to raise children alone • Need to relocate individuals who have gardens near the haul road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for compensation • Support for livelihoods • Need for relocation of farms • Demand for employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
6	Big Hand and Small Fanti town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in these communities buy, process, and sell fish—either fresh or dried • Fish catches have been negatively affected by port activities and changing weather patterns • Port construction has led to soil erosion and the loss of houses • High taxes reduce household income • There is no access to safe drinking water or sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for local employment opportunities • Need for health facilities • Request for protection measures against sea erosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
7	Peace Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of unemployment and poverty • Extreme noise, vibration, and dust caused by trains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for local employment opportunities • Need for training programs • Expectation that the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) be selected from the affected communities • Desire for the company to negotiate directly with the community • Request for relocation away from the rail line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment

5.2.5.2. Youth Focus Group Discussion

Youth FGDs were held after each community consultation. A total of 6 discussions were held with Youth from different ages and backgrounds along the alignment (Table 5-9). Each discussion was attended by 8 to 51 men and women (Figure 5-4) and a total of 99 people were involved. The issues articulated during the FGDs are summarized in Table 5-10. A youth FGD was not held with the fishing communities as their youth are involved in fishing and their views are included with the two fishermen FGDs conducted separately (Section 5.2.5.4).

Table 5-9 Youth focus group discussions

NO.	COMMUNITY REPRESENTED	DATE	NO. ATTENDEES
1	Gbapa	March 17, 2025	51
2	Zolowee	March 18, 2025	10
3	Liagbala	March 19, 2025	10
4	Camp Four	March 20, 2025	10
5	Yekepa	March 21, 2025	10
6	Peace Community	March 29, 2025	8
Total			99

Youth groups usually consist of individuals under the age of 35, often seeking employment and striving to support their families. FGDs with youth provided a safe and open environment for both young men and women to express their concerns, challenges, and anticipated outcomes related to the Project. These groups have successfully challenged the pre-civil war community organizational structure—traditionally top-down through Chiefs and Elders—and have emerged as dominant social voices alongside traditional leaders, advocating for improvements to their lives and holding the potential to mobilize resistance if neglected.

Consulting these groups is essential to understanding the power dynamics within communities. Insights from the discussions enriched and expanded upon the feedback gathered during earlier community consultations. They also offered a deeper understanding of the conditions facing young people in the project area, contributing meaningfully to the social baseline. The issues raised were recorded and addressed, with several measures proposed to minimize these challenges through the mitigation plan. The questionnaires used can be found in the Appendix D.3.2.



a) Peace Community – Grand Bassa



b) Camp Four - Nimba



c) Liagbala – Nimba



d) Gbapa – Nimba



e) Yekepa - Nimba

Figure 5-4 Photos of youth focus group discussions

Table 5-10 Summary of issues articulated during focus group discussions with youth groups

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Gbapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job opportunities • Lack of training programs • Inadequate health services • Poor road connectivity • Limited access to education • Air pollution • Absence of youth empowerment initiatives • Young girls face the greatest challenges in earning an income • Environmental concerns related to dust, noise, and air pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for job opportunities • Call for youth empowerment through employment and training opportunities for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment
2	Zolowee*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for job opportunities • Need to complete education • Desire for training to improve their lives • Lack of health facilities • No access to skills training • No access to safe drinking water • Outsiders are being given jobs instead of local residents • Land has already been lost, leaving the community with limited options • Fear of losing mining creeks (though this area is not actually affected) • Serious existing issues with noise, vibration, light, and dust from current mining operations by neighboring miners, expected to worsen with Ivanhoe ore transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for equal employment opportunities • Expectation for improved health care and road infrastructure • Desire for recognition and inclusion of the community • Request for scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment
3	Liagbala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment among youth is widespread • Concern that crops will be damaged by construction activities and dust • Desire for employment and training opportunities • Opposition to Ivanhoe leaving social welfare responsibilities solely to the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for a Palava hut⁺ for community gatherings and dispute resolution • Request for a community ambulance to transport sick individuals • Demand for university scholarships • Request for community safety officers to ensure local security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of income-generating opportunities and health care for girls and mothers • Expectations of improvements in living conditions 		
4	Camp Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial means to support youth education after school completion • Desire for job opportunities • Lack of skills among community members • No access to safe drinking water, with concerns that the river may be polluted during construction • No latrine facilities • Absence of a VTC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expectation for the company to renovate the community and provide all missing facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment
5	Yekepa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities are unstable and limited • Most youth lack access to training programs • Motorcycle taxis serve as a last resort for income generation • The community faces instability, lacks resources and services, including water and sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for stable and reliable employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment
6	Peace Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No employment opportunities available • Other mining companies do not engage with the community • The community feels ignored and excluded • Women have fewer opportunities compared to men • Noise levels are severe and harmful to the community <p>Other mining companies in the area has a wage rate of \$5 per day for laborers which is considered too low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of having two CLOs per county and holding monthly meetings • Demand for better wages, as \$5 a day is insufficient to support a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities and local employment
<p>* This community is already badly impacted by neighboring mining companies – the damage will only get worse without joint amendment</p> <p>^aThe Palava Hut system is a traditional conflict resolution mechanism in Liberia, in which community elders and chiefs sit under a Palava hut to mediate disputes and restore social harmony. It is participatory, consensus-based, and focused on reconciliation rather than punishment (UNDP Liberia, 2021)</p>				

5.2.5.3. Chiefs and Elders Focus Group Discussions

Chiefs and Elders FGDs were held after each of 8 Town Hall community consultations. FGDs were not conducted in the Bong Rail side Communities as impacts are employment related and environmental rather than differentiated by community subgroups. A total of 8 discussions were held with both men and women from the Chiefs and Elders groups (Table 5-11). Each discussion was attended by 7 to 22 people (Figure 5-5) and a total of 103 people were involved. The issues articulated during the FGDs are summarized in Table 5-12.

Table 5-11 Chiefs and Elders focus group discussions

NO.	COMMUNITY REPRESENTED	DATE	NO. ATTENDEES
1	Gbap	March 17, 2025	22
2	Zolowee	March 18, 2025	10
3	Liagbala	March 19, 2025	10
4	Camp 4	March 20, 2025	22
5	Yekepa	March 21, 2025	9
6	Big Fanti Town	March 27, 2025	7
7	Small Fanti Town	March 28, 2025	10
8	Peace Community	March 29, 2025	13
Total			103

FGDs with Chiefs and Elders provided a chance for them to share their worries, immediate concerns, and expectations about the Project. These discussions added to and expanded on the feedback raised by communities during the Town Hall meetings. They also gave a clearer understanding of the traditional community management systems in the project area, helping build the social baseline and document specific information from each community.

The issues raised during the consultations were recorded and considered, and several measures were proposed to reduce these challenges in the mitigation plan (Section 9, ESIA Volume III). The focus group records are available in the Appendix D.3.3.

Below is a summary of the issues voiced by elders and chiefs, and a more detailed information about concerns raised, expectaions and positive expected outcomes per town are presented in Table 5-12.

The expectation is for local employment and investment on communities. Without employment and trainig these communities feel that they only bear the costs of development and none of the benefits. The main issues raised:

- **Employment:** Communities see employment as their greatest challenge. Many people have low levels of education, no skills, and no future prospects. They want local employment for affected people, along with training and further education opportunities. Schools are in poor condition, under-resourced, and often lack trained

teachers. Many youths drop out of school to try and earn an income, but end up in low-paid, unskilled jobs.

- **Environmental concerns:** All rail communities are severely affected by the train horn, which sounds loud as it approaches. The noise disrupts teaching, conversations, and normal business activities, and many communities say it also disturbs their sleep. Dust is another major concern—whether from roads or rail—since ore dust blows off in transit. Dust on crops reduces yield and nutrition and harms health. Additional trains also bring more vibration, which causes further damage to structures.
- **Benefits:** Communities feel isolated from the benefits of mining and ore transport. There is widespread distrust of the government and other mining companies that operate in the project area, as people believe they have not received the benefits they deserve. They feel entitled to better education and health services, as well as vocational training. This expectation partly stems from pre-civil war views on company responsibilities.
- **Other possible environmental impacts:** More investigation is needed into how port dredging contributes to coastal erosion and land loss. It is important to understand whether this has caused land loss at Custom Beach, and whether further port development could lead to the complete loss of these communities.



a) Fanti Town – Grand Bassa



b) Camp Four - Nimba



c) Zolowee – Nimba



d) Gbapa – Nimba



e) Yekepa - Nimba

Figure 5-5 Photos of chief and elders focus group discussions

Table 5-12 Summary of issues articulated during focus group discussions with chiefs and elders

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Gbapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gbapa has already lost 60% of its land to AML and now stands to lose more to Ivanhoe — there is not enough land to feed the population. • Sacred forests and rivers may be affected. • The community holds a community deed for part of the required land, while others have private title deeds. • Slash-and-burn agriculture requires extensive land per family to allow for soil fertility renewal — there is not enough land to sustain this practice. • Concerns were raised about dust and road safety. • Many skilled workers have left for employment elsewhere and send remittances, while youth with low education and no skills remain in search of any work. • There is a high proportion of elderly-headed and female-headed households. • Community members are concerned that incoming workers seeking jobs will worsen the situation. • There is a general expectation for some form of assistance or handouts. • No rental has been paid for the railroad alignment previously used by LAMCO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased poverty is a major concern. • A traffic management system is needed. • Incoming workers are expected to flood the community. • Compensation is expected for losses. • Rental is expected for land used for the haul road. • Youth need training and skills development. • The old LAMCO water distribution system needs renovation, with new taps and standpipes installed. • Support is needed for the elderly and people with disabilities. • Sacred forests and the Yeti River should be avoided. • A training and skills center is requested. • Scholarships are needed. • A transparent employment process is expected. • New livelihood options are required as there is no land left to cultivate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities
2	Zolowee*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community needs local people to be employed. • The current environmental conditions are dire — dust, light pollution, noise, and vibration are already intolerable. • The presence of outsiders has damaged community structure, with increased drinking and gambling. • There is too much dust on houses and farms, and no alternative land is available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A skills training center is needed. • Local employment is a priority. • Rental is expected for privately owned land. People who recently received title deeds (formerly held under tribal certificates) expect full market value. • Compensation is expected for losses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creeks that supply drinking water are at risk of being affected. • There is concern over small mining creeks, though they are not expected to be impacted. • There is no alternative land to relocate farms; much of the area is mountainous and unsuitable for agriculture. • The safety of people and animals is a key concern. • The Men's Poro bush may be affected, though it is not within the area. • Better road and rail safety is needed. 		
3	Liagbala [^]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The haul road is visible from the community and will spread dust over homes and crops. • There is concern that the haul road will cut off access to farms and Zoe bushes — a safe crossing is needed. • The community has a cultural heritage site called "Old People Rock" that needs protection (located off the alignment to the east). • Concerns about the quality of drinking water from a creek; the haul road crosses this creek, and the alignment needs widening at this point. • The community needs jobs. • A community deed is being prepared, and tribal land certificates are being converted to full title deeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A crossing point across the haul road is needed. • Water sources must be protected. • Livelihoods must be restored if access to farmland is lost. • The community wants employment and training opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs
4	Camp Four ^x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community assumes that development comes with hardship but hopes for economic opportunities. • Local farms are located near the railroad. • There is concern that rubber farms near the old rail track may be affected. • Residents fear soil erosion due to the use of large vehicles. • There are no sacred sites, as this is not a Mano community. • There are concerns about harm to animals in the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community requests job opportunities. • Skills training is needed. • They expect respect from the company. • Health facilities are required. • They hope for a reduction in poverty. • Compensation and new livelihood options are expected. 	

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no formal land ownership — most are considered squatters, though some claim tribal certificates. A few farmers were displaced by the creation of the ENNR without compensation for crops and now have no ancestral home. The community lacks water supply and sewage facilities. Residents preferred the LAMCO period, when services were available and free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The road to Gbapa needs upgrading — it is currently in very poor condition. Dust, noise, and vibration levels are expected to increase. Road and haul road safety measures are needed. 	
5	Yekepa ^o	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few inhabitants farm near the track and haul road site. Most of these are households that were relocated either during the civil war or due to the creation of the ENNR. These households rely solely on farming. They received no compensation for their tree crops now located inside the ENNR, which they are no longer allowed to harvest. The majority of Yekepa residents are not involved in areas near the haul road. There are no sacred forests in the area. The area falls within the AML concession. Some people cross the haul road alignment to collect firewood and other resources in non-ENNR areas. Other mining companies has been dumping waste heaps alongside the track — this is a serious concern. Dust is a major concern, especially for crops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents request compensation for losses. Local employment opportunities are needed. Access to skills training is requested. 	
6	Big Fanti Town ^o	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is mostly composed of Ghanaian fishing households, who are considered technical aliens with no formal rights. Tribal groups remain separate; the nearest community is Kru Liberian. There is concern that fish stocks will decline, houses will be washed away, and port expansion will worsen living conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea erosion is expected to worsen. The community fears further decline in their living conditions. Drinking water is expected to become more polluted. Fishing livelihoods are threatened by port activities, including ship traffic and dredging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents claim that neighboring mining companies' port activities have increased sea erosion in their community. There is concern that further port expansion will bring excessive restrictions affecting daily life. There are no sacred sites in the area. Some large families hold title deeds. Some individuals are reportedly farming on the proposed stockpile site and would expect compensation. Dust from the stockpile area may affect the community. The current drinking water is red from ore dust, and no other safe local water source exists. Sea erosion has significantly reduced the town's area — much of the former settlement is now underwater. The Sirleaf government initiated a sea erosion control project but demolished homes without compensation and left the defenses unfinished, leaving the community worse off. 		
7	Small Fanti Town*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea erosion is threatening the community. Fishing is the main source of livelihood. The land is owned by the government, though some inland areas have title deeds. There is no alternative location for relocation. Iron ore dust and dredging are polluting the sea and reducing fish stocks. The community claims it once had a Sande bush. Access to the community is now swampy; the area previously had a bridge — the Korkorwein Bridge — connecting it to the town. The population is diverse, not only Fanti, and includes both Christians and Muslims. Roads once served the area but have eroded away; an airstrip once present is now submerged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community requests road improvements and sea erosion protection. They expect job opportunities, access to health care, and education. Inclusivity in development processes is important to the community. Women's empowerment is a priority. There should be provisions for people with disabilities to earn an income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
8	Peace Community [□]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents ask if Ivanhoe will use the same rail as AML. Will Ivanhoe employ local labor? How will the community benefit from the project? Has an agreement been signed yet? When will construction or operations begin? How will Ivanhoe ensure employee health and safety? There is a need for skills training. Noise and dust are serious concerns for this community. Will Ivanhoe employ people directly or through subcontractors? The community wants Ivanhoe to negotiate directly with them rather than through the government, as they feel ignored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs and training opportunities are expected. The County Social Development Fund should be allocated to affected communities. The community expects proper facilities for workers. They anticipate the need for relocation away from the rail track. Support is needed for the local school. Community chiefs want to help identify local workers for employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs
<p>* Zolowee is severely impacted by other mining companies and will face further impacts from additional work in the concession mine area and increased train traffic.</p> <p>[^] This community is located on the main road at least 0.5km from the track, very poor but it is expanding.</p> <p>[×] Camp Four is a LAMCO time development, people providing services to LAMCO were forced to live in Camp Four, they could not reside in Yekepa as that was a company town – still occupied by businesspeople, mostly not Nimba people. Some ancestral farmers.</p> <p>[◊] Yekepa was the LAMCO mining town for its employees, abandoned during the civil war and was destroyed by bands of war lords. Partially rebuilt by AML where it still houses AML workers, but also considerable numbers of non-employees providing services to the town.</p> <p>[◊] Big Fanti Town is a fishing community that is at risk from sea level rises and crosses the Buchanan port seaway for fishing livelihoods.</p> <p>• This is a community on custom beach further from the port approx. 2km -</p> <p>[□] This is the Buchanan nearest the rail on the approach to the town</p>				

5.2.5.4. Ecosystem Services Focus Group Discussions and Interviews

A total of 5 discussions were held with both men and women from ecosystem services groups (Table 5-11). Each discussion was attended by 7 to 18 people and a total of 103 people were involved. Hunters, who depend on the animals in the project area.

- Zoes who depend on trees, plants, and resources in the project area.
- Artisanal Miners in Zolowee / Gbapa, Nimba.
- Fishermen off Buchanan, Grand Bassa.

The information gained from these discussions reinforced and expanded the comments and concerns expressed by the communities in the earlier round of consultations. The insights gathered from these conversations reaffirmed and broadened the issues and viewpoints shared by the communities during the initial consultations. They offered valuable insights into the livelihoods of these groups, highlighting their reliance on ecosystem services for their social foundation. Furthermore, these FGDs served as a means to gather essential biological data on significant flora and fauna for the purpose of establishing a baseline for conservation efforts. A condensed overview of the FGDs can be found in Table 5-13, while the questionnaires are available in Appendices D.3.4 to D.3.6. A detailed account of the discussed issues, expectations and positive expectations is outlined in Table 5-14.

Table 5-13 Ecosystem services focus group discussions and interviews

NO.	COMMUNITY REPRESENTED	DATE	NO ATTENDEES
1	Zoes of Nimba	March 17, 2025	8
2	Hunters of Nimba	March 18, 2025	18
3	Miners of Gbapa and Zolowee	March 21, 2025	6
4	Big Fanti Town Fishermen	March 27, 2025	11
5	Little Fanti Town Fishermen	March 28, 2025	7
Total			50

Table 5-14 Summary of issues articulated during focus group discussions on ecosystem services

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Zoes of Nimba*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of forests are used for medicinal and ritual purposes due to mining companies operating in the area and the ENNR. Plants and trees have become scarce; all primary forest outside the ENNR is gone. Concern that haul road traffic will block safe crossing. Poro forest, Sande forest, and cemeteries have been GPS-located and must not be disturbed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only expected benefit is employment. Concern over damage to medicinal and ritual plants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment opportunities for youth.
2	Hunters of Nimba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many male hunters in the project area; they hunt with guns and sell locally. Hunting is sporadic and not usually a sole income source. Hunting increases when other work is scarce, as people rely on bushmeat for food and income. Hunters operate in secondary forests between AML concession and the ENNR. They fear animals will become harder to find, increasing hardship due to cumulative impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs
3	Miners of Gbapa and Zolowee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gold flakes and pebble diamonds are found in local creeks; mining occurs when financially possible. A license is required to mine and sell gold or diamonds. Mining yields are poor; tools are costly[^]. Mining creeks are not affected by the haul road or Tokadeh stockpile area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some may fraudulently claim losses to access compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment
4	Big Fanti Town Fishermen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth is active in fishing near Buchanan. Communities have informal "cooperatives" led by a chairman but lack formal institutional structures. Ethnic diversity: Big and Small Fanti are Ghanaian (no citizenship rights); Port Beach is Kru. Use small (2-man) and larger (5–8 men) canoes; fish both north and south of port sea lanes, targeting cassava and bone fish. Complaint about muddy water during dredging. Fishers cross port sea lanes at night in search of fish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (No explicit expectations stated, though risks imply demand for safety measures and recognition of fishing zones.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not stated

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of ship collisions or capsizing due to wakes. • Women buy and sell fish inland, fresh or dried. • Use rod and line; canoes go out six nights per week, depending on weather and sea conditions. 		
5	Little Fanti Town Fishermen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishermen are Kru, Fanti, Bassa, some Sierra Leoneans, and other Liberians from different counties. • Fish within 0–6 nautical miles offshore; cross port sea lanes as needed. • Nets are damaged near the port by ships. • Fishermen share and act on information about fish locations. • Fishing zones vary by season and species; use coastal features and GPS for navigation. • Use various gear (drift nets, explosives, night lights, GPS, bottom nets) based on fish species. • Furthest boats use outboard motors and paddles. • Face conflicts among groups, collisions, and dangerous sea swells (especially in June–July). • On average, three accidents per year occur in this community during the rainy season. • Fishermen need at least 24 hours' notice to avoid restricted areas. • Danger from submerged boats and iron scraps on the seafloor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect restrictions or bans from shipping lanes but need to cross them to survive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not stated
<p>* Nimba is the West African regional center for the Poro Community; the Chief Zoe resides in Gbapa. ^Currently, no one is mining but some may falsely claim activity to gain benefits.</p>				

5.2.5.5. Other Service Providers Focus Group Discussions

Additionally, another eight focus group discussions were held with service providing groups whose influence and information are useful in the analysis for the Ivanhoe Project.

- Two FGDs were conducted with Car Transport Unions (TUs) that moderate passenger car transport in Sanniquellie and Yekepa. The Car TUs in Bong and Grand Bassa are unaffected by the changes to the rail services, but motorcycle hire operators are affected. The Car TUs in Bong and Grand Bassa operate mostly on the main tarmac roads, with individuals providing freight and passenger transport to towns along the railway. The motorcycle unions are less formally managed but are essential providers of transport on both the tarmac roads and the rail access road.
- Two Motorcycle TUs, one in Nimba and the other in Grand Bassa. The Car TUs in Bong and Grand Bassa are unaffected by the changes to the rail services, but motorcycle hire operators are affected.
- ENNR Management Co-Chairpersons
- Concerned landowners of Gbapa
- Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA)
- Civil Society Groups in Buchanan

The information gained from these discussions reinforced and expanded the comments and concerns expressed by the communities in the earlier round of consultations. The insights gathered from these conversations reaffirmed and broadened the issues and viewpoints shared by the communities during the initial consultations. They offered valuable insights into the communities in the project area. A condensed overview of the FGDs can be found in Table 5-15, while the questionnaires are available in Appendices D.3.7 and D.3.8. A summary of the discussed issues is outlined in Figure 5-1.

Table 5-15 Other focus group discussions and interviews

NO.	COMMUNITY REPRESENTED	DATE	NO. ATTENDEES
1	ENNR Management	March 18, 2025	2
2	Yekepa Car TU	March 19, 2025	2
3	Sanniquellie Car TU	March 19, 2025	8
4	Yekepa M/C TU	March 20, 2025	8
5	Community Deed – Gbapa Development Council	March 20, 2025	7
6	Buchanan M/C TU	March 29, 2025	6
7	LDEA	March 2,7 2025	1
8	Civil Society Groups	March 28, 2025	3
Total			37

Table 5-16 Summary of issues articulated during focus group discussions on other service providers focus group discussions

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
1	Yekepa Car TU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes are expected to the taxi routes. The fare from Yekepa to the border is 100 LD; to Ganta, it is 1,000 LD. There are 5–8 cars traveling to Ganta daily; they do not cross the border. Traffic lights are needed at the haul road and Workshops entrance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes to routes, as long as road crossings are properly managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
2	Gbapa Community Deed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gbapa holds a community deed for its communal land under the 2018 Land Rights Act. This entitles the community to charge rent for land use. There are full private title deeds in the community for land taken by neighboring mining companies and land expected to be taken by Ivanhoe. The group insists that Ivanhoe must not bring in outside workers but should employ local people. Children drop out of school during the academic year due to lack of funds. Progression rates from elementary to junior high are low, and senior high completion is very rare. Boys have little faith in the value of education and often drop out to try to earn money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental income
3	Yekepa M/C TU	<p>20 to 40 motorcycles operate out of Yekepa, typically carrying 2–3 passengers, with fares charged per passenger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common travel routes and fares include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yekepa to N'zérékoré (Guinea): \$20 USD per person Ganta: 2,000 LD per person Sanniquellie: 1,000–1,300 LD per person Saclepea: \$30 USD Karnplay: \$10 USD Bahn: \$25–30 USD Lobatu (Ivory Coast border): \$20 USD (they do not cross the border) Road traffic is more dangerous in Guinea. Only about half of the riders have driving licenses; most have received no formal training. Speeds are generally low, with an average of 3 accidents per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and safety equipment. Riders are willing to work if opportunities are available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment

NO.	LOCATION	MAIN CONCERNS RAISED	EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTED POSITIVE IMPACTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are concerns about crossing the haul road, as riders are not limited to the main road. Road dust is a major hazard. 		
4	LDEA Buchanan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on Custom Beach, with no access to resources. It is alleged that Custom Beach communities are involved in drug trafficking from ships offshore, transporting drugs to Monrovia; the money does not remain in the community. The community is extremely poor, with no water, sewage systems, or permanent housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for policing drug trafficking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with police efforts.
5	Civil Society Groups – Bassa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four groups were represented, all self-funded at the community-based organization (CBO) level. USAID funding has been withdrawn, and there are no active county-wide programs. Civil society administrative management was explained as being under the Government of Liberia (GoL). The groups focus on agriculture and women's empowerment. They anticipate that the project will make people poorer without targeted community development inputs. Train noise affects all Buchanan residents, especially during the night. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community development support is necessary to avoid increased poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None