Improving governance and ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of public goods and services is central to the Government’s development strategy as enshrined in the Agenda for Change (PRSP II 2008-2012) and was critical to the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) project in Sierra Leone. The IBSA Project was implemented in the framework of Public Sector Reform (PSR) which was identified in the Agenda for Change as key to the implementation and monitoring of development priorities, with the objective to ‘build sustainable institutional capacity to strengthen and improve the public sector’s ability to deliver efficient, effective and accountable services’. The IBSA project is aligned with Programme 11 (Public Sector Reform) of the UN Joint Vision 2009-12 and the Country Programme Document (CPD) and Action Plan (CPAP) over the same period. It is also aligned with national priorities in the Agenda for Change.

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the leadership and intuitionial capacity of key government agencies to deliver on their mandates and to meet the policy objectives and targets set under the Agenda for Change. In that regard, the consultant carried out content reviews and analysis and debriefing meetings with both UNDP and partner institutions that served as entry points. There were in-depth interviews and observations involving key stakeholders from UNDP, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC), Human Resources Management Office (HRMO), Cabinet Secretariat (CAB SEC), Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) and the Strategy and Policy Unit (SPU) of the Office of the President; and data analysis and report writing, which involved collation, analysis of key findings and writing of the report looking at project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, resource, partnership and management analysis, lessons learned and recommendations.

The evaluation established that the IBSA project facilitated by UNDP was apt, timely and adequate in addressing the leadership challenges (skills, systems, processes) key state institutions face in managing the country’s resources and meeting the targets set under the Agenda for Change. The evaluation also established that the project provided the logistics, tools and training to senior officials and thus helped the target MDAs in addressing the capacity gaps with the view to efficiently and effectively discharge their mandate and to deliver on reducing poverty and meeting the targets set out in the MDGs. However, the study discovered that realistically the project could only have been achieved in the medium to long term (3-5 years) and not the two year as set out in the Project Document.

Overall, the IBSA Fund has greatly contributed in strengthening leadership management (skills, systems and processes) in the major MDAs in Sierra Leone. The project provided the logistics, tools and training to senior officials and thus helped the target MDAs in addressing the capacity gaps that had characterized the public sector in the country. In line with the Agenda for Change,

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1 The India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Trust Fund) was created out of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in March 2004 by Prime Minister of India, President of Brazil, and President of South Africa. Its purpose is to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to interested developing countries as examples of best practices in the fight against poverty and hunger. The Fund, as an example of cooperation among three developing countries, constitutes a pioneer and unique initiative to enhance south-south cooperation for the benefit of the neediest nations of the south.
the Fund has helped to strengthen learning and knowledge networking and experience sharing by senior government officials through study tours to a number of countries. More importantly, the PPRU at MoFAIC has been revamped with substantial investment in basic operational equipment and facilities, and through the SPU, the design and roll-out of competency and skills development on results-based management for technical staff of MDAs were undertaken.

The evaluation also concludes that IBSA support to the SPU to promote and roll out performance contracting and sensitization of MDAs and local council representatives in performance contracting have been successfully carried out. The project’s support to the HRMO to organize refresher workshop for managers in “Individual Performance Appraisal System” methodology have greatly enhanced the capacities of public officials to deliver on their mandate. Other strengths of the project include: CABSEC benefitted from computing and network printing facilities; internet connectivity has been installed to improve communications with MDAs; Cabinet Secretariat data management capability strengthened; and installation of LAN system to support data and voice communications, and to create secure, reliable and scalable platform completed.

In terms of national ownership and strengthening leadership, the evaluation discovered that the government has actively advanced the formulation and implementation of this project, including convening and chairing the project Steering Committee, defining knowledge-sharing visits interests and agendas, outlining needs and supporting the undertaking of studies, and leading the development of training curriculum and of government-tailored software platforms, performance monitoring and technical and advisory tools. The experience from the evaluation demonstrated that strong involvement of partner institutions in project design, planning, implementation and management, and being part of the project’s coordination and management systems has been evident. This has increased the participation of and alignment with other state institutions such as the ACC and Local Councils, and national ownership which forms the bedrock of successful implementation and M&E.

However, the project was faced with some challenges. For instance, the CAB-SEC lacks personnel to effectively carry out and manage its responsibilities because the Secretariat is still being frowned on by civil servants. The Secretariat has a dual portfolio (Head of Civil Service and responsible for Cabinet Affairs). The government also faces a challenge in transitioning from recurrent budgeting to performance based budgeting. This poses a major reform issue in Public Finance Management in 2012 and beyond. Equally worth noting is the difficulty for RBM and performance management systems to take of largely because the country relies more on donor funding rather than internal resource generation as the case in Ghana. The cost for implementation poses a serious challenge.

Regardless of the above limitations, one can conclude that in the execution of the project, UNDP maintained its focus in strengthening the technical and operational capacity of key PSR institutions. It has also continued to provide a ‘helping hand’ in the design or adaptation of necessary tools and frameworks, and providing basic systems and tools as well as skills training opportunities to enhance delivery of service to the people of Sierra Leone. The overall performance of the IBSA project was largely successful and beneficial to partner institutions in
Sierra Leone in the country’s quest to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. The partner MDAs are seen to have immensely benefitted from support provided by UNDP especially regarding outputs 1, 2, 4 and 5. The outcome of the evaluation reveals that to a large extent the implementation of planned outputs contributed to the achievement of the overarching outcome.

**Lessons Learned**

- There was authentic ownership right through all phases of the project as demonstrated through the fundamentally key role played by the Office of the President and the MoFAIC;
- One lesson Sierra Leone can learn from the IBSA project is the drawing and reliance on its own local capacity to help alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development;
- There was strong involvement of partner institutions in project design, planning, implementation and management, and being part of the project’s coordination and management systems was very visible and evident; and
- The IBSA support has created tremendous appetite for potential donors to contribute to the institutional and human capacity building project in Sierra Leone.

**Recommendations to GoSL:**

- Review of institutional policies, strategic plans and procedures paying particular attention on consolidating the strategic priorities and objectives, costing the plan, designing results framework, setting out project indicators, baseline and target values, and a detailed action plan for implementation;
- Prioritise, develop and roll out an efficient monitoring and evaluation framework for the RBM Performance Tracking and Management at all levels of engagement;
- Endeavour to develop achievable job descriptions that can contribute positively to and consistent with the performance tracking system and RBM;
- Involve local institutions and agencies such as the local councils in future project design and implementation to ensure ownership at the local level with to effectively decentralize RBM and performance management systems;
- To forge and sustain strong linkages with countries within IBSA especially African countries that are well ahead in institutional reforms, strategic decision-making and poverty alleviation efforts;
- To formalize capacity building policies by ensuring that attendees of training and skills development programs, and study tours hold experience sharing fora/sessions with other staff members;
- The GoSL to provide incentives to civil servants through pay increase in order to effectively and efficiently deliver on their mandate;
- The Government to ensure that civil servants are given the space to lead the change necessary for poverty alleviation and promote sustainable development as is the ideal case in other countries such as Kenya; and
- Design and develop internal control system, especially in the financial management arena that opens up institutional bureaucracies with the view to guarantee transparency

**Recommendations to UNDP**

- ICT and training/skills development programs remain the biggest challenge. UNDP should assist partner institutions especially CAB-SEC to complete the unfinished ICT component of the project, train staff in ICT related technologies, develop an e-library and create a research unit with the MDAs that has international standards. This is key to ensuring the modernization of MDAs with the wherewithal to making them effective and efficient in delivering on their mandates;

- There is need for UNDP to attract more funding from IBSA to undertake the following: provision of furniture and ICT equipment all MDAs; training of senior and middle level officials Strategic Management, ICT, administration, and good governance. UNDP can collaborate with tertiary institutions such as IPAM to provide these services;

- In order to ensure that the MDAs are efficient and effective in the discharge of their core mandate, it is critical to continue investing in professionalism through training programs, adherence to the separation of roles and responsibilities between Ministers and Civil Servants. Civil Servants should take the lead in reform process;

- UNDP should provide assistance to MDAs to develop Strategic Plans, procedures manuals by contracting Strategic Plan experts with the skills to develop an achievable and attainable plan;

- Towards ensuring strengthened project accountability and improved reporting, project supervision, monitoring and analytical evaluation by Funding Partners should be prioritised; and

- There is need to improve disbursement of funds in a timely manner