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Terms of Reference

Summative Evaluation: Liberia Decentralization Support Programme

1. Background

The Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP) is a five-year (2013–2017) Government of Liberia program designed to facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government. The project which should have ended in 2017 was extended for 2 years to December 2019 because of the effects of the Ebola crisis which slowed implementation and affected project operations. The transition of the new government in January 2018 was also another reason for the extension as the government had requested UN-supported programmes to roll-out into the next National Development Circle of 2020. The LDSP programme is funded by several partners including EU, Sweden USAID, UNMIL and UNDP. The LDSP has an estimated budget of \$18,604,472.21 for the duration of the programme. The resources are geared towards achieving 5 pertinent outcomes of the programme. To date, approximately 80% of the resources have been spent on delivering the project's results. The key partners of the LDSP is Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), serving as Implementing Partner, and Governance Commission (GC), serving as Responsible Party, with UNDP providing technical support.

The LDSP supports the decentralization of administrative, political and fiscal governance in Liberia. In 2012, the Government of Liberia launched the National Decentralization and Local Governance (NDLG) policy aimed at systematically providing guidance to the process of decentralizing power, authority, function and responsibilities from central government to local government. The NDLG policy is geared towards establishing local governance structures in all 15 counties. The policy also envisaged having a decentralized basic service structure where citizens no longer must travel for miles to the Capital for such services. It is predicated on this that the LDSP programme was designed and implemented.

To ensure that this objective was met, the LDSP envisaged to achieve four core outcomes which would lead to this objective:

- Decentralized services and corresponding resources are managed at the assigned level of government;
- Service delivery and accountability of government improved;
- Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization is in place;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs is capacitated to lead the implementation of decentralization reforms; and
- Strengthened programme management support, coordination and monitoring.

The project covered all 15 counties of Liberia where key basic services are being provided to local populations, thus reducing the need for travel to Monrovia.

2. Evaluation Purpose

UNDP commissions programme evaluations to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of its contributions to development results at the country level as articulated in UNDP's Country Programme Document (CPD). These are evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy. In line with the Evaluation Plan of UNDP Liberia, project evaluation is planned to be commissioned at during the last year of the project implementation.

The UNDP Office in Liberia is commissioning this evaluation on decentralization to capture evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme (gender and human-rights approach) all in an effort to ascertain what has been achieved, how beneficiaries have benefited from the interventions and what lessons could be learned for future interventions. The evaluation serves an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Liberia with an impartial assessment of the results of LDSP's support. Findings and lessons learnt from the evaluation will be used in the design of a potential phase two of the Decentralization Project.

3. Evaluation Scope

The outcome evaluation will be conducted during the months of June and July, with a view to enhancing the project while providing strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the next Decentralization programme to start in 2020. Given that this a terminal evaluation, the evaluators are expected to look at the entire period of the program (2013-2017) and its two extensions (2018 and 2019). The evaluation is expected to look at the extent to which gender has played a role in the program as well as determine the level to which people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds have benefitted from the decentralization process.

4. Objectives of the Evaluation

Findings from the evaluation is expected to serve two objectives. The first objective is to reflect on the program's implementation strategies and to determine the extent to which the program successfully delivered on its set objectives. Drawing from that, the evaluation is expected to draw on lessons learnt which will be used in the design of a potential phase two of the Decentralization Project, which is the second objective of the evaluation. Lesson identified will serve as a guide during the design of the new program.

Specifically, the project evaluation will assess:

- 1) The relevance of the LDSP programme and UNDP's support to the government's decentralization process.
- 2) The frameworks and strategies that LDSP has devised for its support to decentralization and whether they are well conceived for achieving planned objectives.
- 3) The progress to date under the outputs and what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future Decentralization programming support.

The evaluation will consider the pertinent outcomes and outputs as stated in the project document focused towards decentralization and local governance. The specific outcomes under the LDSP Programme are to be assessed relates to **Country Programme Outcome #4: Liberian governance systems strengthened to ensure consolidation of peace and stability supported by effective and well-functioning**

institutions that foster inclusive participation of stakeholders, especially women and youth, with enhanced service delivery at local levels.

As described in Annex A, the LDSP has implemented 5 outcomes. An analysis of achievements across all 5 outcomes is expected.

The evaluation will cover the period from 2013-2019 as the project had two extensions. This period is important because it allows for a true reflection of the extent to which the project has carried out its interventions. The evaluation will cover the entire project area (15 counties). However, given the challenges in accessing harder to reach counties during the Rainy Season, a sample of the counties will be covered.

5. Evaluation Questions

The outcome evaluation seeks to answer the following questions, focused around the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

Relevance:

- How well has the programme aligned with government and agency priorities?
- To what extent has LDSP's selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?
- Has LDSP programme been influential in influencing national policies on legal reforms and human rights protection?
- To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?
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Effectiveness

- What evidence is there that the programme has contributed towards an improvement in national government capacity, including institutional strengthening?
- Has the LDSP programme been effective in helping improve governance at the local level in Liberia? Do these local results aggregate into nationally significant results?
- To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made towards their achievement.
- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
- What were the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by LDSP's work?
- What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP performance?

Efficiency

- Are LDSP's approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework relevant to achieve the planned outcomes?
- To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?
- Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources?
- Did the monitoring and evaluation systems that LDSP has in place help to ensure that activities and outputs were managed efficiently and effectively?

- Were alternative approaches considered in designing the programme?

Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that the LDSP programme interventions are sustainable?
- What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?
- To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed or implemented?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?
- What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained, e.g., through requisite capacities (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?

Impact

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

The evaluation should also include an assessment of the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross cutting issues into consideration:

Human rights

- To what extent have poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from LDSP's interventions?

Gender Equality

- To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the LDSP programme?
- To what extent has LDSP programme promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects?
- How did the programme promote gender equality, human rights and human development in the delivery of outputs?

Based on the above analysis, the evaluators are expected to provide overarching conclusions on LDSP's results in this area of support, as well as recommendations on how the programme could adjust its programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities to ensure that the programme has sustainable results in the future. The evaluation is additionally expected to offer wider lessons for UNDP's support in Liberia and elsewhere based on this analysis.

6. Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by an external team of evaluators and will engage a wide array of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including national and local government officials and staffs, donors, beneficiaries from the interventions, and community members.

The evaluation is expected to take a "theory of change" (TOC) approach to determine causal links between the interventions that LDSP has supported and observed achievement at national and local levels. The evaluators will develop a logic model to

determine how LDSP's interventions have led to improved national and local government management and service delivery.

Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of LDSP's interventions should be triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, evaluations and technical papers, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys and site visits.

The following steps in data collection are anticipated:

5.1 Desk Review

A desk review should be carried out of the key strategies and documents underpinning the programme's scope of work. This includes reviewing the programme document, different reports, documents kept at the county service centres and the government entities, the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), country programme document, the midterm review report as well as any monitoring and other documents, to be provided by the programme.

5.2 Field Data Collection

Following the desk review, the evaluators will build on the documented evidence through an agreed set of field and interview methodologies, including:

- Interviews with key partners and stakeholders
- Field visits to project sites and partner institutions
- Survey questionnaires where appropriate
- Participatory observation, focus groups, and rapid appraisal techniques

7. Deliverables

The following reports and deliverables are required for the evaluation:

- Inception report
- Draft Evaluation Report
- Presentation at the validation workshop with key stakeholders, (partners and beneficiaries)
- Final Evaluation report

One week after contract signing, the evaluation manager will produce an **inception report** containing the proposed theory of change for UNDPs work on governance in Liberia. The inception report should include an evaluation matrix presenting the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods to be used. Annex 3 provides a simple matrix template. The inception report should detail the specific timing for evaluation activities and deliverables and propose specific site visits and stakeholders to be interviewed. Protocols for different stakeholders should be developed. The inception report will be discussed and agreed with the UNDP country office before the evaluators proceed with site visits.

The **draft evaluation report** will be shared with stakeholders, and presented in a validation workshop, that the UNDP country office will organise. Feedback received from these sessions should be considered when preparing the final report. The evaluators will produce an 'audit trail' indicating whether and how each comment received was addressed in revisions to the **final report**.

The suggested table of contents of the evaluation report is as follows:

Title
Table of contents
Acronyms and abbreviations
Executive Summary
Introduction
Background and context
Evaluation scope and objectives
Evaluation approach and methods
Data analysis
Findings and conclusions
Lessons learned
Recommendations
Annexes

8. Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies

The evaluation will be undertaken by 2 external evaluators, hired as consultants, comprised of a Team Lead and an Associate Evaluator. Both international and national consultants can be considered for these positions.

Required Qualifications of the Evaluation Manager

- Minimum Master's degree in economics, political science, public administration, regional development/planning, or other social science;
- Minimum 7-10 years of professional experience in public sector development, including in the areas of democratic governance, regional development, gender equality and social services.
- At least 5 years of experience in conducting evaluations for government and international aid organisations, preferably with direct experience with civil service capacity building;
- Strong working knowledge of the UN and more specifically the work of UNDP in support of government;
- Sound knowledge of results-based management systems, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies; including experience in applying SMART (S Specific; M Measurable; A Achievable; R Relevant; T Time-bound) indicators;
- Excellent reporting and communication skills

The **Team Lead** will have overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the draft and final evaluation report. Specifically, the Team Lead will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Develop the inception report, detailing the evaluation scope, methodology and approach;
- Conduct the project evaluation in accordance with the proposed objective and scope of the evaluation and UNDP evaluation guidelines;
- Manage the team during the evaluation mission, and liaise with UNDP on travel and interview schedules'
- Draft and present the draft and final evaluation reports;
- Lead the presentation of draft findings in the stakeholder workshop;
- Finalize the evaluation report and submit it to UNDP.

Required qualification of the Associate Evaluator

- Liberian citizen or persons with extensive experience working in Liberia during the last 5 years;
- Minimum master's degree in the social sciences;
- Minimum 5 years' experience carrying out development evaluations for government and civil society;
- Experience working in or closely with UN agencies, especially UNDP, is preferred;
- A deep understanding of the development context in Liberia and preferably an understanding of governance issues within the Liberia context;
- Strong communication skills;
- Excellent reading and writing skills in English, and preferably also Shona.

The Associate Evaluator will, *inter alia*, perform the following tasks:

- Review documents;
- Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
- Assist in carrying out the evaluation in accordance with the proposed objectives and scope of the evaluation;
- Draft related parts of the evaluation report as agreed with the Evaluation Manager;
- Assist the Evaluation Manager to finalize the draft and final evaluation report.

9. Evaluation Ethics

The evaluation must be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' and sign the Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP Evaluations. In particular, evaluators must be free and clear of perceived conflicts of interest. To this end, interested consultants will not be considered if they were directly and substantively involved, as an employee or consultant, in the formulation of UNDP strategies and programming relating to the outcomes and programmes under review. The code of conduct and an agreement form to be signed by each consultant are included in Annex 4.

10. Implementation Arrangements

The UNDP CO in collaboration with Government will select the evaluation team through an open process and will be responsible for the management of the evaluators. The Head of Unit/DCDP will designate a focal point for the evaluation that will work with the M&E Specialist and Programme Manager to assist in facilitating the process (e.g., providing relevant documentation, arranging visits/interviews with key informants, etc.). The CO Management will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report. The M&E Specialist or designate will arrange introductory meetings within the CO and the DCD or his designate will establish initial contacts with partners and project staff. The consultants will take responsibility for setting up meetings and conducting the evaluation, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. The CO management will develop a management response to the evaluation within two weeks of report finalization.

The Task Manager of the Project will convene an Advisory Panel comprising of technical experts to enhance the quality of the evaluation. This Panel will review the inception report and the draft evaluation report to provide detail comments related

to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. The Panel will also advise on the conformity of evaluation processes to the UNEG standards. The evaluation team is required to address all comments of the Panel completely and comprehensively. The Evaluation Team Leader will provide a detail rationale to the advisory panel for any comment that remain unaddressed.

The evaluation will use a system of ratings standardising assessments proposed by the evaluators in the inception report. The evaluation acknowledges that rating cannot be a standalone assessment, and it will not be feasible to entirely quantify judgements. Performance rating will be carried out for the four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

While the Country Office will provide some logistical support during the evaluation, for instance assisting in setting interviews with senior government officials, it will be the responsibility of the evaluators to logistically and financially arrange their travel to and from relevant project sites and to arrange most interviews. Planned travels and associated costs will be included in the Inception Report and agreed with the Country Office.

11. Time-Frame for the Evaluation Process

The evaluation is expected to take 22 working days for each of the two consultants, over a period of six weeks starting 9 July 2019. The final draft evaluation report is due the 9th of August 2019. The following table provides an indicative breakout for activities and delivery:

Activity	Deliverable	Work day allocation		Time period (days) for task completion
		Evaluation Manager	Associate Evaluator	
Review materials and develop work plan	Inception report and evaluation matrix	4	3	7
Participate in an Inception Meeting with UNDP Liberia country office				
Draft inception report				
Review Documents and stakeholder consultations	Draft evaluation report Stakeholder workshop presentation	13	16	30
Interview stakeholders				
Conduct field visits				
Analyse data				
Develop draft evaluation and lessons report to Country Office				
Present draft Evaluation Report and lessons at Validation Workshop	Final evaluation report	5	3	7
Finalize and submit evaluation and lessons learned report incorporating additions				

and comments provided by stakeholders				
	totals	22	22	6 weeks

12. Fees and payments

Interested consultants should provide their requested fee rates when they submit their expressions of interest, in USD. The UNDP Country Office will then negotiate and finalise contracts. Travel costs and daily allowances will be paid against invoice, and subject to the UN payment schedules for Liberia. Fee payments will be made upon acceptance and approval by the UNDP Country Office of planned deliverables, based on the following payment schedule:

Inception report	20%
Draft Evaluation Report	40%
Final Evaluation Report	40%

13. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - LIST OF LDSP OUTCOMES TO BE EVALUATED

LDSP PROGRAMME OUTCOME 1	Deconcentrated services and corresponding resources managed at the assigned Level of government
LDSP PROGRAMME OUTCOME 2	Service delivery and accountability of local administration is improved
LDSP PROGRAMME OUTCOME 3	Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization in place
LDSP PROGRAMME OUTCOME 4	MIA capacitated to lead and implement decentralization
LDSP PROGRAMME OUTCOME 5	Program Management Support, Coordination and Monitoring strengthened

ANNEX 2 - DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSULTED*

- LDSP programme document
- LDSP Annual Work Plans 2013-2019
- UNDP Country Programme Document 2013 – 2019
- Local Governance Act
- UNDP PME Handbook
- UNDP Evaluation Guide and addendum
- UNDG RBM Handbook
- UNDG Ethical Code of Conduct of Evaluators

** This is by no means an exhaustive list. The evaluators are required to seek and research all documents relevant to the programme.

Annex 3: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation matrices are useful tools for planning and conducting evaluations; helping to summarize and visually present an evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. In an evaluation matrix, the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods appropriate for each data source are presented, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated is shown.

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators / Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis

Annex 4: Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP Evaluations

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[†]

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at ___ on _____

Signature: _____

[†] www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct