interfere with GVL’s operations. These independent farmers CANNOT sell their produce commercially.11

Golden Veroleum Liberia’s rights over natural resources on its concession land

- Carbon credits. GVL has the right to use and sell Carbon Rights connected to its concession area.81
- Timber. GVL can plant and cut timber and other vegetation on its concession area to the extent that it deems necessary for constructing infrastructure and performing its operations. This is completely at GVL’s discretion, with no government oversight. Earlier, timber CANNOT be sold commercially. Profits from such sales are to be shared equally between GVL and the government.82
- Earth. GVL can take free of charge as much earth and stones that have no significant commercial mineral value other than as construction material as they may consider useful for conducting their operations. This can be sold commercially, though unlike timber there must be written government approval for this. Profits from such sales are to be shared equally between GVL and the government.83
- Water. GVL can sink boreholes, dam streams, build reservoirs, and use water within the concession area free of charge. However, this must not result in any environmental damage. Before damming any body of water, they must get approval from the government, but not affected communities. GVL cannot deprive any settlements of the water supply that they have customarily used. GVL is also prohibited from damming water in such a way as to harm any farming activities being conducted on the effective date of the contract (August 16, 2010). There is no requirement that they refrain from harming settlements or farming activities, which come into existence after the beginning of the contract.84

Public mobility/access issues

The public is allowed to continue to freely use the roads across the Concession Area that they have always used, including for commercial purposes. UNLESS: (1) this use unreasonably interferes with GVL’s operations; (2) GVL and the government come to a mutual agreement to stop this use.85
- GVL may also deny or restrict public access over these roads (with prior notice to the government) if they think it threatens the security of their operations or employees. This may include the installation of security gates on public roads, subject to government approval. In the case of an emergency, GVL can close these roads and trails without asking the government first, provided that they immediately notify the Ministry of Agriculture.86

Community Development Promises

- Outgrowers’ Program. This will give 40,000 of the Gross Concession Area to be farmed by Liberian oil palm farmers cooperatives selected by GVL and the government. GVL commits to purchase their produce, and to provide them with training and non-financial support in obtaining farming materials. Funding will be sought from the World Bank and other international development funds. If funding is not obtained, the program will not go through and the land will revert to government.87
- Support for Qualified Liberian Farmers. GVL may provide advice, technology, training and spare farm supplies to other Liberian oil palm farmers as part of the government’s Qualified Liberian Farmers program, but this is purely at GVL’s discretion – unlike Firestone they are under no legal obligation.88
- Community Development Contribution. GVL will contribute US$5 annually per ha of land within developed areas to a community development fund. A management team of not more than 10 members will administer this fund. GVL will get to choose half of the management team; there are no similarly ring-fenced positions for representatives from the community (or government) in the remaining half. The management team’s budget shall be determined in consultation between the management team and the government.
- Funds can only be disbursed for (a) direct delivery of services and community infrastructure improvements, and NOT for the general work programs of administrative offices; and (b) for the benefit of the communities in the affected counties.10
- Transparency requirements: the fund will be audited by an internationally-recognized auditing firm. Its financial records will be publicly available. Information about the audits, the committee members, and the programs paid for by the funding will be published on a website maintained by GVL.
The Golden Veroleum Liberia Contract

Geographical Scope of Concession & Timescale of Expansion

Geographical Scope of Concession

The Golden Veroleum Liberia contract (GVL) has a geographical scope that includes 350,000 hectares of land in Liberia. This is divided into several zones, each with a specific timeframe for expansion:

- **Zone A**: Expansion within the first 10 years (2010-2020)
- **Zone B**: Expansion within the second 10 years (2020-2030)
- **Zone C**: Expansion within the third 10 years (2030-2040)
- **Zone D**: Expansion within the fourth 10 years (2040-2050)

Each zone has its own specific geographical boundaries, and the expansion is scheduled to take place according to a predetermined timeline.

Size of the Golden Veroleum Liberia Concession Area

The size of the Golden Veroleum Liberia concession area is 350,000 hectares, of which 220,000 hectares are designated for palm oil cultivation, and the remaining 130,000 hectares are reserved for other non-palm-oil farming activities.

Geographical Boundaries

The geographical boundaries of the Golden Veroleum Liberia concession area are as follows:

- **North**: The concession area is bounded by the international border with Sierra Leone.
- **South**: The concession area is bounded by the international border with Côte d’Ivoire.
- **West**: The concession area is bounded by the international border with Ivory Coast.
- **East**: The concession area is bounded by the international border with Guinea.

The concession area includes the following districts and areas:

- **Bomi District**: The area includes the neighborhoods of Robertsfield, Duarzon Village, and other settlements.
- **Lofa District**: The area includes the neighborhoods of Teapong, Kpobee, and other settlements.
- **Liberia National Road Network**: The concession area is integrated with the national road network, providing accessibility for transportation and development.

Displacement of Communities

The resettlement of communities living on the land designated for the concession is a significant consideration. The government and Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) have a resettlement committee to oversee the process. The committee is responsible for the following:

- **Resettlement Process**: The committee oversees the process of resettling communities that GVL and the government have identified as being affected by the concession.
- **Compensation**: Communities are entitled to compensation for the loss of their land, which is determined based on the size of their land and the duration of their occupation. GVL is responsible for the compensation process.
- **Transitional Housing**: GVL is also responsible for providing transitional housing for communities that are resettled.

The resettlement process is designed to minimize operational, security, and social disruptions and to ensure that communities are adequately compensated for the loss of their land.

GVL’s Obligations

Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) has certain obligations under the concession contract:

- **Minimum Investment**: GVL is required to invest a minimum of US$200 million in the concession area within the first 10 years, increasing to US$400 million in the second 10 years, and to US$600 million in the third 10 years.
- **Annual Expenditures**: GVL must spend at least 5% of its annual expenses on areas that are not suitable for palm oil production, allowing for the cultivation of rice, livestock, or any other non-palm oil-producing crops.
- **End of Cycle**: Once a piece of land’s End of Cycle has come, GVL must replant the land. If the land is not suitable for replanting, it must be removed from production.
- **Government Ownership**: If the government requests GVL to change the use of its concession land, the government must be compensated for any losses incurred.
- **Reclamation**: If GVL fails to meet its obligations, the government has the right to reclaim the area in question.

Termination of the Contract

The contract has several termination options:

- **Failure by GVL**: Failure to meet its minimum investment obligations, end of cycle requirements, or performance indicators.
- **Government Request**: The government may request the termination of the contract if GVL does not meet its obligations.
- **Contract Expiry**: The contract expires automatically after 65 years, unless extended.

Compensation

GVL is required to compensate communities that are affected by the resettlement process. Compensation includes:

- **Monetary Compensation**: Compensation is awarded according to a scale determined by the government, with the government bearing the sole responsibility for resettlement expenses.
- **Non-Monetary Compensation**: Communities are entitled to transitional housing and compensation for the loss of their land.

The resettlement process is designed to minimize operational, security, and social disruptions and to ensure that communities are adequately compensated for the loss of their land.