SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF LIBERIA DECENTRALISATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (LDSP)

FINAL REPORT

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Preliminary section

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AfT  Agenda for Transformation
CDA  County Development Agenda
CDF  County Development Fund
CDSC County Development Steering Committee
CEOs County Education Officers
CSCs County Service Centers
CSOs Civil Society Organizations
CST  Country Support Team
DEOs District Education Officers
DIM  Direct Implementation Modality
DPs  Development Partners
EU  European Union
FLY  Federation of Liberian Youth
GC  Governance Commission
GoL  Government of Liberia
ICT  Information, Communication and Technology
LACC Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LDF  Local Development Framework
LDIP  Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan
LDLD Liberia Decentralization and Local Development
LDSP  Liberia Decentralization Support Program
LEGIT Local Empowerment for Government Inclusion and Transparency
LGA  Local Government Act
LIPA Liberia Institute for Public Administration
LISGIS Liberia Institute for Geo-Information Service
M&E  Monitoring and Evaluation
MACs Ministries Agencies and Commissions
MFDP Ministry of Finance Development and Planning
MIA  Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoLG Ministry of Local Government
MTR  Mid-term Review
NDIS  National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat
NIM  National Implementation Modality
NPDLG National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government
OECD/DAC Organization for Economic Committee for Development/Development Assistance Committee.
PESTEL Political, Economic, Social, Technical, Environmental and Legal
PPRROL Public Partnership for Respect and Rule of Law
PRS  Poverty Reduction Strategy
RBAD Rights Based Approach to Development
RBM  Results Based Management
RICCE Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment
SDF  Social Development Fund
SGBV  Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SWOT  Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TE   Terminal Evaluation
ToC  Theory of Change
ToTs  Trainers of Trainees
UN  United Nations
UNDAF  United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL  United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSDCF  United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID  United States Agency for International Development
YPD  Youth Participation in Democracy
YPPD  Youth Partnership for Participation in Development
Executive Summary

Background: Since the adoption of a decentralized system of governance in Liberia in 2006, a number of programs have been designed and implemented for its further entrenchment and strengthening. Significant ones include: the Liberia Decentralization and Local Development Program; the County Support Team Program and the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP), which is the most current. The Liberia Decentralization Support Programme was originally designed for a five-year intervention, from 2013 to 2017, but was extended for two years up to December 2019. The program is being implemented through the Ministry of Internal Affairs with financial support of US $18,604,472.21 from different Development Partners (DPs) that include: EU, Sweden, USAID, UNMIL and UNDP.

The program was designed to achieve five core outcomes delivering 14 core outputs (see table 1.1). The design and implementation of the program was in response to the need for harnessing the gains of the predecessor programs and also address the bottlenecks that prevailed at the time. Through provision of both up and down stream interventions, LDSP envisaged to create conditions that would favor the establishment of a Transparent, accountable and responsive public institutions that contribute to economic and social development as well as inclusive and participatory systems in partnership with citizens under a vibrant decentralized system. Thus, strategic investments were directed at creating: i) strong management capacity to support effective and efficient resource management at different levels of decentralization thereby enabling delivery of better and inclusive services; ii) Highly accountable service delivery and governance structures, iii) a streamlined legal and regulatory framework for decentralization.

The evaluation: Expected to end in December 2019, the evaluation of the program was pertinent in accordance to UNDP evaluation policy. The findings are intended to provide strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the next Decentralization programme to start in 2020. More specifically, evaluation assessed:

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 outcomes and outputs as well as what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future Decentralization programming support.

Methodology: The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to enhance the validity of the results. Fundamentally, the evaluation sought to answer three universal evaluation questions namely; i) what did the programme set out to achieve and how? ii) To what extent has the programme achieved its aspirations and why? and iii) what lessons and best practices can be drawn from the program implementation experience to inform future programming. Thus, guided by the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the evaluation captured and articulates evaluative evidence in respect to the LDSP relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability as well as the integration of cross cutting issues.
The evaluation was highly participatory with the evaluation data being extracted from both primary and secondary sources. A total of 107 stakeholders were consulted through key informant interviews and focus group discussions in the 9 purposively selected counties. Furthermore, a beneficiary survey involving 91 (53 males and 38 females) respondents was conducted in 5 counties of Bomi, Bassa, Nimba, Sinoe and Maryland.

**Findings:** The degree of the program’s external and internal consistence demonstrates its relevance. Externally, the programme concept and design were well aligned with both the UNDAF and the national development agenda. The program interventions are in tandem with the national development priorities and hence well targeted at addressing the national development challenges highlighted in several policy and national development documents.

With its focus on improved policy and regulatory environment coupled with human and institutional capacity strengthening, it is apparent that the program’s intervention logic was sound and well thought through to support the realization of the intended results both at outcome and output levels. Implementation was well integrated in the national structures and systems; a factor that promotes national ownership of the programme. For example, the creation of the NDIS in the Ministry of Internal Affairs was a good strategy for promoting national ownership of the programme. On the basis of its alignment with the overall UNDAF and national development priorities, the relevance of the programme is well ascertained although some gaps were also noted in the design and implementation. They include: i) lack of a robust capacity building strategy; ii) Lack of M&E framework for Real Time monitoring using the Results Based Management tool; iii) Lack of clear exit strategy; iv) Lack of sustainability plan; and v) lack of clearly formulated theory of change.

In terms of efficiency, programme implementation has ensured economical use of resources in a manner that has accelerated the realization of the intended results. At the time of the evaluation, 61.8% of the overall program budget had been realized with all the donors having honored more than 50% of their pledged contribution. Deliberate strategies to ensure economical use of resources were notably integrated in the programme design and implementation and they include inter alia; i) adequate adherence to approved work plans and budget lines; ii) the use of results based budgeting and expenditure framework; iii) The use of the National Implementation Modality (NIM); iv) the use of UN volunteers in the program implementation; v) The institutionalization of Results Based Management (RBM); and vi) Adherence to financial management regulations and procure of both UNDP and Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, staff turnover, lack of a results and resource framework as well as delays in the release of funds to some extent compromised the program’s expected levels of efficiency.

The passing of the Local Government Act, establishment of the CSCs, creation of public awareness about the decentralization policy and processes, institutional and human capacity strengthening are the key achievements of the programme. It is apparent that the program interventions have made significant contribution in addressing the implementation challenges that bedeviled the decentralization program prior to the LDSP. Although more capacity strengthening remains critical for smooth implementation and deepening of the decentralization policy and processes, the LDSP has set a good stage upon which more successful implementation of the decentralization policy in Liberia shall hinge.
The UNDP assisted NIM, Political good will, building on previous initiatives like CST and LDLD programs, Good logical flow of the program design with good outcome-output linkages, Anchoring LDSP in existing systems and structures, conducive program timing, Adaptive program management and quick Impact interventions are some of the critical success factors. However, Gaps in the program design particularly lack of the results framework; Logistics and Infrastructural Challenges faced by CSCs; Inadequate funding of CSCs; Capacity gaps at county level; High staff turnover; Delays in financial disbursements and approval of work plans; and Deficiencies in policies required to support decentralization are some of the significant barriers to the achievement of enhanced results.

Program sustainability faces both opportunities and challenges. Potential sustainability opportunities include inter alia; the existing national policy and regulatory framework, positive political will, alignment with donor support priority areas, existing government systems and governance structures at various levels, ability of lower local governments to generate own resources and the already built human and institutional capacity. These opportunities notwithstanding, sustainability of the LDSP faces a myriad of challenges that include inter alia; absence of a sustainability plan; Weak coordination amongst MACs on the decentralization programme at central and local level; lack of commitment among some duty bearers to relinquish authority; funding challenges for the implementation of decentralization leading policies.

A number of best practices including inter alia; The enactment of the Local Government Act 2018; Establishment of the One-Stop Shop County Service Centers; Establishment of County Treasury model; Basket Funding and Management Model; The National Technical Working Group (TWG); CSC Co-ordination mechanisms – County Development Steering Committee Meetings (CDSC); Gender mainstreaming capacity building /trainings at CSCs have been noted during the evaluation. Flowing from the program design and implementation experience, the following lessons and recommendations are derived.

Lessons:

✓ The NIM model still requires further strengthening of institutions and capacity building of staff in order to allow national institutions to anchor the requisite capacity for effective and efficient management
✓ Improved infrastructure and communication are critical requirements in ensuring effective service delivery and decentralization in general.
✓ The creation of a Secretariat at the MIA without full empowerment and controls often leads to challenges especially in financial management and delays in program activity implementation
✓ The model of One-Stop Shop CSC creation has proved to be an important service delivery point in national development
✓ The alignment of the LDSP with sector-wide approach under MACs at County Level is a tremendous strategy that will see Decentralization well-coordinated and providing holistic service delivery.
✓ The Anti-Corruption aspects of institutions in the management and implementation of such program is key and crucial in ensuring that transparency and accountability are adhered to.
✓ Proper planning and design of national programs like the LDSP require clear exit strategy to ensure an inbuilt sustainability plan
✓ For effective implantation of programs like LDSP, capacity needs assessment are crucial in order to ascertain the strength and weaknesses of the existing structures and systems through which the program would utilize.
✓ The high turn-over of staff at NDIS and CSCs as well as lack of Program Coordinator affects the smooth implementation of the program.
✓ Bringing services closer to the people has made services accessible and convenient it reduces cost and risk of travel thereby allowing local citizens to make productive use of time while revenue generation is increased
✓ Creation of awareness and sensitization of population about decentralization is a crucial method of wide coverage
✓ The creation of CSC together with various technical teams has promoted and reinforced team work as well as exchanging expertise through cross-pollination of ideas and expertise. Building synergies within MACs under the overall one Coordination mechanism is a key lesson as it ensures coordinated delivery of services and de-concentration.
✓ Working together with other MACs synergizes effort and ideas for goal realization
✓ Working with people from diverse professional/technical background is a self-capacity enhancement and preparation for greater responsibility
✓ CSCs are the first line of implementers of the decentralization program and major contributors to the actualization of the national budget
✓ Citizens obtain services with less difficulty and save them from spending more money to go to Monrovia
✓ Bringing marriage certification services and counselling closer with LDSP through CSCs service delivery activities has addressed cultural barriers through both traditional and western marriage registrations

**Recommendations**
1. **UN strategic SDG interventions:** The UN should also strategize and MIA in its quest to roll out and operationalize the LGA 2018 ensure that the SDGs are mainstreamed and reported on systematically within the SDG Development Cooperation Framework.
2. **M&E Systems:** There is need for a robust M&E Framework and system to guide full implementation of the program from a Results Based Management perspective. This is because of the following:
   - Indicators are key components of design and log frame and should be set at design with their intention made clear: to determine a project’s progress, impacts, and effects.
Baseline indicators should be sought or set for all expected outputs and outcomes. Without measurable baseline data impact or effect cannot be measured nor attributed to an intervention.

- Target indicators should be realistically set; that is, they must be set within the capability to be achieved given the resources, time frame, and capacities.
- Means of verification should be included in the design and be methodologically robust and time bound in order to give validity not only to monitoring but also to the analysis of effects, outcomes, results and impact.

3. **LDSP Management Systems**: Streamline management and organizational systems that hinder timely implementation, such as issues associated with delays in disbursements, lengthy procurement processes, and lack of coordination between partners. In this case the NDIS (PMU) should in future be fully constituted and filled with adequate staffing and empowered especially the head to have specific Program Bank Account as well as financial management powers in consultation with Ministry heads.

4. **Gender Mainstreaming**: The Decentralization processes should in future ensure and enhance integration of gender aspects of the program as well as follow up on the full development of a Gender Policy and Strategy in the MIA or Ministry in Charge of Local Government that will guide in the operationalization of the LGA.

5. **Resource Mobilization Strategy**: As the GoL prepares and plans to roll out the LGA 2019 and fully decentralize, there is need to have a robust Resource Mobilization Strategy highlighting key areas of concern and drivers of Decentralization such as Infrastructure and Communication as well Institutional Development and Capacity Building Resource requirements

**Government of Liberia**

1. **Political Will and Support**: LDSP having achieved an important milestone of enacting the Local Government Act 2018, the GoL should fast track its operationalization as well as put in place all the required regulations, strategies, plans etc The government should take full charge and ensure that LGA Implementation Plan is fact tracked and owned so that all the other procedures and process are realized in order to consolidate the gains of the LDSP.

2. **Signing powers and Partial De-concentration**
   In order to fully de-concentrate services from the central government, the CSCs should be fully given signing powers on the documents and certificates issued under the One Stop Shop CSC. In the same breath the Government should fast track the services under the de-concentration platform specially transport related services and Commerce in order to boost revenue etc

3. **Fiscal Decentralization through County Treasuries**: Whereas the CSC generate revenues from the de-concentrated services there is need for the government to fast track the roll out of County Treasuries in all the 15 Counties as well as speed up the constitutional and legal processes of revenue sharing in order to ensure financial sustainability. **GoL Financial appropriation and Revenue Sharing**: For effective and efficient operation of the CSCs, the GoL should prioritize and start appropriating funds through its national budget to the CSCs as well as scale up all the 15 Counties with County Treasuries. GoL should also fast track the enactment of the newly developed Revenue Sharing Formula between the Central government and the respective CSCs. The CSCs should be captured in the budget planning during County Council Sitting.
4. **IT and software:** A number of Information Technology (IT) recommendations have been floated as a result of the current challenges faced by various CSCs and these include.

- The absence of internet connectivity at the center from 2017 to 2018 hampers regular communication to LDSP and partner who normally requests for information. The installation of internet to center should be considered.
- Since 2017 to date, there has been no software for the production of traditional marriage certificate. This has resulted to dormancy of the activity at the center. There is an urgent need to resolve this challenge to enable the center to produce traditional marriage certificate.
- It is important to note that the Labor Local office staff at the center has not been trained to use the biometric ID card equipment, thus results to lack of software for the machine. It is suggested that a solution be found by LDSP to enhance the smooth running of the equipment, including training of staff and provision of appropriate software.
- To date, the software (windows7) and antivirus installed on the supplied desktops are outdated. There is a need for IT technician to visit the center to correct the situation.

5. **Logistics, Infrastructure and support staff**

- **Support Staff:** Government prioritizes recruitment of support staff since CSC is detached from administration building.
- **CSC Premises security:** In 2017 and 2018 the center has run without security guards and office assistants. Ultimately, securing assets and maintenance of the center hinges on retaining security guards and office assistant. These are challenges that require immediate solution.
- **Transport:** The issue of mobility and communication should also be handled by
Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Summative Evaluation of the Liberia Decentralization Support Program (2013-2019). Structured in three sections, the report presents program background and the evaluation design and methodology in section one while sections two and three present the findings and conclusions, lessons learnt, best practices as well as recommendations.

1.1 Background

Liberia’s decentralization system is still evolving with the support of the national government and development partners. The country adopted a decentralized system of governance 2006\(^1\) and since then, a number of programs have been designed and implemented to entrench and strengthen the system. Significant of these include: the Liberia Decentralization and Local Development program; the Country Support Team Program and the Liberia Decentralization Support Program (LDSP), which is the most current.

The Liberia Decentralization support program was originally designed for a five-year intervention, from 2013 to 2017, but was extended for two years up to December 2019\(^2\). The program is being implemented through the Ministry of Internal Affairs with planned budgetary support to the tune of US $18,604,472.21 from different Development Partners (DPs) that include the EU, Sweden, USAID, UNMIL and UNDP.

In tandem with the national development agenda as enshrined in the Liberia’ National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance, the Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan (LDIP) and Agenda for Transformation (AfT), the LDSP envisaged to achieve four core outcomes by delivering 11 core outputs as summarized in table 1.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 De-concentrated services and corresponding resources managed at the assigned level of government.</td>
<td>Output 1.1: The MACs of the government of Liberia tangibly and visibly transfer functions, decision making and corresponding resources to the counties according to the de-concentration strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 1.2: Enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of macs at the county level achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 1.3: Improved infrastructure to support the de-concentration process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 1.4: Citizens are organized and informed to participate in the de-concentration process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Service delivery and accountability of local government improved.</td>
<td>Output 2.1: Capacity for participatory planning, budgeting and managing of development funds as well as revenue collection strengthened with focus on marginalized groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 2.2: Anti-corruption measures (systems and enforcement mechanisms) established and functional at county, city, district and community levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 2.3: Capacity of women and girls to participate in local government as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) Mid-Term Evaluation-UNDP LDSP-Liberia

\(^2\) The programme was extended twice to coincide with the extensions of UNDP Liberia’s Country Programme Document which in itself was extended.
leaders enhanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization is in place.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome 3.1: Efforts to finalize local government act and other requisite legislation sustained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 3.2: Civil service reforms aligned with decentralization policy and all signed international conventions that ensure equal access to civil service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 3.3: Criteria established for districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans to rationalize and restructure them to ensure economic viability and sustainability.</td>
</tr>
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<th>4</th>
<th>MIA is capacitated to lead and implement decentralization reforms.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 4.1: Institutional and human capacity of MIA built to coordinate and lead the implementation of decentralization nationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 4.2: GC Capacitated to undertake governance assessment and monitoring strengthen.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 4.3: ICT and working environment of county administrations improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 4.4: Capacity for concurrent monitoring and evaluation of decentralization implementation established at MIA and the county government level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Programme Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output 5.1: Efficient and effective support and coordination of the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design and implementation of the program was in response to the need for harnessing the gains of the predecessor programs and also address the bottlenecks that prevailed at the time. Despite the upstream political commitment, strong policy framework and successful governance reforms that had been implemented, the decentralization policy in Liberia—prior to the LDSP—was bedeviled by a number of challenges including inter alia: i) limited viability of local governments at the time of program design; ii) inadequate human and financial resources and administrative capacity at local level; iii) inadequate citizens’ participation in local community development decisions; and lack of appropriate fiscal framework for the emerging local government among others.³

In the light of the above challenges, the need for creating equitable, peaceful, transparent and inclusive democratic institutions to enhance political governance at national and local level under a vibrant decentralized system became apparent. It was against this backdrop that the LDSP was designed to support the creation of transparent, accountable and responsive public institutions that contribute to economic and social development in a framework of inclusive and participatory systems.

1.2 LDSP Theory of Change

The Decentralization policy in Liberia is geared towards bringing quality services closer to the people. Thus, the policy envisages having a decentralized basic service structure where citizens no longer have to travel for miles to the Capital for such services. It is plausible that this goal can be achieved through creation of equitable, peaceful, transparent and inclusive democratic institutions to enhance political governance at national and local level. The achievement of the aspirations of the decentralization policy calls for; i) strong management capacity to support effective and efficient resource management at different levels of

³ Program document
decentralization thereby enabling delivery of better and inclusive services; ii) Highly accountable service delivery and governance structures, iii) a streamlined legal and regulatory framework for decentralization;

The LDSP envisaged that the creation of the above conditions would favor the establishment of a Transparent, accountable and responsive public institutions that contribute to economic and social development as well as inclusive and participatory systems in partnership with citizens under a vibrant decentralized system.

It was against this backdrop that the LDSP was designed to support the creation of transparent, accountable and responsive public institutions that contribute to economic and social development in a framework of inclusive and participatory systems as summarized in the LDSP intervention logic/theory of change (see annex 3). The success of the program's intervention logic/theory of change was premised on a number of assumptions hereunder:

- MIA and GC embrace capacity building initiatives for effective delivery on their mandates. This was envisaged to support effective stakeholder participation in the program hence leading to sustainable interventions.
- Relevant infrastructure in place to enable MIA and GC play their roles once their capacities are strengthened.
- Existence of functional MIA and GC structures and systems and that what is required is capacity strengthening to propel their functionality.
- Political will from government to embrace and support the necessary policy and legal reforms.
- A supportive public embracing decentralized services and reforms but lacking capacity to effectively participate in the decentralized system.
- Existence of an M&E system but requiring strengthening for enhanced functionality.
- Willing Development Partners to support the decentralization policy in Liberia.
- Existence of structures and mechanisms for Accountability and transparency and inclusive planning.

The program is slated to end in December 2019 having been extended for two years from 2017. The UNDP Office in Liberia commissioned this evaluation to capture evaluative evidence on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the program (gender and human-rights approach). This was further intended to identify and document lessons and best practices based on the level of program achievement. 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. The parameters of the evaluation are detailed in the evaluation Objectives and scope presented hereunder;

1.3 Objectives of the Evaluation
This was an outcome evaluation whose findings are intended to provide strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the next Decentralization programme to start in 2020. More specifically, evaluation assessed:

4) The relevance of the LDSP programme and UNDP’s support to the government’s decentralization process.
5) The frameworks and strategies that LDSP has devised for its support to decentralization and whether they are well conceived for achieving planned objectives.

6) The progress to date under the outputs and what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future Decentralization programming support.

1.3.1 Evaluation Scope
Building on the November 2016 Mid-Term Review (MTR), the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP) Terminal Evaluation (TE) covered the initial five-year (2013–2017) framework as well as the 2-year extension period due to the Ebola crisis up to December 2019. The LDSP being a Government of Liberia program also evaluated how it has facilitated the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government as well as other relevant national policies countrywide covering all the 15 Counties.

The Terminal Evaluation also captured and demonstrates evaluative evidence of the LDSP contributions to development results at the country level as articulated in UNDAF and UNDP’s Country Programme Document (CPD) in line with the overall provisions of Evaluation Policy and Plan of UNDP Liberia.

Particularly the evaluation considered the **pertinent 5 outcomes and related outputs** as clearly stipulated in the project document. The specific outcomes under the LDSP Programme were assessed if they are in tandem with the **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”

Fundamentally, the evaluation was guided by the three universal evaluation questions explained hereunder:
The first question was answered through analysis of the programme concept and design as explicitly laid out in the programme document. The analysis here helped to ascertain whether the need being addressed was well analyzed and the interventions as well as delivery strategies developed are appropriate. Through this analysis, the evaluative evidence of the programme relevance was captured and articulated with a purpose of generating evidence-based recommendations for addressing any gaps that would be identified. Furthermore, the program aspirations at output and outcome levels were articulated in order to provide a basis of analyzing the extent to which they have been achieved.

Question two was intended to capture evaluative evidence on the programme achievements so far. This was aided by a comparative analysis of the baseline and target values in order to ascertain the changes in the performance indicators. Facilitators and inhibitors of performance were also analyzed to: i) explain the current level of performance; ii) draw lessons from best practices worth scaling up and replication as well as poor practices worth dropping or redesigning. On the whole, through the analysis, evaluative evidence on the programme effectiveness was captured and articulated. Further, the volume of results at this stage was compared with the volume of resource commitments to ascertain the degree of efficiency. Using a results chain analysis, both output and outcome level indicators were assessed. Basing on the trends in the achievements registered, impact and sustainability projections are also made. The results from the analysis at this stage are used to articulate the contribution of UNDP and contributing Development Partners to development results in the decentralization process in Liberia hence providing a solid foundation for accountability.

The results from the entire analysis support evidence-based action plans for enhanced programming in future. As also indicated in the ToR, the results of this evaluation provide strategic direction and input for the formulation of a successor program expected to commence in 2020.

Explicitly, the evaluation was guided by the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with particular focus on assessing the programme relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as cross cutting issues of gender mainstreaming and human rights (see detailed evaluation matrix in Annex 2).

1.4 Methodology
The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to enhance the validity of the results. Qualitative methods were largely be premised on primary data sources (stakeholder consultations) while quantitative methods hinged on secondary data sources (M&E data base and program reports). The evaluation further integrated a number of techniques and tools such as Theory of Change (ToC); Results Based Management (RBM), Rights Based Approach to Development (RBAD), and Gender Analysis and OECD-DAC criteria and principles.

Using an outcome harvesting approach, the evaluation took stock of the programme achievements in the light of the set targets and baseline values, assess the appropriateness of programme strategies and drew vital lessons to inform future programming. The overall methodological approach revolved around ascertaining whether the program did the right
things (adherence to the program document), did them right (soundness of the implementation arrangements) and the lessons that can be drawn.

The evaluation was highly participatory and a total of 107 purposively selected stakeholders participated in key informant interviews as well as group discussions (see annex 3). Field visits were made to 94 purposively selected counties. In addition to the qualitative data sources, a beneficiary survey involving 91 (53 males and 38 females) respondents was conducted at 5 County Service Centres. The overall execution was guided by the ‘Assessment to action’ approach with specific but somehow overlapping phases as shown in figure 1.2 below.

**Fig 1.2: Assessment to Action Approach**

A systems analytical model focusing on the input, process, output, outcome, impact and sustainability variables was used. This was integrated with other analytical models such as: Gender analysis; Human Rights Based approach to Development; Policy and Regulatory Analysis; PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological and Legal) Analysis; The SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis; Results Based and Management analysis; and Governance analysis with particular emphasis on aspects of accountability, transparency and participation.

**1.5 Limitations of the Evaluation**

The lack of baseline values for some outcome and output level indicators to some extent constrained analysis of the program contribution. However, based on the activity-output and outcome linkages as explicitly articulated in the program theory of change, the evaluation was able to qualitative demonstrate program contribution.

Furthermore, actual measurement of program performance on some outcome indicators required data from national perception survey. The Governance Commission has conducted a perception survey, entitled Benchmarking the Demand Side of Decentralization in Liberia, which results suggests rising interest and service utilization by local citizens and people all walks of life. However, the evaluators based judgment in this report on the program output-outcome linkages.

Inconsistences in gender-based reporting constrained presentation of gender desegregated data. Nevertheless, the evaluation identified general commitments towards gender mainstreaming although more efforts and support are still necessary.

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4 The counties selected include: Montserrado, Gbarpolu, Cape Mount, Bomi, Margibi, Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Bassa.
2. Findings: Analysis of Results

The presentation of findings follows the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with focus on: program relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Impact analysis is based on the projections based on the hitherto program outcomes. The analysis of results also covers UNDP programing principles of Gender and Human Rights. Central in the analysis is the articulation of program strengths, weaknesses and gaps worth harnessing and redressing in future programing respectively. The strategic analysis of the results in this section forms the basis of the conclusions, best practices, lessons learn and recommendations presented in section three.

2.1 Programme relevance

The internal and external programme consistence was the key parameter on which programme relevance was assessed. Externally, the evaluation analyzed the degree of programme alignment with the national development aspirations enshrined in various development documents as well the UNDAF strategic direction. Internally, analysis of the programme concept and design, implementation and management as well as monitoring and evaluation arrangements have formed a central part of the relevance analysis as presented hereunder;

2.1.1 Programme Concept and Design

Validity of program concept and relevance to national development needs and priorities of the country remain hardly impeachable in terms of the Liberian Constitution, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra (2003), Agenda for Transformation, Liberia Decentralization and Local Development and County Support Team programmes, the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance amongst other sectoral policies and strategies including Land Policy, Gender Policy, National Environmental Policy, Education Strategic Plan, National Capacity Development Plan, etc.

Specifically, National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance presented a sweeping change in the governance structure of Liberia. With a plan to establish local government structure in each of Liberia’s 15 counties and communities granted city charters, it proffers democratic elections of councils and an executive branch with administrative structures. The policy also proffers deep devolution of functions and resources to the newly constituted local governments with the Superintendent taking responsibility for proposing county budget and a development plan for the approval of County Council (CC). The policy scopes superintendents' functions as inclusive of some appointments in the administrative structures of the county, as provided for under Civil Service Agency regulations, and levying of all local taxes, rates, fees and fines.

As a result of recommendations emanating from the policy, a five year Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan (LDIP) was developed to guide the decentralization agenda based upon the prevailing post-war situation of Liberia, and was capable of entrenching a decentralized governance system and democratization in the country.

Around the time of LDSP development, UNDP’s Country Program Document (2008 - 2012) focused two programmatic priorities: governance, and pro-poor economic growth. While UNDP has addressed several major causes of state fragility and conflict, contributions to
outcome oriented results were in three main areas. First, the rule of law, justice and security, enabling the justice and security sector to restore basic functionality, working closely with UNMIL, the United Nations and United Nations Member States: a) development of strategic plans for institutions of justice and security; b) investment in essential training for judicial staff (public defenders and prosecutors, with special focus on SGBV); and c) expansion of access through construction of the first five regional Justice Security Hubs, providing communities with improved access to police and judicial services, together with establishment of 55 Women and Children Protection Units at the national and local levels. Second, political governance, targeting institutions and processes critical to consolidation of peace and oversight of reconstruction and development: a) technical and financial assistance to the Elections Commission for the conduct of Constitutional Referendum (2011) and Presidential and Legislative elections; b) establishment for an architecture for anti-corruption, based on approved national policy and strategy, including creation of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and General Auditing Commission; c) preparation of a National Decentralization Policy, seen as essential for State legitimacy and social inclusion; d) drafting of a public sector reform policy; and e) formation of Independent Commission on Human Rights. The third tier, pro-poor growth and productivity, tackled immediate needs for jobs and critical services while making a start on tackling structural impediments to employment generation.

In response to Liberia’s transformative agenda and development priorities, the Government and the UN have agreed on four strategic results areas, encapsulated in the recently developed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020 - 2024) that will guide the work and collaboration between the Government of Liberia and the UN. UNSDCF outcome #4 supports the concept of LDSP: By 2024, people in Liberia especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive, and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels.5

Liberia’s decentralization system is still evolving with the support of the national government and development partners. The country adopted a decentralized system of governance 20066 and since then, a number of programs have been designed and implemented to entrench and strengthen the system. Significant of these include; the Liberia Decentralization and Local Development program; the Country Support Team Program and the Liberia Decentralization Support Program (LDSP) which is now being evaluated.

The design and implementation of the program was in response to the need for harnessing the gains of the predecessor programs and also address the bottlenecks that prevailed at the time. Despite upstream political commitment, strong policy frameworks (for example Land Policy, Gender Policy, Health and Social Welfare Policy, National Environmental Policy, Education Strategic Plan, National Capacity Development Strategy, etc.) and successful governance reforms that had been implemented, the decentralization policy in Liberia—prior to the LDSP—was bedeviled by a number of challenges including inter alia; i) limited viability of local governments at the time of program design; ii) inadequate human and financial resources and administrative capacity at local level; iii) inadequate citizens’

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5 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2024
6 Mid-Term Evaluation-UNDP LDSP-Liberia
participation in local community development decisions; and lack of appropriate fiscal framework for the emerging local government among others.\textsuperscript{7}

In tandem with the national development agenda as enshrined in the Liberia’ National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance, the Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan (LDIP) and Agenda for Transformation (AfT), the LDSP Goal was designed to create transparent, accountable and responsive public institutions that contribute to economic and social development as well as inclusive and participatory systems created in partnership with citizens.

2.1.2 Integration of Decentralization in National Policies and Discourse

a) National Level

Since Liberia’s return to democracy in 2003, decentralization has been part of a broad agenda for the recovery and development of the country. Efforts have been made in that direction from the first transitional Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which commenced in 2003. In 2006, the government created the Governance Commission whose mandate is to finalize and implement a blueprint, providing options for political, social and economic decentralization. The main achievements as of 2011 included the implementations of the County development fund (CDF) and County Development Agenda (CDA). The CDA was overseen by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (now defunct) in consultation with the legislature including joint implementation carried-out by MIA and GC. The CDF is operated by a County project Committee and the Superintendent with oversight responsibility of legislators. Although progress in de-concentration has been made with the second PRS “Lift Liberia” which lasted from 2008 to 2011, a lack of political will and financial mismanagement led to poor implementation of the governance pillar.

In 2013, a nationwide consultation was held to design the eighteen year-long development programme, Vision 2030-Liberia Rising, a platform that provided the pathway to Liberia becoming a middle income economy within the specified time frame. In this program, decentralization is a top priority as specified in the good governance section of the agenda.

According to the NPDLG, the two main objectives of decentralization are to enhance democracy and improve access to public services. This requires the establishment of a constitutional support for local governance which was absent from the 1986 Constitution. Also, the first five years objectives of this roadmap are described in the strategy, Agenda for transformation whose fourth pillar is dedicated to governance and public institutions. This document further enumerates the goals of decentralization to include: popular participation, local initiative, transparency, accountability, provision of public services and provides a list of priority interventions such as de-concentration of Ministries, Agencies and Commissions, development of infrastructures and human capacities and encourages citizen participation to the constitutional reform process. Within that framework, several documents have been published detailing the agenda on decentralization raised by politicians. Political involvement is also playing a key role demonstrated by a strong interest of the President to promote de-concentration efforts through the launching of the De-concentration platform in 2015 and by President Sirleaf’s presence during the official opening of the County Service Centers.

\textsuperscript{7} Program document
The LDSP is aligned to the objectives of decentralization as expressed in the AfT and the NPDLG and is relevant in providing support to the Government of Liberia pursuit of its stated priority within these policy framework documents.

b) Sectorial Level

Despite the recommendations from the Agenda for Transformation, (AFT) mandating all ministries to publish their strategy and organizational charts by 2017, decentralization remains absent from many sectorial strategies (Eg. Public Works, Transport, Commerce, Labor, etc.). The Land Rights Policy (2013) did not make clear reference to decentralization reforms, but the LDSP have registered serious concerns about revising the administrative boundaries and defining criteria for each territorial level.

The Terminal Evaluation established that prior to the promotion of the decentralization agenda, very few sectorial documents had already expressed some opinions regarding lack of emphasis made on similar issues. Accordingly, there are some MACs that have integrated decentralization into their policies including: The Ministry of Health and Social welfare and the Ministry of Education, among others as such, they are advanced as compared to others because their de-concentration processes started many years ago.

In the Educational Sector Plan (2010-2020), the strengthening of the decentralized education system is a specific policy objective. The strategies adopted are the development of a decentralization policy and strategy ensuring empowerment of local education authorities, the improvement of monitoring and supervision of schools and type of teaching materials provided by County Education Officers, (CEOs) and District Education Officers, (DEOs), the allowance of the necessary financial resources and finally, the strengthening of coordination with the other government bodies responsible for decentralized governance and local capacity building.

Also, decentralization is well integrated into Liberia’s 2011-21 National Health and Social Welfare Policy. This document defines the role of the county administration with responsibility for service delivery and partner oversight, while the central administration focuses on establishing policies, standards, resource allocation, planning, monitoring and evaluation. Responsibilities for direct social welfare service delivery will be transferred progressively to local authorities as their capacities improve. In order to adapt to decentralization, several strategies have been established to include the development and implementation of a coherent de-concentration that transfers functions, authority and resources to the local level and the restructuring of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in order to strengthen local government structures.

The National Gender Policy of 2009 identifies the low presence of women in decision-making at the national and local levels as the main challenge regarding governance. The main actions required to address this issue established the need to implement a gender capacity-building plan and provide technical support to counties for gender mainstreaming thus ensuring that County development plans, programs, budgets and services benefit women.
The 2002 National Environmental Policy mentioned the need to decentralize decision-making to the appropriate level of government and civil society.

In addition, the Liberia National Capacity Development Strategy (2011) includes the decentralization perspective in planning for future human resources needs at the local level, and a two-year capacity-building strategy developed by the MIA.

Decentralization has a potential to become the vehicle for coordination of and harmonization of sectorial decentralization strategies and sequencing. Many of the MACs participate in the Technical working Group and the Board. Progress has been made in de-concentrating documentation services. However the LDSP has initiated the drive and definition of sectorial decentralization efforts, bringing together the county authorities and key sector ministries to define strategy, objectives and key competencies and resources required.

c) Civil society

Liberia has a promising civil society; and governance is one of the top issues addressed by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), along with youth and women empowerment. Among the main CSOs defending decentralization and local governance is Partners for Democratic Development “Naymote”, a key actor promoting citizens’ understanding of democratic processes and the long-term benefits of their participation in these processes. They also provide guidance such as the Youth and local government toolkit. Other structures include Youth Partnership for Peace and Development (YPPD), Youth Participation in Democracy (YPD), Liberia Democracy Watch, (LDW), Promotion of Public Participation and Respect for the Rule of Law, (PPRROL) and Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment (RICCE) who are engaged in empowering rural communities to participate in decision making, advancing actions on genuine democratic alternatives thus Promoting transparency and accountability. Civil society has been widely consulted to design the Vision 2030 program. Furthermore, Civil Society Organizations Platform on Decentralization and Governance in Liberia was set up in 2013 in order to participate in the dialogue on the Local Government Act and get involved in some of the project activities. Civil society has also been part of the national consultative process for the national land reform and is represented at the Constitution Review Committee. Nevertheless, civil society is excluded from the County Council which allocates money from the County Development Fund and Social Development Fund to development projects.

Though CSOs are critical advocates for decentralization their engagement has been minimal. However, achievement of decentralization should provide expanded space for civil society engagement at the local level, through the mandating of consultative mechanism and the expanded opportunities to play a role in service delivery and ensure robust watch dog function. Decentralization is a relevant approach for civil society.

d) Politics

LDSP supported the inclusion of decentralization in the political discourse when 21 national political parties signed a Joint Resolution on Decentralization and Local Governance Reforms, calling for enactment of the Local Government Act (2015) into a law in June 2016. Political parties pressured the government to achieve the constitutional amendment
needed in order to set up a legal framework for the implementation of decentralization and to conduct local elections. In July, 2016, this act was approved by the legislature pending approval by the Liberian Senate. These activities prove that LDSP has integrated decentralization into national policy discourse.

Smooth implementation of LDSP can be attributed mainly to the relevance of the LDSP to Local Government developments. Considering various outputs under outcomes 1, 2 & 3 of the LDSP which gives high positive rating to integrated service delivery to the citizens based on application of the concept of One Stop-Shop (OSS). The CSCs have significantly improved public access to documentation services, resulting into some level of security and savings in both time and money for the communities in those counties. Additional relevance also points to the passage of the LGA, a huge boost in driving the decentralization process.

2.1.3 Programme implementation and Management

Programme implementation and management strategies proffered in the PRODOC put at the top of LDSP management structure the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization (IMCD) chaired by former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, with the Minister of Internal Affairs serving as secretary to the Committee. It was intended to hold meetings twice each year with membership of relevant ministries, agencies and commissions (MACs), which were incrementally amendable as decentralization of government functions went nationwide. The Committee was constituted to report on progress of planned activities and allow the President to have on-hands monitoring of the decentralization processes. Key informants across programme stakeholders hardly found minutes of the committee’s meeting.

The next line of management authority was the programme board, chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The Board met quarterly and reported to the IMCD. Co-chaired by the Governance Commission, the board took responsibility for providing strategic advice and direction on the programme and made related decisions; approved program annual work plans and budgets based on resource framework; provided oversight and monitored progress against annual work plans and programme cycles; ensured coordination of program activities and accomplishments among other implementation and management responsibilities. Number of annual work plans and budgets approved are indicative of its performance as the strategic policy oversight of the LDSP.

As a means of ensuring effective compliance and quality assurance of the LDSP, the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat (NDIS) was established at the MIA to provide technical support to coordinate, facilitate and support the capacity building, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the program. The program planning envisaged 15 staff for the NDIS, in view of its organogram, but at the time of this evaluation at least 44% was on seat both at the MIA and GC.

The program was planned to move from Direct Implementation (DIM) to National Implementation modality. Its 2015 approved work plan emphasized the National Implementation (NIM) modality, noting that MIA would manage and coordinate activities of the programme. MIA had reporting responsibility to UNDP and MFDP on outputs and use of financial resources. However, the programme witnessed UNDP Country office support to NIM or “hybrid direct implementation” on grounds of donor concerns around procurement

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8 LDSP 2015 Annual Work Plan, March 2015
and government budget bureaucracy pinching on reporting, approvals and other implementation processes.

The implementation strategies produced legal and institutional frameworks such as the enactment of the Local Government Act (LGA), transforming the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Ministry of Local Government (MIA-MoLG) and the County Service Centers (CSCs). LDSP’s basket funding and pool strategy harnessed donor resources, which gave management oversight responsibility to one agency (say UNDP), enhancing transparency and accountability. On incremental basis, MACs rolled out their presence in CSCs, opening windows of services under their respective corporate jurisdictions. It also enhanced publicity and created awareness in addition to building and strengthening existing key national formal and informal institutions, using inclusive approach. UN Volunteers assigned within the counties were proactive in ensuring capacity building and institution strengthening, which contributed significantly to knowledge, attitude and practice at national and local levels.

2.1.4 Derivation of Programme relevance
The LDSP was highly relevant to the country’s context with its interventions closely aligned to Liberia’s prevailing national priorities in terms of its development goals and objectives as well as its challenges, with Vision 2030 Plan, Agenda for Transformation, National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government, and Liberia Decentralization and Local Development underpinning its programmatic development. While Vision 2030 encapsulated a vision statement designed to provide a long-term framework for decision-makers, leaders at all levels of society and development practitioners in the public, private and civil society sectors; and set a compass to guide the identification of concrete national policies, analyzing key constraints that need to be overcome especially in strengthening national institutions against causal conflict factors, the AfT synchronized the overarching conflict factor of poverty into government’s five-year strategic plan (2013 – 2017). Moreover, the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government traced the root cause of poverty to a centralized system of governance, which has impeded popular participation and local initiatives, especially in the provision of goods and services, contributing to the need for transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs thereby leading to the gap in economic growth and development, equal access to social and economic opportunities and human wellbeing between Monrovia and the rest of Liberia. In its overall goal, the LDLD program supported national efforts to speed the transition from reconstruction to long-term development by establishing innovative solutions to local governance and to reverse historic pattern of centralized development. The programme strengthened local governance with immediate objective of establishing the decentralization policy. LDSP was birthed to succeed LDLD, putting in place legal and policy regulatory frameworks and structures proffered by the decentralization policy.

2.1.5 Programme consistence with national/beneficiary needs and priorities
LDSP was consistent with Liberia’s post conflict needs in that it addressed the key conflict factors of centralization, poverty and participatory governance at the national and county levels. Inclusivity is at the core of the programme goal for the stabilization and development of the country. Decentralization aims to ensure a fairer access to administrative services,

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9 Vision 2030 Report, Governance Commission, 2010
10 National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government, Governance Commission, 2011
11 LDLD Final Evaluation Report, UNCDF, 2013
political decision making, and mainstream funding at the local level, thus bringing government to the population.

The County Services are however located in the main cities of the counties, which is logical and relevant for practical reasons, but mainly benefits rural elites. They have easier access to the provisions of services and local government structures while the most vulnerable groups consisting of the population in the most remote communities may find the CSCs inaccessible. Community awareness through community radio was put in place to increase the outreach of information on decentralization, using the concept of the LDSP Communication Strategy developed over the program span.

LDSP has extended provision of services to rural populations. Women have been a key category that have benefited from this expanded service delivery. The Ministry of Gender is one of the MACs represented at the CSCs in addition to the presence of its offices in all the county capitals. Specific attention to marginalized groups such as disabled, ethnic minorities, or youths do not appear in components of the LDSP Programme document, even though youths and women groups have been consulted generally on the provisions of the LGA and their perspective on decentralized governance. The question of youths, students’ participation and/or inclusion into the process to endorse local government legitimacy and accountability still remains a key factor, as well as the integration of rural women, who are the population’s least educated. Regarding the provision of increased administrative and legal recognition to rural populations, the LDSP has made strides that have impacted some groups and have reduced their vulnerabilities.

2.1.6 Appropriateness of the implementation strategies

Hybrid of NIM and Country Office (CO) Support to NIM was the key implementation and management strategy that was adopted for the program. Referred to as ‘UNDP Country Office support to national implementation’, this modality was a well thought through decision given the program implementation landscape in terms of time and capacity challenges of the partners especially in procurement. The application of CO Support to NIM helped to overcome significant government bureaucracies and that would have slowed down activity implementation. The program instituted clear management structures such as the board whose composition was so strategic to bring on board all key stakeholders hence promoting program ownership. National Technical Working Group (TWG) and County Development Steering Committees (CDSC) enhanced coordination and partnerships at both upstream and downstream. Joint Monitoring Teams by Development Partners and Government

2.1.7 Consistence with overall UNDAF Framework

The LDSP is consistent with United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now known as United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework). The Government and the UN have agreed on four strategic results areas, encapsulate in the recently developed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020 - 2024) that will guide the work and collaboration between the Government of Liberia and the UN. UNSDCF outcome #4 supports the concept of LDSP: By 2024, people in Liberia especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive, and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels. Moreover,
LDSP aspirations are in tandem with UNDP 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”. Both UN documents feed into the LDSP goal and objectives. On the basis of its internal and external consistence, the evaluation found this program relevant to the development aspirations of the nation, beneficiary institutions as well as the financing agencies.

2.1.8 Strengths and weaknesses of Programme relevance enhancement strategies

Robust capacity-building strategy: The Program document although it stipulates in its outputs that there will be capacity building and strengthening of institutions and other MACs and CSCs this was not clearly articulated from the design stage. Although LDSP tried to build capacities and held trainings, the evaluation team could not find any links as whether they followed a clearly laid out strategy.

Lack of M&E framework for Real-Time monitoring using the Results-Based Management tool. The LDSP, as already indicated, lacked a robust M&E framework and system as it was never articulated right from the design stage to the implementation. This has had serious repercussions on the quality of reporting as well as knowledge management of a program of such magnitude. Most of reporting were geared at realizing activities and outputs as well as budget absorption but never had clear indicators and targets following through to outcome and impact reporting.

Lack of clear exit strategy: the LDSP could have effectively achieved most of the set activities and outputs but the sustainability aspects of those achievements are still hanging in balance due to the various challenges highlighted in the section about inhibitors. With no clear sustainability plan and with no commitment from government funding as well as revenue sharing and continuous capacity building and sensitization, the LDSP achievements are likely to face sustainability challenges.

Theory of Change\textsuperscript{12}: By the time the program was formulated the concept of Theory of Change was not emphasized as opposed to Intervention logic. The evaluation team

\textsuperscript{a}) Making Connections: Using a theory of change to develop planning and evaluation: By Jean Ellis, Diana Parkinson and Avan Wadia for Charities Evaluation Services; February 2011: A theory of change is a description of a social change initiative that shows how early changes relate to more intermediate changes and then to longer-term change. It can form the basis of strategic planning and, as a blueprint for the work ahead and its likely effects, it can be used for management and decision making as a project or programme develops and progresses. Once the longer-term aim and the desired outcomes are clear, you can agree on the activities and outputs that will achieve change. As you start thinking through the activities and outputs necessary to deliver the results, you may identify other groups that you will need to work with to achieve the desired outcomes, and your model will become more detailed as these preconditions for change are added. In order to be really useful as a planning tool and evaluation model, the theory of change will also identify:

- the assumptions that are being made. These could be about the effectiveness of specific models of service delivery, or about the context in which you are working.
- the resources you will need to carry out your activities
- the collaboration or points of contact you will need with other agencies
- the timelines attached to your activities, delivery of outputs and different levels of change.
however tried to apply ToC in this evaluation and highlighted some of the assumptions underpinning the LDSP Theory of Change. These include stable political climate, adequate funding from government, requisite capacities within MIA and at the MACs and CSC etc.

2.2 Effectiveness
The LDSP effectiveness analysis covers: i) the extent to which the envisaged program results at outcome and output levels have been realized; ii) contribution of the program’s partnership arrangements; (iii) specific changes (intended/unintended, positive/negative) caused by the project; and iv) factors (facilitators and/or inhibitors) that have influenced program performance.

2.2.1 Analysis of program results at outcome and output levels
The LDSP was designed to deliver four core outcomes with effective and efficient program management as the fifth. Specific outputs and their corresponding actions were developed and they form a pathway to the desired outcome level results (see theory of change in annex 2). The presentation of findings are organized by the program outcomes and their corresponding outputs as here below.

Outcome 1: De-concentrated functions and corresponding resources managed at the assigned level of government.
Liberia’s decentralization policy dates way back to 2006. However, the de-concentration of decision-making powers, logistics and basic infrastructure had remained a glaring challenge prior to the LDSP as they were concentrated in Monrovia. The state of quagmire in social service delivery at county level was mostly revealed during the 2014 Ebola response. Although all the 14 MACs that were responsible for service delivery had physical presence at county level, the lack of basic facilities and supplies made them less functional at that level.

It was against the prior LSDP situation that the program set out to deliver four outputs that would support the realization of the desired program outcome above. They are: i) The MACs of the government of Liberia tangibly and visibly transfer services, decision making and corresponding resources to the counties according to the de-concentration strategy; ii) enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of MACs at the county level achieved; iii) improved infrastructure of County Service Centers to support de-concentration process; and iv) Citizens are organized and informed to participate in the de-concentration process.

This evaluation established that great strides at output level have been realized and are indeed supporting the realization of the outcomes. The establishment of County Service Centers in all the 15 counties has been a key achievement towards de-concentration of functions and services. The program support to infrastructural development at the CSCs has strengthened their functionality. Document review has indicated that on average, 70%\(^{13}\) of the MACs services are being delivered at County level. Although the results slightly fall short of the 75% target, the program achievement has been so vivid and highly appreciated by a cross-section of stakeholders consulted during this evaluation as one of them had this to say during interview:

\(^{13}\) Progress report 2018 Pg 19.
“…..County Service Centres are doing a great job. Many services are indeed being delivered and this saves the citizens a lot of time and money they would have incurred if they were to get the same services from Monrovia…..”

Deconcentrated services being delivered at the County level include licensing, business registration and issuance of certificates (Birth and Marriage). Evaluation findings further indicate that a total of 31,121 documents have been issued at CSCs since their inception in 2015. However this figure does not include the statistics of 2017 and 19 as they are not provided in the respective reports. These results provide solid evidence of the de-concentration of MACs services to the county service centres.

According to a cross section of stakeholders consulted during this evaluation, the de-concentration of services has been advantageous to both the service recipients and providers at the same time. The reduction in time and costs that were previously involved in seeking the deconcentrated services constitute great efficiency gains that have ripple effects on the recipient’s welfare indicators. For example, the saved costs can be used to advance the beneficiaries’ welfare.

Furthermore, the evaluation took note of spirited political commitment towards de-concentration of functions and services. The presidential directives coupled with budgetary allocations to counties are strong evidence for political good will for the de-concentration of functions and services. Program progress report 2017 indicates that the government had allocated USD 500,000 to all service centres. Of the 91 beneficiaries that participated in the survey, 95% confirmed availability of the services at the centre with 98% giving a positive rating of the deconcentrated services as seen in figures 2.1 and 2.2 below
Despite the impressive rating of the services at the CSCs, there was however a concern among sections of the respondents over the issuance of western marriage certificates. It was revealed that final signatures for these certificates is still done in Monrovia and the time required and resources spent on the entire process of acquiring it defeats the motive of the de-concentration process as one respondent explained during interview;

“We cannot call it decentralization if I must start a process and end it in Monrovia because the same cost and risk I try to avoid, I still have to go through it anyway, ”

The above sentiments notwithstanding, 89% of respondents revealed that the services were easy to obtain as opposed to the time before the creation of the centers. In fact, 54% of the respondents said it took three days to get served; 15% said they were served within one week; and roughly 7% who are within the Western Marriage category intimated that it took more than a month to complete their service. It is therefore apparent that the improvements in accessing the services that has been created, improvements in service efficiency is still necessary.

Awareness creation has well been paid attention to using a multi-pronged communication strategy that involved both media and community outreaches. Although 59% of the respondents indicated that the level of awareness about the deconcentrated services was minimum, it is apparent that the awareness creation efforts are continuing to take root. The programme successfully established partnership with the media and the arrangement is significantly yielding fruits as the communication expert explained;

“…..it would be futile for a success public policy implementation without the support of the media. The media has worked well with us on this programme in creating public awareness. Targeting the media as the very first change agents is a strategy that has paid off…..”

With the multiplicity of service centres, effective coordination becomes necessary in order to achieve harmonized procedures and standardized services. The LDSP has made considerable investment in streamlining coordination of country service centres. More specifically, the program has supported: i) coordination meetings of CSCs; ii) training of county superintendents and other local government officials; iii) procurement of vehicles to
support the coordination work; iv) recruitment of UNVs to mentor local government staff; v) establishment of a de-concentration working group to continuously design and implement effective coordination mechanisms both at central and local levels among others.

In the light of the program supported activities and outputs thereof, the evaluation noted that there is a sound coordination framework hinged on strengthened capacity, established coordination mechanisms as well as the revenue sharing formula that has been put in place. It is therefore apparent with this framework, enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of MACs at the county level is on track. However, the pooling and sharing of resources still requires streamlining if it is to yield desired results. For example, discussions with county officials revealed that it was only consumables mostly stationary that were being shared but other logistics such as vehicles were not yet being shared by the time of the evaluation.

On the basis of the program supported activities and emanating outputs discussed above, the sustainability of these gains requires strong citizens participation. The program envisaged that 80% of the citizens would have an increased sense of participation in public serve delivery by 2017. Subsequently, program support was channeled through trainings and general popularization of the de-concentration process. Although the percentage of citizens participating in public service delivery could not be ascertained due to data deficiencies, the evaluation noted that the program supported activities have raised public awareness about the deconcentrated services and this may partly explain the increasing numbers of the citizens turning up for services at county service centres.

Despite the above achievements, the following challenges are still hindering decentralized service delivery at the County Service Centres;

1. Unstable electricity continues to delay service provision and motivation of MACs representatives within the centers. In some centers, Bomi, Nimba, Maryland and Sinoe for example, power has to be rationed between morning and afternoon hours. Sometimes power in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon. This inconveniences clients as many times they have to go back without being served or wait until power comes back.

2. Road connectivity within local communities tends to discourage many people from accessing services. Since service centers are located in the capitals of the counties, people who live in communities far from the capitals said they face difficulty getting to the centers. Severity of this difficulty is mostly found in Maryland and Sinoe. Nimba, Bomi and Bassa have their road challenges also especially during the rainy season.

3. According to the respondents, radio talk shows and announcement, which were done in local vernacular, used to reach some communities but stopped nearly a year ago. This has reduced awareness about the services. In some counties like Bomi and Bassa, MACs went in communities creating awareness especially about children birth registration. Beneficiaries said, about a year now, the MACs are not often seen doing awareness campaign anymore.
4. The absence of full decentralization of the most frequently desired services such as adult birth certificate, Western Marriage certificate, vehicle license plate and passport reduces the relevance of the CSC. Local citizen still go to Monrovia for these services anyway, noted one Medical Doctor and a lawyer.

The above challenges notwithstanding, it suffices that through the LDSP technical guidance in addition to tangible resources in form of equipment, finances and human resources have dearly contributed to capacity strengthening for operationalization of the de-concentration process. Although more support is still needed to fully entrench the process, the LDSP has established a foundation upon other future interventions would thrive.

**Outcome 2: Service delivery and accountability of local governments is improved**

The de-concentration of services and functions comes along with an inevitable requirement of enhanced transparency and accountability in order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. It is on this ground that the evaluation found the LDSP interventions in strengthening accountability of local governments very strategic in achieving the overall aspirations of the decentralization policy in Liberia. Under this outcome, the program envisaged to deliver three outputs namely: i) Capacity for participatory planning, budgeting and managing of development funds as well as revenue collection strengthened; ii) Capacity of the public, citizens’ groups and civil society organizations strengthened to undertake participatory and performance monitoring and to carry out watch-dog functions; iii) Anti-corruption measures (systems and enforcement mechanisms) established and functional at county, city, district and community levels; and iv) Capacity of women and girls to participate in local government as leaders enhanced.

The evaluation noted that the program outputs were derived from the outcome indicators implying that the program interventions under this outcome were well aligned with the envisaged results. The set progress markers were: i) the number of women and girls holding leadership positions in local government; ii) percentage of county projects implemented from the county develop agenda through CDF, SDF and LDF that are selected by the communities and managed at county level; and iii) percentage of citizens who perceive that corruption is decreasing in local government were the set progress markers under this outcome.

Reading from the program work plans and progress reports, it is indicated that capacity strengthening, facilitation of dialogues, development of county development agendas and participatory planning manual, development of revenue sharing formula, as well as advancement of gender in development through women engagements and development of the Local Government gender policy are the key investments and achievements.

Though still considered inadequate, the program supported trainings of the various stakeholders including staff from deconcentrating MACs, Governance Commission, female political leaders has seemingly built capacity for participatory performance monitoring. Furthermore, the bringing on board of anti-corruption and integrity institutions such as LACC is according to several stakeholders a key milestone in the promotion of transparency and accountability in the decentralized service delivery system.
Much as more support especially towards development and implementation of anti-corruption plans and participatory planning is still necessary, the implemented initiatives and results under the LDSP hitherto provide a strong foundation for continuous engagements to achieve accountable and transparent service delivery under the decentralized system.

**Outcome 3: Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization is in place**

The significance of a sound legal and regulatory framework for the implementation of the Liberia’s decentralization policy can never be overstated. Such a framework helps to define the establishment, mandates and functions, powers, restrictions as well as reporting relationships of central and local governments. At the design stage of the LDSP, glaring gaps in the legal and regulatory framework included: i) lack of provisions for the sharing of revenue between the central and local government; ii) Local governments had no permission to collect taxes and fees; and iii) lack of constitutional provision for the election of Superintendents, district commissioners.

In respect to the gaps in the legal and regulatory framework underpinning the implementation of the decentralization policy, the LDSP set out to support: i) coordinated formulation of legal framework for decentralization; ii) alignment of public and civil service reforms with decentralization policy; and iii) establishment of the criteria for rationalization and subsequent restructuring of districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans to ensure their economic viability and sustainability.

The evaluation established that the passing of the Local Government Act in 2018 has been the most spectacular achievement of the program. The stakeholders that participated in this evaluation were greatly appreciative of the program support towards the formulation and subsequent enactment of the Act. Besides the passing of the Act, through the LDSP, the Act has been popularized through a number of program supported engagements with various categories of the citizens. Significant of these are the political parties, physically challenged persons, MIA staff among others.

With the program support, the stage for continuous awareness creation about the Local Government Act and the entire decentralization policy and process has been set. This has mainly been through the long term local capacity development as well as the communication strategies that have been formulated with the program support. Furthermore, through program supported engagements with various stakeholders especially political parties, commitments to include decentralization in their political agendas/manifestos of these parties has been made. For example, a joint resolution was signed by political parties affirming their commitment to support the decentralization processes.

Furthermore, alignment of public sector and civil service reforms with the decentralization policy is taking root. For example, rationalization of payroll as well as harmonized capacity development of civil servants across the counties were reportedly in high gear following the project supported profiling and re-documentation of the MIA personnel and their subsequent job descriptions in tandem with the decentralization policy.

The evaluation further noted that the rationalization and restructuring of districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans has been started on with the support of the program. Through the LDSP, several stakeholders have been engaged in meetings to secure their buy-ins for the implementation of the rationalization process. In effect, a technical
decentralization roadmap was developed for the Department of Urban Affairs in the MIA to guide the harmonization and rationalization of local government structures and boundaries. Although it is not yet fully achieved, the program support has laid a foundation upon which other future interventions can hinge.

In the evaluator’s opinion, it suffices that the interventions undertaken to achieve this outcome have been sound and logical with high potential of supporting the realization of the outcome. However, it should be recognized that the process of developing a sound legal and regulatory framework requires ample time and committed investments in form of both technical guidance and finances. This can inevitably spillover a project period but with the achievements of each project forming the building blocks for attaining holistic results.

**Outcome 4: Responsible GoL institutions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Governance Commission, are capacitated to lead and implement decentralization reforms.**

The implementation pace of the decentralization processes and the sustenance of the achievements thereof require strong institutional capacities. Accordingly, the LDSP targeted to strengthen the capacities of the responsible government institutions particularly the MIA and Governance Commission given their pivotal roles in the implementation of the decentralization processes. This was intended to enable these institutions to provide better coordination and leadership in the implementation of the decentralization policy.

The achievement of the above results was envisaged through three core outputs namely: i) Institutional and human capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Monrovia and Counties) built to co-ordinate and lead the implementation of the decentralization processes; ii) GC capacitated to undertake governance assessment and monitoring strengthened; and iii) County administration with necessary ICT facilities (software, services) in place.

The evaluation noted that institutional capacity strengthening of both the MIA and GC has significantly been supported under the LDSP. This has mainly been through: i) development of capacity development strategy for MIA subsequent trainings for staff of both MIA and the GC; ii) review and update of governance and management manuals; iii) development of the Liberia Local Government Assessment Framework spearheaded by the GC; iv) round-table policy dialogues; v) constitutional review; and vi) mentorship of CSCs staff.

Following the developed MIA capacity development and training, the program supported Training of 40 ToTs from the Ministry of Internal Affairs as well as 8 staff from the department of Research and Planning in M&E. Other supported trainings included; a gender professional training in which 57 MIA staff benefited, coordination mechanisms of decentralized service delivery, monitoring and evaluation for the MIA and GC staff as well as ICT for county administration staff. Interaction with various stakeholders revealed that both the undertaken capacity development initiatives and their respective delivery methods were robust enough to strengthen the capacities of the targeted institutions. The use of ToTs was particularly strategic in promoting sustainability of the training component in the targeted institutions.

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Furthermore, the evaluation learnt that the capacity development strategy was well informed by the comprehensive study that was conducted in 2016. This did not only make the trainings relevant but also comprehensive although there is still a deeper call for more capacity strengthening. This calls for periodic review and evaluation of the capacity development strategy that was developed.

As a result of the LDSP supported institutional capacity strengthening, there is general optimism that the MIA and GC have been well positioned and capacitated to take lead in the implementation of the decentralization policy. However, as reiterated by several stakeholders during consultations, there is still need for capacity strengthening to supplement what has been gained under the LDSP.

In the light of the program outcome and output targets, the evaluation noted that great achievements have been realized as discussed above. However, the lack of baseline values for some outcome indicators constrained the full assessment of the program contribution at outcome level. Various factors discussed hereunder have influenced program performance.

2.3 Facilitators and inhibitors of performance

The overall program design and implementation coupled with the general implementation landscape have facilitated and/or inhibited the achievement of the desired results. However, the identified facilitators and inhibitors form critical lessons that would inform the design and implementation of similar interventions in future as seen hereunder;

a) Facilitators

Hybrid of NIM/CO Support to NIM Implementation arrangement: This enabled institutional capacity strengthening which in turn supported program implementation. This arrangement enabled pooling of expertise from both the government institutions and UNDP for successful implementation of program components. Particularly, the use of NIM/CO Support to NIM Implementation ensured streamlined financial management hence leading to efficient use of resources.

Political good will: the political leadership at various levels have been in good support of the program. This has in turn facilitated release of resources from the government in addition to providing other services and facilities such as infrastructure for program implementation.

Building on previous initiatives like CST and LDLD programs: the gains of the previous interventions have also had a positive reflection on the implementation of the LDSP. It is apparent that these particular predecessor programs had related interventions that formed the foundational blocks for the implementing of the current program.

Good logical flow of the program design with good outcome-output linkages: As indicated in the relevance and effectiveness sections, the program theory of change was solid with proper linkages between outputs and outcomes. The evaluation noted that the program outputs flowed directly from the outcome indicators and were directly in response to the identified challenges at the start of the program. The implication is that the interventions were highly potential of delivering the desired results at output and outcome levels.
Anchoring LDSP in existing systems and structures: this has been a key resource mobilization strategy as well as a key tool for promoting country ownership of the program hence enhancing sustainability.

Strong and Effective Partnerships: program implementation has benefited from a heavy partnership among development partners on one hand and the government of Liberia. As indicated in the efficiency analysis section, all development partners have been committed to their financial obligations for the implementation of the program.

Program timing was conducive: the de-concentration of services was a great relief to the population. The citizens had suffered for long in terms of long distances to seek services from Monrovia. Therefore, the bringing of services closer was a much awaited intervention. This according to a cross section of stakeholders consulted explains the big turn up at County Service Centres.

Adaptive program management: Flexibility in the LDSP especially by allowing UNDP to handle procurement role enabled relatively speedy processing. At NDIS with the absence of the Program Coordinator and M&E Specialist the staff together with MIA ministerial heads were able to continue with implementation of the program activities.

Quick Impact interventions: The role and contribution of the UNMIL in quick impact interventions for instance the construction of the CSCs was also another facilitating factor that enabled LDSP implement its activities.

b) Inhibitors
Gaps in the program design: The lack of a results framework and some outcome indicator baseline values constrained streamlined implementation and institutionalization of results based management. This partly explains the reliance on the activity and output reporting.

CSCs Logistics and Infrastructural Challenges: despite the infrastructural improvement made at County Service Centres, there are still infrastructural gaps and inadequacy of logistics. This constrains service delivery at the centres.

Inadequate funding of CSCs: central government funding of the CSCs is still inadequate to enable deliver all deconcentrated services. Some CSCs still lacked required software vital for providing services.

Capacity gaps at county level: Both the central and local governments are still grappling with capacity gaps at institutional and human resource levels. This affected activity implementation by the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat especially during the time when the staff contracts had expired.

High staff turnover: The evaluation learnt that at some point the Chief Technical Advisor resigned and affected program implementation. Besides, the program spent some time with an M&E officer and this affected systematic tracking of progress and timely reporting.
Delays in financial disbursements and approval of work plans: The evaluation noted some delays in the activity implementation occasioned by delays in resource disbursements and work plans approvals.

Deficiencies in policies required to support decentralization. The evaluation noted that although the program made successful efforts to support the formulation of gender policy, its absence at the initial stages of the program to some extent deprived it spirited engendered implementation and reporting commitments.

2.4 Efficiency
As required in the Terms of Reference, the program efficiency analysis was anchored on: i) whether the LDSP’s approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework were relevant to achieve the planned outcomes; ii) the extent to which quality outputs were delivered on time; iii) the economical use of financial and human resources; iv) the robustness of LDSP monitoring and evaluation systems in ensuring efficient and effective management of activities and outputs; and v) the degree to which alternative approaches were considered in designing the programme.

Thus, central in the analysis was the program budget and expenditure nexus, adoption of cost minimization strategies as well as programme financial management and accountability system as seen here under;

2.4.1 Programme budget and expenditure nexus
The LDSP was designed to achieve 5 core outcomes over a period of five years at an estimated cost of USD 18,604,472.21. However, due to the effects of Ebola, the program was extended by two years bringing the project completion period to December, 2019. The program budget was envisaged to be raised through donor contributions as well as government co-financing as in table 2.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
<th>Actual contribution</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberian Gov’t</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>3,385,242.56</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>5,319,601.62</td>
<td>106.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t of Sweden</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>1,787,922.74</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000.00</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>GoL</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL (QIPS)</td>
<td>476,406.56</td>
<td>UNMIL</td>
<td>476,406.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,476,406.56</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,476,406.56</td>
<td>11,492,766.92</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program budget was further distributed across the 5 outcomes and across the implementation years. However, the financial data obtained by the evaluation team indicates that 11,492,766.92 has been realized as at 17 September, 2019 which constitutes 61.8% of

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the overall programme budget. However, of the realized budget, 10,226,301.69 (89%) had been spent and/or committed at the time of the evaluation.

Efficiency in program management is achieved when the program budget has been well realized and utilized optimally to achieve the desired results. Thus, the entire program budgeting and expenditure patterns form the foundations of an efficient program management. The evaluation noted that throughout the programme implementation period, expenditure was ably controlled within the budget lines and as such, a positive variance was experienced each programme year as shown in figure 2.1. Furthermore, the distribution of the budget and expenditure depicts a normal distribution implying a reasonable activity implementation inertia which is an indicator of efficient programmes. Both the budget and expenditure at the beginning and towards the end of the programme implementation are lower which signifies proper sequencing of the programme activities.

Although the programme overall expenditure was contained within the overall budget lines, analysis of budget and expenditure per programme outcome indicated that programme management (Outcome 5) took a disproportionate share (65.8%) of the total expenditure as shown in figure 2.4.

The evaluation noted that the overall programme management cost increased by 54.4% over its initial budget, making it the heavily spent on component of the programme. As indicated in the figure, other components were implemented with a positive variation of the budget.

Besides the high management cost of the programme, more management related expenditure was incurred under UNDP general Management Services. This
brings the overall budget and expenditure on non-core programme activities to 5320709.3 and 6729380.61 representing 28.6% and 65.8% of the overall programme budget and expenditure respectively as shown in figure 2.5.

Programme efficiency was compromised right from the design phase of the programme with management budget allocations much higher than the internationally acceptable levels of less than 20%. The LDSP has been implemented at an average resource absorption rate of 80.1% with 2015 and 2017 recording the highest rates of 92.3% and 96.8% respectively.

2.4.2 Program’s financial management and accountability system
In tandem with the National Implementation Modality, the LDSP adopted a coordinated financial management arrangement in which various donors delivered on their funding commitments with the responsibility of direct program implementation resting on the NDIS. Both UNDP and GoL financial management procedures provided guidance depending on the center of financial management. The UNDP financial management procedures were adhered to for the financial resources managed by UNDP while the GoL’s financial management procedures were respected in the management of finances controlled by Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Program finances were released on quarterly basis in line with the quarterly work plans that were extracted from the approved annual work plans. Responsible officers at different levels of program implementation had accountability responsibilities for the funds disbursed to their respective office.

2.4.3 Program efficiency enhancement strategies adopted
The evaluation noted that the implementation of LDSP was built of specific strategies that had enormous efficiency gains. These were embedded in the design, implementation and progress tracking of the program as discussed hereunder;

Throughout program implementation, there was adequate adherence to approved work plans and budget lines which ensured that the deployment of program resources was well aligned with the activity schedules laid out in annual work plans. All annual work plan was satisfactorily signed off by all the delegated authority and this gave the implementation processes great momentum. Although as presented in sub section 2.2.1 above there were some variations between the budget and expenditure, in majority of the cases the variance was positive occasioned by activities that were carried forward. This arrangement curtailed diversion of program resources hence ensuring that financial resources were used for those purposes jointly agreed upon in the annual and even quarterly work plans.

Coupled with the program budgeting and work planning, the evaluation further noted that the use of results based budgeting and expenditure framework was instrumental in aligning the program expenditure and the desired results. A review of annual work plans revealed that there was a clear flow program work with adequate emphasis that resources are deployed in respect to envisaged outcomes, outputs and specific activities. As seen in sub section 2.2.1 above, the annual budgets were systematically derived from the results framework. This provides an opportunity of ensuring that each unit of resources spent is targeted at achieving specific results hence achieving efficiency.
The use of the National Implementation Modality (NIM) enabled program implementation to leverage the existing infrastructure and structures which to a greater extent lowered the implementation costs of the program. The implementation of the program through an existing institutional framework facilitated the realization of government contribution besides being an important tool for entrenching program ownership and capacity strengthening.

The role played by volunteers in the program implementation is worth emulating in promoting program efficiency. Besides the staff of the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat who were asked to serve as volunteers upon the expiry of their contracts in 2016, program implementation also benefited from UNVs that were supported by USAID. These volunteers played a pivotal role at County Service Centres (CSCs) in ensuring replication of knowledge through various trainings. Despite some delays experienced in their recruitment and subsequent deployment, they have been instrumental in guiding activity implementation at county level. This has significantly contributed to the timeliness and quality of the implemented activities as one respondent explained during interview

“...I don’t what was going to happen if these volunteers were not available. At a time when the contracts of the other programme staff expired, the volunteers played an instrumental role in ensuring programme continuity during that time.....”

The institutionalization of Results Based Management (RBM) has yet been another program strategy adopted to enhance efficiency. Focus on results has received utmost attention throughout program implementation. Outcome-output-activity linkages that influenced resource allocation and expenditure formed a good model for ensuring the achievement of enhanced results.

Adherence to financial management regulations and procure of both UNDP and Ministry of Internal Affairs has to ensured efficient use of resources. The evaluation noted the program was audited annually by an independent auditor (PricewaterCoopers) and this enabled timely detection of financial management and implementation gaps requiring redress. There was notable management commitment to address audit queries as reflected in various audit reports. The financial management arrangement enabled program implementation to remain consistent with both UNDP and GoL financial management regulations. Interaction with program stakeholders at various levels, there was relative satisfaction with the financial management arrangement although many of them decried the delays in the disbursement of funds.

Despite the evident efficiency enhancement strategies that characterized program implementation as discussed above, the inherent gaps in implementation and reporting systems to some extent compromised the desired levels of efficiency as presented here below.

2.4.4 Gaps in program efficiency enhancement strategies

Despite the adoption of results based management and report, the evaluation noted some inconsistence in narrative and financial reporting. There was no standardized reporting and
as such, the content of the progress report varied considerably. Whereas some annual reports contained financial data, this was not uniform as some annual reports omitted this information. Furthermore, the presentation of financial data only hinged on the program burn out rate without giving a detailed account of the program expenditure in the light of the outcomes and outputs. Thus, from the annual progress reporting, the tracking of program outcome/output financial performance was less vivid. This can potentially inhibit the generation of evidence-based remedies for outcome/output level financial performance.

Whereas the financial management procedures were sound and ensured transparency and accountability, there was a general outcry among program stakeholder over the cumbersome financial management procedures at UNDP. This repeatedly featured in nearly all the progress reports as an inhibiting factor for performance. Although a specific staff was hired to expeditiously handle financial management issues at UNDP, little progress according to the consulted stakeholders has been made. There are reported procurement delays which grossly affected activity implementation hence rocking program performance. Inadequate human resource planning which led to staff turnover also grossly affected program implementation especially in 2016 when the NDIS became inactive due to the expiry of staffs’ contracts. Although some staff upon request remained serving as volunteers, this was a big blow to program implementation as many activities came to a standstill. Furthermore, the resignation of the Chief Technical Advisor before the expiry of the contract affected the program. As such, his replacement was not achieved quickly to the detriment of program implementation.

2.4.5 Robustness of the LDSP M&E
The M&E system was in theory adequate despite some glaring gaps in its implementation. The system was built on a number of M&E tools that included; Issue Log, Risk Log, Programme Lessons Learned Log, Quality Log, annual programme review, Updates and briefings as well as Mid-term and terminal evaluations. The program document clearly stipulates the responsibilities of various stakeholders in the management and implementation of the program M&E framework.

There was general dissatisfaction among stakeholders that were consulted during this evaluation over the extent to which M&E function was executed. The lack of a program result framework greatly compromised systematic tracking of progress at results level. Furthermore, despite the multicity of the M&E tools described in the program document, review of program documents reveals that not all M&E tools were applied. Capacity deficiencies in M&E hindered effective execution of M&E functions at various stages of program implementation. It was revealed by stakeholders that the program suffered from the high turnover of M&E personnel which occasioned late preparation and submission of reports.

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16 The delayed procurement of equipment and furniture for CSC in 2016 made the program fail to meet its target of having 10 CSCs functional. Even when construction at four centres was completed, some remained non-functional due to delayed procurement of the required equipment and furniture which partly explains the program’s decimal performance during the year 2016.
It is apparent that the program design and implementation influenced the extent to which the desired results have been achieved as further presented in the effectiveness analysis in the next sub section.

2.5 Sustainability

The likelihood of sustaining programme achievements beyond the programme funding period is a key indicator of success. However this requires deliberate interventions to ensure sustainability throughout the programme implementation process. Thus, under sustainability analysis, the presence of a sustainability plan, its strengths, weaknesses and gaps as well as the underlying opportunities and threats to sustainability formed the focus of the analysis as seen hereunder;

2.5.1 Availability and structure of the sustainability plan

A flagship programme for the government and development milestone for donors, the LDSP design paid limited attention to sustainability concerns at the design stage. Consequently, a sustainability plan, articulating steps for continuation of program outcomes upon face-out that could be triggered by donor fatigue was hardly developed. While the programme inarguably created awareness on decentralization and local government reforms at various level of the Liberian society, it still lacks adequate funding in addition to abrupt political changes in leadership and some challenges that exists especially, as it relates to the revision of the local government structures on which the success of the programme depends and that could hamper the continuity of the process. There is no exit strategy indicated in the programme document, detailing for example, how the state will take over the program, or which mechanism would be put in place to sustain the activities without UNDP or other donors' intervention.

Sustainability of the CSC operations, through GoL budgetary allotment, salaries and logistics for staff assigned at service centers, which form the bedrock for national ownership tends to weaken the determination for service provision. While capacity developed through infrastructure and training exist, CSCs are demotivated by limited logistics for outreach, road network challenges in their respective counties, lack of signature rights are among scores of problems hampering sustainability of services. Sustainability can be better ensured through continued investments in capacity building of different stakeholders and not only Governments at the local level over a long period of time.

The evaluation discovered that in order to ensure that capacity building is prioritized in the decentralization process; an assessment was conducted by Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) to assess the capacity of institutions and staff to implement decentralization, which revealed some capacity gaps and challenges both at the central and local levels. Hence, in consideration of the institutional and human capacity gaps, GOL has formulated a 10-year National Capacity Development Strategy. Presently, the Capacity Building Coordination Team is located at the MIA as part of the NDIS.

As to date, some capacity building efforts have already been made and they are mentioned under the achievement section of this report. However, considering these significant capacity building achievements and the LDSP own approach to foster the use of knowledge and skills acquired through the capacity development component for actual implementation
of planned activities to drive the decentralization process, the TE discovered the vital need for LDSP to additionally ensure the on-going of more professional capacity development activities at all levels of LG as outlined in the LDIP and as the need arises for smooth programme implementation. It is worth noting that in order to implement decentralization, the requisite capacities must be developed in the rural areas. Currently, GOL is strongly committed to installing a viable local decentralized governance system and to accomplish this goal, capacity building is a significant foundation of the decentralization agenda. Without building the requisite local capacities, the counties will be unable to assume the administrative roles devolved to them.

The TE opines that capacity building at all levels must become the cornerstone to successful implementation of decentralization in Liberia. The LDSP capacity building initiatives were well received by stakeholders and partners. Significant achievements were reported under this component. However, as more MACs rolled-out in the counties, comprehensive capacity building became limited thus leading to some CSC staff who participated in training and others who did not. Consequently, capacity level of MACs within CSC had been at unequal wave length. Unequal capacity levels amongst MACs within CSCs had its impact on timely data synchronizing and reporting, community engagement strategies, coordination as well as use of limited logistics available to the centers.

2.5.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the Programme sustainability plan

Government and development partners’ commitment to fostering achievements of the LDSP is critical to sustaining the programme concept. The strength of the programme can be realized in the various policy documents and research results derived over the program implementation span. Along legal policy framework is the LGA, which implementation strategy is being developed. At its implementation, the LGA will complete the operationalization of the decentralization process of the country. Although the administrative processes to be altered by the LGA could face hurdles due to political tradition and entrenched system supportive of an “imperial presidency”, some administrative alterations influenced by the LGA would require constitutional referendum. In terms of the sequence of time, constitutional referendum may stay longer to be achieved as the enactment of the LGA.

County Service Centers put cost and non-cost, documented and non-documented services to convenient access of local citizens within their respective counties. The CSC as one of two overarching achievement of LDSP is ‘ideal in concept’ as its visibility tends to reduce cost and time for access to services in Monrovia as well as overcrowding of the political capital. Service availability, citizens’ awareness and utilization of the services at county and district levels remain indispensable relevance of the CSCs. However, the CSC become less useful when a single service cannot get completed at any CSC due to signature rights, software problem, fuel to run generator, de-motivated staff representing MACs, unutilized equipment attracting dust within the centers, absence of support staff among other issues that make CSCs to be only physical structures.

Meanwhile with the minimum services being provided, CSCs boost government revenue generating capacity. County level revenue generation and monitoring have great potential in view of CSC reports and results of data collected during this evaluation mission. In as much
as these reports show high margins in government revenue in take, there are issues that require actions by the government. For example there are conflicting revenue reports in some counties because the LRA appreciates operating independent of the CSC. CSC reports submitted to the Superintendent office and those submitted by LRA have discrepancies as LRA reports other funds generated outside the service center. Since other MACs have statutory requirement to provide field service, LRA’s reneging to submit to CSC does not only weaken unison at the centers but also undermines the authority of Ministry of Internal Affairs as the lead county administrative agency in local governance. However in other counties, the county administration allows withdrawal of some essential fiscal services such as country treasury and LRA from CSCs.

LDSP procured power generator for each CSC. In the absence of clearly written sustainability plan, which should have penned down procedure for supporting the maintenance of the generators, the effective use of the equipment remains questionable. In the spirit of national ownership, government is expected to assume this role. CSCs decry receipt of fuel and other allotment since 2018, thereby rationing power over working hours. In some counties, the generator is overtaken by the county administration with CSCs not having access.

2.5.3 Opportunities to Programme sustainability
LDSP presents great opportunities to the Liberia decentralization process through its achievements. Policy processes developed during programme implementation, when fully adapted, would crystalize the decentralization process as well as rekindle its missing links. While enactment of the LGA and operationalization of CSCs present viable doors of opportunities, other policy process initiated or developed remain indelibly critical to enhancing administrative and fiscal decentralization. Few of the noble instruments include but not limited to:

**Decentralization Implementation Strategy (DIS):** This strategic document presents indisputable solution to challenges of de-concentration/decentralization over the years. These challenges include a) lack of implementation strategy; b) some MACs commenced decentralization even before the National Decentralization Policy but following it on an ad hoc basis and in isolation, ignoring intra-sector and inter-sector linkages or economies and scales; c) the decentralization process continues to suffer from human capacity constraints and limited institutional, system and process-based arrangements; d) overlapping administrative structures resulting to lack of efforts to coordinate and consolidate supporting administrative, financial and procurement services associated with decentralization functions of sector ministries and agencies; and e) inadequate participation of local citizens in community development decisions due to absence of formal functioning mechanisms for such participation.

**Assessment of Local Revenue Generation for Local Government:** It presents the economic profile of each county; defining its resources and modalities for accessing those resources as well as plausible revenue generation. The LGA implementation strategy must immediately put authority in the hands of the superintendent as “president of the county” to administer these resources through the function of CSCs.
Decentralization Communication Strategy: This strategy outlines presentation of LDSP and the decentralization program to a variety of audiences through various public information methods. Using various media tools, the strategy projects decentralization in four broad concepts: a) that decentralization promotes good governance, poverty reduction and rule of law; b) that LDSP is a tool at the service of central and local governments; c) that decentralization provides concrete solutions to real governance challenges and reduces number of poor people; and d) that decentralization is a platform for the promotion of a culture of innovation in governance and service delivery by involving citizen in making decisions that affect their lives. Its targeted audience includes community residents within the 15 counties, Liberian policy makers, private sector representatives, the media and civil society organizations.

Revenue Sharing Formula: The intent of the formula includes a) developing an effective and sustainable resource mobilization framework at local level; b) provision of resources for a balanced and equitable local development; and c) strengthening planning and management capacities at local level, using participatory approach. The revenue sharing formula between central and local governments aims to create fiscal space for local administrations in the delivery of services and facilitate infrastructural development in the counties. The rationale of revenue sharing formula evolved around intergovernmental transfers, which has the following three concepts: 1) addressing vertical fiscal imbalances – national governments in most countries retain major tax bases, leaving insufficient resources to the subnational governments for covering their expenditure needs; 2) addressing horizontal fiscal imbalances – referred to as differences in fiscal capacities, some jurisdictions may have better access to natural resources and other tax basis that are not available to others on one hand, while some jurisdiction may have extraordinary expenditure needs because they have old, poor, young population or need more financial resources to critical infrastructures such as airports, harbors, etc. The fiscal benefit, measured by the gap between fiscal capacity and fiscal needs, is often caused by such uncontrollable factors and therefore should be addressed by central government transfer; and 3) addressing inter-jurisdictional spill-over effect – some public services have spill-over effects (externalities) on other jurisdictions. For example pollution control (water or air), inter-regional highway, higher education (graduates may leave for other regions to work), fire departments may be used by neighboring areas. Without reaping all the benefits of these projects a government tends to underinvest in such project. Therefore the central government needs to provide incentives or financial resources to address such problems of under-provision. As a research, found two broad revenue sharing formulas: a) derivation-based system – sharing revenue based on where they are collected; and b) indicator-based system – allocated and transferring revenue based on set indicators, irrespective of where the revenues are collected.

Gender Responsive Decentralization: Recognizing that the decentralization process presents an important opportunity to further promote gender equality and equity in the development of Liberia’s sub-national governance system, the need for a comprehensive
review of gaps and opportunities for women in the decentralization process has been identified, thus a substantive stakeholders review and analysis of gaps and opportunities. Local governance that is gender-responsive takes into account the different needs, interests, priorities and concerns of women and men, girls and boys. These differences are used to inform all local governance processes, including policymaking, planning, budget allocation, program development, local service delivery and performance monitoring, and to directly address existing gender inequalities.

2.5.4 Threats to Programme sustainability

However, challenges to LDSP or the decentralization programme sustainability are inherent in three critical areas: 1) the absence of sustainability plan at programme design; 2) weak coordination among MACs over decentralization; and 3) limited political will of national leaders.

The absence of a sustainability plan reduced commitment of stakeholders in donor and beneficiary spheres of the programme. Donors could not envision follow up and or exit strategy to commit additional funding thereby create artificial fatigue or directing resources from the basket fund. Equally, recipient and or implementing government agencies (for example MIA, GC, MFDP, etc.) had nothing binding in the programme design. It had a trickle-down effect on succession in government. MACs renege on devolving signature authority for their services within CSCs, which is a major setback to the operations of CSC. Some MACs (the Ministry of Transport for example) argue that they do not have personnel to assign to CSCs due to budgetary constraints and pledged to train staff of MIA to back-stop them at CSCs. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which is responsible for appropriating and disbursing government funds, has since withdrew its commitment to the programme. The absence of this key Ministry undercuts government’s funding allotment for support to operations of CSCs.

Weak coordination amongst MACs on the decentralization programme at central and local level is a pitfall to sustenance of the program. As exemplified by withdrawal of MFDP, MACs’ dwindling commitment to the decentralization program has diminishing effect on the momentum of the programme. This is largely responsible for line ministries and agencies to assign staff to CSCs who have no authority to commit the agencies. Moreover, there is no policy instrument that gives supervisory authority to Center Coordinators over other MAC staff at the service centers. Hence coordination at the centers is left at the mercy of human relations and sustainable training activities. Again there would hardly be sustainable training activities in the absence of sustainability plan. The only hope is that the implementation strategy for the LGA, which would enhance the decentralization programme when successfully implemented. Political, bureaucratic and limited awareness are among reasons underpinning weak coordination of decentralization.

While LDSP has a communication strategy document that could have amicably promoted the entire decentralization program, much seemed not to have been done in dedicating time and resources to the strategy thereby weakening awareness on decentralization and undermining the work of CSCs. Awareness about the services at CSCs remained very minimum throughout the programme implementation due to logistical and human capacity.
challenges faced by the service centers. Radio and outreach campaigns about services available at the service centers were initiated but very sporadic to have impacted local communities. Billboards and flyers were not rigorously printed and distributed due to limited road connectivity and lack of mobility at most centers.

National leaders had lingering political commitment to decentralization, which was one obvious challenge of the LDSP. Unwillingness to relinquish authority made decentralization a mere lip service in Liberia’s political discourse. This reverberates in the tendency and approach with which MACs dedicate human and financial resources to the process. Political authority had been in the hands of both political appointees and elected officials, centralized in Monrovia to the extent of not willing to release the powers. From this conceptual standpoint, decentralization has become a creeping menace to power devolution hence the slow pace of the process and delay in enacting the Local Government Act.

2.6 Partnerships and Coordination

In a bid to establish if there were effective partnerships and coordination mechanism in the implementation of the LDSP in order to realize the set objectives and outcomes, the evaluation noted partnerships between UNDP with other Development Partners such as the EU, SIDA, UNMIL, and USAID. In another layer of partnerships, it was also noted that UNDP was able to partner and implement the program with government both Central Government as well as the local level County Administrations through creation of the County Service Centers (CSC).

UNDP was able to craft an effective partnership with government, development partners and CSOs through various ways while spearheading and managing the LDSP Basket fund. At the government level there was an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization (IMCD) as the highest organ. At the national UNDP, MIA and GC as well as other Development Partners form a specific LDSP Board whose responsibility was to ensure policy and governance related matters of the LDSP are well managed. At the same time the National Technical Working Group (TWG) was charged with ensuring that the implementation of the program is technically realized.

At each county the Superintendent leads the County Development Steering Committee which is a representative coordinating mechanism of all MACs within the County which meets monthly with the LEGIS playing the role of the Secretariat with a CSC Coordinator in charge. This County mechanism has enhanced partnerships and coordination at County level in terms of the deconcentrated services under the LDSP. The capacity building efforts by UNDP, MIA and GC were indeed noticed in the level of service delivery and revenue generation at the CSC levels coupled with aspects of gender disaggregated reporting statistics.

The 15 Country Service centres are brought and coordinated together under the umbrella Association of the CSCs in Liberia.

Whereas LDSP was reported to have created some level of effective coordination measures under the UNDP as the main IP, there were issues noted and cited by some of the respondents in terms of oversight roles whereby the program was faced with top leadership turn over especially the CTA and Program Manager which left the NDIS in a precarious
situation and in the hands of government political heads like Ministers. It was also noted that red tape due to UNDP systems also led to some delays in activity implementation especially emanating from the delayed financial releases. With such kind of weaknesses, there is need to enhance governance and coordination structures with clear specification of the roles and responsibilities and accountability as well as with constant and full time program management team and empowered NDIS.

2.7 Cross-cutting issues

Several issues cut across the decentralization program. Some of these issues include gender, human rights, peace building, communication and outreach, youth and social inclusion. These issues are profoundly critical to the success of the entire decentralization program. This section of LDSP terminal evaluation report endeavors to articulate these issues based on information gathered during the mission.

1. **Human Rights**: the rights of all stakeholders within the programme catchment remain critical particularly the poor, indigenous, tribal people, women and other disadvantaged and or marginalized groups. Decentralization of government services must be defined in the context of the extent to which members of disadvantaged sub-population benefited. From the standpoint of this evaluation, the means by which the LDSP met the needs of these sub-population groups is through the enactment of the Local Government Act (LGA) and establishment of County Service Centers (CSCs). While the project has succeeded in establishing the Centers, which bring government services into the locale of indigenous, marginalized and disadvantaged populations, challenges such as limitation in awareness campaign, absence of most desired services such as adult birth and western marriage certification, lack of clout or robust authority to amicably settle the numerous gender related problems especially child abandonment, logistical shortfall, etc. still create service deprivation for local people. In cases of abandonment and persistent non-support for example, the gender units at CSCs make commendable effort. But with the absence of prosecution authority gender, staffs only negotiate with the accused (mostly men). The end result has created dissatisfaction for many women and girls who have expressly noted lack of confidence in the work of the CSC.

2. **Gender Equality**: At design level, the program envisaged gender equality by encouraging equal participation in all activities. Specific attention was paid to mainstreaming gender in the program as actualized by the inclusion of a National Gender Technical Advisor on the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat. Among other functions, the Gender Technical Advisor ensures that every aspect of program implementation is gender-sensitive by categorizing roles of women, girls, men, boys, youth, and persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Gender Units at CSCs are among the busiest as indicated by the many family neglect, child abandonment and persistent non-support cases being resolved by the Units. The unintended effect of these alternative dispute resolution processes is dissatisfaction of some beneficiary girls who argued that the units failed to compel their spouses or men who have abandoned their children to pay amounts of money commensurable to the number of months or years they defaulted on their family responsibilities. Beneficiaries in Nimba and Grand Bassa intimated “the people at the center did well at least to have my children father do written commitment to give monthly support, but I expected them to compel him to pay for the years he did not
feed us”. These were the exact words of at least four female beneficiaries within the 21 to 28 age range in Bassa and Nimba counties. The Service Centers have no legal instruments to compel people.

3. **Peace Building**: Centralization/concentration of distribution authority over national resources and opportunities in Monrovia had been among underpinning factors of conflict in Liberia. This conflict factor had been responsible for lack of participation in national policy decision making by local people, marginalization and or exclusion of vulnerable members of the population, and growing distrust in the government that further degenerated into broken institutional relationships throughout the country, leading to the civil crisis. Reconciliation and conflict mediation have been the core of the intervention of the international community with a piggyback strategy of decentralization from Rwanda. Widely seen as a prerequisite to avoiding future conflict, decentralization process however has potential for fueling new conflicts if it does not offer tangible results that the population can relate to and benefit directly from. In furtherance of the concept of avoiding renewed conflicts, a UN Country-Team driven approach to deliver a decentralized system of government, creating room for participation of all Liberians as a tangible dividend of peace. LDSP’s establishment and functioning of County Service Centers, where citizens from all walks of life access government services, is an embodiment of the tangible results. The challenge however remains the inability on the part of the government to incentivize the Centers for their effective and efficient operations. Conflict can hardly be avoid when most desired services such as adult birth certificate, western marriage signature rights, passports, vehicle registration, fuel, mobile and other logistics are hardly available at the Centers.

4. **Communication and Outreach**: In the process of decentralization, partnership with all communities and citizens remains critically important. The implementation of decentralization has been demand-driven, reflecting the perceptions, expectations and aspirations of citizens and various segments of the society on the benefits, opportunities and challenges of decentralization for which the government must create enabling environment. Such environment entails development of policy instruments, administrative procedures, fiscal and financial devolution, which must be operationalized and communicated to all and sundry citizens across the country. As a means of meeting this need, the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat developed a communication strategy, which articulates the roadmap for creating cross-country awareness on the decentralization program activities, processes and procedures. Drawbacks to communication and outreach included short-lived contracts with local radio stations that hosted radio discussions and announcements in local vernacular; and the absence of mobile logistics (vehicles and motorbikes) to reach major towns and villages to inform citizens about availability of services. CSC MAC teams have persistently complained about the absence of vehicles and motorcycles to enable them reach other parts of their respective counties distant from the capitals.

5. **Youth**: Children and young people constitute an estimated 60% of the Liberian population. They are generally vulnerable by virtue the country’s socio-economic system but in the absence of decentralization, they are discriminated in access to power, services and possibilities for work and education. Their social and economic
vulnerability stand from the fact that there are hardly national policies or legislations comparing government to establish specific national programs or enshrine clauses in concessions for their future development. Though a national youth policy was crafted in 2005 with the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) revising the policy from 2012 – 2017. This policy’s goals include the promotion of youth participation in national decision making processes; and provision of an appropriate framework that will promote fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political wellbeing of all young men and women in order to enhance their participation in the overall development process and improve their quality of life\(^\text{17}\). The LDSP has supported Liberian policy interventions that increased youth and gender and equality.

6. **Social Inclusion:** When individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources, social exclusion is in play. However, social inclusion refers to policy efforts designed to ensure that all people are able to participate in society regardless of their background or specific characteristics. Prior to the LDSP intervention, women and youth were under-represented on concerned county-level decision making bodies with particular reference to the County Development Fund (CDF) and Social Development Fund (SDF) management committees and County Councils. This lack of broad inclusiveness of the population and CSOs transcended in the decentralization process. LDSP took stance against discrimination in its implementation by ensuring that i) MACs were trained to see the benefit of inclusiveness and diversity; ii) built the capacity of marginalized groups to ensure their participation in local government; and iii) use qualitative focus groups to measure inclusiveness of the decentralization process. The program encouraged implementing MACs (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Governance Commission) to use quantitative indicators disaggregated by sex and age throughout its implementation. Social inclusion variables are visible through representation of MACs at the CSCs.

3. **Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations**

3.1 **Take home messages**

3.1.1 Program concept and Design

The programme concept and design was well thought through as the challenges to be addressed were appropriately identified. The conceptualization and design of the programme was informed by the evaluation findings of other predecessor decentralization support programmes. The programme theory of change was appropriate and ably provided guidance in the design of the overall intervention logic.

The programme was well aligned with government and UN priorities as enshrined in both national and UNDAF development frameworks. It is noticeable that once alignment between UNDAF and national development framework is achieved, the alignment of the resultant programmes is more assured.

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\(^{17}\) Revised National Youth Policy (2012 – 2017), September 18, 2012
The programme approach of delivering both the up and down stream interventions while leveraging on national delivery systems has not only been an appropriate strategy for promoting national ownership of the programme but also a key national capacity strengthening strategy. Thus, the adopted programme delivery strategy has been sound and a key factor on which the observed success of the programme hinges.

The policy formulation support provided by the LDSP has created a demand for the review of national policies to ensure appropriate alignment. As such, a number of other relevant policies will require review and subsequent alignment if the implementation of the decentralization policy and processes is to be streamlined.

Programme commitment to mainstreaming cross cutting issues of gender and human rights is evident. However, lack of a gender policy and/or strategy makes it rather hard for effective mainstreaming and achievement of the desired results.

Although considerable work towards addressing the decentralization implementation challenges, more support is still required for further capacity strengthening and sustainability of the gains hitherto. Institutionalization of the M&E function in the implementation of the decentralization policy coupled with the design and roll-out of the integrated capacity development strategy remain critical investments for the successful implementation of the policy.

3.1.2 Management arrangements and partnership strategy
The programme management and implementation arrangement was good with national management structures such as IMCD and the programme board strategically constituted to provide leadership. However, whereas the functionality of the Board was evident, evidence for the functionality of the IMCD was scanty. Nevertheless, the established management and implementation arrangements provided a good environment in which the NIM thrived.

Donor coordination was also good and there has been sufficient commitment by donors to honor their pledged contributions. UNDP has satisfactorily played a key donor coordination role that has facilitated resource mobilization for programme implementation.

3.1.3 Programmatic achievements
The enactment of the LGA and establishment of the County Service Centres are the most significant achievements of the programme. Coupled with the human and institutional capacity strengthening support provided by the programme, effective access to the deconcentrated services is eminently arising. Despite the mixed feelings expressed by the citizens on the efficacy of the service de-concentration, there is general satisfaction among the citizens for de-concentration services.

The de-concentration of the services has come with enormous efficiency gains on the part of the citizens who previously had to travel for long distances to seek these services at the center. However, it is necessary that all inter-related services be provided at the center in order to maximize the efficiency of the centers.
Despite the funding gaps of about 38%, the programme is likely to realize its budget. All donors have expressed commitment to honoring their pledged contributions with all of them having honored more than 50% by the time of the evaluation.

In the light of the gains so far on the side of government and the citizens, decentralization remains fundamental in the process of bringing services to the people. With appropriate policy foundations, decentralization provides a clear pathway to achieving inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

3.1.4 Sustainability potential
Whereas the overall programme design and implementation has well integrated the fundamentals of sustainability; participation, ownership, contribution and capacity strengthening, actual sustainability still faces challenges which largely revolve around funding gaps. Whereas revenue collection has reportedly increased through the CSCs, such revenue is still inadequate to cover all the running costs, and besides, there is need of a policy if the CSCs are to retain part of the revenue generated.

3.2 Best Practices
The enactment of the Local Government Act 2018: The over-arching achievement which is also qualified as a best practice was the enactment of the LGA 2018 which will streamline and guide the roll out of the holistic decentralization in the country. The local Government Law enhances the Liberia Policy on Decentralization where by powers, decision making and authority will be devolved local administrative structures of governance especially at the County level as the main service delivery focal point.

Establishment of the One-Stop Shop County Service Centers: The creation and establishment of CSC has proved to be a very good model in ensuring a coordinated service delivery to the population at minimal costs as compared to the centralized government services.

Establishment of County Treasury model: Whereas the County Treasuries were piloted in only 4 counties in order to test the feasibility and viability of the fiscal decentralization, the evaluation noted that so far they were good models for Counties to in future have their treasuries.

Basket Funding and Management Model: The GoL and Development Partner’s partnership along Basket funding mechanism has also been hailed as good practice as an efficient and cost effective method of Resource mobilization and management. This mechanism is also reported to have improved coordination and partnerships between GoL and Development Partners.

The National Technical Working Group (TWG): The National TWG was also another good practice technical arm as it brought together all the key partners in ensuring that technical aspects of the LDSP are well coordinated and owned. These ensured that there are no wastage and duplication of resources and efforts through joint development and ownership of the Annual and Quarterly Work Plans.
CSC Co-ordination mechanisms – County Development Steering Committee Meetings (CDSC): The MACs at the Country level together with County Administration were reported to be meeting monthly and quarterly and at times weekly in order to plan coordinate their plans and service delivery in line with the various mandates under the de-concentration aspect. The fact that this coordination mechanism brings together both technical and county administration under one mechanism can be hailed as it ensures transparency, accountability as well as coordinated management of County services delivery through CSCs as the main vehicle.

Gender mainstreaming capacity building /trainings at CSCs: At the CSCs it was established through discussions and meetings with the various MACs that they all appreciated issues to deal with gender and were actually addressing them in their activities and reporting. They attributed this to the various trainings and capacity building initiatives under the LDSP.

3.3 Lessons learned
- To UNDP, whereas the NIM model is geared at efficiency and national capacity building, it has proved that it can only work well over time but initially it requires CO Support to NIM Implementation supported aspects.
- Improved infrastructure and communication are critical requirements in ensuring effective service delivery and decentralization in general.
- The creation of a Secretariat at the MIA without full empowerment and controls often leads to challenges especially in financial management and delays in program activity implementation.
- The model of One-Stop Shop CSC creation has proved to be an important service delivery point in national development.
- The alignment of the LDSP with sector-wide approach under MACs at County Level is a tremendous strategy that will see Decentralization well-coordinated and providing holistic service delivery.
- The Anti-Corruption aspects institution in the management and implementation of such program is key and crucial in ensuring that transparency and accountability are adhered to.
- Proper planning and design of national programs like the LDSP require clear exit strategy to ensure an inbuilt sustainability plan.
- For effective implantation of programs like LDSP, capacity needs assessment are crucial in order to ascertain the strength and weaknesses of the existing structures and systems through which the program would utilize.
- The high turn-over of staff at NDIS and CSCs as well as lack of Program Coordinator affects the smooth implementation of the program.
- Bringing services closer to the people has demonstrated that the more you decentralize the more people seek for the services hence increased revenues.
- Decentralization of marriage services has had a positive impact on the reduced GBV cases reported and experienced in families and communities.
• Creation of awareness and sensitization of population about decentralization is a crucial method of wide coverage

• The creation of CSC together with various technical teams has promoted and reinforced team work as well as exchanging expertise through cross pollination of ideas and expertise. Building synergies within MACs under the overall one Coordination mechanism is a key lesson as it ensures coordinated delivery of services and de-concentration.

• Working together with other MACs synergizes effort and ideas for goal realization

• Working with people from diverse professional/technical background is a self-capacity enhancement and preparation for greater responsibility

• CSCs are the first line of implementers of the decentralization program and major contributors to the actualization of the national budget

• Citizens obtain services with less difficulty and save them from spending more money to go to Monrovia

• Bringing marriage certification services and counselling closer with LDSP through CSCs service delivery activities has addressed cultural barriers through both traditional and western marriage registrations which has in turn created harmony within families and reduced rampant SGBV and GBV.

• UNDP partnerships with other partners’ as well as collaboration and coordination work generate more tangible results not only at the national but also at the local levels. This should go beyond mere signing of Memorandums of Understanding to the development and putting in place a strong clearly laid out Partnership Strategy.

• Continuous capacity Building trainings, mentoring, coaching for CSC Staffs; (benchmark/foreign exposure visits) should be a continuous and highly prioritized process as the population still needs to be sensitized on the decentralization policy and program

3.4 Recommendations

Design and Strategy

1. **UN strategic SDG interventions:** The UN should also strategize and MIA in its quest to roll out and operationalize the LGA 2018 ensure that the SDGs are mainstreamed and reported on systematically within the SDG Development Cooperation Framework.

2. **M&E Systems:** There is need for a robust M&E Framework and system to guide full implementation of the program from a Results Based Management perspective. This is because of the following:

   • Indicators are key components of design and log frame and should be set at design with their intention made clear: to determine a project’s progress, impacts, and effects.
Baseline indicators should be sought or set for all expected outputs and outcomes. Without measurable baseline data impact or effect cannot be measured nor attributed to an intervention.

Target indicators should be realistically set; that is, they must be set within the capability to be achieved given the resources, time frame, and capacities.

Means of verification should be included in the design and be methodologically robust and time bound in order to give validity not only to monitoring but also to the analysis of effects, outcomes, results and impact.

3. **LDSP Management Systems**: Streamline management and organizational systems that hinder timely implementation, such as issues associated with delays in disbursements, lengthy procurement processes, and lack of coordination between partners. In this case the NDIS (PMU) should in future be fully constituted and filled with adequate staffing and empowered especially the head to have specific Program Bank Account as well as financial management powers in consultation with Ministry heads.

4. **Gender Mainstreaming**: The Decentralization processes should in future ensure and enhance integration of gender aspects of the program as well as follow up on the full development of a Gender Policy and Strategy in the MIA or Ministry in Charge of Local Government that will guide in the operationalization of the LGA.

5. **Resource Mobilization Strategy**: As the GoL prepares and plans to roll out the LGA 2019 and fully decentralize, there is need to have a robust Resource Mobilization Strategy highlighting key areas of concern and drivers of Decentralization such as Infrastructure and Communication as well Institutional Development and Capacity Building Resource requirements

**Government of Liberia**

1. **Political Will and Support**: LDSP having achieved an important milestone of enacting the Local Government Act 2018, the GoL should fast track its operationalization as well as put in place all the required regulations, strategies, plans etc. The government should take full charge and ensure that LGA Implementation Plan is fact tracked and owned so that all the other procedures and process are realized in order to consolidate the gains of the LDSP.

2. **Signing powers and Partial De-concentration**
   In order to fully de-concentrate services from the central government, the CSCs should be fully given signing powers on the documents and certificates issued under the One Stop Shop CSC. In the same breath the Government should fast track the services under the de-concentration platform specially transport related services and Commerce in order to boost revenue etc.

3. **Fiscal Decentralization through County Treasuries**: Whereas the CSC generate revenues from the de-concentrated services there is need for the government to fast track the roll out of County Treasuries in all the 15 Counties as well as speed up the
constitutional and legal processes of revenue sharing in order to ensure financial sustainability. **GoL Financial appropriation and Revenue Sharing:** For effective and efficient operation of the CSCs, the GoL should prioritize and start appropriating funds through its national budget to the CSCs as well as scale up all the 15 Counties with County Treasuries. GoL should also fast track the enactment of the newly developed Revenue Sharing Formula between the Central government and the respective CSCs. The CSCs should be captured in the budget planning during County Council Sitting.

4. **IT and software**

A number of Information Technology (IT) recommendations have been floated as a result of the current challenges faced by various CSCs and these include.

- ✓ The absence of internet connectivity at the center from 2017 to 2018 hampers regular communication to LDSP and partner who normally requests for information. The installation of internet to center should be considered.

- ✓ Since 2017 to date, there has been no software for the production of traditional marriage certificate. This has resulted to dormancy of the activity at the center. There is an urgent need to resolve this challenge to enable the center to produce traditional marriage certificate.

- ✓ It is important to note that the Labor Local office staff at the center has not been trained to use the biometric ID card equipment, thus results to lack of software for the machine. It is suggested that a solution be found by LDSP to enhance the smooth running of the equipment, including training of staff and provision of appropriate software.

- ✓ To date, the software (windows7) and antivirus installed on the supplied desktops are outdated. There is a need for IT technician to visit the center to correct the situation.

5. **Logistics, Infrastructure and support staff**

- ✓ **Support Staff:** Government prioritizes recruitment of support staff since CSC is detached from administration building.

- ✓ **CSC Premises security:** In 2017 and 2018 the center has run without security guards and office assistants. Ultimately, securing assets and maintenance of the center hinges on retaining security guards and office assistant. These are challenges that require immediate solution

- ✓ **Transport:** The issue of mobility and communication should also be handled by providing more transport equipment like Motor Bikes and if possible vehicles in order to take services to the people coupled with bad roads and infrastructure. Prioritize the infrastructure programs such as mobilizing resources for opening and gravelling of the County and District Access Roads for the decentralization impact to take root.
✓ Power supply: In the absence of CSC adequate resources to maintain the generators the government should provide Solar system as power source alternatives.

✓ Donor partners should increase funding and ensuring monitoring and supervisory responsibility over the activities especially of CSCs.
4. Annexes

Annex 1: OECD/DAC Ranking table

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**Impact**

Both the up and down stream programme support promote transformational changes that can have great positive changes in the population’s welfare indicators. For example, improvement in access to quality and inclusive social services is directly connected to improvements in the population’s standards of living. Although evidence is still scanty to link the current changes in the people’s living standards to the programme intervention, the programme interventions are projected to affect the living conditions of the people both directly and indirectly.

**Sustainability**

Much as the programme design and implementation integrated the four pillars of sustainability, the lack of an exit plan and limited resources for continuous support of the CSCs puts programme sustainability at stake. Without prejudice to the programme achievements, the implementation of the decentralisation policy is still grappling with both structural and capacity challenges that may not favour smooth implementation without further support. Nevertheless, the strategic investments made have great potential of upholding service delivery under a decentralised framework with time.

**Relevance/Design**

Programme conception, design and implementation was well informed by the national development priorities as well as the strategic direction of the donors. As such, the programme has been consistent with national priorities and the results framework of UNDP and the UN Family as enshrined in CPD and UNDAF respectively. Furthermore, the strategies employed to achieve the results were sound and appropriate.

**Effectiveness**

The programme largely achieved its output level targets. The enactment of the LGA provides a solid foundation for the achievement of the corresponding decentralisation outcomes. Although policy implementation challenges are still enormous, with a clear policy direction and strengthened capacity, the realisation of the desired results remains just a matter of time. Thus the LDSP programme support has laid a strong foundation for attaining the set outcome level results.

**Efficiency**

The programme was able to realize 61.8% the planned financial resources and 89% had been spent by the time of the evaluation. However, more than 60% of the expenditure has been on programme management. Although activity implementation had progressed well, the high expenditure on management functions indicates a compromised programme efficiency. Nevertheless, there was adequate
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1 low, 5 high)</td>
<td>adherence to the budgets as well as the financial management policies and systems of UNDP and Government of Liberia.</td>
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The following Tables depict the Project’s Progress

**GOVERNANCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PILLAR (GPI)**

| OUTCOMES | 1. Deconcentrated functions and corresponding resources managed at the assigned level of government.  
2. Service delivery and accountability of local governments is improved.  
3. Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization.  
4. Ministry of Internal Affairs is capacitated to lead and implement decentralization reforms.  
5. Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring strengthened |
| --- | --- |
| **Output 1.1 The MACs of the government of Liberia tangibly and visibly transfer services, decision making and corresponding resources to the counties according to the de-concentration strategy:** | Presidential Directives – that created the political space and stated the unwavering commitment of the government to move services to the people put into place.  
✓ The establishment of county service center(s) which provides opportunity for MACs and county administration to pool resources in a shared governance format; Eg. Bassa, Margibi, Service centers with MOL, MIA, MoC, MoGCSP, MoH, MoPW, MOT, MOE, CNDR and LISGIS providing services from the Center  
✓ Citizens now have access to services at the county level (i.e. permits, birth certificate, marriage certificates, business registration, driver’s license, Ecowas bio-metric Permit etc.  
✓ Non documentation services in progress  
✓ Launch of the Deconcentration Platform in February 2015 in Gbarnga City, Bong County.  
✓ A baseline study conducted by MIA (58% male, 48% female) to gauge citizens’ awareness of decentralization reform agenda, revealed that radio and town hall meetings were preferred channels of information dissemination, thus informing the finalization of a communication strategy.  
✓ Communication strategy finalized.  
✓ Communication materials prepared and distributed to media outlets, stakeholders and the general public beginning 2014.  
✓ In February of 2015, the Liberia Decentralization Support Program (LDSP) conducted a Rapid Assessment of facilities in all 15 counties to determine their readiness to deliver de-concentrated services. The findings of the Rapid Assessment provided data- statistics, facts, descriptions of facilities, county-specific service needs, staff availability and capacity at the county level, and the extent of support (logistics) needed in each county to establish and operationalize the de-concentration process.  
✓ The first County Service Center (CSC) was opened in Grand Bassa County on 30th June, 2015.  
✓ $125,000 appropriated to the CSCs to cover operational costs.  
✓ Traditional marriage certificate software procured and owned by MIA. |
Output 1.2 Enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of MACs at the county level achieved;

✓ Procurement of furniture and specialized equipment and stationery.
✓ County service center training for MACs of Nimba, Lofa, Bong, Margib, Gbarpolu, Rivercess, Cape Mount and Bomi)
✓ Recruitment of UNVs all in place and supporting coordination in and around the CSCs
✓ Disaggregation of the budgets – MOH underway. MIA and MOE not yet disaggregated
✓ Procurement training discussion concerning additional resources for establishing presence in counties hosting CSCs especially.
✓ Procurement of 8 pickups given to Grand Gedeh, Rivergee, Rivercess, Maryland, Gbarpoly, Bomi, Grand Kru and Lofa counties to support coordination and pooling of resources.
✓ 4 (four) County Treasuries established as a pilot in four counties, namely, Bassa, Bong, Margibi and Nimba counties aimed to strengthen Superintendents role in the coordination of service delivery including coordination of county expenditure and other development programs at the county level.
✓ Training conducted for 15 superintendents and other key staff in February 2015 on the roles of superintendents in a decentralized system of governance, the LGA, the County Treasury Framework and Fiscal Decentralization as a precursor to the launch of the De-concentration Platform.
✓ Five (5) IUNVs were recruited and assigned to five (5) regions, responsible for 3 counties in each region respectively. They paired up with Liberian counterparts under the mentees program. These IUNVs and Mentees worked with local officials and the citizens at the county level to implement the decentralization/de-concentration reform agenda.
✓ MOH has had some of their budgets disaggregated in Nimba, Bong, Margibi and Grand Bassa. MIA has started the process of disaggregation.
✓ Nine counties held at least three coordination meetings in 2017, chaired by the county superintendent or the CSC coordinator. Some of these meetings were also attended by international UNVs.

Output 1.3 Improved infrastructure of county service centers to support the de-concentration process;

✓ Improved infrastructure—County Service Centers (CSCs) infrastructure were either newly constructed, modified and/or refurbished in 15 counties for improved service delivery. Under UNMIL Quick Impact Project (QIP) new buildings were constructed in Grand Cape Mount, Rivercess, Bomi, Grand Kru, Rivergee, Gbarpolu. All CSCs are now functional, though at different levels.
✓ A seminar for political parties was held on October 23, 2013 under the theme “A Review of the Local Government Act”. Three representatives (29 females and 49 males) of twenty-nine of the 31 registered political parties participated in the workshop. The workshop broadened national support for the draft LGA and also engendered collaboration with political parties to engage the National Legislature to pass the LGA into Law.

Output 1.4 Citizens are organized and informed to

✓ Training and technical support was provided to strengthen the capacity of CSOs, women and youth groups to participate in the implementation of de-concentration/decentralization in the southeastern, Western and
| **participate in the de-concentration process** | Central regions.  
✓ Governance Commission (GC) conducted training in 5 counties in the southeast with thirty-three (33) participants from various CSOs, disaggregated by sex (19 male & 14 females) on background information and materials on decentralization, policy advocacy, and the draft LGA.  
✓ Training was also held in Gbarnga, Bong County in August 2015 for CSOs of the North-Central region. In October 2015, another training was held in Tubmanburg, Bomi County. These trainings sought to deepen citizens' knowledge about the decentralization Program and what they can do to ensure its success.  
✓ Town hall meetings conducted in Bassa in Buchanan and District 1 (137 / 44 women.  
✓ Conducted radio talk shows nationwide – community radio stations selected in Bassa, Kakata, Margibi, Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh.  
✓ MIA press conference held in Bassa on 28th June.  
✓ A “Town-hall” meeting was held in November 2015, in Compound 3-District #3, Grand Bassa County. The meeting brought together more than one hundred (100) participants, representing local officials, traditional leaders, students, and citizen groups, including the physically challenged) to talk about decentralization/de-concentration program at the county level.  
✓ The meeting focused on: The current state of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance; The concept of County Service Centers and what they seek to achieve; How services are obtained at the County Service Centers (CSCs), the Local Government Bill, etc.  
✓ 500 flyers were produced and distributed, 17 bill boards erected and other communication materials (jingles, etc.) produced and distributed to support service delivery as per communication strategy. The 5 billboards were also erected around the county as follows: Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County Tubman Street, Buchanan City near the LAC-Monrovia Junction; Kakata, Margibi County, near the BWI Campus along the Monrovia-Ganta Highway; St. Paul Bridge, Montseradoo; ELWA junction - Paynesville, Monrovia; Executive Mansion Road, opposite the University of Liberia Campus, Monrovia  
✓ Call in Radio programs nationwide, targeted towards de-concentration of services were done in Grand Bassa and other counties as part of the publicity for the opening of the County Service Centres. In Buchanan, being the first CSC opened, specifically, five (5) talk shows were conducted, of which 2 were on ELBC and UNMIL radio (national radio stations) whiles the last 3 aired on community radio stations in Buchanan (Radio Gbehzohn, Radio Dukpah and Radio 1). There was also two additional shows conducted in Buchanan after the opening of the Service Center to reinforce the concept of the CSC.  
✓ Strong links with the Civil Society Platform on Decentralization and Local Governance established. The Platform has 10 members who have participated in activities such as Town Hall meetings and Radio Programs. In addition, 13 CSOs which are county based also participated in Town Hall Meetings held in Grand Bassa County and Gbarnga. |
In 2017, eleven two town hall meetings were conducted in Bong, Nimba, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe and Maryland Counties under the theme: ‘Increased Knowledge for Increased Participation’. A total of 2,041 persons attended the meetings, 1,051 of the attendees were males while 991 were females.

- Public Relations officers and County Information Officers training manual completed.
- Monthly newsletters were produced and distributed to all MACs, CSO networks and other stakeholders.
- A one-hour radio talk show called ‘Decentralization Forum’ was aired on state radio, ELBC FM 99.9 during the year 2017. Very Important Personalities that represented different institutions were guests on radio program to include then Ambassadors of Sweden Lena Nordstrom, and the EU Tiina Itelmann, Senior officials of MFDP, MIA, GC, CNDRA, County Superintendents and CSC Coordinators, MACs technical committee member of MOE, MOH Etc.
- Radio broadcasts were also held on community radio stations in the counties. These broadcasts comprised live phone-in radio talk shows featuring CSC staff. These radio broadcasts have contributed immensely to the public awareness about the decentralization program and the services at the County Service Centers.
- Eleven (11) CSOs were selected, trained and conducted public awareness in seven counties on creating public awareness and advocacy on deconcentrated services in the seven counties. The counties included Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Nimba. The implementation of this activity provided an opportunity for the CSOs to perform a watchdog function and continue to build critical mass for decentralization implementation in Liberia.
- There were several newspaper articles released to the media on the implementation of the LDSP, success stories of the CSC as well as reports of the encouraging statistics from CSCs. Articles relating to progress relating opening of CSCs were also circulated.

**Output 2.1a Capacity for participatory planning, budgeting and managing of development funds as well as revenue collection strengthened with focus on marginalized groups**

- Establishment of county treasuries-treasury officers deployed to Bassa, Bong, Nimba and Margibi
- Synergies in service delivery under the Supt. (cost effective and coordinated).
- 0 CDAs developed but regional dialogues were held across 13 counties to identify any potential areas of conflicts or barriers to the CDA development process.
## Output 2.1b Capacity of the public, citizens’ groups and civil society organizations strengthened to undertake participatory and performance monitoring, and to carry out watch-dog functions.

- Forty-five (45) persons from across the deconcentrating MACs have been trained and effectively delivering services at the County Services Center.
- Developing 3 year County Development Agendas-dialogues conducted in Bassa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh.
- County participatory planning manual—updated by LIPA and department for research and planning.
- To enhance the capabilities of the Governance Commission for evidence-based policy development, ten (10) of its staff (five females and five males) were sponsored for twenty-one days (21) at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria to study Public Policy Analysis and Research Methodology.
- Revenue Sharing Formula developed.

## Output 2.2 Anti-corruption measures (systems and enforcement mechanisms) established and functional at county, city, district and community levels

- Anti-corruption measures–LACC and other integrity institutions on board (Notice board, watch dog manual, Code of conduct in process).
- 0 (zero) counties developed anti-corruption plans.

## Output 2.3 Capacity of women and girls to participate in local government as leaders enhanced.

- Women are the greatest beneficiaries of services currently at the county service centers, for example, about 70% of those receiving birth certificates are women.
- 78 female political leaders including county superintendents, female members of the legislature, political parties women wing chairpersons benefited from a seminar to widen their understanding and advocate for a gender sensitive LGA resulting in a review of the constituency clause on women representation.
- Two workshops were held with 120 women in attendance in gender budgeting and role of women at the local government.
- Gender-responsive Budgeting (GRB) regional trainings were held in 2 regional hubs (covering 10 counties) for stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. A total of 96 participants (55 males, 41 females) from 10 Counties participated in the Gender Responsive Budgeting Regional Training. One training was held in Bong from June 28–30, 2017. Participating counties included: (Gbarpolu, Lofa, Nimba) and Grand Gedeh, from July 3-5, 2017, participating counties included: (Rivercess, Sinoe, Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee).
- A draft Local Government Gender Policy has been developed. The policy aims to ensure that the implementation of the decentralization process is gender responsive and inclusive. The draft policy is closely linked to the Local Government Act. The policy will be completed based on the passage of the Local Government Act.
- The Gender Unit in MIA has been setup, staff identified and ToRs for staffs developed. The Staff of the Unit
have developed a one-year Action plan aligned with the Ministry’s mandate and engaged in a series of gender related activities and continue to engage partner MACS

✓ A three day Gender Capacity Development training was held at the Ministry of Internal Affairs from September 20-22, 2017. The training was held for 4(four) (1male, 3female), Gender Unit Staffs and 16 (sixteen) (2male, 14 female) departmental focal points with the aim of building the capacity of the Gender Unit Staff and Departmental focal persons to address critical knowledge and skills requirements for building and maintaining the necessary momentum for effective implementation of mainstreaming gender in the decentralization process.

✓ The Gender Team carried out an appraisal of the service delivery at 2 County Service Centers (CSC) in Nimba and Bong counties. The team comprised (Gender Advisor-UN-Women/MIA, Gender Specialist NDIS/MIA and Decentralization Focal Point-MGCSP) of LDSP from April 13-16, 2017. The assessment focused on the gender equitable nature of service delivery, the challenges experienced by citizens particularly women and marginalized groups in accessing the services.

✓ A Gender Resource Center established at the Governance Commission (GC). The Gender Resource Center is to serve as a data base for knowledge expansion, research and information dissemination on gender and development in the country.

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<tr>
<th>Output 2.4 Criteria established for districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans to rationalize and restructure them to ensure economic viability and sustainability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Two separate workshops were organized in Monrovia and Buchanan on December 12 and 18, respectively, to engage the Legislature and stakeholders including political parties, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders to engender their support for and approval of local government rationalization criteria including boundary harmonization.</td>
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<th>Output 3.1 Ensure coordinated formulation of legal framework for decentralization.</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Engaged political parties to make Decentralization a key principle in their party platform-conference of political partners held in June in Buchanan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ LGA Bill passed into law in September 2018.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ A two months assessment and survey of MIA staff conducted, and a long-term local capacity development strategy for decentralization implementation formulated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 19 out of 20 political parties agreed to include decentralization in their manifestos in 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The Governance Commission organized a five-day Policy Dialogue in Kakata, Margibi County with fifty (50) participants from the physically challenged community under the theme: “The Role of Persons with Disabilities in Decentralization Reforms”. The participants included the visually and hearing impaired and the physically impaired.</td>
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challenged from Margibi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Montserrado and Nimba Counties. At the close of the workshop, the participants pledged their support to collaborate with the Governance Commission and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the implementation of ongoing decentralization reforms through sustained advocacy with members of the Legislature including those representing their constituencies for the passage of the Local Government Act.

✓ A two-day National Conference was held with political parties in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. The Commission engaged political parties and solicited their support to ongoing decentralization programs and to make decentralization a key principle of their Party Platforms. At the close of the Conference, 19 out of 20 political parties signed a Joint Resolution affirming their commitment to preserve the unitary state system for all Liberian citizens through local self-governance in the sharing of political, fiscal and administrative powers with county authorities.

2 Stakeholders awareness conducted on the LGA in Ganta and Kakata respectively.

Media awareness on the LGA using community radio stations in the counties.

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<th>Output 3.2 Public sector and civil service reforms aligned with decentralization policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Women in informal business sector are now moving into the formal sector due to access to business registration services at the county service center; local catering and restaurant businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ As a result of the registration of traditional marriages at the county, women can now have rights in their marriages, similar to those of women in civil marriages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The Ministry of Internal Affairs completed the profiling and re-documentation of personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which was undertaken in eleven of the fifteen counties with the purpose of rationalizing the payroll, plan quality capacity development programs for the personnel as well as plan and execute socio-economic development projects across Liberia in support of the decentralization program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ In partnership with the Civil Service Agency (CSA), 200 job descriptions were completed by MIA. at central administration level aligned with the decentralization policy. This number constitutes 100%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ This activity was implemented as part of the PSMP procedures. All employees now have one file, with the appropriate job details and credentials. This is consistent across the country</td>
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<tr>
<th>Output 3.3 Criteria established and implemented for districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans to rationalize and subsequently to restructure them to ensure economic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Engaged legislators for support and approval of LGA-lunch meeting with the Senate and House of representative. Concerns documented and follow up conference held.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ On Monday, June 13th 2016, LDSP supported a lunch meeting of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the Internal Affairs Committees of both the Senate and the House of Representatives at Corina Hotel. The objective of the meeting was to continue with efforts to share the importance of the rationalization of local governance structures and harmonization of boundaries of these units. Got the commitment of the legislators</td>
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| **viability and sustainability.** | ✓ MIA Urban Affairs Department and LISGIS conducted a field study on intra boundary conflicts using LISGIS software. This activity was implemented by a team comprising of MIA and LISGIS staff. Two teams were deployed to confirm and document intra boundary conflicts across the 15 counties.  
✓ A technical decentralization roadmap developed for the Department of Urban Affairs of the MIA to guide the harmonization and rationalization of the local government structures and boundaries. This activity was implemented by an international consultant and outlines the new role the DUA-MIA is expected to perform as mandated by the National policy of decentralization and local governance and the proposed Local Government Act. |

| **Output 4.1 Institutional and human capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Monrovia and Counties) built to co-ordinate and lead the implementation of the Decentralization process** | ✓ Key provisions in the local government bill on elections of local officials were successfully considered by delegates during the constitutional reform conference.  
✓ Developed an MIA capacity development and training strategy-LIPA is taking the lead and will be supported by an international consultant.  
✓ Selected 15 local government mentees and pair them up with the UNVs possible mentees now identified in the majority of counties.  
✓ In 2016, a comprehensive study was conducted, profiling MIA Central Office staff. The analysis of the study brought to the fore significant data and information which was used for updating their Capacity Development and Training Strategy. The study showed 56% of MIA staff is 50 – 64 years old. 16.2% are 65 year old and above. Two-thirds (66.4%) of the staff members have either no formal education or did not complete grade school (23.2%). Less than five percent acquired at least an associate degree. 16.5% of staff members are not on payroll, and 9.7% are displayed as replaces (whose status has not been regularized). 85.7% of MIA employees are males and 14.3% are females.  
✓ Six (6) manuals previously developed under the LDLD program were reviewed and updated, aligning them to decentralization reforms. This task was assigned to the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) and the manuals reviewed included: (1) Accounting and Financial Management Manual for Local Government; (2) Public Procurement and Concessions Regulations; (3) Introduction to Basic Computer Operations; (4) Ministry of Internal Affairs Staff Training Manual for MS Excel 2007; and (5) Budgeting Manual for Local Government 2010.  
✓ 40 MIA Master Trainers out of targeted 40 benefitted from a five-day training of trainers (ToT) in Grand Bassa County. Master trainers are MIA staff from across the 15 counties with at least a first degree whose skills will be used to support training both at the center and county levels.  
✓ Eight members of staff from the department of Research and Planning, MIA attended an M&E course at LIPA in preparation for their roles within the M & E unit.  
✓ A gender professional training (in collaboration with LIPA) for MIA staff at central and county levels was
implemented. This activity was implemented at the central level, benefiting 57 MIA staff from the central office.
✓ Program to support County Coordination Mechanisms (county decentralization coordination committee chaired by the County Superintendent) was implemented by the Department of Operations, building on a previous training in 2016 which broadly covered coordination around the de-concentration process. The main aim of the action was to provide a consultative forum for effective service delivery
✓ An international UNV was contracted to provide technical support to the programme upon request from MIA.

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<tr>
<th>Output 4.2 GC capacitated to undertake governance assessment and monitoring strengthened</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Conducted 4 round table policy dialogues-first dialogue conducted in Buchanan regarding lessons learnt from Grand Bassa County Service Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The Governance Commission conducted two (2) training seminars on monitoring and evaluation. The training was intended to equip officials from the MACs at the CSCs and project planners with the necessary skills and tools to ensure the necessary level of monitoring and evaluation of the de-concentration and decentralization efforts in the country. By the end of the training, participants were able to formulate their own monitoring and evaluation plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The Governance Commission developed ‘The Liberia Local Government Assessment Framework’ to be used as a tool and guide for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of decentralization reforms in Liberia. A pilot conducted by the GC showed that the assessment framework was a valid instrument for gauging the overall impact of government’s interventions in establishing effective local governance in Liberia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The Governance Commission conducted three policy dialogues with a focus on emerging issues on de-concentration implementation and enhancing citizens’ access to the county service centers. The dialogues were held respectively in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, Kakata, Margibi County and Sanniquellie, Nimba County with citizen representatives and representatives of the MACs assigned to the county service centers. The local officials of government and civil society organizations also participated. The key policy issue that emerged from the dialogue was the need for MIA and MACs to establish a mechanism for sustaining the CSCs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Two (2) monitoring visits were carried out to monitor the county service centers in 2017. The monitoring reports highlighted the challenges at the centers – many of which are consistent across all the centers visited. These include logistics, fuel and internet which were highlighted in the CSC reports. A total of eight (8) county service centers in Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu, Margibi, Maryland and Nimba were visited to assess the level of service delivery.</td>
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<td>✓ 1(one) Stocktaking workshop held on November 27, 2018</td>
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<th>Output 4.3 County administration with necessary ICT facilities (software, Internet connectivity valued at US$45,000.00 was installed at CSCs.</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Bluecrest University was hired to carry out the training of 30 MIA staff from the counties. Training targeted 2 staff; the IT officers in county centers and one other from each county. The course was intended to build on</td>
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services) in place

their existing IT knowledge so that CSCs in particular are in a position to solve day to day problems and reduce reliance on the IT Manager at the central office.
✓ Internet hotspots were procured for the CSCs.

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<tr>
<th>Output 5.1 Efficient and effective support and coordination of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government.</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Streamlining of NDIS and alignment to MIA departments</td>
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<td>✓ DMA designated as the focal person for the programme in the Ministry, reporting to the Minister who then reports to the IMCD</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Support staff and drivers under the programme have been moved to the government structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ The Senior Analyst at the GC will lead the M and E mechanism of the programme and support the M and E specialist recruited into the NDIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ In 2016, the NDIS was fully staffed with six professional staff. Included were a National Program Coordinator, Finance Officer, Gender Specialist, Communications Officer, Capacity Development Specialist, and a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer.</td>
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<td>✓ In September 2016, the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) resigned from her post to take up a new assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ A significant amount of equipment was procured in 2016 including 15 motorcycles for the mentees, desktops and printers for DSUs, 20 laptops for the mentees and International UNVs, as well as six laptops to support the various departments of MIA.</td>
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<td>✓ All program progress reports submitted to UNDP</td>
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<th>Output 5.2 Capacity for concurrent monitoring and evaluation of decentralization implementation established at MIA and the county government level</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Chairing of High Level Round Table on Deconcentration by the President of Liberia, Mrs., Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Included the Vice President of Liberia, H.E. Joseph N. Boakai, heads of Service Delivery MACs, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, the Donour Community and other interested parties; meeting served as the catalyst to speedily implement deconcentration with all MACs on board</td>
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## Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Specific Sub-Questions</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>Indicators/Success Standards</th>
<th>Data Analysis Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>How well has the programme aligned with government and agency priorities?</td>
<td>To what extent has LDSP’s selected method of delivery been appropriate to Liberia’s development context?</td>
<td>Progress reports, Annual reports Program doc. CPD, UNDAF Gov’t decentralization Policy Interviews and focus group results</td>
<td>Desk review Interviews Meeting with stakeholders Focus group discussion</td>
<td># of decentralization activities supported by the program</td>
<td>Compare documents, reports and interviews/discussion outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Has LDSP programme been influential to national policies on legal reforms and human rights protection?</td>
<td>Government Decentralization Policy Interview/Focus Group</td>
<td>Interviews Focus group discussions Review of reports</td>
<td></td>
<td># of decentralization policy meetings supported by program</td>
<td></td>
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<td>To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?</td>
<td>What specific changes did the LDSP program set out to achieve and to what extent was it realized.</td>
<td>Annual and progress reports National Policy documents Interviews results Focus group discussions results</td>
<td>Document review Meetings Interviews Focus group discussions</td>
<td># of institutions established and functions Level of de-concentration of government services Level of improvement in functions of MACs</td>
<td>Critical review of policy documents in line with outputs in PRODOC Observe catalytic or direct changes influenced by the LDSP</td>
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## Data Collection Method

- Desk review
- Interviews
- Meeting with stakeholders
- Focus group discussion
- Review of reports
- # of decentralization activities supported by the program
- # of service centers established by the program
- Level of support provided to national policies
- # of decentralization policy meetings supported by program
- # of national policy processes supported and completed
- Development results of the meetings
- Comparing quantitative information with qualitative responses
- Critical review of policy documents in line with outputs in PRODOC
- Observe catalytic or direct changes influenced by the LDSP
<p>| 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? | Annual and progress reports Performance reports of county decentralization structures Policy documents developed and legislated | Review of documents (reports) Interviews Meetings Focus Group Discussions | Level of institutional capacity strengthened # of government institutions whose functions have been decentralized # of local government administrative structures established | Comparison of programme outputs with reports and response |
| Do these local results aggregate into nationally significant results? | Data of citizen turnout at service centers at county level Reports of legislative processes on Decentralization policy documents | Review of documents (reports) Interviews Meetings Focus Group Discussions | # of services centers established and functional # of MACs whose function have improved % of people accessing services at county level | Comparison of programme outputs with reports and response |
| To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made towards their achievement. | Progress reports Interview results | Document review Interview Meetings | Level of achievement against programme outcomes # of outputs in terms of policy documents, research reports, etc. | Observation Comparison of reports and implementation progress Calculation of delivery rates, matching planned against actual |
| What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme | What were the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by LDSP’s | M&amp;E Plan Reports | Interviews Focus group discussions Meetings with donor partners | Level of achievement against programme outcomes # of outputs in terms of policy documents, research reports, etc. | Observation Comparison of reports and implementation progress |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Partnerships</strong></th>
<th><strong>Questions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Methods</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outputs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Calculation</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?</td>
<td>What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP performance?</td>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Interviews, Focus group discussions, Meetings with donor partners</td>
<td># of outputs in terms of policy documents, research reports, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Are LDSP’s approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework relevant to achieving the planned outcomes?</td>
<td>To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?</td>
<td>Activity reports, M&amp;E reports, Desk review, Interviews, Meetings</td>
<td># of program outputs on target with timely delivery, # of policy instruments developed and in use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources?</td>
<td>Financial reports, Desk review, Meetings</td>
<td>Rate of expense, Quality of human resource in implementation process</td>
<td>Comparing planned and actual expense records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Did the monitoring and evaluation systems that LDSP has in place help to ensure that activities and outputs were managed efficiently and effectively?</td>
<td>Monitoring reports, Progress reports, Annual reports, Review of M&amp;E matrix, Meeting with programme team, Interview with staff of MACs</td>
<td># of monitoring reports, Frequency of activities monitoring, # of output documents/policy instruments available</td>
<td>Comparative analysis of monitoring reports with programme outputs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Were alternative approaches considered in designing the programme?</td>
<td>Meetings, Interviews, Programme assumptions, Review of PRODOC, Meetings</td>
<td># of alternative measures if any</td>
<td>Comparing PRODOC with responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>What mechanisms have been set in</td>
<td>Policy documents and</td>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td># of functional service centers maintained by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>What is the likelihood that the LDSP programme interventions are sustainable?</td>
<td>To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed or implemented?</td>
<td>To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?</td>
<td>What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained, e.g., through requisite capacities (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Place by LDSP to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?</strong></td>
<td>regulatory instrument reports Service Center reports</td>
<td>Training reports Interview reports Feedback reports from training participants</td>
<td>Meetings Interviews Focus Group discussion Desk review</td>
<td>Interview results Focus groups discussions Meetings</td>
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<td><strong>Meeting with partner agencies Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Meetings Interviews</td>
<td># of synergy programs supported by other partners</td>
<td>Level of partnership commitment with different partners</td>
<td>Analysis programme board meeting minutes</td>
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<td><strong>Observation of reports and feedback information from program stakeholders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meetings with partner agencies Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interview reports Feedback reports from training participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviews Focus Group discussion Desk review</strong></td>
<td><strong># of MACs and CSOs that have adapted legal and policy regulatory instruments % of members of county based population accessing services at county and national levels</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Comparison and observing reports over planned activities</strong></td>
<td><strong># of regulatory instruments effective</strong></td>
<td><strong># of local government actors trained # of training beneficiary CSOs Level of technical and material support provided to MACs and service centers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review documents and partnership meetings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analysis programme board meeting minutes</strong></td>
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<td>Impact</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
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<td>What has happened as a result of the programme or program?</td>
<td>To what extent have poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from LDSP’s interventions?</td>
<td>To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the LDSP programme?</td>
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<td>What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?</td>
<td>Have the programme equally provided the support inclusive of various segments of the Liberian population (poor, indigenous, tribal people, women, disadvantaged and marginalized)</td>
<td>How did the programme equally address the needs of women, men, girls and boys in its design and implementation</td>
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<td>Annual and progress report Interview results Focus group results</td>
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<td>Programme documents Reports Interview and focus group results</td>
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<td>Document review Meetings Interviews Focus groups</td>
<td>Desk review Interviews and Focus groups</td>
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<td># of legal and regulatory frameworks adapted and use in the functions of MACs and CSOs</td>
<td># of persons trained # of MACs and CSOs capacity strengthened # of persons accessing services</td>
<td>An attempt will be done on # of programme beneficiaries disaggregated by sex</td>
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<td>Level of improvement in service delivery accountability in the functions of MACs and CSOs</td>
<td>Observe changes in local citizens’ perception and practice</td>
<td>Observation of reports and interview results</td>
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<td>How many people have been affected?</td>
<td>Proportional representation of various population groups in programme activities Extent of these populations accessing services supported by the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual and progress reports Interviews results Focus group result</td>
<td>Observe strategies used in involving various segments of population</td>
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Annex 3: Theory of Change/ Intervention Logic

The Goal

Creation of equitable, peaceful, transparent and inclusive democratic institutions to enhance political governance at national and local level under a vibrant decentralized system

Outcomes

The need being addressed

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

Program Outputs

The MACs of Liberia tangibly & visibly transfer services, decision making and corresponding resources to the counties according to the decentralization strategy

Enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of MACs at the county level achieved

Improved infrastructure of county service centers to support the decentralization process

Citizens are organized and informed to participate in the decentralization process

Capacity of participatory planning, budgeting and managing of dev't funds as well as revenue collection strengthened with focus on marginalized groups

Capacity of the public, citizens' groups & CSOs strengthened to undertake participatory and performance monitoring, carry out dog functions

Anti-corruption measures (systems & mechanisms) established and functional at county, city, district and community levels

Ensures coordinated formulation of legal framework for decentralization

Public sector and civil service reforms aligned with decentralized policy program

Institutional and human capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Monrovia & counties) build to coordinate and lead the implementation of the decentralization process

GC capacitated to undertake governance assessment and monitoring strengthened

Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization is in place

Ministry of Internal Affairs is capacitated to lead the implementation of decentralization reforms

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## FGD participants

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<td>82.</td>
<td>Actebeouson Nyema</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
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Annex 5: Data collection tools
Key informant interview guide

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<td>2</td>
<td>Specific role during implementation</td>
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<td>Institution/Organization</td>
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<td>Organization’s mandate</td>
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<td>Position in the Organization</td>
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<td>Date of the Interview</td>
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**Introduction**

Hello,

My name is ………………………Your Institution/Organization was selected on the basis of being a key partner and stakeholder in the program. The program is nearing completion and hence the need for a terminal evaluation. Primary purpose of the evaluation is to take stock of the achievements hitherto and capture feedback to inform future programming. You are requested to freely provide information that will enable the achievement of the evaluation objectives. Your views and opinions shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. To ensure this, the names of the respondents shall not feature anywhere in the report.

The interview takes about 30-40 minutes and you are free to stop the interview at any point should you deem yourself unable to continue with it.

**A - Design and Relevance**

1. What key challenges were underlying the decentralization process prior to the program?
2. How effective was the design of the program in addressing these challenges?
3. What key development challenges did this program set out to address?
4. What specific strategies were undertaken at design stage to ensure enhanced program relevance? Probe for: stakeholder consultation & participation, needs assessments done etc.
5. In case this same program is to be redesigned, what modifications would you suggest and why?
6. Specifically, what gaps in the design of the program are evident to you?
7. In your opinion, how have such gaps affected the delivery of the program?
8. What recommendations would you suggest for improving the program?

**B - Implementation**
1. How is the program being implemented?
2. What specific role does your organization play in the program implementation?
3. Any specific challenges you have faced during program implementation?
4. How have such challenges affected the implementation efficiency & effectiveness?
5. What remedies to the above challenges would you suggest?
6. What would you consider as the best and worst practices during program implementation?

C-Efficiency:

1. How adequate are the program allocated funds for the implementation of the required activities by your organization?
2. What gaps have you noted in the resource mobilization and management of the program?
3. To what extent are the resource management procedures being observed including value for money requirements?
4. What specific strategies are being deployed to improve efficiency during program implementation?
5. What more improvements do you consider necessary for enhanced program efficiency?

D. Effectiveness:

1. What are the major program achievements so far?
2. What has been the contribution of UNDP towards realization of program outcomes?
3. What factors beyond the control of the implementing partners that have influenced the outcome of the program?
4. Suggest ways on how the program can be effective in the future

E-Sustainability

1. What are the indications that the program achievements will be sustained?
2. What key obstacles would undermine the sustainability of the program results?
3. Suggest practical ways in which program outcomes can be carried on in the future

F-Cross cutting issues

1. How is gender mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the program?
2. How was Human rights inclusion and empowerment being promoted in the design and implementation of the program?
3. What key gaps are evident as far as gender and human rights mainstreaming in the program is concerned?
4. Give recommendations on how gender and human rights can be appropriately mainstreamed in this program or similar program.

**F-Lessons learnt and best practices**

1. What have been the best and worst practices in addressing issues related to design and relevance, performance and success of the program?

**G-Recommendations**

1. What corrective actions do you recommend for the design, and remaining implementation of the program?
2. What are the appropriate actions to follow up or reinforce the benefits of the program?
3. What are your proposals for future directions underlining remaining part of the programming of the program?

**FGD Guide for program beneficiaries**

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<td>Date of the Interview</td>
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<td>Start time: End time:</td>
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**Introduction**

- Program background
- Evaluation purpose and objectives
- Guidelines for the discussion

The discussion takes about 30-40 minutes and you are free to opt out at any point should you deem yourself unable to continue with it.

**B- Design and Relevance**

a) How is the program designed? Probe for: awareness about the objectives & implementation arrangements.

b) What have you liked most from this program and why?

c) What are the key development needs is the program addressing?

d) In case this same program is to be redesign, what modifications would you suggest and why?

e) Specifically, what gaps in the design of the program are evident to you?
f) In your opinion, how have such gaps affected the delivery of the program?
g) What recommendations would you suggest for the remaining program implementation period?

B-Implementation

7. How were you selected to participate in the program?
8. Any specific challenges you have faced during program implementation?
9. How have such challenges affected the implementation efficiency & effectiveness?
10. What remedies to the above challenges would you suggest?
11. What would you consider as the best and worst practices during program implementation?

C. Effectiveness:

5. What are the major benefits which you have received from the program so far?
6. Is the program well on track to achieve its objectives?
7. What factors could be affecting the program?
8. Suggest ways on how the program can be effective in the future

E-Sustainability

4. What are the indications that the program achievements will be sustained?
5. What key obstacles would undermine the sustainability of the program results?
6. Suggest practical ways in which program outcomes can be carried on in the future

F-Cross cutting issues

5. How is gender mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the program?
6. How was Human rights inclusion and empowerment being promoted in the design and implementation of the program?
7. What key gaps are evident as far as gender and human rights mainstreaming in the program is concerned?
8. Give recommendations on how gender and human rights can be appropriately mainstreamed in this program or similar programs.

F-Lessons learnt and best practices

2. What have been the best and worst practices in addressing issues related to design and relevance, performance and success of the program?

G-Recommendations

4. What corrective actions do you recommend for the design, and remaining implementation of the program?
5. What are the appropriate actions to follow up or reinforce the benefits of the program?
6. What are your proposals for future directions underlining remaining part of the programming of the program?

Annex 6: List of Documents reviewed

1. LDSP PRODUC
2. County Program Document
5. LDSP Communication and Civic Awareness Strategy
6. Local Revenue Generation for Local Governments Assessment Report
7. De-concentration Implementation Strategy
8. Decentralization Implementation Plan
13. Liberia Local Government Assessment Framework
14. The National Decentralization Platform
15. Revenue Sharing Formula Study Report
17. LDSP Work Plans
18. LDSP Implementation Progress Reports
19. Audit Reports