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United Nations Development Programme-Liberia

Terminal Evaluation: Liberia Decentralization Support Program II

International Evaluator and Team Leader: [Cliff Bernard Nuwakora](#)
National Evaluator: Ms. [Angelance K. Browne](#)

PROJECT INFORMATION

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Geographical Map of Liberia-LDSP II Intervention Areas



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Disclaimer

This Terminal Evaluation report was prepared by two (2) Independent Consultants: Cliff Bernard Nuwakora and Angelance Browne commissioned by UNDP. However, the findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UNDP.

Acronym and Abbreviations

ACs	Agencies and Commissions
AWP	Annual Work plan
BSC	Business Startup Center
CFM	Citizens Feedback Mechanism
CSCs	County Service Centers
CSOs	Civil Service Organizations
CSR	Public Sector Reform Agenda, Civil Service Reform
CTF	County Treasury Framework
DEF	Donor Engagement Forum
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DSU	Decentralization Support Units
EMAAS	Electronic Mass Automation Appraisal System
GC	Governance Commission
GPS	Geography Positioning System
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDAD	Institute for Democratic Action and Development
IMCD	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization
IREDD	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
JSF	Joint Stakeholder Forum
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Coalition
LDSP	Liberia Decentralization Support Programme
LGA	Local Government Act
LIPA	Liberia Institute for Public Administration
LOA	Letter of agreement
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAC	Ministries, Agencies and Commissions
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MOT	Minister of Transport
NDIS	National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPDLG	National Policy on decentralization and Local Government
PAPD	Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PMB	Project Management Board
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RCU	Reform Coordination Unit
SMEs	Small and Micro Enterprises
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WAPP	West African Power Pool

Executive Summary

The Liberia Decentralization Support Program (LDSP) is a flagship intervention of UNDP Liberia that aims to support the Government of Liberia in achieving its national development priorities, the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) (2018-2023). The LDSP, which is being implemented from January 2020 to December 2024, is supported by the UNDP, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Government of Ireland (Irish Aid). The primary objective of the LDSP is to support the government's efforts to deliver basic services to the people. To achieve this objective, the program seeks to operationalize the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (NPDLG) and the 2018 Local Government Act. By doing so, the program aims to contribute good governance and socioeconomic growth through the decentralization of services and devolution of revenue-sharing. The LDSP II has a budget of USD 7,133,400 and directly benefits key national institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Finance for Development Planning (MFDP), Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), and Governance Commission (GC), who are essential to the national decentralization process. The program's coverage is wide, reaching across all fifteen counties of Liberia through the regional County Service Centers (CSCs).

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) is commissioned as a requirement stipulated in UNDP Liberia's Evaluation Plan and the LDSP II program document. Its primary purpose is to assess the program's progress towards achieving its stated objectives and the developmental changes that have occurred because of the program's contributions and attributions towards providing decentralized services to the people of Liberia. The TE covers the length of the program's implementation from inception till the present and the entire geography of the program. The evaluation used UNDP Liberia's Country Programme Document (CPD) as the main reference point and the OECD/DAC criteria (Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact) as the foundation. The evaluation assessed the program's interventions, outcomes, outputs, and resources to ascertain how they achieved clear results. The evaluation also assessed the role of LDSP II in furthering equality for all by considering human rights and gender as the other two criteria.

The LDSP II program was developed with a focus on national commitments to key development agendas such as the SDGs, Agenda 2063, PAPD, UNSDCF, and the CPD. The program successfully contributed to the national development through decentralized services, fiscal decentralization, and revenue-sharing. The program was designed and implemented through a consultative process that involved political figures, technocrats, and donors, which enabled it to overcome some challenges experienced during the implementation of Phase I. The LDSP II program achieved most of the results set forth in the project document and turned 15 out of 20 outputs into quantifiable achievements. The program utilized and expanded the gains from Phase I by strengthening the national decentralization process, championing the passage of the Revenue-sharing Law, and creating development opportunities for everyone. The program was able to proceed and achieve all-end-of the project targets despite occasional delays in recruiting consultants/experts due to the need to comply with the UNDP rules and regulations. Across the counties, there are some 7 basic services are being provided by at least 12 national institutions.

The LDSP II program demonstrated a satisfactory degree of efficiency in terms of financing to achieve the planned outputs and outcomes. The five outcome areas were transparent and provided accountability for how resources were utilized. The project was able to implement activities with the resources allocated to it. The program successfully raised enough resources that contributed to its successful implementation. The sustainability of

Liberia's decentralization has made significant strides since the creation of the Revenue-sharing Act. The LDSP II plans to support the passage of the Local Government Act, creating a Department of Decentralization to operationalize the decentralization process. The approval of the Revenue-sharing regulatory framework will enforce the law, sustain the operations of the CSCs, and contribute to local development. According to the program's initial design, of the USD 7,133,400 budget, SIDA, Irish Aid, UNDP, and the government providing a funding commitment of USD 5,089,288.37. Consequently, an unfunded budget of just over USD 2 million remained. As of the evaluation date, the program received a total of USD 2,948,730.35—which also translated into its annual workplan budgets—in funding, while the cumulative project expenditure was USD 2,841,397.50. With the available resources, the program team has accomplished 96% of the planned activities to date. Although the program succeeded in securing most of the required funds, the COVID pandemic had an impact on the amount of funding utilized and received. The program has one year of implementation remaining, during which additional resources will be utilized for developmental purposes.

The sustainability of decentralization efforts in Liberia have progressed significantly since the enactment of the Revenue-sharing Act. This act will ensure that the operations of the CSCs continue and contribute to the development of local communities. The LDSP II program aims to support the passage of the Local Government Act, which will establish a Department of Decentralization to oversee the decentralization process. Furthermore, the approval of the Revenue-sharing regulatory framework is crucial for enforcing the law. However, the program lacks a comprehensive sustainability plan to guide stakeholders and policymakers in furthering the decentralization process. Developing a sustainability plan in consultation with key stakeholders would strengthen national ownership and enhance the success of the decentralization efforts.

The LDSP II has been a game-changer in the decentralization landscape. It has brought about significant legal and policy reforms that have consolidated the gains made in previous interventions. This has resulted in the reduction of resources and time spent by people in the counties to access basic services, leading to significant cost-effectiveness for the population, especially those who were previously unable to access such services. The program has enabled counties to actively participate in their development through revenue-sharing, positively changing the administrative landscape through the LGA. The conduct of CSC staff has also been positively impacted by the program, leading to increased commitment to service delivery. The inclusion of all, especially vulnerable groups such as women and persons with disabilities, has been promoted by the program, enhancing their well-being. Capacity building, infrastructure development, and retooling have also played a significant role in positively impacting service delivery under the decentralization framework.

Also, the terminal evaluation observed, that LDSP II programme was spot on in the promotion of positive changes regarding gender equality. The active participation of women in the county and municipal councils, increased access to crucial services at service centers such as free services for psycho-social support to victims of GBV and rape, inclusion of women in the small grants scheme among others were all positive changes that are directly attributed to the LDSP II programme. All those positive changes are evidence of how LDSP II programme has promoted gender equality. Additionally, the TE observed that gender responsive planning & budgeting interventions were largely targeted and inclusive of women. Evidence showed that skills acquired from the trainings enhanced the

mainstreaming of gender responsiveness in development planning and budgeting at the sub-national levels with women actively involved in the participatory planning processes¹

Regarding Human Rights, TE observed that the LDSP II promoted equal opportunities for both men, women, PWDs in delivery of its outputs. This terminal evaluation noted issues such as the awareness about the legal reforms, provision of crucial services for supporting the vulnerable such as victims of GBV, Rape, Psycho-social support and capacity building initiatives and community feedback mechanism. Affording everyone opportunity was all geared and in-line with promotion of human rights by LDSP II programme.

The evaluation team found that the most significant achievement of LDSP II until the end of 2023 was Outcome 1. This was due to the implementation of all LGA reforms through enhanced participation of stakeholders, including males, females, and PWDs, in decision-making and service delivery. The next most important outcome was Outcome 3, where County Service Centers were empowered and capacitated to improve service delivery at the sub-national level. LDSP II also focused on gender-related activities, which led to an increase in gender awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness. In terms of Outcome 4, Legal and Regulatory Reforms were developed and partially implemented to sustain decentralization. LDSP II played a supportive role in moving the Local Governance Act, Revenue sharing law, and other laws to final approval. The achievements of Outcome 5 were limited, as Program Management Support, Coordination, and Monitoring were strengthened. This was achieved through joint coordination and M&E conducted by UNDP, GOL, and donors. Lastly, Outcome 2, which aimed to fully devolve local government institutions and services at the assigned levels of government, performed poorly due to the lack of devolution of power at the central level.

Recommendations & Lesson Learned

UNDP

- **Recommendation 1:** Formulation of a successor program to ensure full fiscal decentralization by operationalizing and implementing the RSL PFM and LGA; support other local structure to implement LGA; Documentation of best practices and production of knowledge products to inform the successor program.
- **Recommendation 2:** Enhance and strengthen coordination and partnership both internally and externally between government agencies as well as Development Partners and Civil Society.
- **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen the LDSP II program management team by staffing it with specialized experts such as CTA as well as other relevant technical skills for effective capacity building of the Government institutions and departments considering the need for staff motivation through salary harmonization as well as regularizing volunteer staff.
- **Recommendation 4:** Carefully design each outcome and output in an open participatory manner to ensure full beneficiary involvement in program design, to

¹ LDSP 2022 Year End Board Meeting Final

include those at local level outside of Monrovia and ensure it does not overburden the government management capacity.

Government of Liberia (GOL)

- **Recommendation 5:** An urgent and clear plan of action for Revenue Sharing Law full implementation must be given immediate attention to ensure the mobilization of needed resources to operationalize CSCs initiatives. Support CSOs, CBOs, youths, etc. to pressurize GOL; effect intentional mainstreaming of decentralization platform into the budgeting process of all GOL institutions to fast track the process.
- **Recommendation 6:** Grant full devolution of services at local levels to the CSCs and ensure enhancement of political will to accelerate decentralization agenda through the holding of a National Conference/Dialogue on decentralization. (Services at CSCs are still being initiated at the county levels but completed at central level due to authorization challenges encountered to obtain signatures for document locally which is evident of the lack of devolution of power)
- **Recommendation 7:** Make a judicious re-assessment of the costs of the traditional marriage certificate to ensure that poor, marginalized women may benefit; traditional Marriage certificate devolved to 4 counties must be replicated to others and increase the age of birth certificate recipients.
- **Recommendation 8:** Create an enabling environment in terms of infrastructure as well as providing logistical support-(transportation, office equipment, supplies etc,) to enable CSCs in the 15 counties to function adequately.
- **Recommendation 9:** Need for the digitization, automation, and online technology migration of some services in Monrovia and at CSCs; also, strengthen the Community feedback mechanism to improve infrastructure and promote multi-media outreach to all.

Lessons Learned

- Teamwork and coordination were key to delivery of programme management and delivery of its outputs for successful implementation.
- Strengthening coordination and information sharing contributed to trust building and programme success.

1.0. Evaluation Background and Context

Over the years, Liberia has experienced high levels of centralization in the capital Monrovia along with a concession-based growth model which have entrenched socio-economic inequalities (because of many years of conflict) that continued to underlie acute poverty and vulnerability. Centralization and concentration of political and economic power in the capital and inadequate provision of services and infrastructure at the local level have produced uneven development patterns across Liberia.² Although, Liberia has rolled out the de-concentration of various Ministries to the local level and the provision of decentralized public services through the establishment of Country Service Centers (CSCs), a lot still needs to be done to strengthen and ensure transparent, inclusive and accountable decentralized system that facilitates effective service delivery.³ For instance, issues related to decentralization need to be approved in a referendum thus making the issue of decentralization a work in progress and have alluded to the population's skepticism of the government. Strengthening decentralization is very paramount to Liberia's development process and it aligns with Pillar 4 of Liberia National Development Plan, UNSDCF Outcome 4 and UNDPs CPD Outcome 1 that focus on improving governance and transparency.

Against this background, Liberia completed the implementation of the first phase of the Decentralization Programme in 2019. Results accrued from the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP) Phase II (2020-2024) are inclusive governance, provision of basic services, and allocation of authority and resources at the most appropriate levels of government. Centralization of governance has compromised popular participation in national decision-making and has caused inequities in access to basic social services and economic opportunities at local levels. This situation has kept most Liberians in abject poverty and at the margins of their society.

The LDSP Phase II (2020-2024) supported and facilitated the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (NPD LG). It also helped to operationalize the newly gazetted Local Government Act (2018). The LDSP II deliberately targets the decentralization of administrative and political governance in Liberia. The programme is implemented in tandem with the fiscal decentralization component implemented by the MFDP and is aligned to the Peace Building and Reconciliation processes, Public Sector Reform Agenda, and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) - under Governance Pillar IV. By extension, it supports the implementation of all pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the PAPD, and the SDGs particularly goals 1, 5, 16, and 17.

Given the above, the total resources allocated for the implementation of the LDSP Phase II activities and program is USD 2,948,730.35 which was provided by its donors including the UNDP, Swedish Embassy, and Irish Aid. **(See Table 1)** below. Using the abovementioned resources, LDSP Phase II has implemented several activities across all 15 counties in Liberia. Key among those activities have been the organization of more than 30 town hall meetings and regional awareness to enable citizens understand the benefits of the Local Governance Act and Revenue Sharing Act, strengthening of the Citizens Feedback

² UNDP Human development Report, 2018

³ The Story of UNMIL: Supporting Decentralization in Liberia", April 20, 2018.

Mechanism by providing internet coverage and monitoring units for viewing citizens responses on the LIBTALK platform in the County Service Center, enhancing local government officials capacities to manage resources, deliver services, and incorporate gender responsiveness in participatory planning & budgeting, empowering MACs through the training of more than 40 technical staff to deliver services at the County Service Center for more than 14 County Service Centers, improving the infrastructure of more than 8 County Service Centers through the installation of solar power systems, ensuring the passage of the Revenue Sharing Act, drafting of the Revenue Sharing Regulation and the amended Public Financial Management Act.

To achieve decentralization objectives, several stakeholders have worked collaboratively with the LDSP II including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Governance Commission, Liberia Revenue Authority, and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Towards the overarching goal of decentralizing services for citizens, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has supported the LDSP to devolve services at the local level, lead lobbying efforts for the passage of the Revenue Sharing Act, establish County Councils, and strengthen the capacity of the County Service Center's technical staff and infrastructure to provide services to citizens. The Governance Commission has also been instrumental in setting up the county council, assisting in decentralization efforts such as the provision of financial management training, budgeting, and developmental planning of local government officials, organizing dialogues and engagements with youth and students on the local government and Revenue Sharing Acts. The Liberia Revenue Authority has supported the LDSP to rollout the revenue sharing act through the implementation of the real properties expansion project which includes the recruitment of tax agents, implementation of the real estate tax revenue sharing mechanism, training of local government staff to manage revenue transfer, and aided in organizing dialogues with CSO, PWDs, and youth on the Revenue Sharing Law. Finally, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has supported the LDSP in rolling out fiscal decentralization, financial management, and budgeting training.

1.1. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

- **Evaluation Purpose**

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

The UNDP Office in Liberia commissioned this evaluation on decentralization to capture evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the programme (gender and human-rights approach) all to ascertain what has been achieved, how beneficiaries have benefited from the interventions and what lessons could be learned for future interventions. The evaluation served as an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Liberia with an impartial assessment of the results of LDSP's support.

- **Specific objectives**

Specifically, the evaluation objectives were to:

1. Assess the evidence to determine the Programme's contribution to the achievement of national priorities on decentralization, SDGs, UNSSCF and UNDP's Strategy and CPD.
2. Examine evidence to assess the Programme's contribution to strengthening capacities of decentralization mechanisms at national and sub-national levels.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the Programme's strategy including management structure, partnership, and other implementation modalities vs its contribution towards the achievement of the results achieved.
4. Evaluate evidence to assess the availability, affordability, and quality of services accessible to the public at the sub-national level which were otherwise mainly accessible to the public in Monrovia. Assess the Programme's contribution to this achievement or the lack of.
5. Examine the evidence of the Programme's contribution to the improvement or the lack of fiscal space at the national and sub-national levels.

1.2. Evaluation Scope

As the project ends in December 2024, the outcome evaluation was conducted between October and November to assess the LDSP II progress, challenges as well as document lessons learned, while providing strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the next Decentralization Programme to start in 2025.

This Terminal evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of UNDP's assistance across the major thematic and cross cutting areas of local government and the entire decentralization process considering its coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender, disability inclusion and human rights with a view to enhancing LDSP programs under UNDP's IGP portfolio. Geographically, the evaluators with approval of the Project Management considered sample size of four counties for site visit purposes including: (Capemount, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bong Counties) respectively. It entailed, project stakeholder consultation meetings, field visits and data collection (both qualitative and quantitative).

Specifically, the project 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 of decentralization and whether they are well conceived for achieving planned objectives.
- 3) The progress to date under the outputs and what can be derived in terms of lessons learned for future Decentralization programming support.

The evaluation considered the pertinent outcomes and outputs as stated in the LDSP project document. The specific outcomes under the LDSP Programme to be assessed relate to UNSDCF Outcome # 4/ UNDP Outcome #1: 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.

A detailed analysis of the achievements at both outcome and output level is presented in section of this report on the effectiveness of the programme. LDSP II 5 targeted outcomes are as follows:

Outcome 1: LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery.

Outcome 2: Local government institutions and services are fully devolved at the assigned levels of government.

Outcome 3: County Service Centres empowered and capacitated for improved service delivery at the sub-national level.

Outcome 4: Legal and Regulatory Reforms developed and implemented to sustain decentralization.

Outcome 5: Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring strengthened.

The table below provides a breakdown of the total contribution per donor vs. the total budgeted amount with percentages (%) for the period under review.

Table 1: Donor Contribution to LDSP II for 2020-2024 in USD⁴

Donor	Total Amt. Received	% of total Amt. received
UNDP	1,887,187.41	64%
SIDA	648,720.69	22%
IRISH	412,822.25	14%
GOL	0	0%
TOTALS BUDGET	2,948,730.35	100%

1.3 Evaluation Criteria & Questions

The TE followed the UNDP-Terminal Evaluation and the UNEG Guidelines It used the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, disability inclusion and human rights, considering the post-conflict and fragile nature of the country. The analysis was conducted according to the OECD DAC definitions of the evaluation criteria, in conformance with UNEG evaluation norms and standards.

According to the Guidelines, the TE provided evidence-based credible, useful, and reliable information. It has set-up a collaborative as well as a participatory approach to ensure close cooperation with the project team, government counterparts in Liberia with focus on the UNDP Country Office, UNDP Regional team, the national, regional, and local levels, and other key stakeholders. The ToRs mention a few sub-questions, which formed the basis of the analysis. The evaluation matrix in the annex summarised evaluation questions from the ToRs, sub-questions, as well as indicators and means for verification.

⁴ UNDP-LDSP 2 Financial Analysis 2020-2024

1.3.1 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation answered the following questions and focused on the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability alongside cross-cutting issues as Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Human Rights. It also included an assessment of the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross cutting issues into consideration:

Relevance: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partners.

- How well has the programme aligned with government and agency priorities?
- To what extent is the LDSP II in line with the UNDP mandate, national. priorities and the requirements of targeting women, men, and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent has LDSP II selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?

Effectiveness: Extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance.

- What evidence is there that the programme has contributed towards developmental change at the national and local levels? □ To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made toward their achievement.
- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
- What were the positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work?
- What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP II performance?
- Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?

Efficiency: Extent to which the outputs and/or desired effects have been achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.).

- To what extent has there been an economic use of financial and human resources?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits from the development intervention continue after termination of the external intervention, or the probability that they continue in the long term in a way that is resilient to risks.

- To what extent will target men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP II to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?
- To what extent have a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?

- Do the legal frameworks, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what policies extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?

Impact: Extent to which the project's intervention is expected to affect its targets beneficiaries negatively or positively (E.g.: - community, people environment, organization, etc.).

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

Human Rights: Extent to which HR was factored and addressed in the program design and implementation and have enabled the poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups to benefit from UNDPs work in support of local decentralization.

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

Gender Equality: Extent to which gender was factored and addressed in the project design and implementation, and how these have contributed to the participation and benefit of women under the project.

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

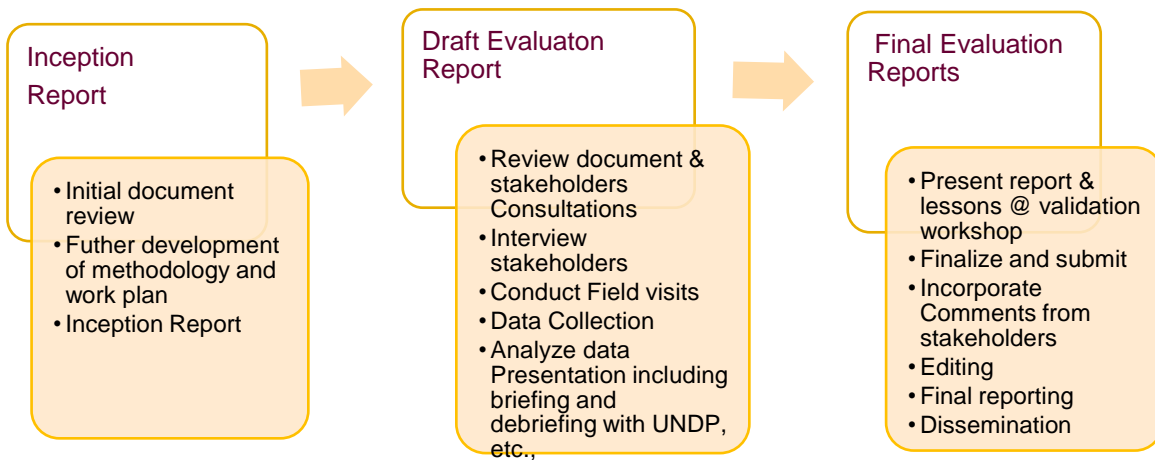
Based on the above analysis, the evaluators provided overarching conclusions on LDSP II results in these various areas of intervention, as well as making adequate recommendations on how the programme could adjust its programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities to ensure that the programme has sustainable results in the future. The evaluation is additionally expected to offer wider lessons for UNDP's support in Liberia and elsewhere.

1.4. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance the validity of the results. Qualitative methods were largely 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 several 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.

Phased Approach (Desk, field, Synthesis, Dissemination)

Figure 1: Phased approach to the terminal evaluation



Using an outcome harvesting approach, the evaluation took stock of the program achievements in the light of the set targets and baseline values, assessed the appropriateness of program 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 20 purposively selected stakeholders participated in key informant interviews as well as group discussions (See Annex 7). Field visits were made to selected counties. In addition to the qualitative data sources, a beneficiary survey involving (20 males and 10 females) respondents was conducted at 5 County Service Centers. The overall execution was guided by the ‘Assessment to action’ approach with specific but somehow overlapping phases as shown in figure 1.2 below.

Figure 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 and challenges

Some of the data was not made available to the evaluation team such as market listenership survey reports, all quarterly reports and enacted laws and associated regulations. The failure to access such vital documents limited the extent to which deep analysis could be undertaken in relation to how all outputs directly contributed to envisaged outcomes.

2.0. The LDSP II- Description and Intervention Logic

The LDSP II intervention logic/Theory of Change as illustrated in **Annex 2** and its objectives are clear as outlined in a well elaborated logical and clear theory of change which articulates the casual pathways on how and under what conditions the LDSP II intervention activities shall influence change processes in the decentralization process in Liberia. However, evaluation team has noted that in the operationalization of the proposed interventions to yield anticipated results, several loopholes come to the fore and to some extent weakened the causal pathways. Key areas of concern observed by the evaluating team included limited political will at MAC level in devolving and decentralization of services; capacity building initiatives were not operationalized in uniform manner in terms of access to equipment and tools. For instance, whereas some CSCs were provided new equipment, others had defective, absolute equipment in state of disrepair due to lack of maintenance.

3.0. Evaluation Findings and Analysis

The presentation of findings follows the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with focus on program relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The analysis also considers the UNDP programming principles of gender, disability, and human rights and Leaving No One behind. The strategic analysis of the results in this section forms the basis of the conclusions, best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations presented in section three 3:10 and four.

3.1. Program design and relevance

Key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent is the LDSP II in line with the UNDP mandate, national priorities?
2. How well has the programme aligned with government and agency priorities?
3. What are the priorities and the requirements of targeting women, men, and vulnerable groups?
4. To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?
5. To what extent has LDSP II selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?

The LDSP II program relevance is well articulated in the program interventions and related changes brought about in terms of targeted institutions and beneficiaries. The LDSP II program built capacity of the institutions and personnel at MACs and CSCs as well Municipal councils enabling them delivery critical services such as birth certificates, Traditional and western marriage certificates, corporate business registration, business support services and small grants. The latter services improved the wellbeing and livelihoods of the vulnerable and marginalised with key beneficiaries being women, youth, PWDs among others. The creation of town councils and associated legislative powers, and participatory gender budgeting and planning addressed the pressing issues of inclusion of all in governance and planning based on local priorities which addressed the relevant needs of the citizens. The LDSP II operationalisation of SDGs principle of “*Leaving No One Behind*” in its interventions, the support to enactment of gender policy and strategy support were meant ensure women and men issues are well addressed. From the evidence available in documents reviewed and interviews conducted, the evaluation affirms that the LDSP II addressed peace building, poverty reduction and governance challenges. Moreover, the

objectives of the LDSP II were to deliver i) inclusion of all citizens; and (2) ensuring the delivery of the basic and social services of the citizens of Liberia.⁵

Under this sub-section, the evaluation assessed how the program alignment to UN and UNDP mandates in Liberia and its alignment to national development priorities was the right thing and how it contributed to extent to its success. In view of the latter, the terminal evaluation elaborates here below how alignment contributed to addressing the development challenges and entrenched of the decentralisation agenda.

3.1.1. Extent to which LDSP II was in line with UNDP mandate & National priorities

By aligning to UNSDCF outcome 4: *By 2024, people in Liberia, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, and inclusive and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels* and the UNDP outcome1: *By 2024, the people in Liberia, especially the vulnerable and the disadvantages, 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*; the LSDPII was enabled to ensure the inclusion of all and focused on strengthening capacities of relevant institutions, personnel and targeted beneficiaries to ably contribute to addressing issues afflicting Liberian such as conflict, poverty, services access to all Liberians as well contributing to SDG implementation with the operationalization of the principle of “*Leaving no one behind*” and the awareness about legal reforms such as GA,CFM... The terminal evaluation noted that LSDPII interventions were enabled targeting and inclusion of all particularly in the planned and implemented interventions such as seed funding to SMES(Goal 1), deployed the gender markers and SGBV services on planned activities to deliver on some outputs a(Goal 5),planned conflict resolution tools such as CFM and land registration(Goal 16) as well as planned partnership with MCAs, CSOs and Media to deliver on specific outputs and resource mobilization among others(Goal 17).

3.1.2. Extent of LDSP II Alignment to government and agency priorities

The primary goal of the LDSP II program was to enhance the achievements of the LDSP1 in its efforts to strengthen the decentralization agenda. The evaluation has established that the alignment of LDSP II program of the PAPD the vision 2030 particularly governance pillar 4: *“inclusion, equitable distribution of national wealth, and rights based approach focused in Liberia vision 2030”*⁶ enabled the roll out of the interventions(CFM,LGA awareness campaigns, capacity building initiatives for institutions, personnel and targeted beneficiaries of small grants) because there were already enabling policy environment prescribed in Liberia Decentralization and Local Development and County Support Team programs, Local Government Act (LGA) of 2018, the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance amongst other sectoral policies and strategies including the fiscal decentralization, Public Sector Reform Agenda, Civil Service Reform (CSR) Land Policy, Gender Policy, National Capacity Development Plan among others.

3.1.3. Extent of LSDP II priorities with beneficiary (women, men, and vulnerable groups) needs and priorities:

The evaluation noted that the LDSP II programme design catered for inclusion of the vulnerable namely women, youth, and persons with disabilities as targeted beneficiaries of the interventions aimed at including everyone. Indeed, evidence from the documents reviewed show that CSCs capacity was strengthened to provide vital services such as

⁵ LDSP III programme document.

⁶ 2020 LDSP II Annual Report Final

traditional and western marriage certificates, birth certificates and free services such as counseling services, gender-based violence etc which immensely benefitted women in rural areas. The community feedback mechanism provided avenues for all to have a voice in the affairs of governance regarding matters affecting them and service delivery.

LSDP II project by design took interest in supporting and addressing gaps in inclusive governance which aligns with Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa. It also sought to bridge the gap in gender inequality and women participation in politics and governance by ensuring inclusion of women in all capacity building initiatives at all levels of programme intervention, community feedback mechanisms and psychosocial support services to victims that suffered GBV, sexual violence etc. The LDSP II planned interventions under the SME grant to support Women and PWDs alike were intended to support the vulnerable and marginalised cope with after effects of shocks associated with Covid-19 and prevalent poverty in most parts of Liberia.⁷ In addition, the SME support extended to PWDs was intended reduce stigma and contributed to improved wellbeing.⁸ Lastly, LDSP II also addressed LNOB aspects through a special focus of county-level interventions partnering up with grassroots institutions, women's groups etc.

Thus, the alignment of the LDSP II programme to national priorities was evident in the programme document and monitoring reports on interventions implemented so far. In its approach, the programme aimed at addressing the most pressing development needs of Liberia especially issues to do with inclusion of majority of the populations due to erstwhile centralized service delivery, chronic poverty and conflict due to bad governance.

3.1.4. Extent to which the theory of change espouses the outcome model and its relevance; and appropriate vision on which the initiatives were based

The theory of change for LDSP II programme is well articulated and properly demonstrates how the strategic interventions will link to outputs which in turn lead to envisaged outcomes that contribute to the ultimate goal: *“Strengthen of government decentralization efforts and improve the quality of the delivery of services to all Liberians and residents across the 15 Counties.”*

It was envisaged that the LSDP II project would close gaps particularly lack of results framework, forestall logistics and infrastructural challenges faced by the CSCs, close capacity gaps at county level, reduce high staff turnover, stops delays in financial disbursements and approval of work plans and close deficiencies in policies required to support decentralization which could be significant barriers to achievement of the programme results.

The evaluation assessed whether the theory of change assumptions held true during the programme implementation and implications on closing the envisaged gaps to realize the targeted results. Here below are the findings of the evaluation assessment:

- ***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.***

MIA and GC embraced the capacity building initiatives which greatly enabled them deliver on their mandates. Notably, developments in this regard include issuing birth certificates, traditional and modern marriage certificate, drivers' licence, motor vehicle plates, counseling services etc.

⁷ Final Report (2022) Mid-term review of the UNDP CPD 2020-2024

⁸ LDSP II Programme document

- **Relevant infrastructure in place to enable MIA and GC play their roles once their capacities are strengthened.**

LSDP II programme supported investments in infrastructure and tools that strengthened the capacity of MIA and GC to effectively play their roles in the furtherance of the decentralization agenda.

- **Existence of functional MIA and GC structures and systems and that what is required is capacity strengthening to propel their functionality.**

LSDP II supported the improved functionality of MIA and GC structures and systems. This was done by building capacity of staff, infrastructure and equipment which contributing greatly to their functionality as far as decentralisation was concerned.

- **Political will from government to embrace and support the necessary policy and legal reforms.**

There has been some political will exhibited from government as portrayed by the amendment of Public Financial Management (PFM) Law, enactment of the Revenue Sharing Formula Bill and the Ministry of Local Government Act. The legal reforms have streamline systems and structures of decentralization programme delivery.

- **A supportive public embracing decentralized services and reforms but lacking capacity to effectively participate in the decentralized system.**

The LSDP II programme largely supported the LGA awareness campaigns and Community feedback mechanism to a great extend to create much needed awareness among the citizenry on the understanding of the CSCs service delivery and LGA Act. The evaluation noted that indeed there has been improved appreciation of the decentralized services among the Liberian citizenry, though challenges remain apparent about the failure of all MACs to decentralize their services and the breakdown of the equipment and limited supplies of consumables.

- **Existence of an M&E system but requiring strengthening for enhanced functionality**

The LSDP II established a strong M&E system with an ME expert at its helm. Notable about the enhanced M&E function is the participatory approaches involving stakeholders and partners. In addition to production of regular quarterly and annual reports, additional monitoring reports were included. They are Back to Office Reports, Board Meetings reports and technical working group reports. All categories of monitoring reports provided detailed information disaggregated by gender where possible and highlighted issues that were pro-actively addressed by concerned stakeholders during programme implementation phase.

- **Willing Development Partners to support the decentralization policy in Liberia**

It has been noted by the evaluation that as result of the LDSP performance so far a number of development partners such as Sweden, European Union Representative, UNDP and USAID were reported as having expressed the willingness to support the decentralization policy in terms of future programmatic interventions and funding.

- **Existence of structures and mechanisms for Accountability and transparency and inclusive planning**

As observed by this evaluation, the notable structures and mechanisms for accountability include Citizen Feedback Mechanism, gender planning and budgeting at Municipal and county level and capacity building of county treasures in areas of procurement and management of revenues.

The overall observation by this evaluation is that the theory of change held true of the its assumptions and the LDSP II interventions indeed tried to bridge up all the gaps with varying success due to matters beyond programme control.

3.2. Efficiency

Key Evaluation Questions

- To what extent has there been an economic use of financial and human resources?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management

Efficiency of this Terminal Evaluation measures the extent to which the Extent to which the outputs and/or desired effects have been achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.). This determined how LDSP II has achieved its desired/planned results outputs, and outcomes in relation to the allotted financial resource: Considering the period under review, (October 2020 - October 2023), the project has been able to keep on track towards implementing its planned activities within the specified period. As to date, there is approximately full delivery of most of the financial and technical support for the LDSP II implementation.

The evaluation team discovered that the progress reports of all 5 outcomes areas were transparent and provided accountability of how resources were utilized. Quarterly and annual progress reports were well prepared and provided critical information on the activities undertaken and the outputs produced. Also, Projects Boards were fully operational and results from meetings were key to programme implementation and economical use of financial and human resources applied. Assessment revealed that resources were used for intended planned activities and concentrated on the achievements of those results as reflected in the LDSP II financial analysis. **(See Table (4)).** Other factors that relate to efficiency include: - The monitoring & evaluation aspect include efforts devoted to institutional capacity development such as, capacity development training that were undertaken by the project, the utilization of knowledge and skills obtained from the various training were assessed and achieved.

3.2.1. Financial, economic resources and management

During the period under review, the use of economic, financial, and human resources was well recorded. Assessment revealed that resources were used for intended planned activities and concentrated on the achievements of some of those results. For example: -four (4) Civil Society Organizations were issued grants, and they implemented the second phase of awareness and outreach activities on the Local Government Act and Citizens Feedback Mechanism. A total of 1,172 persons (685 male & 114 female) were directly reached through 15 townhall meetings held during the LGA awareness raising, 3,800 copies of animated posters printed and distributed, and aired jingles on 7 radio talk shows which reached an estimated 2,450 citizens in Grand Gedeh, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, and Maryland Counties.

To improve citizen participation and access to basic public services, particularly by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the LDSP Phase II supported the implementation of an innovative, information technology-enabled citizens' feedback mechanism launched in 2019. Currently, the (CFM) platform is in 5 pilot counties (Bomi, Grand Bassa, Nimba,

Grand Gedeh, and Sinoe). The CFM is a mobile and online platform designed to receive, verify, compile, analyse and channel citizens' perceptions of public service standards to the various Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) for feedback and action in near-real time. It has provided citizens with information on key services offered by the country's 112 Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) and on the implementation of the government's flagship medium term development plan, the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). The CFM which also serves as a central database is available to all MACs and serves as a robust depository of key data on service delivery (eg.1000 plus citizens were informed and this has increased citizens' use of the system by improving Short Message Service (SMS) traffic to 63.1%. Also, data from this mechanism has enabled the design and implementation of a performance management system for the civil service, and inform the planning, implementation, and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals.

TE established that in-person engagement was also conducted with 20 key stakeholders (17 male & 3 females) including Commissioners, Elders, Chiefs, and Development Superintendents about the project activities and meeting dates. These awareness activities contributed to improved citizens dialogue and participation in national governance and engender wider public narratives about the LGA; The LDSP conducted a Solar Maintenance Training Workshop which included 25 technicians (24 males & 1 female) from 13 County Service Centers (Lofa, Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Rivercess, Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Bong, Grand Kru, Rivergee, Grand Gedeh) were trained on major systems components of solar system, systems operation, solar maintenance system including- importance of maintenance, benefits of maintenance, types of maintenance, preventive maintenance, corrective maintenance, roles of the solar panels, charge controller, batteries, and the inverters. The training also included highlights on rules of cleaning, charge controller maintenance, the review of inverter display panel for any recorded faults. skills training concluded with practical assimilation exercises on solar installation and maintenance skills.

County Council setup was completed in Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Rivergee, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Rivercess and Grand Bassa Counties in compliance with Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act. The UNDP through the LDSP provided support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Governance Commission to establish County Councils in the seven counties. The County Council is responsible to approve development plans, budgets, and levy taxes and fines for the local government structures. Also, the LDSP II conducted capacity-building training for 76 financial management officers (70 men & 6 women) from Nimba, Bong, Margibi, and Grand Bassa county treasuries. The training focused on Fiscal Decentralization/Financial Management highlighting the newly enacted Revenue Sharing Act.

In continuation of the Real Estate Tax Expansion Project, the LRA signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the UNDP valued at \$150,000 USD to support the rollout and implementation of Real Estate Tax Expansion project in Grand Bassa County. As such, the project was officially launched on August 5 and 90 tax agents trained were deployed in District #3 in Grand Bassa County including Neekreen, Harlandville, Central, and Upper Buchanan areas. Tax Agents have also utilized Kobo Collect and Electronic Mass Automation Appraisal System (EMAAs) to capture real properties, as such Tax agents have captured 3,861 properties out of total target of 9,000 properties for the fiscal year of 2023.

Few Joint Monitoring & Evaluation activities were undertaking by UNDP, GOL, development partners, stakeholders etc., to adequately boost the project performance as expected for quality assurance, compliance to impact monitoring and supervision required. However, the need for additional periodic monitoring visits to CSCs and CSO partners to assess

compliance, progress and impacts of interventions cannot be overemphasized. Accordingly, the evaluation team were informed by CSCs about limited field presence from the project and other development partners which needs more visibility. It was discovered that monitoring & evaluation mechanisms put in place to measure progress towards the achievement of results were not as effective as expected due to limited resources hence, M & E is still a continuous working progress for the period under review.⁹

3.2.2 Human resources (Staff input)

High staff turn-over issues including loss of Champions institutional memory did in some way impaired the strategic planning process of the programme. (Eg MIA, CSCs, MACs) and needs to be addressed. Especially, those MACs faced with indefinite Volunteering staff. Human resources management at all levels is a potential issue. Most of the staff were affected by the GOL harmonization program, inadequate enumeration, etc. which led to resignation. Other factors relating to efficiency including: - Institutional capacity development such as, capacity development trainings undertaken by the projects with no computer software, office equipment available. Utilisation of knowledge and skills obtained from these training programmes were also assessed.

3.2.3. Extent to which resources have been used efficiently and activities supporting the strategy have been cost-effective

Effective decentralization and inclusive local governance are key strategies to promote sustainable peace and inclusive growth. In this regard, LDSP II strengthened the capacity of local government officials and institutions to implement the 2018 LGA, scaled up the successful county service center model for service provision to 15 counties and ensure fiscal decentralization through county treasures across Liberia. These activities directly supported national efforts to establish and enhance administrative systems at all levels of local government and create operational framework for financing local governments and that measures that were taken to ensure that county level service delivery was beneficial to women, men, youths, elderly, and other marginal groups.¹⁰

Decentralization is geared towards bringing quality services closer to the people. Thus, LDSP II provided a decentralized basic service structure whereby citizens no longer travel for miles to the capital for services which leads to cost-effectiveness.

Predicated on the above, the TE found the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme to be satisfactory based on a detailed assessment using different factors such as (a) Reality of Timeframe; (b) Decentralization Reform Programme; and (c) Fiscal Decentralization and Establishment of Effective and Transparent Financing Mechanism for Local Government Service Delivery, etc.

LDSP II has demonstrated satisfactory degree of efficiency in terms of financing to achieve the planned outputs and outcomes although the project experienced some slow Level of progress primarily because of the COVID-Pandemic, past and present government transfer of power, which led to the some dis-connection between the timeframe for administrative, political, and fiscal reforms issues. The project budget and amount utilized for the period 2020 -2023 can be seen in Table (1) below, which is taken from UNDP data.

According to the program's initial design, of the USD 7,133,400 budget, SIDA, Irish Aid, UNDP, and the government providing a funding commitment of USD 5,089,288.37.

⁹ LDSP II Annual & Quarterly Reports 2021-2023

¹⁰ LDSP II PRODOC, 2020

Consequently, an unfunded budget of just over USD 2 million remained. As of the evaluation date, the LDSP II Expenditure delivery summary reflected a cumulative total budget of USD 2,948,730.35—which also translated into its annual workplan budgets—in funding, while the cumulative project expenditure was USD 2,841,397.50. With the available resources, the program team has accomplished 96% of the planned activities to date. The program has one year of implementation remaining, during which additional resources will be utilized for developmental purposes.

According to UNDP data, LDSP II financial analysis for the period ranging from 2020 October – October 2023 reflected yearly approved budget figures of USD 256,214.08, 808,874.37, 992,112.96, 891,528.98 respectively and the yearly expenditure utilized figures of USD 249,214.08, 808,401.13, 986,830.19, 796,952.10 respectively. This amounted to cumulative budget figure of USD 2,948,730.35 and cumulative amount utilized figure of USD 2,841,397.50. The Project delivery rate was 97%, 100%, 99%, and 89% respectively. The average delivery rate of the project was 96 Percent (%) for the four years implementation period as shown in **table (4)** below.¹¹ Although the program succeeded in securing most of the required funds, the COVID pandemic had an impact on the amount of funding utilized and received.

Table 2: Expenditure delivery summary

EXPENDITURE DELIVERY SUMMARY				
LDSP II FINANCIAL ANALYSIS 2020 OCTOBER - 2023 OCTOBER				
Project No.	Year	Approved Budget	Amount Utilized	Utilized Percentage (delivery) (%)
122614	2020	256,214.08	249,214.08	97%
	2021	808,874.37	808,401.13	100%
	2022	992,112.96	986,830.19	99%
	2023	891,528.98	796,952.10	89%
	TOTAL	2,948,730.39	2,841,397.50	96%

3.2.4 Extent to which the project funds and activities were delivered in a timely manner

The Evaluation Team noted that although UNDP has delivered goods and services in line with administrative procedures, its efficiency in supporting local governance initiatives such as the LDSP II has been adversely affected by cumbersome procurement processes and a weak field presence mid-way into project implementation. There were frequent complaints from all levels that UNDP procedures have been very long, especially those linked to procurement, causing delays that affected the ability of LDSP to deliver timely against results. Also, GoL contributions were often delayed, and recipients frequently experience shortfalls to the extent that checks issued to CSCs could not be redeemed on time at the issuing banks even though the deconcentration county service centers provided direct revenues to the State. The project’s impact and outcome of results were hampered by initial weak monitoring and evaluation due to late recruitment of an M&E officer coupled with insufficient investments of time and adequate resources. Additionally, the high turnover of technicians within Government resulting to loss of champions and institutional memory who should be responsible to drive the decentralization agenda has impaired the strategic planning process. The terminal evaluation has established that reduction of procurement

¹¹ UNDP Data-LDSP II Financial Analysis, 2023

bureaucracy for efficiency & cost effectiveness will increase delivery of results for project implementation timely.

3.2.5. Extent to which M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensured effective and efficient project management.

Effective and efficient implementation of the LDSP II required robust and continuous monitoring and evaluation processes to discover what is working positively and the challenges associated with its implementation. This provided an opportunity to determine and ensure whether the interventions are on track. Therefore, after careful review, it was established that progress reports were well structured reflecting progress of achievements of the intervention in a timely manner. However, unlike the narrative structural reporting done previously, the M & E reporting process was changed to be more results oriented as such, new reporting templates-tools were developed and are now being used by the implementing partners. This has improved the reporting process tremendously.

TE discovered that the LDSP II established a robust M&E system and recruited an M&E expert to advise and support the monitoring function of the project. M&E expert effectively executed the monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation noted that key achievements include joint stakeholders and participatory monitoring as well as capturing gender disaggregated data to the extent possible. Besides, production of regular quarterly and annual reports, additional monitoring reports were produced that include Back to Office Reports, Results framework report, Board Meetings reports and technical working group reports. The evaluation assessed all the categories of monitoring reports produced and is satisfied that they were highly informative because they provided detailed reports and highlighted issues that were pro-actively addressed by concerned stakeholders during program implementation.

However, from the observations made by the evaluation, LDSP II did not conduct a mid-term review (MTR) contrary to the design of the program as prescribed in the project document. Failure to conduct a mid-term review meant that the project could miss the opportunity for critical learning that could have helped review and overcome some risks such as de-concentration of signatures from MACs to CSCs and delayed or lack of disbursement from central government to CSCs. Furthermore, the evaluation noted that most reports were regularly produced as envisaged in the program design especially quarterly and annual reports.

The annual workplan included indicators which vary from year to year and have been cautiously followed. Training have been delivered on M&E for CSCs and county staff, while the main form of M&E were the weekly reports sent on the delivery of services, without other adequate details such as qualitative appreciations. Additionally, it was revealed that most of the data were disaggregated according to men, women, boys and girls, youth, and people with disability and there was adequate information on the impact of LDSP II interventions. The M&E data collection activities did not only focus on process and output monitoring but indicated some information on changes in the lives of beneficiaries and tracking of results. Few weaknesses were observed in terms of setting qualitative indicators to which qualitative statements of outcome and impact from beneficiaries could be linked. Example: Output 1.2 indicators were not SMART; the CFM indicators, 60% were not pointed to direct result which should have been done out of surveys that were not done at the time. It was observed that the project operated almost 60% without an M & E officer and with no Mid-Term Review undertaken which placed extensive burden on project implementation and the Evaluation Team.

It is worth noting that there has been some intentional positive improvement in the M&E of the project to ensure effective and efficient monitoring. This involved Joint monitoring conducted by UNDP, GOL, Donor-Ireland, and Swedish embassies, at the field level considering the five levels of outcome that have positively impacted the project results. The field presence impact and outcome of these results were attributed to investments of time and resources by both project staff, UNDP, GOL, and development partners. Some M&E activities included the following: -

A joint monitoring visits with UNDP, Gol, Ireland, and Swedish embassies to Margibi, Bong and Nimba counties where they discovered that although national level responses to CFM were slow, there were efforts by County Service Coordinators to respond to issues raised by citizens through CFM at the sub-national level.

After careful review and consultation, the ET has established and revealed according to consolidated M&E Reports that on the average, services at eight (8) out of the ten (10) County Service Centres visited were basically functional. Margibi, Bong, River Gee, Maryland, Grand Kru, Gbarpolu, Nimba, and Grand Cape Mount CSC are currently rendering basic services. However, services at Bomi and Lofa County Service Centers are barely effective offering very limited services. This is because the solar power system at the Lofa CSC is damaged thus rendering the CSC without electricity since May 2023. This has halted the provision of several services to citizens. Additionally, services are at a standstill in Bomi County due to the lack of operation fund for more than 2 years, lack of cooperation by MACs, and the recentralization of most services of MACs. To date, the installation of solar power systems in Margibi, Bong, Rivergee, Gbarpolu, Bomi, and Grand Cape Mount Counties have addressed critical service delivery hurdles encountered by local government units in generating electricity and delivering efficient services. Respondents in Bong, Capemount, Bassa and Margibi averred that since the installation of the solar power system, services have regularly resumed and brought about remarkable change to employee work behaviors because it keeps staff seated in offices and attending to clients fulltime, prevented regular occurrences of theft thus improving security coverage at the CSC, improved regular consolidated reporting of all MACs at the CSC, and limited the hand-to-hand turnover of reports from various MACs to the CSC Coordinator's Office for data entry and collation. Additionally, all MACs use the Solar Power System for generating reports, completing assigned tasks/services for service seekers, and has improved the overall operations of the county administration by providing power to the office of the superintendent, and other critical offices.

Although recent field visits conducted by the evaluation team to Cape mount, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Bong Counties revealed that M&E intervention has contributed positively to project implementation, it was established that delivery of most of the services at CSCs are still being initiated at the county levels but completed at central level due to authorization challenges encountered to obtain signatures for document locally which is evident of the lack of devolution of power. Margibi is the only CSCs that is fully operational and currently delivering all services. Also, traditional marriage certificate is the only service that is currently done locally in counties while service for driver license is only done in Margibi and Nimba counties respectively because additional equipment procured by UNDP is still at GSA uninstalled. Hence, there is need to strengthen coordination and interrelations at national and between national and local levels to adequately sustain the project.

3.2.6. Organization and management

The ultimate focus of the organization and management of the LSDPII programme was to ensure that there is pro-activeness, sustainability and inter-connectivity as prescribed in the programme document.¹² Here below, is an assessment of role of each of the effective organs of LSDP II management and extent to which they contributed to pro-activeness, sustainability, and inter-connectivity to ensure effective implementation of interventions and delivery of results. The ET presented the organizational structure and programme management as follows:

The TE hereby presents the management arrangements for this project as specified in the project document and summarized in the organogram chart (**Annex 5**). It is observed that during the projects' implementation, no changes or restructuring of the original management arrangements were affected but few were effective. Performance of various management structures is elaborated here below:

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization (IMCD) chaired by the President, with the Minister of Internal Affairs serving as secretary to the Committee. Accordingly, it held meetings twice each year with membership of relevant ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs). The Committee was constituted to report on progress of planned activities and allowed the President to have on-hands monitoring of the decentralization processes.

The next line of management authority is the Programme Management Board (PMB). This Board was responsible for implementation management of the Plan, it identified priorities, provided technical guidance and strategic direction in Plan implementation, and supervised NDIS. (see organogram in **Annex 5**). The Board effectively provided advice and supported the harmonization and coordination of all stakeholder contribution to Plan implementation. The Board was chaired by MIA and Co-Chair by the Chairperson of the GC and the Minister from MFDP as both co-chairs. All heads of sector MACs, and the Directors-General of the CSA and LISGIS are members. A PMB meeting occurred minimum once every three months to take inventory of where each component of the Plan is with respect to progress made. In so doing it ensured the PMB timely approve of work plans ensured accountability, timely implementation of activities and management and achievement of targeted results.

Evaluation Team also observed that next in line to the NDIS was the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs): They fell under the supervision of the NDIS, and TAVGs and comprised of TWG technicians and professionals seconded from MACs and donor organizations that bring personal and institutional technical and professional expertise, knowledge, and experiences on various thematic areas. TWG focused on the establishment of local government structures, financing of local governments, development planning in local governments and county economic development. In this regard, TWP through several meetings ably coordinated LDSPII programme partners in matter provided adequate and time technical support such as providing policy direction between donors and MACs.

Additionally, ET revealed that a Project Management Team (PMT) was responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and is accountable to the LDSP II Program Manager for the performance of the project. The project team is based at UNDP CO, Monrovia. The

¹² Signed LDSP II Project Document

PMT was led by a full-time staff comprising a Project Manager, Project M&E Officer, Project Finance and Administration Assistant, finance. The PMT was accountable to the LDSP Program Manager for the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of the activities carried out, as well as for the use of funds. Finally, the project is directly supervised by the Team Lead, Inclusive Governance Pillar/UNDP. The PMT is appreciated by the various stakeholders as having provided adequate hands on technical support that enabled the LDSPII achieve the targeted results as prescribed in the workplans and program document.

ET observed that the M&E framework has facilitated effective monitoring. It has focused on performance of achievement of outputs derived from implementation of activities. M&E provided regular tracking of performance through the review of inputs, outputs, and outcomes in each thematic area of the AWP. In terms of project assurance, UNDP CO monitored the project's implementation and achievement of the project outcomes and outputs and ensured the proper use of UNDP funds.

As requested by the GoL, UNDP CO provided the following support services for the implementation of this project and recovered the actual direct and indirect costs incurred by the Country Office in delivering such services as stipulated in the Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the GoL and UNDP.

All relevant project staff was trained by UNDP during the early implementation phase on administrative issues, financial matters, procurement, etc. This contributed to strengthening the administration and financial management capacities of the project implementation partners.

ET has established the effectiveness of the role of the Governance Commission, a highly recognized structure in the country for leading all governance reforms, confers legitimacy to the LGA and the overall decentralization process. They have contributed immensely to the positive implementation of the LDSP II. However, GC continued to still experience challenges with low institutional capacities because of existing institutional arrangements.¹³

The overall organization and management of the LDSPII program points to the fact that although 7 tier management structures were put in place, the few that were active provided adequate support rendering the program deliver on its results with minimum hitches.

3.3. Effectiveness

Evaluation questions

1. What evidence is there that the programme has contributed towards developmental change at the national and local levels?
2. To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made toward their achievement.
3. What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
4. What were the positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work?
5. What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP II performance?
6. Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?

The analysis of the LSDP II programme effectiveness covered: (i) Contribution of the programme towards development change at national and local levels; (ii) Progress and extent of achievement of the outcomes; (iii) Effectiveness of the programme partnerships in contributing to achievement of the outcomes; (iv) the positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes brought about by LSDP II work; (v) Programme areas most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward; (vi) Facilitating factors and Inhibiting factors.

3.3.1. Extent of the programme Contribution towards development change at national and local levels

The LSDP II's contribution to development change at both national and local levels is huge. Fundamentally, legal reforms have been instituted; capacity built for MACs and CSCs through skill and infrastructure development as well as ICT use. There was also a widened revenue base through real estate tax and its associated revenue sharing scheme. In addition, there was inclusion of the vulnerable youth, women, and persons with disabilities across all interventions implying the LSDP II project responded well to the SDG principle of "Leaving No One Behind."

3.3.2. Extent of Progress and achievements of the outcomes

Overall, performance of LSDP II programme has been impressive and achievement of results has been rated high by the evaluation. It is evident from documents reviewed that out of the 5 outcomes targeted, 4 outcomes were achieved and the fifth is likely to be realized. This indicates a spectacular performance of over 90% in terms of programme results achievement. At output level, performance was at 80%. Out of the 20 outputs earmarked to contribute to the targeted outcomes; 15 outputs were achieved; 2 outputs were partially achieved, and 3 outputs were not implemented.

LSDP II Programme results performance at outcome and output level is here elaborated below:

a) **OUTCOMES**

❖ **Outcomes achieved:**

1. **Outcome 1:** LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery.
2. **Outcomes 3:** County Services Centres are empowered and capacitated to implement LGA reforms.
3. **Outcome 4:** Legal and regulatory reforms put in place to sustain decentralization.

❖ **Outcomes partially achieved:**

1. **Outcome 2:** Local government institutions and services are **PARTIALLY** devolved, and corresponding resources managed at the assigned levels of government. Examples Margibi CSC

2. **Outcome 5:** Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring is strengthened.

b) OUTPUTS

Outputs' indicators achieved:

1. **Output-1.1:** Enhanced citizens' participation in local governance through the implementation of the LGA.
2. **Output-1.2:** Citizens' Feedback Mechanism (CFM) developed and implemented.
3. **Output-1.3:** Local government officials' capacities for gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed.
4. **Output-2.1:** Municipalities functional and capacitated to manage resources and deliver services.
5. **Output-3.1:** MACs empowered and capacitated to deliver services at the County Service Centers
6. **Output-3.2:** Infrastructure of County Service Centers Improved.
7. **Output-4.1:** Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended.
8. **Output-4.2:** Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted and rollout.
9. **Output-4.4:** Enhanced citizens' participation in the implementation of the Revenue Sharing Act through public awareness and ownership
10. **Output-4.7:** Automated property tax base developed and capacity building in real estate tax collections for 5 counties.
11. **Output-4.8:** County Treasuries in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties capacity strengthened.
12. **Output-4.9:** LRA and LIGIS staff capacity enhanced for effective data collection in four counties.
13. **Output-4.10:** Four counties capacity built to manage and account for revenue transfer.
14. **Output-5.1:** NDIS fully staffed to facilitate effective implementation of decentralization programme
15. **Output-5.2:** Programme management capacity strengthened by logistical and operational support

Outputs partially achieved:

1. **Output 4.5:** Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing bills regulations developed.
2. **Output 5.3:** Only M&E Officer hired to fully oversee the M&E of the LDSP, CTA and UN Volunteers not hired.

Outputs not implemented:

1. **Output 2.2:** Boundaries between towns, clans, chiefdoms, districts, and counties harmonized.
2. **Output 4.3:** Ministry of Local Government Bill enacted (removed)
3. **Output 4.6:** Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational

The evaluation noted that the implementation of the LDSP II activities and outputs were designed in such way that they led to desired outcomes as per the programme intervention logic. The presentation of the findings is aligned to targeted outcomes and corresponding outputs as analyzed here below:

Outcome 1: LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery.

The outcome was achieved. The evaluation has noted that LSFP II project supported participatory approaches in planning and service delivery through interventions like the

awareness about the LGA, community feedback mechanism, building local government officials' capacity on gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed. The evidence from documents reviewed showed that the interventions enhanced participation of men, women and PwD in decision making processes and service delivery through feedback on quality of services delivered at CSCs.

The three outputs earmarked to deliver on the outcome include **Output 1.1:** Enhanced citizens' participation in local governance through the implementation of the LGA; **Output 1.2:** Citizens' Feedback Mechanism (CFM) developed and implemented; and **Output 1.3:** Local government officials' capacities for gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed.

This evaluation has established that great strides have been achieved at output level. These entail a multi-media campaign held in the 15 counties. The LDSPII project in partnership with CSOs and CBOs successfully supported LGA awareness campaigns. In total 15 town hall meetings were conducted, 18 radio talk shows (some in local vernaculars), 24 inception meetings, 6 debates and symposiums, aired jingles on 14 community radio stations, and distributed 4,200 copies of animated posters containing simplified messages town hall meetings held, county level consultative meetings on the LGA benefiting 3,513 (2,061 male & 1,079 female).¹⁴ The targeted beneficiaries were key drivers of the decentralized agenda that include development superintendents, city mayors, district commissioners, paramount chiefs, town chiefs, county council members, gender focal persons, as well as youth, women, and people with disabilities (PWDs) citizens, students, and residents in 15 Counties. The multimedia strategy contributed to massive awareness targeting all citizens, students, residents (women, men, PWDs and students) in LGA campaigns thus endearing the citizenry to decentralization agenda, equipped the leadership at county and district level with knowledge about the role and responsibilities in delivery of services and development agenda.

In addition, capacity developments were also undertaken targeted at local key government officials, technicians, financial management officers (301-48 Female & 178 Male) and focused on critical subjects aligned to their duties and responsibilities. As seen in documents reviewed and interviews conducted, capacity building of the local government institutions enhanced gender responsive planning & budgeting, revenue forecasting, development planning, fiscal decentralization, revenue sharing formulas among others. The capacity development is reported to have contributed to ability of the CSCs to deliver services inclusive of all with emphasis on gender equality.

Also noted by the evaluation, the LDSP II contributed to infrastructure development that facilitated service delivery in the targeted sub-counties. Relevant infrastructure (Internet providers (Orange & MTN) and equipment (Laptops, Internet Modems, and Televisions screens) were put in place to support the community feedback mechanisms so as to enhance participation of all as far as service delivery oversight was concerned. For example, CFM Sub hubs were established and rolled out in 10 Counties (Nimba, Bong, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland, Grand Kru, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi).

¹⁴ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft



A partial view of the recently refurbished Ministry of Transport window at the County Service Center in Margibi County

The CFM sub-hubs were found critical to enhancing stakeholder participation aimed at improved service delivery at CSCs. Notable as reviewed documents revealed, the equipment and related internet infrastructure enabled some CSCs ability to conduct analysis of the feedback from citizens which further reinforced self-reflection at CSCs level ultimately leading to improved service delivery.

However, for some CSCs, the participation and inclusion of all targeted beneficiaries through the CFM mechanism was hampered by limited capacities due to lack of equipment, limited or no reach to vulnerable groups especially the deaf and blind that needed sign language interpreters and brailled information about the LGA act. Other persons targeted by CFM but could not effectively benefit and therefore could not actively participate in community feedback mechanisms include, lack of 23 synchronized schedules between town hall awareness days and local government official availability¹⁵, those citizens living in remote areas that lacked access to radio signal, lived too far away from towns, unreliable internet connection and unwillingness of technicians to troubleshoot internet disconnections, limited understanding of CFM concept ¹⁶ high transport costs and poor road infrastructure¹⁷ and so were unable to attend LGA Act briefings at town halls. The evaluation also learnt that the emerging obstacle to appreciation and use of CFM was a failure to provide feedback on matters of concern raised by the citizens. One key Informant reported thus:

“The CFA feedback system is not effective because sometimes citizens send feedback about services and there is no response. Response mechanism is weak in terms of the way citizens send their feedback and government does not come back to say these are the issues you raised, and this is the feedback. It’s a weakness from the government side

¹⁵ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

¹⁶ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

¹⁷ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

which makes it appear citizens unable to use the mechanism.”



Community Engagement with the Town Chief, Elders, and Youth on LGA awareness activities conducted by Integrity Watch Liberia in Sehigeh, Nimba County

Outcome 2: Local government institutions and services are fully devolved, and corresponding resources managed at the assigned levels of government.

Devolution and decentralization cannot be considered complete unless local government institutions are able to generate and manage adequate financial resources for effective delivery of decentralized services. Thus, one of the LSDP II programme interventions achieved towards realizing this outcome was that it built adequate capacity for the staff of local government institutions and provided the required resources (infrastructure and equipment) that enabled them raise and manage financial resources locally. However, the outcome was partially achieved. Under this outcome, the programme planned to deliver 2 outputs namely **(i) Output 2.1:** Municipalities functional and capacitated to manage resources and deliver services and **(ii) Output 2.2:** Boundaries between towns, clans, chiefdoms, districts, and counties harmonized. However, for some unknown reason output 2.2 was not implemented and we seek to find out why.

The evaluation noted that delivery on the outcome 2 required the employment of a number of strategic interventions that include capacity building of municipal staff in areas of appreciating M&E concepts, financial management training, gender responsive participatory planning & reporting, CFM report generation, data collection, solar maintenance, and county treasuries trainings.¹⁸ Key personnel both men and women from all 15 Counties were trained and acquired the requisite capacity to deliver devolved

¹⁸ Results framework terminal evaluation cumulative achievement

services.¹⁹ The above key investments are considered as important achievements by the LSDP II project as far as supporting the local governments in delivery of devolved and decentralized services at both municipal and county level. However, the evaluation noted that the personnel earmarked for training lacked background knowledge in public financial management systems and basic financial accounting which constrained their capacity to cope with the training.²⁰ As observed by the evaluation, skilling could not have been effective enough to have personnel a properly skilled to handle the tasks awaiting them. Also notable was the lack of reporting culture on part of the beneficiary municipalities which could water down sustainability of the capacity efforts.²¹ Furthermore, the evaluation noted that in all municipalities, internet connectivity remains a big constraint yet digital infrastructure has been earmarked as a key enabler in the decentralization drive.²²

Outcomes 3: County Services Centres are empowered and capacitated to implement LGA reforms.

Figure 2: Signage indicating visibility of County Service Centre



One of strategic interventions of LSDP II programme was to strengthen the requisite institutions with adequate capacity to deliver decentralized services as enshrined in the LGA act. Indeed, the evaluation did note that the LSDP II programme invested heavily in building capacity of CSCs by providing necessary infrastructure and tools which empowered and capacitated CSCs to effectively implement Local government act reforms. The outcome was achieved, and two outputs (achieved) earmarked as essential in bringing about the desired results **(i) Output 3.1: MACs empowered and capacitated to deliver services at the County Service Centers** and **(ii) Output 3.2: Infrastructure of County Service Centers Improved.**

The ability of the MACs to effectively deliver on the de-concentrated and devolved services is heavily dependent on the capacity as well as empowerment of CSCs to effectively support them. This entailed that the CSCs have the requisite infrastructure and equipment to be

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ 2022 LDSP II Annual Report Final 5,14,23 pdf

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

able to deliver on devolved mandates.

Figure 3: Signage indicating services available at CSCs.



The evaluation has established that the LSDP II programme indeed invested in the equipment and infrastructure to enable CSCs effectively and efficiently deliver on the de-concentrated services. With the LSDPII programme support, it was established that for areas off the main electric grid, alternative reliable sources were installed to ensure reliable and constant supply of power to support service delivery. In total, it is noted by the evaluation that LSDPII programme supported 12 CSCs namely Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Sinoe, River Gee, Lofa, Bong, and Grand Bassa Counties were equipped with solar systems. In addition, the LSDPII supported the training of CSC staff technical in operational skills for maintenance solar power systems.²³ Equipping staff with maintenance skills was crucial to enable CSCs effectively sustain and maintain solar power system to ensure seamless service delivery. Notable as observed by the evaluation was that the installation of the solar power systems and associated capacity for its maintenance by resident staff bridged the gaps of lack of grid power at service centres and greatly improved service delivery.²⁴ Ultimately the installation of the solar systems and associated maintenance training was appreciated by the CSCs coordinators as having immensely contributed to efficient and effective services delivery at CSC.

²³ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

²⁴ Ibid



Sinoe county administrative building after renovation and installation of solar lighting for lighting and powering computers

Effective and valuable services offered due to installation of Solar.

It created easy access for reporting information from the CSC to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, consolidating electronic reports, limited the physical handover of reports from MACs to the CSC, improved security of the CSC, and has contributed to a significant positive shift in staff behavior. All MACs use the CSC Solar Power for generating reports, completing assigned tasks, and has improved the overall operations of the county administration by providing power to the office of the Superintendent.

However, the challenge with solar systems was that they often suffered inadequate maintenance and vandalism thus undermining good intentions of enhancing service delivery.

The evaluation did observe that in addition to solar systems, the LSDP II program funded the supply of ICT equipment (Computers, Software, and Printers). The support was equally appreciated and County coordinators indeed appreciated that the infrastructure and associated equipment enabled CSCs effectively execute their mandate such as printing Traditional and Western Marriage Certificates at 5 CSCs in Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, and Grand Gedeh. Access to the service and acquisition of the Traditional and Western Marriage Certificates reinforces observance of the rights of women especially stability in marriages and ownership of property.

The evaluation also noted that the effectiveness of issuance for Drivers License and Vehicle number plate at service centers varied from CSC to CSC. For example, although the LDSP II programme supported acquisition of assorted equipment especially computers and software for Drivers License and Vehicle number plate for MoT, the service was only operational at Margibi while same services were completely dysfunctional at Bong. A key informant described the challenges associated with issuance of driver's license and vehicle number plate as follows:

“Driver’s license and vehicle number plate is a big issue even in the capital Monrovia, because of unreliable electricity supply, people wait for long to have their documents processed.”

The evaluation has also learnt that LSDP II programme supported improved service access to all at the CSCs centers. The construction of ramps aided PWDS access to CSCs premises. Specifically, persons with disabilities especially the wheel chair users were given a consideration by construction of ramps at CSCs of Grand Kru, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, and Lofa) enabling the PWDS have easy/equal access to CSCs. However, beyond the wheelchair users, it appears other categories of persons with disabilities such as blind and partially sighted, deaf were not catered yet they also require accessing CSCs for services such as marriage certificates and any other services.

Overall, the evaluation has learnt from documents reviewed and field interviews conducted that although there were improvements in infrastructure and skilling of staff of each service centre few services were being offered under the decentralization framework. By decentralization standards, each CSCs was supposed to provide 50 services, however, the CSCs remained challenged to deliver such number of services. For example the three piloted city governments lacked financial and operational manuals to guide financial management processes,²⁵ apparent recentralization of services by some MACs, lack of office space, lack of transport to carry out reaches and related movements of CSCs staff, low salaries, some counties not adequately benefitting from county development fund and failure by the Centre coordinators to have administrative powers to reign in on staff deployed from MIA to provide services under a given county service centre. As one key informant commented thus:

“If someone is on government payroll and does not want to come to work, we have no control over the situation.”

Outcome 4: Legal and regulatory reforms put in place to sustain decentralization.

Legal and regulatory reforms are strong bedrock upon which any sustainable institutional frameworks can be anchored for effective decentralized service delivery. The evaluation has noted that LSDPII program supported critical legal and regulatory reforms and built capacities of local governments in areas of expanding, sharing and management of revenues. The key achievements of the LSDPII program in contributing to this outcome (achieved) include: the amendment of Public Financial Management (PFM) Law, enactment of the Revenue Sharing Formula Bill and the Ministry of Local Government Act and attendant regulations and staff capacities built and requisite equipment provided for MCAs and counties resulting into enhanced decentralized functions. The latter reforms have set a firm ground upon which the decentralization has been well entrenched, and its sustainability guaranteed, thanks to LSDP II program support.

The above results have been realized specifically due to the contribution of the following 10 outputs namely: **(i) Output 4.1:** Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended; **(ii) Output 4.2:** Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted and rollout; **(iii) Output 4.3:** Ministry of Local Government Bill Enacted(removed); **(iv) Output 4.4:** Enhanced citizens' participation in the implementation of the Revenue Sharing Act through public awareness and ownership; **(v) Output 4.5:** Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing bills regulations developed; **(vi) Output 4.6:** Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational(**not implemented**); **(vii) Output 4.7:** Automated property tax base developed and capacity building in real estate tax collections for 5 counties; **(viii) Output 4.8:** County

²⁵ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

Treasuries in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties capacity strengthened; **(ix)Output 4.9:** LRA and LIGIS staff capacity enhanced for effective data collection in four counties; **x)Output 4.10:** Four counties capacity built to manage and account for revenue transfer.

LSDPII programme supported and successfully engaged stakeholders resulting into the amendment of the Public Finance Management Act. The evaluation has learnt that the LSDP II programme effectively mobilised key stakeholders (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Development and Planning, Governance Council, and legislature) and they supported the enactment of the law to ensure the effective roll out decentralised functions. The amended Public Finance Management act is reported to have strengthened the fiscal decentralisation. Fiscal decentralisation is appreciated by several stakeholders for having given autonomy to sub-national structures to collect, manage and expand locally raised revenue critical for local government administration. The latter development implied that there will always be availability of resources for the operationalization of County Service Centres and social economic development at the sub-national level,²⁶ leading to effective service delivery as envisaged in decentralisation strategies. One of the respondents described the challenges to operationalization of the PFA Act in the following words:

“PFA was designed for centralised arrangements and not decentralisation that is why in practice it contradicts with Revenue Sharing Law.”

For purpose of ensuring there is adequate revenue for the decentralization units, LSDP II program supported the enactment of the Revenue Sharing Act 2022 contributing to legal reforms.²⁷ In order to further the implementation of the law, a lot of awareness activities were undertaken including the printing handbills or popularization among key stakeholders. The signing into law of the Revenue Sharing Act and the passage of the Amended PFM Law of 2022 were key accomplished legal reforms supported by LSDPII that served to strengthen local ownership and sustenance of the decentralization gains over the three years.²⁸ The evaluation has noted that operationalization of the Revenue Sharing Law is challenged as one of the Key Informant put it as follows:

“Accessibility for the revenue to be shared is very poor and in most cases, revenue is not shared on time.”

As a way of ensuring the inclusion of all, the LSDP II also supported public awareness campaigns about the Revenue Sharing Act contributing to enhancement of citizens’ participation in its implementation. As the Liberia transits from the centralized to decentralized administration and associated service delivery reforms, citizens need to be much aware about the reforms so that their participation and ownership are well entrenched in order for them to demand for quality services as well as check corruption. Thus, as a strategic intervention, LSDP II program rolled out policy dialogues about revenue sharing act that were well targeted at all categories of stakeholders. In response to that duty, the LSDPII program supported 8 policy dialogues and awareness rising on the Revenue Sharing Act organized at the regional level across the country. Inclusion of all in the targeted audience meant care was taken to cater for gender and other dimensions of vulnerability in society. Indeed, the targeted audience was realized. According the

²⁶ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II)- Annual Report - 2021 (Jan - Dec 2021)

²⁷ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II) Annual Report - 2022 (Jan - Dec 2022)

²⁸ Ibid

monitoring reports a total of 225 (113 males & 112 females) local government officials, women, youth, PWD groups participated in the policy dialogues.²⁹ By supporting the policy dialogues, LSDPII program contributed to enhanced understanding of the revenue sharing law including roles and responsibilities among the citizens of Liberia.³⁰ For the local government officials, their participation in policy dialogues was hailed as having significantly enhanced their understanding of the law including roles and responsibilities ascribed to each stakeholder. Thus, the LSDPII program well-orchestrated campaigns packaged in form of public dialogues on the revenue sharing act was well appreciated by participants in that it created a sense of ownership cultivated by participants who committed to work with the central government in ensuring that the law is scrupulously implemented.³¹

The LSDPII program also supported the development of the regulations of the Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing. Regulations are critical to operationalization of laws because they define what is in the law and its legality and guide regulatory agencies to enforce the laws. Thus, regulations were put in place to ensure legal reforms are well enforced by regulatory agencies. The evaluation observed that LSDPII program supported the drafting of regulation to enable the responsible authority to operationalize the enacted laws. Evidence from the reviewed documents by the evaluation team indicates that only one regulation in draft form was developed.³² It has been established that the revenue sharing act regulation was crucial to rolling out the revenue sharing act and highly appreciated by stakeholders at subnational level for enhancing service delivery.

The evaluation also learnt that in order to develop the automated property base and capacity building in real estate tax collections, LSDP II program undertook a partnership approach in order to enlist the requisite expertise, training and putting in place necessary infrastructure and tools. Notable achievements include the signing of letter of agreement signed between UNDP and the LRA that opened opportunities for both technical support and financial resources required to build necessary capacity.³³

²⁹ Results Framework: Terminal Evaluation Cumulative Achievement

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II) Annual Report - 2022 (Jan - Dec 2022)

³² Opicit

³³ Ibid



Sensitization and Community engagement with residents of Harlandsville on the real properties tax expansion project

The LSDP II project also contributed by supporting the recruitment, training, and deployment of critical personnel human resource (90 tax agents (68 males & 22 females) the tax agents. The bringing on board of tax agents was a game changer in terms of widening the revenue base and improved service delivery. This positive development was affirmed by a key informant thus:

“The real property tax is clearly a raw hanging fruit, with a lot of potential to raise revenue to support both the national and county treasuries.”

The infrastructure and tools for data capture laid by the LSDPII program namely the Kobo Collect and Electronic Mass Automation Appraisal System (EMAAS) are reported and appreciated for having improved both data collection and much needed revenue for local development.³⁴ One informant affirmed thus:

“The system we have put in place to capture data on property estate is very effective because you know all details about a property, county where it is capture, its value and amount of tax expected.”

However, challenges remain-recruitment is reported to have been politically driven, LRA authority has been reluctant to provide the necessary tools and motivations for the tax agents with some reporting having gone for many months without their wages and allowances and no tags to attach to properties.

The LSDPII program undertook systematic and well-planned actions to adequately strengthen capacity of the targeted county treasuries. As first step, program undertook a capacity needs assessment in Margibi, Grand Bassa, and Lofa County treasuries to determine existing financial management system’s needs. Capacity needs assessment helped determine the strengths and weaknesses in operationalizing the new systems. In addition, capacity building training was provided to entrepreneurs, local government staff, and county officials. The trainings are reported to have equipped and skilled the

³⁴ Results Framework: Terminal Evaluation Cumulative Achievement

stakeholders who appreciated and were supportive of the new reforms in procurement, government appropriation and E-procurement using the IFMIS system.

Furthermore, the LSDPII program provided 3 technical and system strengthening support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Liberia Revenue Authority, and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for the passage of the revenue sharing act, the amendment of the PFM Law, and the development of the Revenue sharing regulations. A key informant had this to say:

“Whatever revenue we generate from that county we share 50/50, the revenue authority takes 50% and the county also gets 50% of all the revenue raised.”

The latter technical support is reported to have contributed to enhance the capacity and appreciation at MCA level to render necessary support to county treasuries.

In addition, the LSDPII program supported acquisition of critical equipment namely 4 sets of desktop computers, 4 printers/photocopiers/Scanners, and 4 safe deposit boxes procured for Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa Treasuries. The equipment is reported by officials at county treasuries has having transformed and reinforced operations service delivery for the beneficiary counties. However, challenges still persist due to lack of supplies of computer software, so counties were unable to print checks and to make matters worse, the Comptroller and Accountant General Office did not include all MACs such as Ministry of Health, Agriculture etc. Such a development constrained the full and effective operationalization of the treasuries which undermined the essence of the County Treasury Framework³⁵ that is a key infrastructure to operationalization of decentralization.

It was also crucial that LRA and LISGIS staff capacity is enhanced for effective data collection in four counties. The evaluation noted that LSDPII program took deliberate actions by skilling of staff the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Governance Commission, and Liberia Revenue Authority and LISGIS in data collection methods and reporting writing trainings. The skilling is reported to have effectively contributed to enhanced capacity of the two institutions to manage and process data critical for planning and service delivery. The above initiative as observed by the evaluation was appreciated for having strengthened the ability of targeted institutions in generating and processing quality data crucial for improved service delivery. In addition to skilling, requisite tools such as QuickBooks financial software were installed on desktops procured for City governments of Kakata, Buchanan, and Voinjama. The tools have enabled the beneficiary staff and institutions with enhanced financial management, planning, and budgeting skills crucial for effective service delivery under the decentralization. However, this terminal evaluation has noted that Ministry of Finance and Development Planning continues to centralize the budget formulation process which constrains the local governments to exercise their devolved mandate of participatory development planning and budgeting.³⁶ This kind of attitude by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has also undermined strengthening capacities because trained staff is denied opportunities to practice the skills acquired.

The other persistent problems observed by the terminal evaluation was that the coordination between the County Service Center and other MACs in consolidating reports, procedures, and implementing services remains a challenge because of laxity of staff commitment to duty.³⁷ For example, in Grand Gedeh the data entry officer from the LISGIS

³⁵ 2022 LSDPII Annual Report final-5,14,25 pdf

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report pdf

responsible for collating information gathered from all MACs was often not present at duty station which often delayed monthly reports submitted by the CSC. This kind of behavior could be attributed to poor conditions of services such as low salaries.

As observed by the evaluation, the requisite equipment (Computers, Printers, Battery Bank) supplied to some County Service Centers such as Grand Gedeh were obsolete and also challenge with software renewal/update (anti-virus updates and Operating Systems (OS) updates.) persisted indicating failure of the MIA to consistently provide adequately logistics and consumables. Targeted beneficiaries also had limited awareness of services provided at the county service center which often rendered them unable to access essential services critical for their day today livelihoods and wellbeing. Lastly, although LDSPII did provided various capacity building activities to improve CSCs ability to deliver services, the evaluation noted that there were limitations in terms of ability of staff to cope or limitations of the consultants to effectively deliver the training. Consequently, some staff was unable to cope with the work at hand.

LDSP II also played a crucial role by supporting capacity building of four counties which enabled them manage and account for revenue transfer to their dockets. The evaluation documents reviewed indicate the LSDPII program supported capacity building initiative targeted at county treasurers and requisite tools installed financial management system- the quick books financial system/software and provided computers for city governments of Kakata, Buchanan, Sanniquellie, Harper, Greenville, and Voinjama. The latter support is appreciated to have enhanced financial management, planning, and budgeting in the counties targeted. In addition to skilling the county treasures, the staff were equipped with tools of trade that included: 183 ICT equipment procured (81 tablets, 81 power banks, 5 laptops, 8 printers/scanners/photocopier, and 8 desktops). The overall support in capacity building by LSDPII program in the four targeted counties is appreciated to have enhanced the ability of select treasuries to manage revenue transfers, a key service under the decentralized framework.

However, the challenge derived from some MCAs that continued to hold onto the revenues through operationalizing a centralized approach and other cases privatized some services which derailed the good intentions of revenue sharing to enhance decentralization. It has also been noted that lack of country wide branches for bank contracted to serve as a repository of revenues generated from service delivery has slowed the process of operationalizing the issuance of driver's license and plates.³⁸ As a consequence, many of CSCs must refer clients to Monrovia for services which have bred despondence and inconveniences thus undermining effective and efficient service delivery. In addition, the absence of an asset management policy to ensure that equipment is safe and secured³⁹is persistent and worsened by vandalism and theft of vital equipment for effective service delivery.

³⁸ LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

³⁹ Ibid

Outcome 5: Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring is strengthened.

As envisaged in the program document, strengthening management support, coordination and monitoring were considered very vital for the effective delivery of the envisaged programme results. Indeed, the LSDPII program supported the recruitment of competent management personnel as well as built their capacity at national and subnational level resulting into effective delivery of overall program interventions leading to the achievement of this outcome. The above results of the delivery on this outcome were a contribution of three outputs: **(i) Output: 5.1** NDIS fully staffed to facilitate effective implementation of decentralization programme; **(ii) Output 5.2:** Programme management capacity strengthened by logistical and operational support **(iii) Output 5.3:** Chief Technical Advisor, and M&E Officer hired, UN Volunteers equipped to fully oversee the management of the LDSP.

The LDSP II program have played a crucial role in fully staffing NDIS enabling it to deliver on the decentralization program. The evaluation did observe that LDSP II provided the most needed support that resulted into recruitment of key staff namely the National Programme Coordinator and Project Associate.⁴⁰The two staff is reported to have provided the most needed support and were always at the forefront of effectively coordinating key programme management activities ensuring organizational and management structures worked in a coordinated manner to deliver overall program results.

LDSP II program also strengthened management capacity by supporting and contributing to much needed logistics and tools for MIA and GC. The support that ranged from the stationary and supplies as well as internet modems and data are reported to have strengthened program management capacity.⁴¹ The evaluation has noted that the effective operations of the two institutions and their ability to deliver on their mandates to the decentralization agenda were heavily attributed to that support.

Furthermore, LDSP II supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs to hold an Inter-ministerial Committee meeting on decentralization. The Inter-ministerial Committee meeting attended by key stakeholders (29 participants (22 men & 7 women) namely the heads of decentralization Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs), technicians, and development partners deliberated on how best to move the decentralization process forward. The deliberations of the meeting are reported to have contributed constructive ideas that informed strengthening decentralization with a critical focus on improved service delivery at the County Service Centers including the devolution of signatory powers to improve efficient and effective service delivery⁴²

Furthermore, the LSDPII program, supported recruitment of a competent personnel that successfully oversaw the today to day management of the program operations. Indeed, as observed in the reports reviewed by this evaluation, UNDP prepared ToR that prescribed the staff competences required for Chief Technical Advisor, M&E officer and UN volunteers.⁴³ According to reports reviewed, competent Chief Technical Advisor, and M&E

⁴⁰ LDSP II Annual Project Progress Report – July to December 2020

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² LSDPII 2023 Annual Report-draft

⁴³ Results Framework: Terminal Evaluation Cumulative Achievement

Officer were hired.⁴⁴ But for reasons unknown to the evaluation team, the UN volunteers were not hired. Subsequently, the staff was equipped with requisite tools and capacity that enabled the LDSP II program effectively and efficiently steer deliver on its results.

3.3.3. Effectiveness of the program partnerships in contributing to achievement of the outcomes

- **Joint undertakings in formulation and drafting amendments of laws and Policies:**

Under the LDSPII program interventions, UNDP partnered with Ministry of Internal affairs and successfully delivered on crucial activities aimed that led to legal reforms namely Revenue sharing, Review existing laws on Public Financial Management and Procurement, and support to public hearings with relevant information and documentation on the benefits of revenue sharing.⁴⁵ The partnership of UNDP, MIA and working with the Legislature brought about the facilitation of the fiscal decentralization, aligned provisions of Public Financial Management and Procurement partnership to much needed awareness among the citizenry and attendant opportunities of economic empowerment of local communities about benefits of revenue local development further entrenching decentralization agenda.

Evidently, the evaluation noted that another critical partnership was one between the UNDP and Liberia Revenue Authority. as noted from documents reviewed and interviews conducted, the partnership between UNDP and LRA delivered on hiring tax agents to carry on RETD activities in Buchanan City and its surrounding; trained the supervisors, team leaders, and tax agents; conducted awareness/outreach by LRA taxpayers team and purchased equipment, servicing, gasoline/fuel. UNDP on its part provided the most needed financial resources.⁴⁶ The partnership brought on board LRA expertise in terms of strengthened human resource capacity necessary widening tax revenue needed for mobilising critical resources for strengthening service delivery under the CSCs.

- **Technical support to program interventions:**

The LDSPII program was keen at providing the necessary support with a technical touch. In that regard, where capacity were not easily internally available, the program outsourced individuals, organisations and partners with relevant expertise and experience which effectively contributed to program outcomes as elaborated hereunder:

- Partnering with civil society played significant role especially on awareness creation as well as CFM services.
- Effective capacity building and training initiatives of the program especially to CSCs and Civil society greatly enhanced the capacities at both the national and local level institutions which ultimately improved service delivery.
- Targeted trainings and capacity building of the Local Government officials on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting greatly contributed to participatory planning and inclusion of all in the development process.
- The Solar power systems procurement, supply and installation greatly improved service delivery at county service centres especially printing of the traditional

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ MIA LOA docs

⁴⁶ LRA LOA docs

marriage certificates and other relevant documentation necessary sought after for business registration, birth documentation and ECOWAS work card.

The partnerships thus played a big role in bring about services closer to the citizen in turn contributing to improvement of their wellbeing.

3.3.4. Extent of the positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work

- **Positive intended changes brought about by LDSP II work.**

Institutional reforms have streamlined service delivery primarily as the men, women, PWDs and other vulnerable are able to access services that promotes and protect their rights. Such services include offered include traditional marriage certificate, pyschosocial support, physical assault, sexual assault, child abandonment, rape cases, child maltreatment, domestic violence, birth certificate, western marriage certificate, alien biometric card, business registration, article of incorporation, construction companies contract approval, private school registration certificates, etc.⁴⁷

Legal and policy reforms, infrastructure and related human capacity development have streamlined and strengthened institutional capacities to deliver on their mandate right from national and local level. For example, the valuation noted that Municipalities and County councils have acquired capacities to plan, budget and tapped into available revenue potential for local economic development. Quite important as observed by the evaluation was development planning which is done in consultation with stakeholders which have not been done in the past.⁴⁸ For the Solar Power Systems, they contributed to effective and valuable services offered creating easy access for reporting information from the CSC to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, consolidating electronic reports, limited the physical handover of reports from MACs to the CSC, improved security of the CSC, and has also contributed to a significant positive shift in staff behavior.⁴⁹

- **Positive unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work.**

As discussed above, LDSP II did also contribute some positive changes otherwise not envisaged in the results framework yet enhanced the intensions of the program of decentralization. The evaluation observed that under small grants scheme capacity building initiatives beneficiaries especially women adopted digital technologies such as use of Facebook to advertise products thus expanding their marketing channels.⁵⁰ Related to small grants scheme, the evaluation noted that the Seed funding boosted business expansion contributing to creation of jobs as beneficiary business. The beneficiaries testified as having expanded their businesses and therefore had to employ other persons to support them in their business endeavors.⁵¹ In addition, the seed funding the (500 USD) is reported by the beneficiaries as having indirectly contributed to food security and financial stability that helped small business to recover from COVID-19 depression.⁵²

⁴⁷ BOTR –Monitoring of business support service –Zedru CSC solar final pdf-Activity: Monitoring of Business Support Services and Solar Power System installed at Grand Gedeh County Service Center- February 21, 2023

⁴⁸ BTOR-Monitoring CSC and LGA,Bong,Marigib, Lofa and Nimba-ACTIVITY: Monitoring of County Service Centers, Financial Management Training, and LGA awareness activities in Margibi, Lofa, Bong, and Nimba Counties- June 18, 2023

⁴⁹ BOTR –Monitoring of business support service –Zedru CSC solar final pdf-Activity: Monitoring of Business Support Services and Solar Power System installed at Grand Gedeh County Service Center- February 21, 2023

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid

The evaluation also observed that the roll out of the real estate documentation, the property owners were able to appreciate the value of their properties as key resource for accessing financial loans. A key informant observed thus:

“Determination of total value of the real estate property helps the owner know the value of what they own and can be used by owners to access loans from the financial institutions.

People have really appreciated the value of their property.”

- **Negative unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work**

Although LDSPII intentions were to positively contribute to the decentralization agenda, the evaluation registered some negative unintended changes brought about by its work. Some of the negative unintended changes are here below elaborated:

There was reluctance of property owners to embrace tax compliance which is seen as exploitation by the government. A key informant reported about the state of affairs thus:

“Owners of property don’t want to pay tax and others deny ownership of the property.”

Silo mentality among the MACs still persist leading to recentralization of some services due to reluctance to provide authority and requisite to enable CSCs fully deliver all devolve services. As one key informant intimated thus:

“The ministry of health is difficult to work with because they don’t follow advice. I don’t know whether they are untouchable.”

3.3.5. Extent to which LDSP II Program areas were most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward.

LDSP II is successor program to LDSPI whose intent by design and implementation was aimed at strengthening the decentralization agenda in manner that is inclusive of all and enhances service delivery in the 15 counties of Liberia. Thus, decentralization has been considered as work in progress hence the implementation of LDSP II project. As observed by the evaluations there were apparent gaps in the effectiveness of the LDSPII. Thus it was imperative that some select interventions deemed to be relevant and strategic need to be scaled up to cover up for gaps going forward.

In view of the above, the evaluation identified the following areas that need attention of the UNDP going forward:

i) Support to SMEs (Small Scale grant) targeted both women and PWDs

As noted by the evaluation, the small grant funding of the USD 500 should be further supported and even amounts increased and geographically scaled up to cover all the 15 counties. It considered view of the evaluation as adduced from the evidence adduced documents reviewed and interviews with beneficiaries that the benefits were immense and have the potential to transform the livelihoods and wellbeing of the marginalized and vulnerable populations. This is attributed to that fact that the small grant has multiplier effects of contributing to improvement of the wellbeing by ensuring profitability of business, and a health business creates job opportunities for vulnerable as well as reliable taxpayer that contributes to sustainable tax revenue that is critically needed improving service delivery under the decentralization framework.

ii) Continued support to awareness of laws- Local Government Act(LGA) Revenue Sharing Scheme(RSS) and Community Feedback Mechanism(CFM).

At the heart of any successful decentralization program is a population aware of their duties and obligations to their mother land. As noted by the evaluation, the awareness creation

about the pertinent laws that fully support the operationalization the decentralization agenda has been a one-off engagement tagged to the LDSPII project interventions that will soon come to an end. Yet, the population must be kept constantly in the know about such laws for a long time to come using appropriate communication strategies that will ensure all segments of population (Youth, Women, PWDs, Elderly and other vulnerable people) are kept in the know to create the necessary consciousness about their rights and obligations under the decentralization framework. Thus, it is crucial for UNDP to take interest and continue to fully support the awareness of Local Government Act (LGA) Revenue Sharing Scheme (RSS) and Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) as key spine upon which the decentralization agenda can be strengthened further.

iii) Capacity building and infrastructure developments

As noted by the evaluation, the design and roll-out of the LDSPII program did not take account glaring gaps in terms of capacities and infrastructure between CSCs. Thus, as observed by the evaluation, different counties had different infrastructure needs and capacities to be able to deliver on the LDSPII outputs. It is this imperative for UNDP working hand in hand with Liberia government to take audit and continue supporting capacity building of staff on continuous basis as well as ensure all infrastructure needs at all CSCs is at par in the whole in the whole of Liberia. It should be noted that continuous support to capacity building and infrastructure serve as key foundations upon which decentralized should be anchored.

3.3.6. Facilitating factors

Political good will: the political leadership at national level has been supportive of the programme. This was exhibited in the expedition of legal and policy reforms to fully operationalize decentralization. In addition, critical services and infrastructure have been provided to support programme implementation.

Partnerships: Well networked partnerships have been weaved between the donors, development partners, local governments, private sector, the media CSOs. This enabled pulling of critical resources such as finances, human resource and goodwill that were responsible for successful execution of the programme interventions right from the national to sub-national levels.

Building on the lessons learnt from LDSP I and related interventions: LDSPII programme by its design was purposely structured to build on the past interventions on decentralization with a focus on closing gaps of the predecessor programme LSDPI. The programme had a soft landing in terms of already established infrastructure and mindset that set-in motion with relative easy.

3.3.7. Inhibiting factors

- **Reluctance of the MACs to cede powers and services to CSCs:**

It has been observed that some of the MACs do not have the will to de-concentrate their powers such as signing of document at the CSCs; others are not willing to surrender their revenue sources to CSCs. This development has severely constrained the service delivery at CSCs. For example, the budget formulation process is still centralized at the Ministry of

Finance & Development Planning; hence, Local governments have limited forum/opportunities to practicalize the skills acquired.

- **Inadequate funding of CSCs:**

The central government funding of the CSCs is still inadequate to enable deliver all de-concentrated services. Some CSCs still lacked required software vital for providing services.

- **Hitches in coordination between County Service Center and other MACs**

Hitches as it relates to coordination between the County Service Center and other MACs in consolidating reports, procedures, and implementing services. For example, the CSC Coordinator in Grand Gedeh averred that the data entry officer from the LISGIS responsible for collating information gathered from all MACs is not at the CSC in most cases thus delaying monthly reports submitted by the CSC.

- **Inadequate and poor maintenance of infrastructure and equipment:**

The evaluation noted that limited maintenance and obsolete equipment, some CSCS constrained delivery of services. Evidence adduced during documents reviews and interviews point to the fact that some of the CSCs inherited equipment from LSDPI and due to poor maintenance had already broken down and had not been repaired when the LDSPII was rolled out. In other instances, installation of the equipment has been poorly done with no appropriate software and accessories rendering them useless. Sadly, even when consumables such toners run out and monitors breakdown, there were no streamlined supply and facility for providing quick repairs to ensure sustained service delivery.

- **Internet connect remains erratic impacting its functionality**

Availability of connectivity in all CFM pilot counties, yet its fluctuation and functionality remain is problematic for CSCs which is vital for the powering of the CFM. Even though the project extended the contract for MTN & Orange to provide internet services reliability in connectivity is a big challenge.

- **Absence of bank of branches in some counties constrains revenue collection**

Establishing the mechanism to collect revenues in the absence of the bank contracted to serve as a repository of revenues generated from service delivery has slowed the process of operationalizing the issuance of driver's license and plates.

3.4. Impact

Impact is attributed to everlasting changes brought about by any program intervention. The evaluation noted that LDSPII program has greatly contributed to reforms in the institutional landscape that is likely to improve service delivery in line with the decentralization agenda as prescribed in PAPD and Liberia Vision 2030. By creating county councils, the LDSPII has contributed to emergence of institutions critical for promoting participatory planning, budgeting and development that support the inclusion of all including men, youth, women and PWDs. The county councils are engrained in the decentralization framework as permanent institutions necessary for democratization of decision making and development at sub-national level contributing to further entrenchment of decentralization.

Key Evaluation Questions:

1. What has happened because of the programme or project?
2. What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
3. How many people have been affected?

3.4.1. Extent of changes or difference experienced because of the or project.

Real difference made by LDSP II to the targeted beneficiaries: What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?

As per design and implementation of LDSPII interventions, the program targeted to among others build capacity building of staff at various levels national, sub-national and local level. The program also aimed at supporting the small micro enterprises to overcome the effects of Covid-19 slump. Because of above LDSPII interventions, the evaluation has observed a number of notable areas of impact that include acquisition of skills and knowledge and positive attitude towards service delivery by staff at CSCs. In addition, the evaluation captured compelling evidence from documents reviewed and interviews indicating that beneficiaries of small-scale enterprises have positively changed the way they conduct business due to skills acquired in bookkeeping and even gone ahead to adopt IT tools notably facebook for marketing their services, supported the widening tax base through taxes and corporate company registration, and creation of employment opportunities at local level.

3.4.2 Number of people that have been affected by the project

The evaluation has discovered that LSDP II programme targeting varied and was guided by the nature of interventions and anticipated reach and likely impact on beneficiary persons. It is notable that gender considerations served as guiding selection principle in areas of a capacity building, small grants to micro enterprises, and awareness of LGA, CFA, Revenue Sharing Scheme and Real estate Tax.

Overall, 4,574(1,132 Males and 433 Females) persons were reached by the LDSPII project according to the statistical data captured from monitoring reports availed to the evaluation team. **Table 5** below indicates number of persons reached by the LDSP II interventions-capacity building and LGA, CFM and Revenue Sharing awareness campaigns. However, it is important to note that numbers reached by the awareness campaigns using multi-media channels could have been higher, but the evaluation was unable to access any nationwide survey data as to ascertain statistics on the number of people reached. ⁵³

Table 3: Number of persons reached by the LDSP II project

#	Interventions	Male	Female	Total
1	Capacity building interventions	176	77	253
2	Policy dialogue and awareness campaigns	956	356	1,321
3	CSO and Media led LGA Act and Community Feedback Mechanism	-	-	Over 3000

⁵³ LDSP II Monitoring Reports

Overall totals	1,132	433	4,574
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3.5. Disability

The terminal evaluation noted that during implementation of the LDSP II programme interventions, the inclusion of the disabled persons was highly primarily highly emphasized. The evaluation learnt from documents reviewed and interviews conducted with stakeholders that the disabled persons were targeted for inclusion in the LGA awareness activities with a focus on ensuring that they understand vital information about the LGA of 2018, Revenue Sharing Scheme and Community Feedback Mechanism. PWDs were also actively involved in decision making processes supported by the program which enabled them to contribute to the planning and development process at county and municipal level. For example, PWDs were actively engaging in participatory planning and budgeting at community level and in county and municipal councils.⁵⁴ In addition, LSDP II program took deliberate actions to ensure PWDs benefitted from small business seed funding and capacity building which has improved their wellbeing. Evidence available from the documents reviewed indicates that PWDs appreciated the support provided by the project for having helped them improve their businesses enterprises especially the small grants scheme. Furthermore, the program supported the construction of ramps at CSCs which enabled the wheelchair physically challenged to access services at the service centers.



Ramp besides the steps to enable access of PWDs wheelchair users

However, effective inclusion of persons with disability remains limited because not all services centers have rumps, no sign language interpreters at CSCs, hall meetings and County councils. It was also apparent that most PWDs did not access or have assistive devices such as white cane for blind, disability computer program such as jaws and wheelchairs which constrained access to services and participation in decision making in county and municipal councils.

⁵⁴ Consolidated monitoring reports CSC LGA CFM final

3.6. Sustainability of the Project

Key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent will target men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
2. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
3. What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP II to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?
4. To what extent have a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented?
5. To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?
6. Do the legal frameworks, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
7. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
8. What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?

Sustainability measured the extent to which benefits from the development intervention continue after termination of the external intervention, or the probability that they continue in the long term in a way that is resilient to risks. In this regard, the ET has verified that fifteen County Service Centers have been established. However, thirteen CSCs were reported as delivering services at the end of 2018. As to date, nearly all except Margibi have operational problems related to lack of electricity, equipment malfunctioning, lack of software, and lack of authority. Clearly, CSC sustainability remains a major concern because government had yet to establish a mechanism for regular budgetary contributions to their routine operations. However, when considering the overall constraints on government budgetary operations, this should not be all that surprising. Nevertheless, the situation which also concerns donors is attributed to no exit strategy was prepared to identify what the GoL can do to sustain CSC operations after all donor funding stops at the end of 2023.

3.6.1 Availability and structure of the sustainability plan

By its design, the LSDP II program put in place sustainability measures aligned to and anchored on three pillars namely capacity building of relevant national systems to sustain

operating principles of national ownership, harnessing the political will and accountability.⁵⁵In addition to the three pillars, it was also envisaged that during the implementation of the project in line with UNDP programming, there will be a policy shift from Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) to National Implementation Modality (NIM).⁵⁶ However, as observed by the evaluation, there was no document to elaborate on the sustainability strategy for the program.

3.6.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the Program sustainability plan

Strengths

- **Contribution and nature of implementation of capacity development of key national stakeholders**

The LDSPII project engrained and operationalized capacity building initiatives interventions which to the understanding of the evaluation were aimed at sustainability of results at the level of targeted institutions and individual beneficiaries. Capacity acquired by individual staff, institutions and beneficiaries has been very key at imparting critical skills necessary to sustain LDSPII benefits. For example, skills in participatory gender planning and budgeting, accounting skills and treasury management and solar installation have positively impacted staff morale and attitude towards service delivery. However, some institutions reported that some of selected consultants that undertake some capacity building tasks had limited competence. One key informant remarked thus:

“The consultant for Revenue Sharing law had no idea of what he was doing. They should have recruited some competent person with involvement of a responsible government agency.” (KII-FDU-Ministry of Planning)

- **Extent of documentation and sharing of lessons with appropriate parties on continual basis to inform decision making.**

There has been impressive documentation of the lessons learned and sharing which informed critical decision making for LDSPII interventions. The observations made by the evaluation in the Quarterly and Annual Reports (2020, 2021, 2020) indicate that lessons were well documented by the project team and shared with various partners. The evaluation further noted that Lessons learned were used to inform planned and execution of interventions with specific focus on timely delivery of activities particularly on policy dialogues and capacity building activities.

- **Long term benefits of the project interventions to targeted men, women and vulnerable people in the long-term**

LDSPII program built capacity and supported SMEs targeted at businesses owned and men, women and vulnerable notably PWDs to ensure they are sustained in the long run. The evaluation observed in the documents reviewed and interviews conducted with beneficiaries, there is acknowledgement of long-term immense benefits attributed to those LDSPII interventions. For example, beneficiaries attested to having improved the capacity to manage their businesses; the seed funding of USD 500 positively impacted the sustained expansion in volume of business, profits and enabled adopted better and highly customer responsive IT based marketing platforms (facebook). All the latter point to professional and sustained business management benefits that accrue to beneficiaries as result of LDSPII interventions.

⁵⁵ Signed LDSPII document.

⁵⁶ Signed LDSPII document

- **Promotion of voice and interests of men, women and vulnerable through Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB)**

The LDSPII supported intervention on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) has benefited the men, women and vulnerable in a way that promotes their interests in the councils through enhanced participatory governance in the long-term. For example men, women and PWDs county council members benefitted from knowledge and skills on inclusive planning and budgeting and public finance management. The first benefit is the capacity in terms of knowledge and skills were gender inclusive (total 167 (120 Male & 47 Female)⁵⁷ ensuring men, women benefitted from such life governance skills.⁵⁸ Second benefit, is that enhanced capacity of council councils members(men,women,PWDs and Youth) has enabled effective advocate for interests of their constituencies comprising of men, women and vulnerable in development endeavours in the years to come.

- **Mechanisms put in place by LSDPII to support Government of Liberia sustain improvements made by project interventions**

The evaluation has observed that the LSDPII project instituted mechanisms of ensuring that abuse of resources and related excesses is checked long after the end of the project. This has been done by bringing on board anti-corruption and integrity institutions especially Liberia Anti-Corruption Coalition (LACC). It is anticipated that LACC will enhance the promotion of transparency and accountability in the decentralized service delivery system by ensuring the revenues raised are not embezzled.

LSDP II has also helped Liberian Government put in place a mechanism to document the real estate properties, institute the collection of the real estate revenue and sharing scheme between the centre and counties. This mechanism will continue to support Liberian government raise the most needed revenue to support and sustain service delivery by the CSCs at local level as well as national development⁵⁹.

In addition to other watchdogs, the community feedback mechanism supported and put in place by the project has proved to be a formidable force in supporting monitoring the quality of services to the citizenry and is crucial to raising their consciousness. The evaluation has noted that so far, the results from the roll out of the CFM, shows it has played an important role in averting land related conflicts.

- **Extent to which a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented**

The terminal evaluation learnt that the LSDP II delivered capacity building interventions were appropriate and tailored to specific needs of the institutions and targeted beneficiaries. The evidence documented by the evaluation demonstrates that LSDP II first and foremost, undertook capacity assessment needs of planned interventions of targeted institutions and beneficiary staff to ensure the capacity building interventions are tailored towards addressing the capacity gaps. Available evidence from documents reviewed and interviews conducted by this terminal evaluation demonstrated that indeed capacity development to government institutions was deemed appropriate and served to improve delivery of the

⁵⁷ LDSPII 2023 Annual Report draft

⁵⁸ LDSPII 2023 Annual Report draft

⁵⁹ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II) Annual Report - 2022 (Jan - Dec 2022)

social services. For example, the skills acquired by the city governments, county council members, tax agents among others will enhance the capacity of their staff to effectively manage and account for resources intended for service delivery.⁶⁰ In addition, the installation of solar energy at the service centers enhanced service delivery through the provision of constant power supply at the CSCs.⁶¹

Weaknesses

The terminal evaluation noted that there was no structure formal sustainability plan out in place by the project, thus the evaluation could not be able to accurately measure the milestones to indicate achievements made towards project sustainability. In addition, the LDSP II project also failed to shift its implementation modality from DIM to NIM so as to enhance the national ownership. From the documents reviewed, there is no evidence to show that that UNDP shift its policy of rolling the program from direct implementation modality to national implementation modality. This in a way has watered down the degree of ownership of project results by MCAs and counties as it is seen as a UNDP program.

3.6.3 Opportunities to Program sustainability

- **Legal and Policy Reforms**

Legal and Policy Reforms contribute to and are key foundations for enhancing the national systems because they provide rules of engagement that prescribe how norms effectively support service delivery. The evaluation observed that LDSP II program supported landmark legal and policy reforms that strengthened the national systems. For example legal reforms such as the Revenue Sharing Act; Local Government Act, 2018; Public Financial Management Amendment, and the Revenue Code Amendment were appreciated by key stakeholders as to have made significant contributions in the institutional reforms leading to improved service delivery under the decentralized frameworks. It has been established from documents reviewed by this evaluation that the law reforms have had a ripple effect that will strengthen local ownership and sustain the decentralization gains that made over the years.

- **Commitment of the development partners to support the decentralization policy and processes.**

The evaluation has learnt from the documents reviewed that so far, there are 2 partners in the implementation of LDSP II program have expressed interest for continued support. For example, Sweden has prioritized an extra focus on fiscal decentralization that would serve as a key towards strengthening the decentralization effort thus sustaining developmental gains.⁶² In so doing Sweden has developed the next cooperation framework for Liberia and decentralization forms part of the framework.⁶³

The World Bank has expressed interest and discussions held with Government of Liberia for continued funding to County Treasuries to ensure that additional spending entities are

⁶⁰ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II) Annual Report - 2022 (Jan - Dec 2022)

⁶¹ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II)- Annual Report - 2021 (Jan - Dec 2021)

⁶² Liberia Decentralization Support Project (LDSP) End of Year Board Meeting Minutes Virtual Meeting (via Zoom) Tuesday, December 20, 2022, from 10:00 AM-12:20 AM

⁶³ Liberia Decentralization Project Phase II (LDSP II) Board Meeting on 2021 Annual Work plan-virtual meeting (via Zoom), Wednesday, February 10, 2021 from 10:00AM-11:30AM

enrolled. In addition, World Bank and UNDP are working together to ensure that the IFMIS system remained functional at all County treasuries and spending entities.⁶⁴

- **Extent of availability of financial and economic resources to sustain the benefits achieved by the LDSP II project.**

The evaluation team has noted that LSDPII during its implementation undertook several interventions that rendered the availability of financial and economic resources likely to sustain benefits achieved by the project. First of all, capacity building activities and social service delivery strategies will enable ongoing generation of requisite financial resources likely to sustain project benefits so far realized. For example, the fiscal decentralization has given autonomy to sub-national structures to collect, manage and expand locally raised revenue for local government administration -including the operationalization of County Service Centers, and social economic development at the sub-national level.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the support to business enterprises, there is an assurance of monthly taxes and annual license fees remitted by SMEs, roll out of paid for services such as business registration, traditional and western marriage certificates among others are real cash cow that will provide financial resources for sustained service delivery at CSCs.

Secondly, the evaluation has noted that the business grant of USD 500 and associated business management training offered were reported by beneficiaries as having improved capitation of their businesses that led to improved financial health of their enterprises that in turn led to sustained business growth and profits. Health businesses mean boosted financial resources in form of monthly, annual, and presumptive tax revenues to sustain support service delivery at CSCs, municipalities, and national treasury.

Thirdly, the LSDP II program invested in capacity building initiatives for effective exploitation of economic resources (land, labor, technology) likely to sustain the project benefits. For example, documentation of real estate in urban centers for real estate taxation, land registration certification among others provides economic resources that will generate revenue for sustenance of service delivery by the counties and municipal councils and supporting budget of central government. Capacity building initiatives by the LSDPII program provided highly skilled labor in form of well-trained tax agents, County and Municipal superintendents, county council members with capability to effectively support generation of revenues, participatory governance necessary for supporting decentralization in the long-run. The introduction and installation of technologies such as solar power systems, internet and computerized systems provide critical economic resources that enhance accelerated review revenue generation which in turn effectively and efficiently support decentralized service delivery in the long-term at CSCs.

- **Availability of the political will from the government of Liberia**

The project documents reviewed by the evaluation demonstrate that harnessing the political will was undertaken very well by the LSDPII program which has endeared the political leadership to invest in time and other resources to sustain the project results in the future. The evaluation did observe from the documents reviewed that the active involvement of political leaders' right from the national level down to local level including the president, ministers and superintendents' at municipal and county counts a lot in sustaining the

⁶⁴ Liberia Decentralization Project (LDSP) Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023-Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon

⁶⁵ United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II)- Annual Report - 2021 (Jan - Dec 2021)

project benefits. At the national level, LSDPII program, key ministers have been and parcel of the technical working group and attended board meeting to ensure political will is well harnessed. For example, board meetings were chaired by the Minister of internal affairs and in attendance were other key MACs such as Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Finance & Development Planning, Governance Commission (GC) and Liberia Revenue Authority. The inclusion of such ministries was enhanced political will and buy in especially in support of the area of legal reforms is a clear testimony of immense political will to sustain project benefits.

3.6.4 Threats to Program sustainability

- **Risks associated with legal frameworks, operationalisation of governance structures and processes**

Legal frameworks: The evaluation review of existing Legal frameworks notably the Liberia Constitution of 2018 and new laws amended and brought on board by LDSP II project portend overlaps that bring about conflicts in the mandates of all MACs and CSCs. The Liberia Constitution is silent about the decentralization which has emboldened MACs to reluctantly cede their powers to CSCs and often recentralized services such as signatures. The evaluation also noted there were overlaps of mandates of ministries which continue to stifle decentralized service delivery. For example, the ministry of agriculture and internal affairs on matters concerning regulation of the communal farming which lies under the ambit of both the ministry of agriculture and internal affairs.

Overall, article III of Liberia Constitution of 2018 states that Liberia is a unitary sovereign state divided into counties for administrative purposes. The constitution does not provide for devolution of powers as provided for in the decentralization agenda. Thus, county and municipal councils by supreme law are not provided for and do not have powers to make binding ordinance and decisions in the day-to-day execution of their duties.

This situation will often hamper their efforts to raise much needed resources to sustainably deliver on their decentralization mandate. A key informant aptly put it this way:

“The above scenario was partly attributed to contradiction of the Public finance management law() with Revenue Sharing Law(2021) because the latter was created for centralized financial management yet the enactment of the revenue sharing law, there was no amendment of Public Finance Management to fully operationalize the revenue sharing law”

Secondly, Government continues to operate public/ private partnerships that undermine the spirit of decentralization. For example, contracting a private company to issue labour permits on behalf of the ministry of labor sharply contradicts the powers of county service centres to do so. A key informed re-affirmed thus with a classic example of work permits:

“The ministry of labour brought in CETIS a private company to issue and collect revenue for the work permit. This sharply contradicts the decentralization framework where all services are supposed to be delivered by CSCs.”

Governance structures still pose a challenge to sustainability. From the documents reviewed and interviews conducted, the evaluation noted that some Ministries, Agencies and Commissions by omission or commission have not fully decentralized their services to country service centres and do exhibit of no signs of doing so in the near future. This attitude was re-affirmed by a key informant thus:

“There is in fact recentralization taking root against decentralization. In the 15 county centres no fiscal decentralization has taken root, even in the 4 country treasury frameworks and structures have broken down.”

The kind attitude not only denied sustained delivery of services closer to the citizens but also denies the County service centres the much-needed revenues that could enhance service delivery.

LDSP II processes were operationalised in a manner that appeared to pose practical challenges likely to undermine sustainability. The evaluation has observed that this development was apparent in many interventions ranging from the designated services provided by the County Service Centres. As a key informant observed thus:

“Biometric machine was provided to the centre but it is idle because ECOWAS work Card is not issued yet people paid their money. So, people must go all the way to Monrovia to have their cards processed. Here we don’t have a rubber stamp and don’t have any transport means to follow-up on the applications of the workers card on behalf of our clients.”

In addition, the sustainable operationalization of the Community Feedback mechanisms also remains a big challenge after the project expiry. This was attributed to persistent failures for some counties to provide citizens feedback on issues raised regarding flaws in service delivery. Moreover, the evaluation has learned that studies conducted about effectiveness of CFM town hall meetings, citizens views were mixed with some expressing ignorance about the existence of such mechanisms while others thought its value to the benefit of common persons was not worthwhile.

The evaluation also observed that some CSOs regarded as crucial partners in the LGDSP II intervention processes are reported to have improperly internalized different provisions of the laws, which the evaluation has noted comes with risks of disseminating the wrong information to citizen concerning the very laws. Thus, CSOs often engaged in propaganda activities with high chances of derailing ownership of the program in the long run.

Furthermore, LSDP II program brought CSOs on board in anticipation that they had a wide and deep reach as far as targeting marginalized and vulnerable beneficiaries was concerned. However, the term evaluation has established that CSOs had a demonstrated tendency of promoting their individual agenda at the expense of the LDSP II program. For example, CSOs were cited critical of the decentralization program as dormant. Thus, CSOs have often operated as moribund and often watered down the achievements that the government and its partners are making towards entrenching decentralization.⁶⁶

Lastly, effective functioning of county councils to deliver and support decentralization agenda remains weak. The terminal evaluation learnt that majority of the county council members are comprised of paramount chiefs that are illiterate and thus lack the capacity to contribute to making ordinance, budget, or development plans. Such situation waters down sustainability of the good intentions of LDSP II project capacity building initiatives. As one key informant expressed the gravity of the problem in the following words:

“The LDSP II project made an attempt to train the county council members, majority of them are not trainable.”

3.7. Cross-Cutting Issues

3.7.1. Leave No One Behind

LDSP II program supported interventions inclusive of the vulnerable. Key areas noted by the evaluation when the principle of *“Leave No Behind”* was widely applied include the massive awareness campaigns on LGAs, Small grants scheme, CFM, and participation of all in gender planning and budgeting processes at municipal and county level. It was evident in

⁶⁶ Liberia Decentralization Project (LDSP) Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023-Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon

the documents reviewed by the evaluation that efforts were made to include women, youth, people living with disabilities and sexual minorities, communities at the risk of HIV infection and poor health in counties municipalities where LDSP II interventions were implemented. The deployment of multi-media strategy in awareness campaigns of legal reforms using local languages, regional FM stations, townhall meetings and leaflets were intended reach all and leave no one behind as a strategy to enhance decentralization. The only notable challenge recorded by the evaluation that constrained the inclusion of all was lack of provision of assistive devices and sign language interpreters to some categories of PWDs especially the deaf and dumb, partially sighted and blind and other categories of multiple disabilities.

3.7.2. Gender Equality:

TE observed that gender was factored and addresses in the project design and implementation which has contributed to the participation and benefit of women especially at all the CSCs in the fifteen (15) counties of the project intervention. Women have benefitted from almost all the services which has improved and sustained their livelihood. Further details of the intervention are discussed below.

Evaluation Questions:

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

- **The extent to which LDSP programme addressed gender in its design, implementation, and monitoring**

In the design of LDSP II programme particularly under the gender responsive decentralization, the evaluation observed gender considerations for women and men, boys and girls' different needs, interest, priorities and concerns were specifically to addressed in governance concerns (policy making, planning, budget allocation, program development, local service delivery and performance monitoring) and also address gender inequalities.⁶⁷ As program strategy, LSDP II interventions were inclusive of men and women and were better motivated to actively participate in the implementation of the LGA reforms.⁶⁸ Gender mainstreaming and integration of gender aspects were earmarked in the theory of change for LDSP program as one of the enablers of the success and off-course the finalization of the gender policy and strategy in the ministry of local government were expected to guide inclusion of gender aspects.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Signed LDSP Programme Document

⁶⁸ Signed LDSP Programme Document

⁶⁹ Ibid

During the LDSP II Implementation, the evaluation noted from the reviewed annual work plans and reports that the LDSP II program committed to and promoted gender equality. For example, women and men were equally targeted for capacity building and were trained, mentored for business management, and accessing loans. The Business Startup Centre trained (10 females and 8 males) of the 18-business selected and received seed funding of 500USD.⁷⁰ Women beneficiaries appreciated the support and reported it greatly improved their business fortunes in terms of profitability and adoption of digital marketing that endeared them to their customers.



Josephine Suah, Proprietress of A.M Boykai Medicine store displays additional drugs she recently purchased with of the 500 USD seed funding received from UNDP/LDSP.

In addition, the evaluation observed that gender responsive planning & budgeting interventions were largely targeted and inclusive of women. Evidence from the documents reviewed showed that skills acquired from the trainings enhanced the mainstreaming of gender responsiveness in development planning and budgeting at the sub-national levels with women actively involved in the participatory planning processes⁷¹

⁷⁰ BOTR Monitoring of the business support service-Zedru CSC Solar final

⁷¹ LDSP 2022 Year End Board Meeting Final



Pictures from Gender responsive Budgeting and Planning

Case study-Capacity building and mentorship training conducted by BSC Monrovia

Janet Varnia is a proprietress of Janes Catering Bar and Restaurant located in Kakata City. Janet testified that after undergoing capacity building and mentorship training conducted by BSC Monrovia, she acquired knowledge that helped her improve her business. She testified that currently, she has separated ledgers for recording sales, expenses, and inventory of supplies. She also noted that before the training, she usually budgeted for weekly supplies for her business haphazardly. Currently, she prepares a detailed budget inclusive of a list of items to be purchased, transportation for round trip to purchase goods, including miscellaneous expense. Notably, she utilizes her social media (Facebook) page to advertise her daily menu, respond to customers' queries, and reach her target customers.

During the **Monitoring of the LSDP II** project, monitoring reports reviewed show that during participatory monitoring visits, it was evident gender perspectives were given high consideration by selecting both men and women and seeking their views on performance of the program interventions. For example, the performance of the 9 respondents/entrepreneurs interviewed, 67 percent were women compared to 33 percent who were men. This indicates that there were more women than men who benefitted from the business support services.⁷²

⁷² BOTR Monitoring of the business support service-Zedru CSC Solar final



Key Informant Interview being conducted in Gbarma with Ma Dabbah Marshall, Gbarpolu County Marketing Association Chairlady.

- Extent to which the LDSP II program promoted positive changes in gender equality

As the terminal evaluation has observed, LDSP II program was spot on in the promotion of positive changes regarding gender equality. The active participation of women in the county and municipal councils, increased access to crucial services at service centers such as free services for psycho-social support to victims of GBV and rape, inclusion of women in the small grants scheme among others were all positive changes that are directly attributed to the LDSP II program. All those positive changes are evidence of how LDSP II program has promoted gender equality.

- LDSP II promotion of gender equality, human rights, and human development in the delivery of outputs

The LDSP II program promoted gender equality by engraining gender markers in activities of outputs to ensure inclusion and targeting both men and women as a way the decentralization processes in the 15 counties. The **table 4** below indicates the gender markers assigned to crucial outputs and extent of promotion of gender equality.

Table 4: Indicative outputs with a gender marker

#	Output	Gender Marker	Comment
1	Output 1.1	2	The output promoted gender equality in a significant and consistent way and as a cross cutting issue by rationale activities indicators associated with output
2	Output 1.2	2	The output promoted gender equality in a significant and consistent way and as a cross cutting issue by rationale activities indicators associated with output

3	Output 1.3	3	The achievement of gender equality and/or the empowerment of women were the explicit objective of the output and the main reason that this output was planned.
4	Output 2.1	1	The output promoted gender equality though in a limited way
5	Output 3.1	1	The output promoted gender equality though in a limited way
6	Output 3.2	1	The output promoted gender equality though in a limited way
7	Output 4.1	1	The output promoted gender equality though in a limited way
8	Output 4.2	2	The output promoted gender equality in a significant and consistent way and as a cross cutting issue by rationale activities indicators associated with output

Out of the 5 outcomes, each of the 4 outcomes has engrained gender markers with varying degrees to ensure there is inclusion of gender. In instances where outputs (1.1,1.2,1.3,4.2) were considered crucial for inclusion of women and men, gender markers 2 and 3 were assigned in the design and implementation of project interventions to ensure gender equality was well mainstreamed.

3.8. Human Rights

Evaluation Question

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

- Extent to which poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women, and other disadvantageded and marginalized groups benefitted from LDSP’s interventions

LDSP II promoted equal opportunities for both men, women, PWDs in delivery of its outputs. This terminal evaluation noted issues such as the awareness about the legal reforms, provision of crucial services for supporting the vulnerable such as victims of GBV, Rape, Psycho-social support and capacity building initiatives and community feedback mechanism. Affording everyone opportunity was all geared and in-line with promotion of human rights by LDSP II program.

By design and implementation of the LDSP II interventions, human development was considered crucial to the success of the program interventions. For example, the capacity building for SMEs and related small grants support contributed to the improvement of the wellbeing of owners of SMEs. Thus, human development was notable in improved business stability, creation of employment opportunities and food security.

3.9. LDSP II program synergies and collaboration with other relevant initiatives

From documents reviewed, it was evident that the LDSP II program in its design and implementation exhibited well-crafted synergies and collaborations as the mode for delivery of results at national and sub-national level. Key relevant synergies and collaborations put in place to deliver on the program results include the following:

- **LDSP II Synergies and collaborations with fiscal decentralization component implemented by Ministry of Finance, Development and Planning**

The LDSP II supported interventions to tap into the real estate taxation and the revenue sharing scheme are well aligned to enhance and reinforce the fiscal decentralization component implemented by the MFDP. Under this initiative critical capacity has been built by the LDSP II project through the expansion of revenue base by bringing in board the real estate taxation and operationalizing the revenue sharing scheme which in turn have improved revenues for municipal authorities and CSCs⁷³.

- **LDSP II synergy with Public Sector Reform Agenda**

The agenda of public sector reform agenda is to improve pay and performance management in participating ministries, agencies and commissions (MACs) and strengthen payroll management in the civil service. LSDPII project carried out capacity building interventions to roll MACs to empower and capacitate CSCs deliver services. For example, a business development manual was developed for the use by County Service Centers to facilitate the process of providing business advisories to citizens at the sub-national level who are interested in establishing small business start-ups and business sustainability.⁷⁴

- **LDSP II synergy with Civil Service Reform (CSR)**

Civil service reform in Liberia was aimed at improving human resource capacity, service delivery and thereby enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the civil service. Thus, capacity building interventions under LSDPII clearly synergized with Civil service reforms. For example, the training of tax agents with on hand skills to collect data (Kobo collect and EMAAS tools) and assess property tax contribute⁷⁵ to have competent staff that could support widening the revenue base. Secondly, capacity building of the city governments in the areas of financial management, planning and budgeting for the city governments of Kakata, Buchanan and Vionjama was in line with strengthening civil service reforms. It also considered gender balance as critical in the capacity building in which ten (6 males & 4 females) staffs per city were trained.⁷⁶ To enhance their capacity, hands on skills to enable them effectively and fully deliver on their mandates targeted revenue forecasting and collection, financial accounting and reporting, development planning and implementation, public procurement processes and procedures as well as financial management in the context of the Public Finance Law of Liberia.⁷⁷ Thus, the skills acquired by the city governments are reported enhance the capacity of their staff to effectively manage account for resources intended for service delivery.⁷⁸

⁷³ 2022 LSDP Annual Report Final 5,14,23

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Report-Monitoring of real property tax project final

⁷⁶ 2022 LSDP Annual Report Final 5,14,23

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ 2022 LSDP Annual Report Final 5,14,23

- The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) – under Governance Pillar IV

LSDP II has conducted the LGA (2018) awareness activities and testimonies point to mind set change and likely active participation of all in governance. The evaluation team has observed that with LDSP II support, local communities have been able to understand the establishment of county councils, county service centers, election of municipal officials including chiefs and the need to include women and PWDs in decision making, and the revenue sharing act.⁷⁹ This change of mindset will likely enhance the active contribution and participation of the all Liberian citizens in governance in line with governance Pillar IV under PAPD.

- The LSDP II project synergy with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

The LSDP II project linked and supported the implementation of all pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. For example it contributed to UNSDCF **Outcome 4: 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 subnational levels.**⁸⁰

- Synergies between LSDP II with the SDGs particularly goals 1, 5, 16 and 17

LSDP II project was well linked and supported **Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.** LSDP II interventions under the small grants scheme for micro enterprises and related capacity building for targeted beneficiaries in financial management is appreciated by beneficiaries as having improved their business' profitability and created employment opportunities for both men and women. Thus, the changes of the support are clear testimony that LDSP II project contributed to poverty reduction in a manner that was multipronged and well-targeted to reach the poor.

LSDP II has immensely contributed to **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.** The evaluation deciphers the contribution of the LSDP II project as evident in the small business grants support to women and capacity building initiative on ToT - Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) Training of Trainers (TOT) which was targeted to enable local authorities participatory planning inclusive of all including women.

LSDP II program also has linkages with **Goal 16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.** The evaluation noted that the LSDP II program synergies with Goal 16 range from providing services at CSCs level on the following: In collaboration with Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection offering non-payable services such as psychosocial support, physical assault, sexual assault, child abandonment, rape cases, child maltreatment, and domestic violence services and offering center for national documents and records- offers only Western Marriage Certificate service.⁸¹ The latter services intended promote peace and justice to all.

⁷⁹ Consolidated monitoring reports CSC, LGA,CFM final pdf

⁸⁰ 2022 LSDP Annual Report Final 5,14,23

⁸¹ Consolidated monitoring reports CSC, LGA, CFM final pdf

LSDP II programme delivery on Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The LSDP II programme interventions were clearly woven operationalized under partnerships evident at both national and sub-national level. The evaluation observed that at national level, the collaboration between development partners UNDP, Sweden, Ireland, and Government of Liberia provided the most needed platform that has effectively to resource mobilization and enhanced political will to deliver on goal 17. The standard letters of Agreement between Ministry of Internal Affairs with UNDP the implementing partner and another one with UNDP with Liberia revenue authority provide concrete evidence on how partnerships were forged for synergies on delivery of the project in line with SDG goal 17. Secondly at sub-national level, the de-concentration of the MCA services to CSCs, CSOs and private sector partnerships have been vital in efficient delivery of services as well as widening the revenue base and capacity building of key stakeholders. All the later activities demonstrate how the LSDP II project has contributed to delivery on goal 17 with utmost dedication and focus worth emulation for future interventions.

- [It is designed to support and facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government \(NPD LG\)](#)

The LSDP II did enhance the operationalization of the Local Government Act (2018). This is evidenced through awareness campaigns to popularize the LGA law. Interventions in support of popularization of LGA include the multi-media strategic campaigns using TV, Radio and hall based and community campaigns working with CSOs. Targeted populations have been men, women, youth, and disabled persons country wide.

3.10. Good practices of the program

- **Partnerships contributed resources, skills and synergies enabling achievement of project results.**

Partnerships with variety of stakeholders (Donors, MACs, Academia, Private Sector, the media) brought on board a variety of skills, resources and built synergies that support the effective and efficiently delivery of program results.

- **Capacity needs assessments contributed greatly to success of capacity building project initiatives.**

Undertaking capacity needs assessments before implementing capacity building helped to identify the actual needs and how they can be adequately addressed. Most of the capacity building initiatives undertaken by the project because they were pre-ceded by due diligence using capacity need assessments.

- **Feedback mechanism was key assessment of project performance from beneficiaries' perspective.**

Establishing and operationalizing feedback mechanism proved important for the project to easily assess its performance from the targeted beneficiaries' perspective. The feedback mechanisms thus served as feelers upon which project implementers gauged their successes and limitation as well as assess how the decentralization was being rolled out.

- **Joint monitoring with stakeholders**

Joint monitoring of project activities by stakeholders provided an opportunity for sharing experiences on spot and in a manner that evoked quick response emerging challenges and learning lessons that informed adjustment to project interventions.

- **Participatory monitoring involving project targeted beneficiaries.**

Participatory monitoring involving targeted beneficiaries and provided opportunities for the project to learn and get feedback from in real time and experiences in a manner that was

informative to the management. This in turn enabled quick response to emerging challenges during the project implementation.

3.11. Key lessons learned

- **Teamwork and coordination**

The evaluation discovered that the LDSP II Team organized technical working sessions to agree on key implementation strategies and specific roles per institution and timeline for implementation. This approach became extremely workable and lead to the timely implementation of both the Revenue Sharing Policy dialogues and County Treasury Framework training. For example, two joint activities which were intended to be implemented jointly by the MFDP, MIA, LRA & GC with technical support from the LDSP team. The timely and successful implementation of the joint activities was as a result of the cordial and mutual interactions between the MFDP, MIA, LRA & GC.⁸²

- **Strengthening coordination and information sharing contribute to trust building and program success.**

This was evident in the way donors and MACs coordinated to execute interventions. For example, the successful coordination between Sweden while supporting the revision of project document and allocation of fiscal resources decentralization related output activities was smooth due to existing cordial relationships amongst Ministries Agencies and Commissions (MACs) because of improved coordination.⁸³ Furthermore, the Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings proved to be very effective in enhancing coordination amongst MACs and donor partners. In some of the meetings held issues of technical nature discussed were often referred to the Board for redress with utmost attention and success.⁸⁴

⁸² 3rd Quarter 2022

⁸³ Quarter 1 -2023

⁸⁴ Quarter 2 -2022

4.0. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

Decentralization reforms in Liberia continue to gain traction especially in the areas of policy and regulatory accomplishments, service delivery enhancement, and the strengthening of County Service Centres amongst others. Certainly, programme delivery for 2023 was impressive and can be largely credited to the immeasurable support from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Governance Commission, as well as the UNDP country office. While the leg work and coordinating role has been played by these agencies, the generous financial and sometimes technical support by the Government of Sweden and Ireland cannot be overemphasized. This level of cooperation has certainly inspired the project team to embrace 2024 with a thrust that reinforces the urgency to deliver more.

Design and relevance

The LDSPII design and relevance were aligned to UN (UNSD Outcome 4) and UNDP outcome 1 and operationalization of SDGs 1, 5, 16 and 17 and the principle of “Leaving No One Behind”. It was also well for national commitments (Maputo Protocol 2003 on rights of women), policies and priorities (PAPD, the vision 2030, the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance fiscal decentralization and Gender Policy among others) However, the LDSPII appears overly ambitious and was not SMART in its design as outcomes require more time to take root than planned for in the project period.

Effectiveness

LDSP II was highly effective in contributing to both national and local development change as exhibited in the legal reforms executed, capacity built for both MACs and CSCs and beneficiaries (SMEs small grants) and CFM. There has been an impressive performance in the progress towards achieving the program outcomes and outputs with performance exceedingly over 90%. Also notable is the immense contribution of partnerships to mobilization of resources, supporting and provision of requisite infrastructure and capacity building at both national and sub-national level. Both positive and negative unintended changes have emerged such as promotion of rights of marginalized and vulnerable and ensuring inclusion of all through taking services closer to the people, improvement of wellbeing in terms of business stability, food security and creation of jobs and participatory governance at sub-national level. The negative unintended changes worth attention by UNDP that the evaluation captured include reluctance of property owners to pay taxes and persistent silo mentality of MACs continues to stifle effectiveness of the interventions of LDSPII. Issues of limited political will, irregular resource disbursements to CSCs remains an area concern worth attention by UNDP and government of Liberia. It is also crucial for UNDP to continue supporting the following priority areas Small Scale grant, awareness of laws- Local Government Act (LGA) Revenue Sharing Scheme (RSS) and Community Feedback Mechanism(CFM), Capacity building and infrastructure developments. The latter form a strong bedrock upon which decentralization can be further entrenched.

Disability

Inclusion of the PWDs was given due attention in both design and implementation of interventions. Inclusion was evident in small grants scheme, social service access (ramps put at CSCs), county councils and popularization of laws among others. However, effective inclusion of all PWDs remains elusive unless appropriate assistive devices and sign language interpreters are well included and streamlined at all levels of service delivery points and awareness campaigns.

Impact

LDSP project impact is highly visible and wide reaching especially the support and promotion of participatory governance by inclusion of all through representation in County Councils, Legal and CFM awareness interventions among others. Such developments are major steps towards entrenchment of the decentralization as envisaged in the PAPD and 2030 Agenda.

Human Rights

Human rights were given due consideration specifically with deliberate actions undertaken to include the marginalized and vulnerable especially in interventions aimed at improving their participation in governance and improvement of their wellbeing. Specific attention was paid to women, PWDs, youth, elders at improving service access and incomes as well as representation in County Councils.

Sustainability of the program interventions through capacity building institutions and individuals, infrastructure development seems to be taking root but is constrained by limited political will, lack of exit strategy and low and irregular funding of sub-national government structures especially the county councils. Unless efforts to enhance political will take a new turn and adequate and regular funding assured regular and adequate funding, sustainability of program results remains in jeopardy.

Cross-cutting issues

- **Leave No One Behind**

LDSP II fully deployed the “*Leave No One Behind*” principle in the design, implementation and monitoring of the LDSP program. The limitations were that some categories of PWDs such as blind and partially sighted and deaf and dumb could not be reached due to lack of provision of assistive devices and recentralization of some services by some MACs.

- **Gender Equality**

LDSP program addressed gender equality in its design, implementation, monitoring, promoted human rights and human development in the delivery of outputs especially in capacity building initiatives such business start-up and seed capital, participatory monitoring activities, the awareness about the legal reforms, provision of crucial services for supporting the vulnerable such as victims of GBV, Rape, Psycho-social support and capacity building initiatives and community feedback mechanism.

4.2. Recommendations

Table 5: Elaboration on recommendations

Recommendation	Rationale	Description	Responsible Party	Priority	Importance
Recommendations to UNDP					
1. It is recommended that in formulation of a successor program to ensure full fiscal decentralization by operationalizing and implementing the RSL PFM and LGA; support other local structure to implement LGA an	Full fiscal decentralization serves as the backbone upon which effective RSL, PFM and LGA can be fully implemented because it offers legitimacy and critical financial resources to CSCs to exercise their powers to budget, plan and execute their development plans leading to effective and efficient service delivery.	CSCs have decried the delay in the operationalization of fiscal decentralization as having hampered the sharing of revenues and emboldened the MACs to recentralize revenue collection and ministry finance and Development continues to have more powers in deciding budget ceilings for counties which severely constrains their mandate of effective service delivery.	UNDP	Short term	High
2. It is recommended that future program, there is a careful design of each outcome and output in an open participatory manner to ensure full beneficiary involvement in program design, to include those at local level outside of Monrovia and ensure it does not overburden the government management capacity.	The involvement of the beneficiaries in the program design of the outcomes and outputs is important because it incorporates real needs to be addressed and enlists buy-in which is crucial for sustainability of the program results and	Beneficiaries buy-in especially on Real estate tax and CFM has been low because the ideas were imposition from without. This state of affairs	UNDP	Mid-term	High
3. It is recommended that there should be Continuous Capacity building overtime of institutions and agencies as well as retooling, repair, and maintenance of equipment to sustain and retain existing gains already made by LDSP II, considering expansion to the next phase III.	Tailor made training should be the modus operandi to enable the personnel with limited background in the subject area to cope and absorb the skills and knowledge being imparted. Sustained institutional capacity building to avert staff turnover in Municipalities and counties. The need to have proper maintenance	Some of the equipment is obsolete such as computers and others have broken down at different CSCs. Some of the staff especially beneficiaries of real tax had limited knowledge in accounting and therefore require continuous support to enable them up to date. There is urgent need for streamlined repairs and maintenance of equipment such as	UNDP, GOL, DN	Short term	High

	and repair of equipment is crucial for better service delivery.	solar units, computers and tablets for tax agents which require regular serving and provision of consumables like toners, software etc.			
4. It is recommended that there should be enhancement and strengthening coordination and partnership both internally and externally between government agencies as well as Development Partners and Civil Society	Streamlined coordination and partnership both internally and externally between government agencies as well as DPs and Civil Society is critical because it brings on board synergies and resources that serve as important vehicles for both human and financial resource mobilization critical for program effectiveness	Different partners have different niches where they can exploit to contribute to some of the program interventions. For example, CSOs are better place to conduct community awareness and mobilization of the marginalized and vulnerable groups because they have a better reach to grassroots. MACs have a leverage to channel resources and have infrastructure from national to sub-national level in respect to supporting the program interventions.	UNDP	Short Term	High
5. It is recommended that there is need to strengthen the LDSP II program management team by staffing it with specialized experts such as CTA as well as other relevant technical skills for effective capacity building of the Government institutions and departments considering the need for staff motivation through salary harmonization as well as regularizing volunteer staff.	Specialized staff provides critical skills and effective management support necessary for the successful program implementation. Specialize staff engage in providing technical support at short notice and will always effectively supervise activities of partners that require technical expertise	During the implementation of the LDSP II program some stakeholders blamed UNDP for having recruited consultants that were not up to the task-capacity building fiscal decentralization and also some CSCs staff lacking background in finance.	UNDP	Short term	High
Recommendations to Government of Liberia					
6. It is recommended that counties are granted full devolution of services at local levels to the CSCs and ensure enhancement of political will to accelerate decentralization agenda through the holding of a National Conference/Dialogue on	Effective decentralization can only be in place if all services (free and paid for) are devolved to CSCs. The added to full devolution is the cardinal duty of taking services closer to the marginalized, vulnerable and	CSCs decried the recentralization of some services by MACs which not only denied them revenue but hampered their ability to serve their clients better effectively and efficiently. Also, the lack of signing powers by the County	GOL	Short term	High

<p>decentralization. (Services at CSCs are still being initiated at the county levels but completed at central level due to authorization challenges encountered to obtain signatures for document locally which is evident of the lack of devolution of power</p>	<p>upcountry communities as well as increasing revenue at CSCs to support effective and efficient service delivery under the decentralization arrangement. Signing powers when acceded to county superintendents provide legitimacy, increase revenues of the CSCs and ensure timely service delivery.</p>	<p>superintendents' lead to delayed service delivery as documents that require signature had to be sent to Monrovia which took too long time such a week or months demoralizing citizens to seek services at CSCs</p>			
<p>7. An urgent and clear plan of action for Revenue Sharing Law full implementation must be given immediate attention to ensure the mobilization of needed resources to operationalize CSCs initiatives. Support CSOs, CBOs, youths, etc. to pressurize GOL; effect intentional mainstreaming of decentralization platform into the budgeting process of all GOL institutions to fast track the process.</p>	<p>Full enforcement of the Revenue sharing law is vital for realization of adequate resources for the CSCs to be fully functional and effective at delivery of services</p>	<p>As noted in the program implementation, CSCs decried lack of adequate resources to effectively implement local development as well and lack of adequate logistics to run offices.</p>	<p>GoL</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>8. It is recommended that there should be a judicious re-assessment of the costs of the traditional marriage certificate to ensure that poor, marginalized women may benefit; traditional Marriage certificate devolved to 4 counties must be replicated to others and increase the age of birth certificate recipients.</p>	<p>Marriage certificates serve an important function in terms of protection of women rights because the guarantee right to property and marriage stability. Therefore, it is crucial that a roll out to all counties is operationalised to increase access to marriage certificates.</p>	<p>Many women have been denied rights to property suffered gender-based violence for lack of documentation their status in marriages,</p>	<p>GoL</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>9. It is recommended that there is need to create an enabling environment in terms of infrastructure as well as providing logistical support-(transportation, office equipment,</p>	<p>A well-equipped and facilitated CSC office can provide services in an effective and efficient manner to its clients and serves as a pillar</p>	<p>A few CSCs decried poor infrastructure such as obsolete equipment, expired software, broken down desk computers, lack of cables and consumables such as</p>	<p>Government of Liberia</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>High</p>

<p>supplies etc.) to enable CSCs in the 15 counties to function adequately.</p>	<p>upon which decentralization is well anchored.</p>	<p>stationery and even toiletries, lack of internet connection, lack of transport to carry out outreaches. All the above challenges were reported to have severely hampered service delivery to the extent that staff was no longer reporting regular for duty at the office.</p>			
<p>10. There is need for the digitization, automation, and online technology migration of some services in Monrovia and at CSCs; also, strengthen the Community feedback mechanism to improve infrastructure and promote multi-media outreach to all.</p>	<p>Employment of digital technologies is critical to improving issuance of migration documents because it quickens processes in issuance of such documents</p>	<p>CSCs decried the challenges of processing migration documents because lack of operational equipment and delays to have them processed in Monrovia brought about by bureaucratic red tape and often negligence on part of officers charged with providing the service.</p>	<p>GOL</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>High</p>

ANNEXITURES

Annex 1: OECD/DAC ranking table

Table 6: OECD/DAC ranking table

	Rating (1 low, 5 high)					Rationale
	1	2	3	4	5	
Impact						The LDSP II programme highly changed the conduct of CSCs staff in that it endeared them to commitment to service. The legal and policy reforms have changed the decentralisation landscape forever further consolidating on the gains made in the past interventions. The inclusion of all has not all promoted the participation of vulnerable groups but also enhanced their wellbeing especially women and persons with disability. Overall, capacity building, infrastructure developments and retooling have positively impacted the service delivery under the decentralisation framework.
Sustainability						The programme design and implementation integrated the 3 pillars namely capacity building of relevant national systems to sustain operating principles of national ownership, harnessing the political will and accountability. However, the lack of an exit plan and limited resources for continuous support of the CSCs as well obsolete equipment and lack of regular service for equipment and limited political will puts programme sustainability at stake.

	Rating (1 low, 5 high)				Rationale
Relevance/ Design					<p>Programme conception, design and implementation were well informed by the national commitments to international development agenda (SDGs 1,5,16 and 17) and 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 UNSCDF respectively. Furthermore, the strategies employed to achieve the results were sound and appropriate. However, the design was not SMART enough because effective achievement of the results is a long-term requiring consistent sustained effort in terms of continuous capacity building of institutions and individuals, continuous awareness campaigns of legal reforms and CFM as well as support to SMEs.</p>
Effectiveness					<p>Effectiveness of the LDSPII can be rated at over 80%. All the 5 outcomes will be achieved. Moreover 15 out of 20 outputs have been realised. The LDSPII interventions of capacity building, infrastructure developments and associated retooling and awareness campaigns played an important role strengthen decentralisation inclusive of all. Thus, the predecessor LDSP I programme support laid a strong foundation for attaining the set outcome level results.</p>
Efficiency					<p>The LDSPII program exhibited high level efficiency in terms of terms of value for money and timely delivery of activities. However UNDP procurement processes tended to take long and somehow delayed take of some activities.</p>

Annex 2. Reconstructed Theory of Change/Intervention Logic

strengthen of government decentralization efforts and improve the quality of the delivery of services to all Liberians and residents across the 15 Counties

The Goal

Outcome

Outcome 1: LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery.

Outcome 2: Local government institutions and services are fully devolved at the assigned levels of government

Outcome 3: County Service Centers empowered and capacitated for improved service delivery at the sub-national level

Outcome 4: Legal and Regulatory Reforms developed and implemented to sustain decentralization

Outcome 5: Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring strengthened.

Output 1.1: Enhanced citizens participation in local governance through the implementation of the LGA

Output 1.2: Citizens' Feedback Mechanism (CFM) developed and implemented

Output 1.3: Local government officials' capacities for gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed.

Output 2.1: Municipalities functional and capacitated to manage resources and deliver services

Output 2.2: Boundaries between towns, clans, chiefdoms, districts, and counties harmonized.

Output 3.1: MACs empowered and capacitated to deliver services at the County Service Centers.

Output 3.2: Infrastructure of County Service Centers Improved.

Output 4.1 Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended.

Output 4.2 Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted and rollout.

Output 4.3: Ministry of Local Government Bill Enacted

Output 4.4: Enhanced citizens participation in the implementation of the Revenue Sharing Act through public awareness and ownership.

Output 4.5: Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing bills regulations developed.

Output 4.6: Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational.

Output 4.7: Automated property tax based developed and capacity building in real estate tax collections for 5 counties.

Output 4.8: County Treasuries in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties capacity strengthened.

Output 4.9: LRA and LIGIS staff capacity enhanced for effective data collection in four counties.

Output 4.10: Four counties capacity built to manage and account for revenue transfer.

Output 5.1 NDIS fully staffed to facilitate effective implementation of decentralization programme.

Output 5.2: Programme management capacity strengthened by logistical and operational support.

Output 5.3: Chief Technical Advisor, and M&E Officer hired, UN Volunteers equipped to fully oversee the management of the LDSP.

Programme OutPuts

Annex 3. Evaluation Matrix

Table 7: Evaluation matrix

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

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Indicators/Success Standards	Data Analysis Method
	which to base the initiatives?					
Effectiveness	What evidence is there that the programme has contributed towards developmental change at the national and local levels?	Has the LDSP II 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 canters at county level Reports of legislative processes on Decentralization policy documents	Review of documents (reports) Interviews Meetings Focus Group Discussions	# of services canters 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 toward their achievement.	What outcomes have been achieved or which progress has 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
		Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?	Progress reports Interview results	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 Calculation of delivery rates, matching planned against actual
What has been the contribution of partners and other	What were the positive or negative, intended, or	M&E Plan Reports	Interviews Focus group discussions.	Level of achievement against programme outcomes	Observation	

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Indicators/Success Standards	Data Analysis Method
	organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?	unintended, changes brought about by LDSP's work?		Meetings with donor partners	# of outputs in terms of policy documents, research reports, etc.	Comparison of reports and implementation progress Calculation of delivery rates, matching planned against actual
		What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP performance?	Reports	Interviews Focus group discussions. Meetings with donor partners	# of outputs in terms of policy documents, research reports, etc.	Calculation of delivery rates, matching planned against actual Observing programme assumptions
Efficiency	To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?	To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?	Activity reports M&E reports	Desk review Interviews Meetings	# of program outputs on target with timely delivery # of policy instruments developed and in use	Comparison of planned and actual outputs
		Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources?	Financial reports	Desk review Meetings	Rate of expense Quality of human resource in implementation process	Comparing planned and actual expense records
	To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?	To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?	Monitoring reports Progress reports Annual reports	Review of M&E matrix Meeting with programme team Interview with staff of MACs	# of monitoring reports Frequency of activities monitoring # of output documents/policy instruments available	Comparative analysis of monitoring reports with programme outputs
		To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	Monitoring reports Interviews Programme documents	Desk reviews Interviews Review of PRODOC	# of actual funds used to budget Turnaround time of disbursement of requested funds	Comparing planned and actual expense records
		To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?	Meetings Interviews Programme assumptions	Review of PRODOC Meetings	Rate of expense # of actual budget to planned budget	Comparing PRODOC with responses

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Indicators/Success Standards	Data Analysis Method
Sustainability	What is the likelihood that the LDSP II programme interventions are sustainable?	What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP II to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?	Policy documents and regulatory instrument reports Service Center reports	Desk review Meetings Interviews Focus group discussions	# of functional service centers maintained by government # of regulatory instruments effective	Comparing reports with planned outputs
		To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed or implemented?	Training reports Interview reports Feedback reports from training participants	Interviews Focus Group discussion. Desk review	# of local government actors trained # of training beneficiary CSOs Level of technical and material support provided to MACs and service canterers	Observation of reports and feedback information from program stakeholders
		To what extent will target men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?	PRODOC reviews	Interview results Focus groups discussions Meetings	Level of local commitment to these programmes Extent of these populations accessing services supported by the program	Observation of reports and feedback information from program stakeholders
	To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?	To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?	Meetings with partner agencies Interviews	Meetings Interviews	# of synergy programs supported by other partners Level of partnership commitment with different partners	Review documents and partnership meetings Analysis programme board meeting minutes
		What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP II to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?	PRODOC reviews	Interviews Focus Group discussions Meetings	# 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	Comparing and observing reports over planned activities
	To what extent have a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented?	What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?	Policy documents PRODOC reviews	Interviews Focus Group discussions Meetings	# of female and male project beneficiaries and marginalized groups actively involved in exit strategy planning and decision-making	Observation of reports and feedback information from program stakeholders
		To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual	PRODOC reviews	Desk review Interviews	# of lessons learned documents or reports produced and	Observation of reports and feedback

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Indicators/Success Standards	Data Analysis Method
		basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?		Focus group discussions	updated over the course of the project # of relevant stakeholders who receive and acknowledge the lessons learned documents.	information from program stakeholders
Impact	What has happened as a result of the programme or program?	What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?	Annual and progress report Interview results Focus group results	Desk review Interviews Focus group discussions	# of legal and regulatory frameworks adapted and use in the functions of MACs and CSOs Level of improvement in service delivery accountability in the functions of MACs and CSOs	Comparing planned activities against reported achievements Observe changes in local citizens' perception and practice
		How many people have been affected?	Annual and progress reports Interviews results Focus group result	Document review Meetings Interviews Focus groups	# of persons trained # of MACs and CSOs capacity strengthened # of persons accessing services	Observe changes in local citizens' perception and practice
Human Rights	To what extent have poor, indigenous and tribal peoples, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from LDSP's interventions?	Have the programme equally provided the support inclusive of various segments of the Liberian population (poor, indigenous, tribal people, women, disadvantaged and marginalized)	Interviews results Annual and progress reports	Document review Meetings Interviews Focus groups	Proportional representation of various population groups in programme activities Extent of these populations accessing services supported by the program	Observe strategies used in involving various segments of population
Gender Equality	To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the LDSP programme?	How did the programme equally address the needs of women, men, girls and boys in its design and implementation	Programme documents Reports Interview and focus group results	Desk review Interviews and Focus groups	An attempt will be done on # of programme beneficiaries disaggregated by sex	Observation of reports and interview results
		To what extent has the LDSP programme promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects?	Policy documents PRODOC Reviews	Desk review Interviews and Focus groups	# of women holding leadership positions within local governance structures. Women's participation in decision-making processes at the community level	Observation of reports and feedback information from program stakeholders

Annex:4 Terminal Evaluation Rating Scales

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only a few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	A significant risk that keys outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes, as well as key outputs, will not be sustained

Table 8: LDSPII results expected framework

	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	OUTPUTS	SOURCE/MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISK & ASSUMPTIONS
1	<p>LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery</p>	<p>Drafting and amendments of LGA, constitutional referendum organized & results enforced, regulations in support of decentralisation process in place.</p> <p># of public awareness campaigns held with citizens engagement segregated by sex.</p> <p># of training sections conducted and competencies achieved, segregated by marginalized groups.</p> <p># of Citizens awareness campaign for CFM conducted and feedback achieved in the system segregated by sex and County</p>	<p>Output 1.1: Enhanced citizens participation in local governance through the implementation of the LGA.</p> <p>Action: 1.1.1 Number of strategic communication sessions held in 4 regions with citizens segregated by sex – through radio and public campaigns. (Radio stations contracted; radio talk shows conducted in four regions nation-wide, citizens understand benefits and obligations; advocate for LGA implementation).</p> <p>Action: 1.1.2 Number of public awareness campaigns held with citizens segregated by sex.</p> <p>Action: 1.1.3 # of public perception and evaluation report.</p> <p>Action: 1.1.4 CSO Advocacy report</p> <p>Action: 1.1.5 Number of capacity development reports with clear analysis of training sessions and competencies achieved, segregated by marginalized groups</p> <p>Output 1.2: Citizens’ Feedback Mechanism (CFM) developed and implemented.</p> <p>Action: 1.2.1 Number of citizens actively providing</p>	<p>Programme reports, copies of LGA, KII with donors, Review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team.</p> <p>Evaluation reports; Independent studies</p> <p>Interviews; Meeting with programme team; Town hall sessions; radio programmes; KII, Focus group discussions.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Desk review; reports; Independent studies. Townhall sessions; radio programmes; KII; FGD.</p> <p>Town hall sessions; radio programmes; Meetings with stakeholders; Focus group discussions.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix; Meeting</p>	<p>GOL remains committed to existing legal reforms to improve governance and economic management. Especially, maintaining the resilience to establishing management accountability procedures. GOL will provide adequate intentional budgetary financing for the sustenance and implementation of the decentralization platform.</p> <p>External Conditions: GOL remains committed to all existing legal reforms to improve governance and economic management commencing with immediate recruitment of qualified staff with adequate remuneration for those assigned to support the decentralization process at central and local levels; GOI will committedly make adequate financial provision for county and district offices. Importantly, Liberia will remain stable and peaceful.</p> <p>RISK: Reluctance of national government to surrender power and authority at local levels by abolishing the top-down and</p>

	<p># of visits undertaken to monitor the implementation of activities.</p> <p># of women and marginalized groups trained to participate in county development processes Local government Gender Policy and Strategy developed.</p> <p># of CSO, NGOs engagement with other independent parties segregated by marginalized groups.</p>	<p>feedback in the system segregated by sex and County</p> <p>CFM sub-hubs established; and field monitoring visits conducted; CFM system developed and successfully rolled out;)</p> <p>Action: 1.2.2: Existence of data collection mechanisms providing disaggregated data to monitor progress towards the Goals:(i) Conventional data collection methods (surveys); (ii) Administrative reporting systems; (iii) New data sources (citizen feedback mechanism).</p> <p>Output 1.3: Local government officials’ capacities for gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed.</p> <p>Action: 1.3.1 Number of gender responsive participatory planning budgeting of development funds and managing County Development Agenda as well as revenue collection, segregated by sex.</p> <p>Action: 1.3.2 Citizen self-reports and CSOs evaluations and other independent parties segregated by marginalized groups.</p>	<p>with programme team; KII, FGD.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team; Townhall sessions; radio programmes; Meetings with stakeholders; Focus group discussions</p>	<p>embracing the bottom-top approaches. Key GOL employee change regularly. No “Champions” to continuously drive the decentralization platform due to possible modification of the national political set up following generation elections.</p> <p>Medium Risk: Decentralization could dissent and become further divisive. Participation at local level can concessionally slow down the implementation of some bureaucratic top-down development initiatives</p> <p>High RISK: Devolution of power and resources might result into mal administration and corrupted practices at local levels. High level inappropriate sequencing adherence and partial implementation. Weak institutional structure and capacity may hamper expected results. Medium possible resistance to engaging citizens in monitoring the performance of county and central government administration.</p>	
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<p>2 Local government institutions and services are fully devolved at the assigned levels of government.</p>	<p># of municipalities fully functional and totally engaged in service delivery.</p> <p>Rationalization and restructuring criteria for local governments below counties established and incorporated into Local Government Act</p> <p># of sessions conducted for selected municipalities; Cities demarcated into wards; # of city councils' members and administrations trained in financial and waste management.</p> <p># of boundary conflict resolved.</p>	<p>Output 2.1: Municipalities functional and capacitated to manage resources and deliver services.</p> <p>Action: 2.1.1 Number of capacity development reports with clear analysis of training sessions and competencies achieved, segregated professional staff in all Counties and County Service Centers.</p> <p>Action: 2.1.2 Programme reports specifying institutional assessments and organizational development of municipalities.</p> <p>Action: 2.1.3 Number independent evaluations on municipal capacity development to manage resources and deliver services (Organizing sessions conducted for selected municipalities. Cities demarcated into wards; members of city councils and city administrations trained; specialized training also conducted for financial managers; and waste management awareness conducted).</p> <p>Output 2.2: Boundaries between towns, clans, chiefdoms, districts, and counties harmonized.</p> <p>Action: 2.2.1 Data base of boundaries conflicts established and awareness raising on boundaries conflicts completed.</p>	<p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix Meeting with programme team; Meetings with stakeholders; Focus group discussions.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix .</p> <p>Same as above</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix</p>		
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		<p>Action: 2.2.2 # of boundary conflict resolved.</p>					
<p>3 County Service Centers empowered and capacitated for improved service delivery at the sub-national level.</p>	<p># of MACs capacity built to deliver services at local levels.</p> <p># of specialized equipment/software procured by MIA & MOT for issuance of Driver Licenses and Traditional Marriage/divorce certificates.</p> <p>Increase in devolution process by issuance of administrative directives authorizing signing of certificates by Superintendent and County Inspector, CSC coordinator, etc.</p> <p># of County Service Centres made functional (building, wiring, plumbing, etc. in place & usable) in the counties.</p>	<p>Output 3.1: MACs empowered and capacitated to deliver services at the County service center.</p> <p>Action: 3.1.1 Ministry of Internal Affairs/Ministry of Transport procure and install specialized equipment/software for issuance of Driver Licenses and Traditional Marriage/divorce certificates.</p> <p>Action: 3.1.2 Ministry of Internal Affairs issue administrative directives authorizing signing of certificates by Superintendent and County Inspector/ CI Acting as Supt./ County Service Center coordinator.</p> <p>Action: 3.1.3 All 31 remaining MACs co-located with County Service Centers across 15 counties</p> <p>Output 3.2: Infrastructure of County Service Centers Improved.</p> <p>Action: 3.2.1 Solar Panels and Battery back-up systems Installed and functioning Number of CSCs accessible to PWDs.</p> <p>Action: 3.2.2 Office equipment, stationery, and administrative capacity assured (signatures, stamps, office telephony and Internet).</p>	<p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix Meeting with programme team.</p> <p>Evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix Meeting with programme team;</p>				

<p>4 Legal and Regulatory Reforms developed and implemented to sustain decentralization.</p>	<p>Drafting and amendments of PFM, RSL constitutionally organized & results enforced, regulations in support of decentralisation process in place.</p> <p>Revenue sharing bill, rollout, enacted and regulation developed for public use.</p> <p>Performance of local govt. in delivering government development initiatives and services at local levels.</p> <p># of public awareness campaigns held with citizens disaggregated by sex.</p>	<p>Output 4.1 Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended. Action: 4.1.1 Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended. Action: 4.1.2 Evaluation of the benefits accrued from the amendment</p> <p>Output 4.2 Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted and rollout. Action: 4.2.1 Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted. Action: 4.2.2. Revenue Sharing Formula Bill regulation developed. Action: 4.2.3 Evaluation and lessons learned from revenue sharing.</p> <p>Output 4.3: Ministry of Local Government Bill Enacted. Action: 4.3.1 Ministry of Local Government Bill Enacted Action: 4.3.2 Evaluation of the benefits accrued from enactment of the Ministry of Local Government Bill.</p> <p>Output 4.4: Enhanced citizens participation in the implementation</p>	<p>Review of M&E matrix Meeting with GC, MIA, County officials, CSO and programme team.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix Meeting with GC, MIA, County officials, CSO and programme team.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team.</p> <p>Evaluation reports, activities report, meetings with program team; Interviews, Independent studies.</p>			

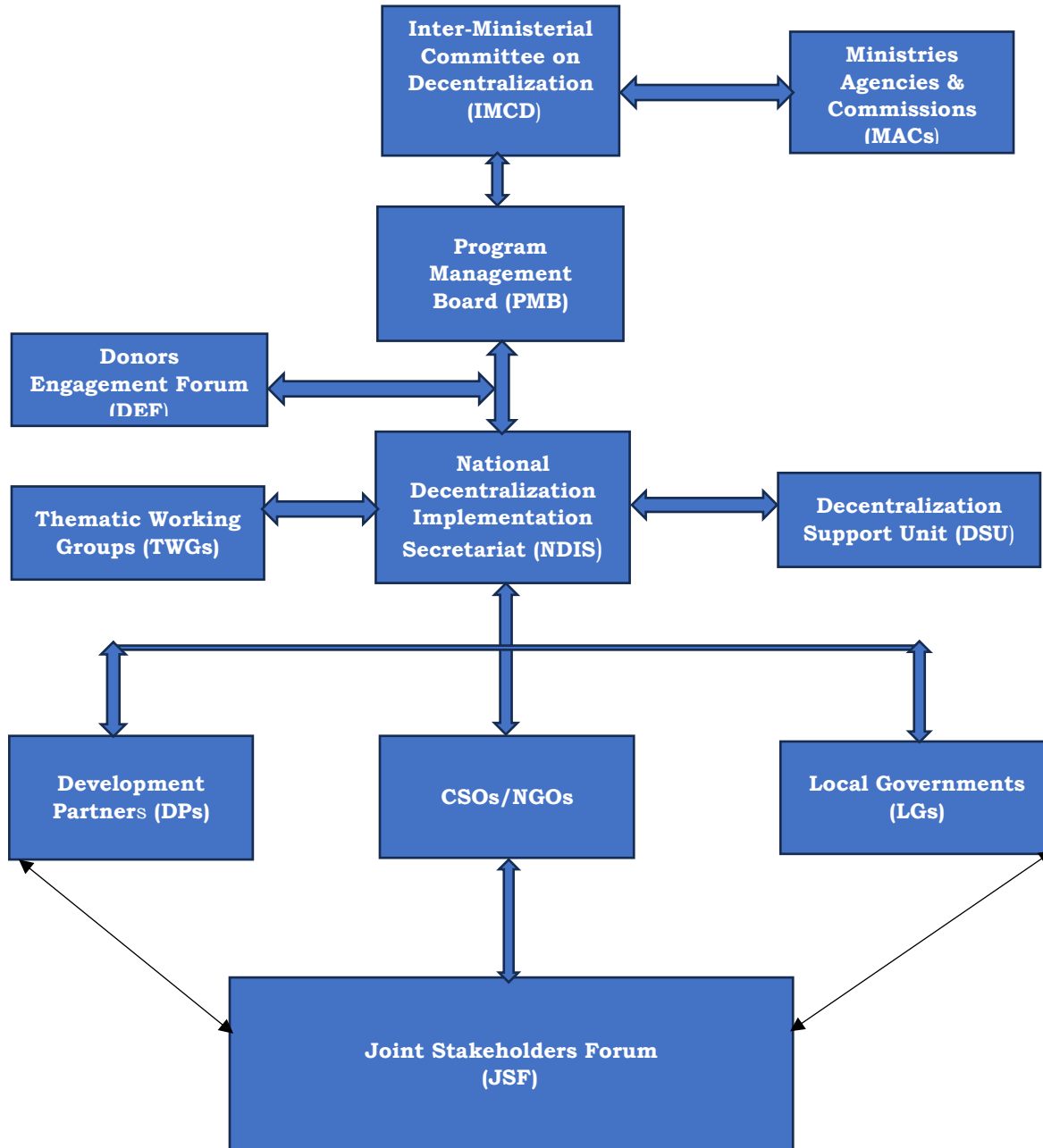
	<p>preparing and caring out civil education and awareness on decentralisation.</p> <p>Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational.</p> <p>Performance of local govt. in delivering government development initiatives and services at local levels.</p> <p>GOL leadership in implementation of decentralisation platform</p>	<p>of the Revenue Sharing Act through public awareness and ownership.</p> <p>Action: 4.4.1: # of policy dialogues held in 5 regions with citizens and stakeholders on the Revenue Sharing Act.</p> <p>Action: 4.4.2: # of public awareness campaigns held with citizens disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>Action: 4.4.3: # simplified copies of the Revenue Sharing Act printed and distributed.</p> <p>Output 4.5: Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing bills regulations developed.</p> <p>Action: 4.5.1: # of regulations developed</p> <p>Output 4.6: Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational.</p> <p>Action: 4.6.1 County fiscal board setup.</p> <p>Output 4.7: Automated property tax based developed and capacity building in real estate tax collections for 5 counties Output.</p> <p>Action: 4.7.1 # of automated data base developed.</p>	<p>Same as above</p> <p>Consultant's report, Evaluation reports, activities report,</p> <p>Presidential appoint listing of members of the Board.</p> <p>LDSP, LRA and consultants/firms reports.</p> <p>LDSP evaluation and reports</p> <p>Same as Above</p>		
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	<p>Increase in # of County Treasuries put in place and capacity strengthened in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties.</p> <p>GOL, UNDP, Donor’s contribution in implementation of decentralisation platform</p> <p>Population informed on the advancement of the cost-effective use of external and GOL funds.</p>	<p>Action: 4.7.2 # of local government staff trained.</p> <p>Action: 4.7.3 # of systems design to administer real estate tax collection.</p> <p>Action: 4.7.4: # of logistical support provided to enhance real estate tax collection.</p> <p>Action: 4.7.5 # of additional counties supported to pilot real estate tax revenue sharing mechanism.</p> <p>Output 4.8: County Treasuries in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties capacity strengthened.</p> <p>Action: 4.8.1: # of assessments conducted to determine functionalities of County Treasuries.</p> <p>Action: 4.8.2: # of capacity building training Provided.</p> <p>Action: 4.8.3: # of technical and system strengthening supports provided.</p> <p>Action: 4.8.4: # of ICT equipment procured for County Treasury offices.</p> <p>Output 4.9: LRA and LIGIS staff capacity enhanced for effective data collection in four counties.</p> <p>Action: 4.9.1: # trainings conducted for LRA, MFDPA& MIA staff.</p> <p>Action: 4.9.2: # of software/systems installed for effective data collection.</p>	<p>Assessment and Evaluation reports</p> <p>LDSP evaluation and reports.</p> <p>Same as Above</p> <p>LDSP evaluation and reports.</p> <p>LDSP evaluation and reports.</p> <p>Same as Above</p> <p>LDSP evaluation and reports.</p>		
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		<p>Action: 4.9.3: # of ICT equipment procured to enhance data collection.</p> <p>Output 4.10: Four counties capacity built to manage and account for revenue transfer.</p> <p>Action: 4.10.1: # of capacity building tra4.9.3: # of ICT equipment procured to enhance data collection. trainings conducted in financial management.</p> <p>Action: 4.10.2: # of financial management mentorship interventions made.</p> <p>Action: 4.10.3: # of financial systems installed.</p> <p>Action: 4.10.4: # of ICT equipment procured</p>	<p>Same as Above</p>			
<p>5 Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring strengthened.</p>	<p># GOL-MIA staff members participating in the implementation of decentralisation platform</p> <p># of visits undertaken to monitor the implementation of activities.</p> <p># of Monthly staff reports, quarterly program progress reports submitted on time.</p>	<p>Output 5.1: NDIS fully staffed to facilitate effective implementation of decentralization programme</p> <p>Action: 5.1.1 NDIS has full staffing complement in place within year one of the Programme.</p> <p>Action: 5.1.2 Report of capacity development and competences improved on NDIS staff.</p> <p>Action: 5.1.2 Report of capacity development and competences improved on NDIS staff.</p>	<p>Evaluation reports; Independent studies; Interviews; Review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent studies.</p> <p>Review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team.</p> <p>Desk review; evaluation reports; Independent</p>			

<p>Programme Governance structure established and functional.</p> <p>Monitoring and quality assurance developed and used within 15 counties.</p> <p>Performance of local govt. in delivering government development initiatives and services at local levels.</p> <p>Regular reporting and information on the advancement of decentralisation implementation advancement</p>	<p>Output 5.2: Programme management capacity strengthened by logistical and operational support.</p> <p>Action: 5.2.1 Programme Governance structure fully functional.</p> <p>Action: 5.2.2 M&E Officer in place</p> <p>Output 5.3: Chief Technical Advisor, and M&E Officer hired, UN Volunteers equipped to fully oversee the management of the LDSP.</p> <p>Action: 5.3.1 Chief technical Advisor in place</p> <p>Action: 5.3.2 M & E Officer in place</p> <p>Action: 5.3.3 Volunteers in place & given recognition and space to be fully functional.</p>	<p>studies;Interviews; Review of M&E matrix; Meeting with programme team;</p> <p>Review of M&E matrix. Meeting with programme team.</p>			
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Annex 5: LDSP II National Governance Structure & Institutional Framework



Annex 6: List of Documents and Literature cited.

- 2022 First Quarter Progress Report January- March
- 2023 LDSP Quarter 1 Report Final
- 2023 LDSP Quarter 2 Progress Report Final
- BTOR-Activity: Monitoring the Training of Tax Agents, and Awareness/Outreach Activities of Real Property Tax Expansion Project in Grand Bassa County- August 10, 2023
- Back to office report monitoring of data collection-tax agents-Activity: Monitoring Data Collection/Field Activities undertaken by Tax Agents for the Real Properties Tax Expansion Project in Grand Bassa County- August 28, 2023
- BOTR –Monitoring of business support service –Zedru CSC solar final pdf-Activity: Monitoring of Business Support Services and Solar Power System installed at Grand Gedeh County Service Center- February 21, 2023
- BTOR –CSC Monitoring in Nimba, Rivergee, Maryland -ACTIVITY: Monitoring of County Service Centers in Nimba, River Gee, Maryland, and Sinoe Counties-May 16, 2023
- BTOR CSC Monitoring Nimba village, Reverage Maryland- ACTIVITY: Monitoring of County Service Centers in Nimba, River Gee, Maryland, and Sinoe Counties. May 16, 2023
- BTOR-Monitoring CSC and LGA awareness-activity: Monitoring of County Service Centers in Margibi, Lofa, Bong, LGA Awareness Activities, and Financial Management Training- June 18, 2023
- BTOR-Monitoring CSC and LGA,Bong,Marigib, Lofa and Nimba-activity: Monitoring of County Service Centers, Financial Management Training, and LGA awareness activities in Margibi, Lofa, Bong, and Nimba Counties- June 18, 2023
- Consolidated monitoring reports CSC,LGA,CFM final pdf
- Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023-Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon
- Joint Travel Mission to assess the Margibi, Bong & Nimba counties service centers-31st August-2nd September 2022
- LDSP II Annual Project Progress Report – July to December 2020
- LDSP technical working group meeting April 13th,2023.
- Liberia Decentralisation Support Programme –Annual Workplan 2020(July –December 2020)

- Liberia Decentralization Project (LDSP) Board Meeting Minutes Virtual Meeting (via Zoom) Date: Monday, October 17, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 AM
- Liberia Decentralization Project (LDSP) Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes
- Liberia Decentralization Project Phase II (LDSP 11) Board Meeting on 2021 Annual Workplan-virtual meeting (via Zoom),
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, from 10:00AM-11:30AM
- Liberia Decentralization Support Project (LDSP) End of Year Board Meeting Minutes
- Monitoring of Business Support Services and Solar Power System installed at Grand Gedeh County Service Center-
February 13 – February 19, 2023 –Report-Kakata, Gbarnga, Ganta, Sanniquellie, Zwedru
- Monitoring Report-ACTIVITY: Monitoring of County Service Centers in Nimba, River Gee, Maryland, and Sinoe Counties-
April 28 – May 6, 2023
- Monitoring Report-ACTIVITY: Monitoring of County Service Centers, LGA, and CFM-Awareness/Outreach Activities in
Gbarpolu, Bomi, and Grand Cape mount Counties- June 19-23, 2023
- Monitoring report-business support services final pdf
- Results Framework: Terminal Evaluation Cumulative Achievement
- Signed LDSP II Programme Document
- United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II)- Annual
Report – 2021 (Jan – Dec 2021)
- United Nations Development Programme Liberia-Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II (LDSP II) Annual
Report – 2022 (Jan – Dec 2022)
- Virtual meeting (via Zoom) Tuesday, December 20, 2022, from 10:00 AM-12:20 AM

Annex 7: List of Persons Interviewed

Monrovia-Based Stakeholder Listing for LDSP II Terminal Evaluation

No.	Name	Position	Institution/ Agency	Cell #	Email Address
1	Olayee Collins	DMRPD	MIA	0880769924	gedehcollins@yahoo.com
2	Augustus Flomo	DMEM	MFDP	0770418647	
3	Actebeouson Nyema	Program Manager	GC	777289212	tanyema@yahoo.com
4	James Afif Jaber	Assistant Commissioner, Real Estate Tax Division	LRA	886516220	james.jaber@lra.gov.lr
5	Bachir Toure	Director for Decentralization	MOT	088651099	Tourebachir99@gmail.com
6	Godo Kolubah	Senior Programme Advisor	Irish Embassy	0778387159	godo.kolubah@dfa.ie
7	Nikolina Stålhand	Programme Officer	Embassy of Sweden		nikolina.stalhand@gov.se
8	Joseph Cheyan	Executive Director	Institute for Democratic Action & Development (IDAD)	0770205998/ 0886280314	idadliberia@gmail.com
9	Bobo Kollie	Executive Director	Citizens' Initiative for Dialogue (CID)	0770407907	Citizensi4dialogue@gmail.com
10	Matthias M Yeanay	Executive Director	Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD)	0886678997/ 0770482707	matthiasmyeanay@gmail.com
11	Harold Aidoo	Executive Director	Integrity Watch Liberia	0776523021	haidoo@iw-lr.org

Field/County-Based Stakeholder Listing for LDSP II Terminal Evaluation

#	Name	Position	County	Contact #
1.	Richard D. Jah	County Service Center Coordinator	Margibi	0777359078 / 0886848384
2.	Mac A. Willis	County Service Center Coordinator	Grand Bassa	0886135266
3.	Isaac V. Williams	County Service Center Coordinator	Bomi	0886291301
4.	J. Moniayoung Gwion	County Service Center Coordinator	Grand Gedeh	0886241413
5.	Alexander Lewis	Tax Agent Team Leader	Grand Bassa	0886270321/ 0775270321
6.	Wilmont Redd	Tax Agent Team Leader	Grand Bassa	0777525331/ 0888717599
7.	T. Eshmael Davis	Tax Agent Team Leader	Grand Bassa	0775863063/
8.	Ezra K. Gueh	Tax Agent Team Leader	Grand Bassa	0770903830
9.	Lassee Bueh	Tax Agent Team Leader	Grand Bassa	0775942869

Annex 8: Key informant interview guide

1	Program name	
2	Specific role during implementation	
3	Institution/Organization	
4	Organization’s mandate	
4	Position in the Organization	
5	Date of the Interview	

Introduction

Hello,

My name isYour 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 programing. 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 redesign, 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.
- 5.

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?

Annex 9: FGD Guide for program beneficiaries

1	Program name	
2	Specific benefit received	
3	Location	
5	Date of the Interview	
6	Start time:	End time:

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

1. How is the program designed? Probe for: awareness about the objectives & implementation arrangements.
2. What have you liked most from this program and why?
3. What are the key development needs is the program addressing?
4. In case this same program is to be redesign, what modifications would you suggest and why?
5. Specifically, what gaps in the design of the program are evident to you?
6. In your opinion, how have such gaps affected the delivery of the program?
7. What recommendations would you suggest for the remaining program implementation period?

B-Implementation

1. How were you selected to participate in the program?
2. Any specific challenges you have faced during program implementation?
3. How have such challenges affected the implementation efficiency & effectiveness?
4. What remedies to the above challenges would you suggest?
5. What would you consider as the best and worst practices during program implementation

C. Effectiveness:

1. What are the major benefits which you have received from the program so far?
2. Is the program well on track to achieve its objectives?
3. What factors could be affecting 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 programs.

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?

Annex 10: Evaluation Work plan

The evaluation team intends to conduct the assignment within 22 working days up to and including September 25 – November 9, 2023. In so doing, the team considers the below table containing scheduled activities and calendar of work.

Table 3.2: Schedule and Calendar Work

<i>Schedule & Calendar of Work</i>			
<i>Activity (s)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Phase (1)		September 25 - October 3, 2023	7 (days)
Inception: Inception report and evaluation matrix	Initial document review, development of methodology and development of a work plan. Participate in an Inception Meeting with UNDP Liberia country office.		
Presentation, data collection	Desk review, surveys, interviews, Presentation including briefing & debriefing. Draft inception report.	Delay in arrival of IC on October 16 th due to issuing (Elections) leading to Adjustments.	
Phase (2)		October 18th - November 3rd, 2023	12 (days)
Draft evaluation report Stakeholder workshop presentation	Interview stakeholders Conduct field visits: (Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Bong, Nimba Counties). Data collection, FGD/KII meetings and other forms of evaluation information gathering		

	<i>within communities within County Service Center.</i>		
Synthesis	<i>Data entry, analysis, interpretation leading to the development of the provisional report.</i> <i>Present draft Evaluation Report and lessons at Validation Workshop.</i>		
Phase (3)		<i>November 6th - November 9th, 2023</i>	<i>3 (days)</i>
Final Evaluation Report	<i>Draft/provisional report is validated with project stakeholders' comments.</i> <i>Finalize and submit evaluation and lessons learned report incorporating additions and comments provided by stakeholders. Final reporting & dissemination.</i>		
		Total	22 (days)

Note: 5 Working days/per week

Annex 11: Terms of Reference (ToRs)



Terms of Reference Summative Evaluation: Liberia Decentralization Support Programme Phase II

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION	
Project/outcome title	Liberia Decentralization Support Programme II
Atlas ID	00122614

**Corporate
and output****Outcome 1: LGA reforms implemented through enhanced participation of stakeholders (male, female, PWDs) in decision-making and service delivery.**

Output 1.1: Enhanced citizens participation in local governance through the implementation of the LGA. Output 1.2: Citizens' Feedback Mechanism (CFM) developed and implemented.

Output 1.3: Local government officials' capacities for gender responsive participatory planning and budgeting developed.

Outcome 2: Local government institutions and services are fully devolved at the assigned levels of government.

Output 2.1: Municipalities functional and capacitated to manage resources and deliver services Output 2.2: Boundaries between towns, clans, chiefdoms, districts, and counties harmonized.

Outcome 3: County Service Centers empowered and capacitated for improved service delivery at the sub-national level

Output 3.1: MACs empowered and capacitated to deliver services at the County Service Centers.

Output 3.2: Infrastructure of County Service Centers Improved.

Outcome 4: Legal and Regulatory Reforms developed and implemented to sustain decentralization

Output 4.1 Public Financial Management (PFM) Law amended.

Output 4.2 Revenue Sharing Formula Bill enacted and rollout.

Output 4.3: Ministry of Local Government Bill Enacted

Output 4.4: Enhanced citizens participation in the implementation of the Revenue Sharing Act through public awareness and ownership.

Output 4.5: Local Government Act and Revenue Sharing bills regulations developed.

Output 4.6: Local Government Fiscal Board established and operational.

Output 4.7: Automated property tax based developed and capacity building in real estate tax collections for 5 counties.

Output 4.8: County Treasuries in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong and Margibi counties capacity strengthened.

Output 4.9: LRA and LIGIS staff capacity enhanced for effective data collection in four counties.

Output 4.10: Four counties capacity built to manage and account for revenue transfer.

Outcome 5: Programme management support, coordination, and monitoring strengthened.

Output 5.1 NDIS fully staffed to facilitate effective implementation of decentralization programme.

Output 5.2: Programme management capacity strengthened by logistical and operational support. Output 5.3: Chief Technical Advisor, and M&E Officer hired, UN Volunteers equipped to fully oversee the management of the LDSP.

Country	Liberia	
Region	RBA	
Date project document signed	June 17, 2020	
	Start	Planned End

Project dates	July 1, 2020	December 31, 2024
Project budget	USD 7,133,400.00	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 3,933,115.08	
Funding source	Government of Liberia, UNDP, Swedish Embassy, Irish Aid	
Implementing party*	UNDP	

* This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Background

Liberia completed the implementation of the first phase of the Decentralization Programme in 2019. Results accrued from the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP) Phase II (2020-2024) are inclusive governance, provision of basic services, and allocation of authority and resources at the most appropriate levels of government. Centralization of governance has compromised popular participation in national decision-making and has caused inequities in access to basic social services and economic opportunities at local levels. This situation has kept most Liberians in abject poverty and at the margins of their society. It has undermined citizen initiatives and ownership of development by local communities. Citizens in almost all communities in Liberia depend on, look up to, and expect the central government to address all their problems. To improve citizen participation and access to basic public services, particularly by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the LDSP Phase II has supported the implementation of an innovative, information technology-enabled citizens' feedback mechanism launched in 2019. The data from this mechanism has enabled the design and implementation of a performance management system for the civil service, and inform the planning, implementation, and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals.

The LDSP Phase II (2020-2024) supported and facilitated the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (NPD LG). It also to operationalize the newly gazetted Local Government Act (2018). The LDSP II deliberately targeted the decentralization of administrative and political governance in Liberia. The programme is implemented in tandem

with the fiscal decentralization component implemented by the MFDP and is aligned to the Peace Building and Reconciliation processes, Public Sector Reform Agenda, and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) - under Governance Pillar IV. By extension, it supports the implementation of all pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the PAPD, and the SDGs particularly goals 1, 5, 16, and 17.

Given the above, the total resources allocated for the implementation of the LDSP Phase II activities and program is USD 7, 133,400.00 which was provided by its donors including the UNDP, Swedish Embassy, and Irish Aid. Using the abovementioned resources, LDSP Phase II has implemented several activities across all 15 counties in Liberia. Key among those activities have been the organization of more than 30 town hall meetings and regional awareness to enable citizens understand the benefits of the Local Governance Act and Revenue Sharing Act, strengthening of the Citizens Feedback Mechanism by providing internet coverage and monitoring units for viewing citizens responses on the LIBTALK platform in the County Service Center, enhancing local government officials capacities to manage resources, deliver services, and incorporate gender responsiveness in participatory planning & budgeting, empowering MACs through the training of more than 14 technical staff to deliver services at the County Service Center for more than 8 County Service Centers, improving the infrastructure of more than 8 County Service Centers through the installing of solar power systems, ensuring the passage of the Revenue Sharing Act and the amended of the Public Financial Management Act.

To achieve decentralization objectives, several stakeholders have worked collaboratively with the LDSP including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Governance Commission, Liberia Revenue Authority, and the Ministry of Finance and development Planning. Towards the overarching goal of decentralizing services for citizens, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has supported the LDSP to devolve services at the local level, lead lobbying efforts for the passage of the Revenue Sharing Act, establish County Councils, strengthen the capacity of the County Service Center's technical staff and infrastructure to provide services to citizens. The Governance Commission has also been instrumental in setting up the county council, assisting in decentralization efforts such as the provision of financial management training, budgeting, and developmental planning of local government officials, organizing dialogues and engagements with youth and students on the Decentralization and Revenue Sharing Acts. The Liberia Revenue Authority has supported the LDSP to rollout the revenue sharing act through the recruitment of tax agents, implementation of the real estate tax revenue sharing mechanism, training of local government staff to manage revenue transfer, and aided in organizing dialogues with CSO, PWDs, and youth on the Revenue Sharing Law. Finally, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has supported the LDSP in rolling out fiscal decentralization, financial management, and budgeting training.

- **Evaluation Purpose**

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

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

- **Evaluation Scope**

As the project ends in December 2024, the outcome evaluation will be conducted during May and June to assess the LDSP II progress, challenges as well as document lessons learned, while providing strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the next Decentralization programme to start in 2025.

Specifically, the project evaluation will assess:

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

The evaluation will consider the pertinent outcomes and outputs as stated in the LDSP project document. The specific outcomes under the LDSP Programme to be assessed relate to UNSDCF Outcome # 4/ UNDP Outcome #1: 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.

As described in Annex 1, the LDSP programme has implemented 5 outcomes. An analysis of achievements across all 5 outcomes is expected.

- **Evaluation Questions**

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

Relevance/Coherence:

- How well has the programme aligned with government and agency priorities?
- To what extent is the LDSP II in line with the UNDP mandate, national priorities and the requirements of targeting women, men, and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent has LDSP II selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?

Effectiveness

- What evidence is there that the programme has contributed towards developmental change at the national and local levels?
- To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made toward their achievement.
- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcome, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the outcome?
- What were the positive or negative, intended, or unintended changes brought about by LDSP II work?
- What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP II performance?
- Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?

Efficiency

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?
- To what extent has there been an economic use of financial and human resources?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

- To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- What mechanisms have been set in place by LDSP II to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these interventions?
- To what extent have a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?

Impact

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

Human rights

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

Gender Equality

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

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

- **Methodology**

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

The evaluation is expected to take a "theory of change" (TOC) approach to determine causal links between the interventions that LDSP has supported and observed achievement at national and local levels. The evaluators will develop a logic model to determine how LDSP's interventions have led to improved national and local government management and service delivery.

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

The following steps in data collection are anticipated:

- **Desk Review**

A desk review should be carried out of the key strategies and documents underpinning the programme's scope of work. This includes reviewing the programme document, different reports, documents kept at the county service centers and the government entities, the pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development (PAPD), country programme document, the midterm review report as well as any monitoring and other documents, to be provided by the programme.

Key documents to review:

2. Project document (contribution agreement).
3. Theory of change and results framework.
4. Programme and project quality assurance reports.
5. Annual workplans.
6. Activity designs.
7. Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
8. Results-oriented monitoring report.
9. Highlights of project board meetings.
10. Technical/financial monitoring reports.

- **Field Data Collection**

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

- Interviews with key partners and stakeholders (men and women): such as key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, United Nations country team (UNCT) members and implementing partners:
- Semi-structured interviews, based on questions designed for different stakeholders based on evaluation questions around relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

- Key informant and focus group discussions with men and women, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.
- All interviews with men and women should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
- Field visits to project sites and partner institutions
- Survey questionnaires where appropriate
- Participatory observation, focus groups, and rapid appraisal techniques
- Data review and analysis of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.
- Gender and human rights lens. All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human right issues.

- **Deliverables**

The following reports and deliverables are required for the evaluation:

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

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

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

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

Title

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations Executive Summary Introduction

Background and context Evaluation scope and objectives Evaluation approach and methods Data analysis

Findings and conclusions Lessons learned Recommendations

Annexes

- **Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies**

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

Required Qualifications of the Evaluation Manager

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

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

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

- Finalize the evaluation report and submit it to UNDP.

Required qualification of the Associate Evaluator

- Liberian citizen or persons with extensive experience working in Liberia during the last 5 years;
- Minimum master's degree in the social sciences;
- Minimum 5 years' experience carrying out development evaluations for government and civil society;
- Experience working in or closely with UN agencies, especially UNDP, is preferred;
- A deep understanding of the development context in Liberia and preferably an understanding of governance issues within the Liberia context;
- Strong communication skills;
- Excellent reading and writing skills in English, and preferably also Shona. The Associate Evaluator will, *inter alia*, perform the following tasks:
 - Review documents;
 - Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
 - Assist in carrying out the evaluation in accordance with the proposed objectives and scope of the evaluation;
 - Draft related parts of the evaluation report as agreed with the Evaluation Manager;
 - Assist the Evaluation Manager to finalize the draft and final evaluation report.

• Evaluation Ethics

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

“The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

- **Implementation Arrangements**

With overall guidance of the DRRP and through direct guidance of the Head of PMSU, the consultants will work the M&E Analyst and Programme Coordinator to assist in facilitating the process (e.g., providing relevant documentation, arranging visits/interviews with key informants, etc.). The CO Management will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report. The M&E Analyst/ Programme Coordinator will arrange introductory meetings. The consultants will take responsibility for setting up meetings and conducting the evaluation, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. The CO management will develop a management response to the evaluation within two weeks of report finalization.

The Task Manager of the Project will convene an Advisory Panel comprising technical experts to enhance the quality of the evaluation. This Panel will review the inception report and the draft evaluation report to provide detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis, and reporting. The Panel will also advise on the conformity of evaluation processes to the UNEG standards. The evaluation team is required to address all comments of the Panel completely and comprehensively. The Evaluation Team Leader will provide a detailed rationale to the advisory panel for any comment that remain unaddressed.

The evaluation will use a system of ratings standardising assessments proposed by the evaluators in the inception report. The evaluation acknowledges that rating cannot be a standalone assessment, and it will not be feasible to entirely quantify

judgements. Performance rating will be carried out for the four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

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

• **Timeframe for the Evaluation Process**

The evaluation is expected to take 22 working days for each of the two consultants, over six weeks starting 1st May 2023. The final draft evaluation report is due on the 1st of June 2023. The following table provides an indicative breakout for activities and delivery:

Activity	Deliverable	Workday allocation		Time period (days) for task completion
		Evaluation Manager	Associate Evaluator	
Review materials and develop work plan	Inception report and evaluation matrix	4	3	7
Participate in an Inception Meeting with UNDP Liberia country Office				
Draft inception report				
Review Documents and stakeholder consultations	Draft evaluation report Stakeholder workshop presentation	13	16	30
Interview stakeholders				
Conduct field visits				
Analyse data				
Develop draft evaluation and lessons report to Country Office				
Present draft Evaluation Report and lessons at Validation Workshop	Final evaluation report	5	3	7
Finalize and submit evaluation and lessons learned report incorporating additions and comments provided by stakeholders				
	totals	22	22	6 weeks

- **Fees and payments**

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

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

Annex 12: Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP Evaluations

Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[‡]

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System Name of Consultant: ____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____
have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

I confirm that I

Signed at _____ on _____

Signature: _____



Louis Kuukpen

DRR-P



22-Mar-2023

28-Mar-2023

‡ www.unevaluation.org/unevaluationcodeofconduct

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Signature: _____

